

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Update on PCBFA Projects & Extension for the Year
- Research Articles
- Upcoming Events

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# FORAGE COUNTRY

WINTER 2015

## Australian Study Tour: Experiencing Agricultural Similarities and Differences on the Other Side of the World!

by Morgan Hobin

November 8, 2014 saw twenty-one producers from the Alberta and British Columbia Peace Region head off on an agricultural experience of a lifetime. In the beginning not all of the group members were known to each other, but by the end of the tour many had become good friends.

The tour not only consisted of visiting agricultural operations throughout the states of Victoria and South Australia, but tour participants had the opportunity to see main attractions like Melbourne, Sydney and the Great Ocean Road through a guided coach tour. There were also a few days out of the twelve day tour that provided free time for everyone to explore the local area and culture on their own.



The Group at Great Ocean Road

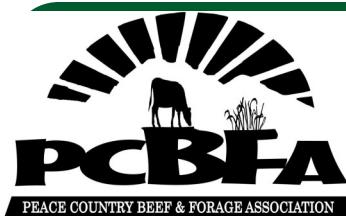
There were twelve farm visits over the period of the tour. Each of the properties was unique in its own way, but similarly each was more than happy to share the details of their operations and open their homes to any and all visitors. This article will highlight a few of the visits – for more information be sure to seek out any of the PCBFA members that attended the tour to hear their first-hand experiences.



Boer Goats

Once landing in Australia and having the chance to recover from jet lag, day 1 of tours saw the group visiting a Boer goat and Dorper sheep operation just outside of Kyabram, Victoria. This type of operation was new to most tour participants, as many were current or retired beef cattle producers. At this operation there were 450 animals on 80 acres. The goats were raised mainly for the export market and any of their meat and breeding stock were planned to support the ethnic market in Melbourne.

Ryegrass and clover pastures were their main source of fodder. The area (most of Victoria and South Australia) was experiencing a drought, whereby there had been no rain since August. The area traditionally experiences 180mm rainfall on average. This property did have a well that helped them to minimally irrigate just enough to produce adequate forage. Land in this area was approximately \$2,000/acre for higher producing areas (dairy production) and \$1,500-\$1,600/acre for those properties located in the drier areas. The day was topped off with a welcome dinner at an olive grove just located outside of the city of Shepparton.



# Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

## Local Information for Peace Country Producers

### Board of Directors

**Peter Tindall**  
**Randi Kuriga**  
**Steve Johnson**  
**Thomas Clayton**  
**John Prinse**  
**Jordan Barnfield**  
**Conrad Dolen**  
**Elton Kauffman**  
**Gary These**  
**Stan Logan**

### Staff

**Monika Benoit, Manager**  
**Akim Omokanye, Research Coordinator**  
**Stacy Pritchard, Extension & ASB Project Coordinator**  
**Kaitlin McLachlan, Crop Program Coordinator**

### Locations

**GPRC Fairview Campus, Trades Instructional Building, Room 229  
780-835-6799**  
**High Prairie Provincial Building  
ARD/AFSC Office  
780-523-4033**

Having worked in the Peace Country for many years, we have established ourselves as an innovative association, willing to work with local businesses, educational facilities, other research groups and always with the producers from across the Peace Region. Our programs vary from environmental concerns to finding the newest technology and helping producers implement it on their operations. Our board is made up of producers from across the Peace Region, who actively voice questions, ideas and concerns to address the needs of the farmers and ranchers of the Peace.

### Vision

The Peace Country Beef & Forage Association is a producer group with the goal to be a hub of innovative, relevant and local bee, forage and crop information for Peace Country Producers.

### Mission

A Peace Country producer's first stop for optimizing beef, forage and crop production to maximize profitability with innovative and credible information.

**If you have any questions, comments or feedback about our current extension events or any of our projects, please do not hesitate to give us a call at either PCBFA office.**

**Your input matters to us!**

We are beginning a new 3 year cycle of funding and with your help we have identified several areas in which we will be focusing our research and extension efforts.

We have come up with titles for each of our Forages & Livestock, Environment and Annual and Special Crops Programs that will help guide our efforts in the next 3 years.

- Forages and Livestock Program: *Optimizing Production and Profitability of Livestock and Forage Production in the Peace Country.*
- Environment Program: *Facilitating the Role of Agricultural Producers as Stewards of the Land.*
- Our new Annual and Special Crops Program: *Long Term Profitability of Crop Production through Land Rejuvenation & Sustainability.*

These programs will all work together to improve production and profitability on all operations in the Peace Country with a focus on soil health and restorative, sustainable farming practices.

### **Our Fairview Office has Moved!**

After 30 years of being in the Animal Science Building of GPRC, we moved into the Trades Instructional Building in September!

A bigger, brighter office for our team. Be sure to stop by for a visit!



### Paringa Livestock Genetics

approximately \$3,000/head for an open cow. Female sales for this operation are not common, but rather they hold two bull sales per year for one and two-year-old bulls. These animals were raised on ryegrass, orchard grass, cocksfoot trefoil and phalaris grass pastures. There is no hay or other supplements given, therefore in drier years their strategy was to wean early. Paringa also discussed beef finishing in Australia. Usually animals finished in a feedlot setting for the export market are fed for 150 days to 1500-1600 pounds. Feedlot animals for the domestic market are 80 days on feed and finished at 14 months of age, whereas those for the grassfed market are usually finished at 1250 pounds and 16-18 months of age.

That afternoon the group made their way west and visited Beefcorp Australia, a leading Wagyu beef producer. They have been breeding Wagyu cattle since 1991 and supply premium restaurants in Australia as well as export markets. The operation had the first 3 purebred calves in the country. There is a large genetic program involved including using an AI and embryo transfer program. They also DNA test all of their progeny, the F1-F3 are a Wagyu x Angus cross. They find the crossbreds do a lot better in general “doing” ability than the purebred Wagyu. When Beefcorp started in 1996 there was also a Wagyu x Holstein cross program. This cross was used to increase marbelling and help with frame size – they found Angus to go fat too easily. The cattle on the property are weaned at 6-7 months at 400 lbs. They are 20-22 months of age and 800 lbs before they are sent to the feedlot. Once they reach the feedlot they are fed for 400 and 500 days for the crossbred and purebred animals, respectively. The cattle are processed at 30-33 months and are scored on a 1-9 marbelling scale in Australia, a 1-12 scale in Japan. Beefcorp tends to result in a 7.3 score. Due to the long feeding period it costs \$3,000 to produce an animal (\$3.50-\$4.00 per day to feed), but are rewarded by receiving anywhere from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per animal sold.



Wagyu Cattle at Beefcorp



Te Mania Bulls

The group continued to travel west and another highlight was the visit to Te Mania Angus at Mortlake, Victoria. The operation has 1800 females (1060 cows and 400 heifers). This area generally receives 640 mm of rainfall, however due to the drought they have been reduced to around 600 mm. Pastures are once again ryegrass and clover based. Their fertilizer program runs at \$80/hectare which equals to \$200,000 per year. They also broadcast compost to area pastures (2600 hectares). During calving season, which is from August 1 to September 30 (Australia's seasons are opposite to that of North America's), they generally have 67 calves per day which equates to 340 per week. Each of those calves are caught on the quad, tagged with RFID tags and weighed. All of the data that is collected from the operation is collated and sent to Melbourne where their clients are then able to capture this data in a cost effective way.

**Te Mania Cows**

The last featured visit might have been the most unique of all. In Warrnambool, Victoria, the group was given a tour of The Midfield Group's slaughter and processing plant. Colin McKenna, who started as a sheep shearer and built this company (100% family owned) from the ground up, allowed us to have a first class tour of the entire beef and sheep processing facility. It is the largest processor in Southern Australia, where they will have the capacity to have 2,100 cattle go through the facility each day when the new beef chain is implemented in March 2015. Midfield also has the capacity to do 10,000 lambs per day. They are involved mainly in the export market and they invest in their local producers for succession purposes. The livestock come from all areas of Australia, even from 6,000km away and have 3,400 farmers that are directly linked to the facility. In addition to the processing facility, the family operates a 2,000 cow dairy, with the plan to expand to 3,000 shortly. They also have ryegrass/clover pastures and do annual crop forage brassicas for grazing rotations. They generally have a stocking rate of 1 animal to 1-1.5 acres. During this visit we were able to visit the McKenna's home where the group was treated to a wonderful lunch and stunning garden views.

This agricultural tour was one of a kind and was enjoyable and eye opening. A country that is a 13.5 hour plane ride from Los Angeles might seem like there would be no similarities to an area like the Peace Regions of Alberta and British Columbia. However, what the group found was that producers around the world are similar in their goals and have a love for what they do!

**Midfield Gardens****Welcome Dinner****Waygu Pasture at Beefcorp**

*Thanks to Morgan Hobin for all the great photos!*

**PCBFA is pleased to announce the addition of our new  
Cropping Program!**  
*by Kaitlin MacLachlan*

The goal of this new program is to fill an extension gap that has become prevalent in the Central Peace region. We will be extending this new program to grain producers in areas not already receiving crops applied research and extension, including; MD of Fairview, Clear Hills County, MD of Peace, Saddle Hills County, MD of Spirit River, and Birch Hills County. Our cropping program will be administered out of the Fairview Office by our new Crop Program Coordinator, Kaitlin McLachlan. We are also going to be partnering with other organizations and experts in the region such as NPARA out of Manning and Calvin Yoder as we develop and administer the program.

As the cropping program is in the developing stages, there will be a large focus on extension events to reach our area growers, building the new program, and identifying the needs of grain and oilseed producers in the area. Research wise, we are planning to start small, and allow the program to grow as we go along. Much of the programming will complement work that PCBFA already has underway, such as trials to improve soil health. Our environmental program will also grow to include area grain producers and extend services such as Environmental Farm Plan and Growing Forward 2 support.



*Photo Credit: Stacy Pritchard*



*Photo Credit: www.deere.com*

Upcoming events under the program include; Peace Country Crop Production Workshop on February 12th in Spirit River, a Sprayer and Fertilizer Technology Workshop in Eaglesham in late March with Tom Wolf, and a Summer Crop Tour in August.

The coming year will be very exciting for PCBFA, and we are looking forward to developing our cropping program! We are actively seeking producer input and suggestions, so if you have any ideas please contact Kaitlin at (780) 835-6799, or [kmclachlan@gprc.ab.ca](mailto:kmclachlan@gprc.ab.ca)

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**Find us online!**  
[www.peacecountrybeef.ca](http://www.peacecountrybeef.ca)

 @pcbfa  
@pcbfa\_crop

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pcbfa/>



**Almost 25,000**  
Canadian farm operators are  
**under the age of 35.**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture 2011  
Photo credit: Kristjan Hebert



## Land Acquisition & Planning for the Future

Fred Mertz from  
*Farming for Freedom*

Learn how to address the growing concern of young farmers accessing land and tax planning for farm businesses.

**Peace Country Classic**

March 13, 2015

Evergreen Park,  
Grande Prairie

9:45am-11:45am  
Meeting Room at  
the Tec Centre

Free to Attend



## 2015 Annual General Meeting

DUNVEGAN MOTOR INN, FAIRVIEW, AB

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2015

4:30PM REGISTRATION

5PM AGM, 6PM SUPPER

GUEST SPEAKER: *BEEF MARKET OUTLOOK*

9PM LIVE MUSIC & DANCING

TO THE *MUSIC DOCTORS*

**\$55/PERSON OR \$75/FARM PAIR**

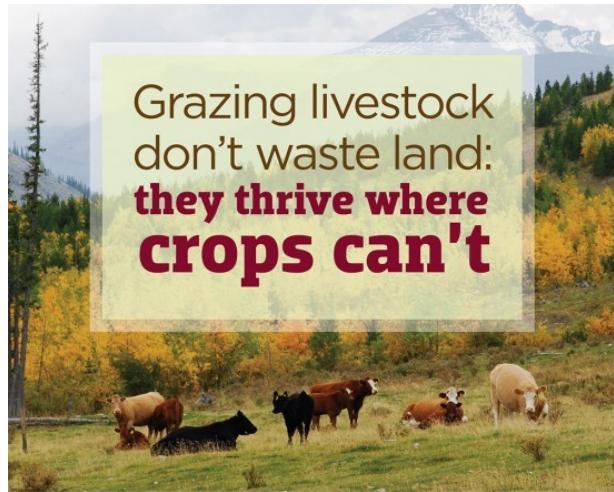
*\*INCLUDES 2015 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP\**

**RSVP TO STACY AT 780-835-6799**

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Grazing livestock  
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**they thrive where  
crops can't**



Source: Ontario Farm Animal Council



## Managing Cold Stress in Beef Cattle

by Stacy Pritchard

As beef producers, we spend the whole summer working to get cows bred, and now, in order to produce that calf, we need to get those cows through the winter. Winter provides a whole new set of challenges for the cow-calf producer to manage; snow, miserably cold temperatures often combined with wind that produces this wonderful concept of “windchill”, and most importantly, what we feed our live-stock *stops growing*. Not only do all of these challenges combine in the same season, but the energy requirements of pregnant beef cattle increase as winter progresses! This is the Big Picture when it comes to winter herd management, but there are a number of smaller details to consider.



*Photo Credit: foodsafetynews.com*

Cattle, like all species, produce optimally when within their thermoneutral zone; when conditions are above or below the temperatures that define this zone, cattle experience physiological changes to help them adapt and deal with these extreme temperatures. Since we’re talking about cold stress, we’ll stick to the lower limit of the thermoneutral zone, which, for cattle with their winter coats is -8°C. Once the thermostat drops below this, cattle experience cold stress (Ontario Factsheet – Jan 2007). In the Peace Region, temperatures on average are below -5 from November to March ([www.climate-charts.com](http://www.climate-charts.com)), that’s 5 months of the year we can expect our cattle to be experiencing cold stress.

Cattle acclimatize to changing temperatures by using both behavioural and physiological adaptations. Behavioural adaptations include seeking shelter and changing their feeding behaviour. Physiological adaptations include changes in their metabolic rate which increases to produce more heat. Blood flow is used to protect vital organs, leaving teats, ears and testes susceptible to frostbite. Feed intake increases, and changes in their hair coat provide more insulation.

Successful winter management will result in cows that maintain body condition, which will affect both this year’s calf crop by producing a calf with a healthy birth weight, and having the ability to produce enough milk to raise that calf. A Body Condition Score (BCS) of 3 at time of calving will also result in the cow returning to estrus sooner than cows with lower BCS and have our herds rebred earlier in the breeding season ([www.animalrangeextension.montana.edu](http://www.animalrangeextension.montana.edu)). Animals that lose condition over the winter and calve with a lower BCS tend to produce lower birth weight calves, have more difficulty producing milk for those calves, and are slower to return to estrus, resulting in a later rebreeding date, and later calving date next year.

Wind Chill Effects for Cattle with Winter Coats									
Wind	Air Temperature (°C)								
	-18	-15	-12	-9	-7	-4	-1	+2	+4
0	-18	-15	-12	-9	-7	-4	-1	+2	+4
8	-21	-18	-16	-13	-11	-8	-5	-2	+1
16	-24	-21	-18	-16	-13	-11	-8	-5	-2
24	-26	-23	-21	-18	-16	-13	-10	-7	-4
32	-29	-26	-23	-21	-18	-16	-13	-10	-7

<sup>1</sup> Assumes that hair coat is dry and clean.

<sup>2</sup> For example, when air temperature is -18°C and wind speed is 24kph, the effective temperature experienced by the animal is the equivalent of a still air temperature of -24°C.

From: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs. Cold Stress in Cows Factsheet 07-001

Cattle are affected by wind as well as temperature, the two combine to produce the effective temperature, or “what it feels like”. We get a windchill because a cold wind will draw heat away from an animal faster than still air at the same temperature. Now, cattle have a hair coat, so when the coat is dry and clean, this can provide some insulation and protection from the cold and wind. When hair is wet or dirty (think mud), this insulative effect is drastically reduced. By providing wind shelter in the form of windbreaks (20% porosity), bush or really any way for animals to get out of the wind, this will reduce the effect the wind has on the effective temperature our cattle feel, which will reduce their cold stress. Bedding cows well will help to keep them clean and dry, and will help them deal with cold stress.

Energy requirements of cattle increase by 2% for every degree below the lower critical limit (-8°C), this extra energy is needed to keep warm as the animal adapts to lower temperatures (Ontario Factsheet – 2007). In order to meet the increased energy demand, cattle increase their feed intake, however rumen capacity is a limiting factor to the amount of feed a cow can consume.

Therefore, when cattle are experiencing severe cold stress, there are typically 2 outcomes: cows have access to high quality feed and can meet their requirements and maintain their Body Condition Score (BCS) or they do not have access to higher quality feed and lose BCS because they can't consume enough of the lower quality feed to meet their energy requirements. So, by providing higher quality feed when the temperature drops, we can ensure our cattle can eat enough to meet their requirements.



*Photo credit: PCBFA*

The amount of feed a cow can consume decreases with progressing pregnancy, as the growing calf compresses the rumen, this further increase our need to provide late gestation with high quality feed, and supplementation, to ensure that she doesn't lose condition during the last trimester. In addition, feeding an ionophore like Rumensin can help to increase feed utilization. This means that the feed we provide our animals will be used to more of its potential. This is an available option than could be used as energy requirements increase or to offset the use of lower quality feed. However, it should be noted that the use of ionophores in winter feeding management is not a replacement for good quality feed.

We can help our cows maintain their feed intake by ensuring they have a reliable water source, be it snow or water, reliable is the key. If water is limited because the snow has crusted over, or the trough has frozen, or any number of other problems, feed intake can decrease and energy requirements cannot be met if cattle aren't eating. Any type of watering system should be monitored closely in the winter to ensure water is always available.

Splitting our herds into different feeding groups allows producers to manage animals with different nutritional requirements separately. The condition of the animals we are feeding plays a large role in their energy requirements. By dividing animals into feeding groups based on their requirements we can match the requirements of the cow to the available feed, therefore the feed value is important know when developing rations.

There are 3 groups that are in every cowherd:

**Group 1 – Mature Cows in Good Condition**

- \* Average hay or bale/swath grazing are appropriate
  - \* supplement in extreme weather

**Group 2 – Bred Replacement Heifers & 2<sup>nd</sup> Calf Heifers**

- \* Don't compete effectively for feed with mature cows
- \* Good quality hay or bale/swath grazing with supplementation to meet requirements for growth and development
  - \* these animals are still growing and gaining body weight as well as developing a fetus

**Group 3 – Thin & Old Cows**

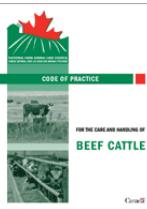
- \* These cows will need extra energy to get through the winter



*Photo credit agweb.com*

If it is not possible to feed 3 separate groups, Groups 2 & 3 could be fed together, or another option is to cull the old and thin cows instead of feeding them over the winter. All groups should be provided with salt and mineral. By dividing the herd into feeding groups, we can more effectively manage the feed we have available; this strategy is especially useful in years with limited feed or feed of poor quality by being able to supplement the animals that need supplementation more directly.

We might not be able to control the weather, but we can control we manage our animals in the winter to ensure they get through the winter healthy and without losing condition. As we can see, providing shelter and bedding in addition feeding practices are keys to winter herd management. Another key to winter management is knowing the feed value of the feedstuffs we are using.



Its easy to get focused on the small details of wintering our herds. By looking at the Big Picture of making sure our cows meet their nutrient requirements during a period where the elements combine to make this difficult, we can see how all the aspects of our winter management contribute to the overall success of our herd.

For more information on Animal Welfare for your herd, please see the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle—2013*.

## Best Management Practices, Variable Rate Technology, and Getting the Most Out of Your Nutrient Inputs

by Kaitlin McLachlan

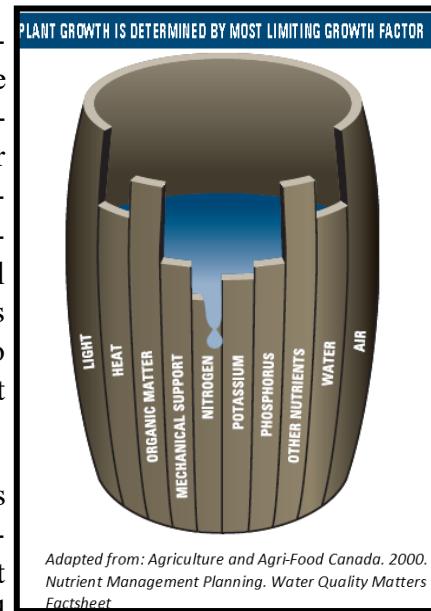
With #Plant15 quickly approaching, have you had a look at your fertilizer management practices and how to get the most bang out of your buck to have a bigger number on your bottom line?

One of the biggest questions we ask ourselves is how much fertilizer should we book? Crop nutrients are one of the biggest costs per acre that we have. So how do recommended management practices save us money without costing yield? A quick Google search of on-farm nutrient management practices will bring up several recommendations for producers to reduce their impacts on the environment. At a first glance, these recommendations may not seem to have much in the way of optimizing yield and improving profitability on our cropping operations. Not only that, but they may obviously not be the correct fit for your farm. The thing about beneficial management practices is that they are meant to be adapted to your operation. The primary goal of fertilizer beneficial management practices is to match the crop requirements and the fertilizer supply to optimize nutrient uptake by the crop and minimize the nutrient loss.

Beneficial management practices (BMP's) range from simple, low-tech solutions such as crop rotations to high -tech variable rate technology and controlled traffic farming options. While they may focus on environmental impacts, proper implementation of these practices can help save input costs as well. Some examples of BMP's that we can adapt to our operations are nutrient management planning, and 4R Nutrient Stewardship.

Nutrient management planning is the process of optimizing yield while minimizing input costs, as well as minimizing soil and water contamination due to runoff. This also involves target setting and planning – targeting a realistic yield and getting soil tested allows one to choose the correct fertilizer blend to reach your target. This is very important, as plant growth is determined by the most limited growth factor. The barrel diagram to the left represents this concept. If one part of the barrel is lacking, the water level will never be able to be higher than the lowest point in the barrel. If all the parts of the barrel are the same height, then there is no one limiting factor, and no extra factors that are being wasted. With a balanced nutrient plan, nutrient wastage is minimized.

Once you have a balanced nutrient plan, it's important to get those nutrients where they need to be so they can be used by the plant. One way to determine if your nutrient delivery is sufficient, ask yourself this; did the plant have the right source of nutrient at the right rate, at the optimal time and place? This is the basic premise behind 4R Nutrient Stewardship Initiative. By ensuring that crop nutrients are coming from the right source, right rate, right time and right place, we see improved yield, greater profit and increased stewardship of the land and water. For more information on the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Initiative, visit their website: [www.nutrientstewardship.com](http://www.nutrientstewardship.com).



Adapted from: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2000. Nutrient Management Planning. Water Quality Matters Factsheet

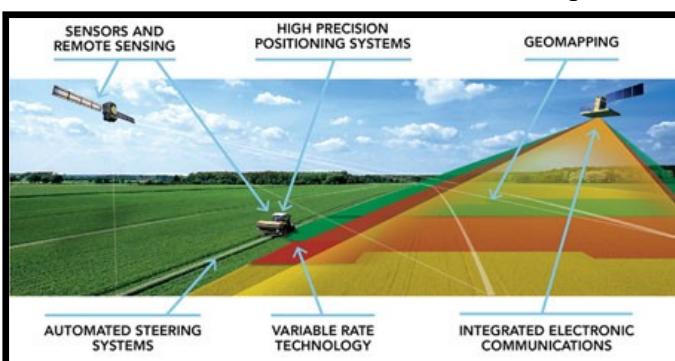
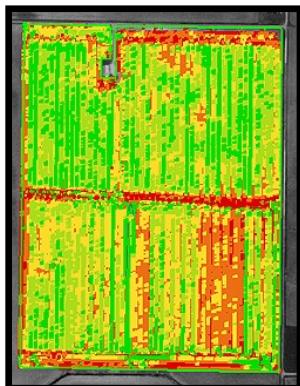


Image from CEMA, Precision Farming: Key technologies & concepts, <http://www.cema-agri.org/page/precision-farming-key-technologies-concepts>

So how can we adopt practices that not only mitigate nutrient runoff, but help out our pocketbooks by keeping fertilizer where it needs to be? This is where precision agriculture – namely Variable Rate Technology (VRT) comes in. The precision approach to farming can be intimidating with the need for new technology, mapping systems, sensors, monitors and other fairly large expenditures. However, these expenditures do not all need to happen at once.

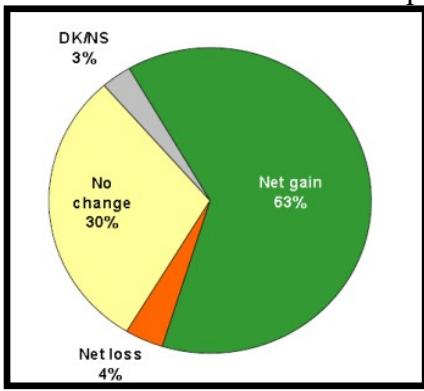


Yield map adapted from SST Data Management,  
www.sstdevgroup.com

To ensure that precision agriculture will be a good fit for your farm, records are very important. If you are interested in giving Variable Rate Technology a try, it is important to know what you are starting with. Mike Bevans, of the Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development AgTech office in Lethbridge says, "When you try a VRT approach, it's important to have the ability to compare what was done and the results from the period before the practice change to the period after the practice change. Records are the only way to do that. Otherwise, when you see a result such as higher yield, you don't know if it was due to VRT or some other factor. Good records also help you have a better prescription map that is likely to be more effective." To the left is a standard yield map. These maps are generated from aerial photos layered with GPS yield data off of your combine. These maps can be compared year after year to see on paper any change in yield. To the right is a soil map. These maps are generated similarly, only instead of combine data, they use GPS marked soil test data. From these types of maps, prescription maps can also be made.

Prescription maps are maps that break-down soil and nutrient variability in a field. These prescription maps can then be uploaded into a controller in the tractor cab when seeding. The controller can then adjust the seeding and fertilizer rates and depths based on the uploaded prescription map. It also records the application on its own map, so you can see how application rates varied across the field. With the precision approach, we can get the correct amount of nutrient where we need it, with the correct rate. If the weather permits, we should be able to optimize yield.

Application can also be done on-the-fly. This can be done by mounting sensor mechanisms, such as GreenSeekers on equipment, or using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) or drones with cameras and sensors fixed to them. These UAV's and drones can be helpful in scouting fields, saving time by virtually eliminating the need to walk the field. Some UAV's even have the capability to detect weeds, diseases, and even create prescription maps.



Graph from Crop Nutrients Council, Net Economic Impact of Variable Rate Fertilization,  
[http://www.cropnutrientscouncil.ca/\\_documents/pdf/CNC\\_final\\_variablerate.pdf](http://www.cropnutrientscouncil.ca/_documents/pdf/CNC_final_variablerate.pdf)

While Variable Rate Technology is relatively new to the western Canadian agriculture scene, there has been very few conclusive economic studies done to measure the impact of switching to VRT. In a survey conducted by the Crop Nutrients Council where they surveyed 1000 western Canadian farmers, they found that close to two thirds of producers interviewed felt that they had experienced a net economic gain by making the switch to Variable Rate Technology. VRT, as noted previously, is very expensive to get operational. However, as found by the Crop Nutrient Council's survey, the net economic gain over time should be substantial. By getting the correct nutrient in the correct place, we are mitigating the over application of fertilizer. If we are not over applying, the crop will use the fertilizer at an optimal rate, which will minimize nutrient loss due to runoff and erosion.

If we as agricultural producers can successfully adopt these practices, not only are we saving money in the long-run, but we are also helping to mitigate our impact on the environment and riparian areas. Remember, although most BMP's do not directly state that they can save us some money, doesn't mean that they won't. By having more control over our nutrient placement and rate, we are saving money and helping the environment.



## WCCCS: Determining Productivity and its Link to Profitability

*by Albert Kuipers – Grey Wooded Forage Association*



In January 2014 a meeting was convened during the Saskatchewan Beef Industry Conference to discuss producers' claims that they had moved their calving start date to May and had seen reduced conception rates. Kathy Larson with the Western Beef Development Centre was part of that meeting because of her experience collecting production data from producers when calculating cost of production.

WBDC's cost of production study has a very small sample size (typically 20-30 producers) and yes, some production data is collected, but details on breeding season start and end dates, cow:bull ratios, and number of open cows are not. The reality is we do not have current benchmarks on cow-calf productivity. So when producers raise questions about reduced conception rates related to time of calving, the benchmarks we have are 16 years old and the industry has changed significantly since then.

But that is about to change with the resurrection of a study last conducted in Alberta in 1998.

The Western Canadian Cow-Calf (WCCC) Survey is being rolled out across western Canada this fall, starting with the provincial cattle association district meetings from British Columbia to Manitoba. The survey was developed through a joint effort between the Provincial Producer Associations, the Provincial Ministries of Agriculture, Canfax, the Beef Cattle Research Council and the Western Beef Development Centre. This survey is being handed out at District meetings, in addition to many agriculture and cattle events and conferences across Western Canada.

The questions have been revamped and expanded somewhat from the 1998 survey, but for the most part we are still asking the same questions on productivity and management practices of cow-calf producers. Questions like:

- What were your start and end dates for your 2013 breeding season?
- How many cows calved on your operation in 2014?
- How many 2014-born calves were weaned?
- When do you provide trace mineral to your cows?
- Do you creep feed?
- Do you pregnancy check?



From the survey responses we can generate production performance measures for the industry. From the 1998 survey we learned that the average cow:bull ratio was 26:1, the average wean weight was 576 lb, the average breeding season length was 93 d, and the average conception rate was 95.6%. We also learned that on average 48% of cows calved in the first 21d of the calving season, that 30% of operations quality tested their forage, and that less than 50% of operations pregnancy checked. That was 16 years ago, how do you think we fair now?

Knowing production performance benchmarks is important. Management practices influence productivity and productivity influences profitability. Increasing productivity through a management practice change can lead to increases in the total pounds of calf weaned on an operation which increases profitability.

Results from the WCCC survey will identify where we have strengths and where we can make improvements on our production practices and performance measures. We can also use the survey findings to guide research and extension to improve the productivity and profitability of cow-calf producers.

The survey is 58 questions long and should take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete. There is also an online version of the survey on Western Beef's website: [www.wbdc.sk.ca/wcccs.htm](http://www.wbdc.sk.ca/wcccs.htm). The website also has additional information about the WCCC survey. For those completing hard copy or paper surveys, paid postage labels are included with the survey or available for download from the WBDC website.

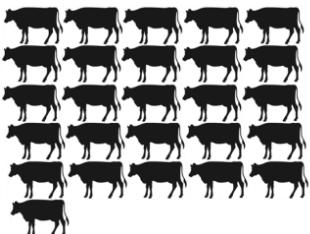
On the last page of the survey, survey respondents can ask to receive a complimentary report summarizing their production measures based on their survey responses. This allows for comparison with the benchmarks. The production benchmarks will be summarized by region, province and herd size and will be ready for sharing in Spring 2015.

Over 1,700 producers participated in the 1998 survey. With a bit of friendly competition between the provinces, we should easily surpass that number. Which province's producers will get the bragging rights on highest conception rate or highest wean rate? Fill out the survey to help us find out. If you have any questions about the survey, provincial contacts:

<b>British Columbia</b>	<b>Alberta</b>	<b>Saskatchewan</b>	<b>Manitoba</b>
<b>Clint Ellison</b> BC Ministry of Agriculture Ph: 250-260-4613 <a href="mailto:clint.ellison@gov.bc.ca">clint.ellison@gov.bc.ca</a>	<b>Barry Yaremcio</b> Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development Ph: 403-742-7926 <a href="mailto:barry.yaremcio@gov.ab.ca">barry.yaremcio@gov.ab.ca</a>	<b>Kathy Larson</b> Western Beef Development Centre Ph: 306-930-9354 <a href="mailto:klarson.wbdc@pami.ca">klarson.wbdc@pami.ca</a>	<b>Ben Hamm</b> Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Ph: 204-425-5050 <a href="mailto:benjamin.hamm@gov.mb.ca">benjamin.hamm@gov.mb.ca</a>

Or visit [www.wbdc.sk.ca/wcccs.htm](http://www.wbdc.sk.ca/wcccs.htm)

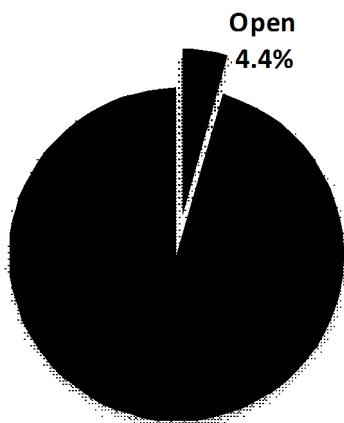
## 1998 Productivity Survey Findings



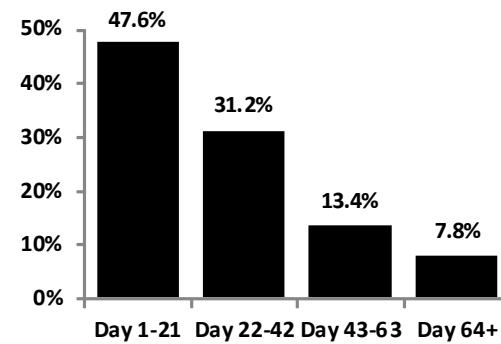
**Avg. cow-to-bull ratio: 26:1**



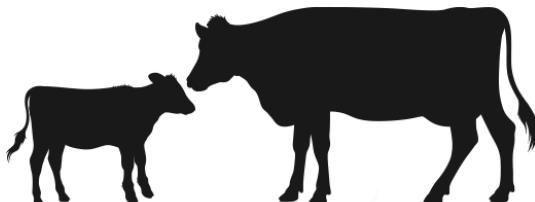
**Avg. breeding season length: 93 days**



**Avg. Conception Rate: 95.6%**  
*{# Females Bred per # Females exposed}*



**Avg. Calving Distribution**  
*{% Females Calved every 21 d of Calving Season}*



**Avg. Wean Rate: 85.6%**  
*{# Calves weaned per # Cows exposed}*



**Avg. lbs Weaned per Cow Exposed: 505 lb**

Source: 1998 Alberta Beef Herd Analysis Survey, 1997 Breeding to 1998 Weaning

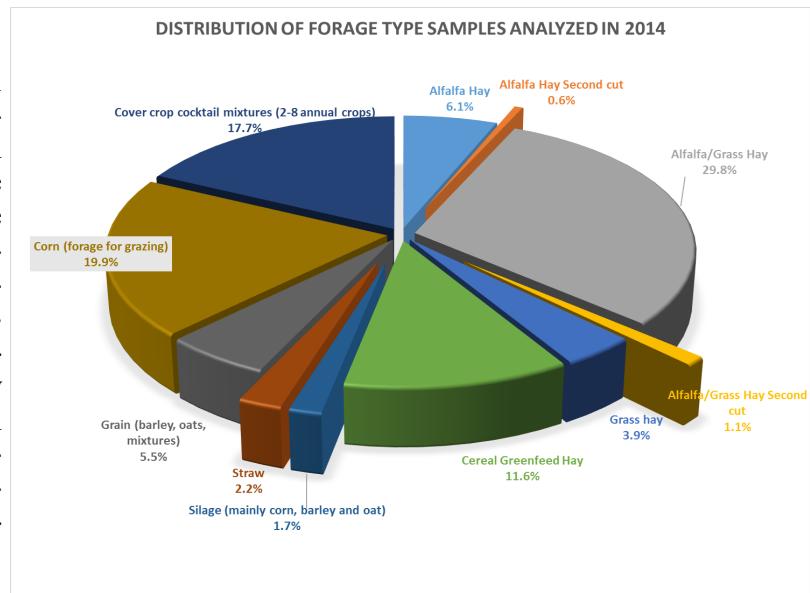
## 2014 Forage/Feed Quality Survey Summary

By Akim Omokanye, P.C.B.F.A.

The quality of forage is dependent on several factors including: management of the soil, nutrient composition, seeding rates, timing of cutting, raking and bailing, and storage of the product (hay, haylage and silage). In parts of the Peace Country (PC) region, perennial forages are normally harvested in July for hay, while annual crops are harvested from July to September, usually as greenfeed and silage as well as for swath grazing. The P.C.B.F.A services to producers include feed testing, analysis and interpretation of results. This report looks at the results of 2014 forage samples from producers farms in part of the PC region. The results are discussed in relation to the nutrient requirements of a mature beef cattle.

### Methods

During the summer and fall of 2014, a total 181 samples of harvested forage/grain materials were tested for quality for producers in parts PC region of Alberta. A few of these samples came from field scale trials (e.g. silage and corn grazing) with producers. The recommended forage sampling procedure was followed by producers in taking samples for quality test. Most of the feed samples were analyzed by Central Testing Laboratory (Winnipeg, Manitoba) and a few forage corn samples was analyzed by Agri-Food Laboratories Inc. (Guelph, Ontario) using standard laboratory procedures for wet chemistry or Near-infrared reflectance (NIR) spectroscopy.



The samples collected were grouped by feed type into the following 11 groups: Grass hay (7), Alfalfa/Grass hay (54), 2<sup>nd</sup> cut Alfalfa/Grass hay (2), Alfalfa hay (11), Forage grass/cereal straw (4), Greenfeed (21), Grain (10), Cover crop cocktail mixtures (32), Corn forage (36), Silage (3) and 2<sup>nd</sup> cut Alfalfa Hay (1). About 30% of the samples analyzed consisted of Alfalfa/Grass Hay, followed by corn forage with 20% and then cover crop cocktail mixtures with 18% (see pie chart).

### Results

Table 1 shows the range of values (high & low) and averages for protein (crude protein, CP), calcium (Ca), phosphorus (P), Ca to P ratio (Ca:P), magnesium (Mg), potassium (K), sodium (Na) and energy (total digestible nutrients, TDN) for each feed type tested.

#### Protein

The beef cow rule of thumb with protein is 7-9-11, which means an average mature beef cow requires a ration with CP of 7% in mid pregnancy, 9% in late pregnancy and 11% after calving. Looking at the average CP values in Table 1, six (Grain, 2<sup>nd</sup> cut Alfalfa hay, Cover crop mixture, 2<sup>nd</sup> cut Alfalfa/grass hay, Alfalfa hay and Alfalfa/grass hay) of the 11 feed types conveniently met the 7-11% CP for a mature beef cow as well as growing and finishing calves (which require 12-13% CP). The remainder (5) of the feed types (except for Straw), had adequate CP values for a cow in mid and late pregnancy. Generally, Straw fell short of meeting the CP requirements of any category of beef cattle. Producers can monitor protein (in terms of cow performance) by looking at the manure - high levels of undigested fibre in the manure indicate low protein.

Energy gives the ability to use the building blocks for growth and other productive purposes. Using total digestible nutrients (TDN) as a measure of energy, the rule of thumb is 55%-60%-65%. This rule says that for a mature beef cow to maintain her body condition score (BCS) through the winter, the ration must have a TDN energy reading of 55% in mid pregnancy, 60% in late pregnancy and 65% after calving. Looking at the average TDN values in Table 1, only Grain, Cover crop cocktail mixtures, Greenfeed and Corn forage conveniently met the 55-65% TDN required by all categories of a mature beef cow. Others only had adequate TDN for a dry gestating cow (mid and late pregnancy).

Minerals are essential for the proper functioning of the animal. A problem arises when the feed does not supply enough to meet the animal's requirements. This may occur because the feed is low in mineral, the availability of the mineral is low or another mineral or nutrient is interfering with the ability of the animal to absorb or utilize the mineral.

**Table 1. Range of values and averages for forages and grains harvested during 2014 for feeding beef cow**

Forage/Feed type		CP	Ca	P	Mg	K	Na	TDN	Ca:P
		% DM basis							
	High	13.4	0.79	0.20	0.60	1.81	0.04	61.0	3.95
Grass (7)	Average	10.3	0.61	0.16	0.23	1.48	0.02	57.2	3.81
	Low	9.27	0.23	0.13	0.11	1.16	0.01	52.8	1.77
	High	19.8	1.48	0.28	0.44	4.14	0.06	65.2	5.29
Alfalfa/Grass Hay (54)	Average	11.8	0.80	0.16	0.21	1.85	0.01	56.6	5.00
	Low	6.50	0.23	0.06	0.09	0.79	0.01	44.6	3.83
	High	14.9	1.43	0.15	0.20	1.70	0.10	56.1	9.53
2 <sup>nd</sup> cut Alfalfa/Grass Hay (2)	Average	12.5	1.16	0.13	0.19	1.60	0.01	51.4	8.92
	Low	10.1	0.89	0.11	0.18	1.50	0.10	46.8	8.09
	High	14.2	1.59	0.19	0.28	2.12	0.05	57.7	8.37
Alfalfa Hay (11)	Average	12.0	0.99	0.14	0.21	1.51	0.02	53.0	7.07
	Low	7.61	0.17	0.07	0.07	0.64	0.01	46.6	2.43
	High	6.52	0.31	0.09	0.15	2.28	0.30	60.8	3.44
Straw (4)	Average	5.76	0.23	0.08	0.10	1.33	0.09	56.8	2.88
	Low	4.89	0.18	0.06	0.07	0.86	0.01	52.5	3.00
	High	14.3	0.56	0.37	0.52	3.38	0.47	70.3	1.51
Greenfeed (21)	Average	10.7	0.29	0.19	0.21	1.60	0.18	67.2	1.53
	Low	6.30	0.11	0.11	0.07	0.35	0.01	55.9	1.00
Grain (10)	High	23.0	0.48	0.56	0.32	2.46	0.09	84.9	0.86
	Average	13.6	0.14	0.34	0.15	0.80	0.02	75.5	0.41
	Low	7.99	0.03	0.18	0.11	0.45	0.01	55.8	0.17
	High	19.1	1.49	0.34	0.54	3.37	0.26	74.8	4.38
Cover crop cocktail mixtures (32)	Average	12.9	0.82	0.20	0.29	1.77	0.10	67.4	4.10
	Low	6.80	0.17	0.13	0.11	0.70	0.01	58.7	1.31
	High	12.0	0.33	0.23	0.32	1.71	0.03	70.7	1.43
Corn forage (36)	Average	9.14	0.25	0.19	0.21	1.24	0.01	65.3	1.32
	Low	7.16	0.16	0.11	0.11	0.56	0.01	59.1	1.45
	High	11.8	1.35	0.30	0.25	2.03	0.09	65.8	4.50
Silage (3)	Average	9.24	0.64	0.24	0.21	1.56	0.04	61.2	2.67
	Low	7.39	0.19	0.18	0.17	1.01	0.01	56.7	1.06
2 <sup>nd</sup> cut Alfalfa Hay (1)		13.1	1.20	0.18	0.29	1.99	0.02	56.0	6.67
<i>Significant at P&lt;0.05</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>LSD<sub>0.05</sub></i>		28.7	0.85	0.14	0.23	1.69	0.22	13.2	5.72

The results from this survey (Table 1) show that most forage/feed types are good sources of calcium, although some, like cereal forages (Greenfeed) and Corn forage, are marginal to low in this mineral. Grain, on the other hand, is a poor source of calcium. The average forage Ca content varied from 0.14% for Grain to 1.16% for 2nd cut Alfalfa/Grass hay (Table 1). Cover crop cocktail mixtures as well as forage types which had alfalfa appeared to have some positive effects on forage Ca content. Straw, Greenfeed, Grain and Corn forage did not have sufficient Ca for a mature beef cow.

The average P varied from 0.08% P for Straw to 0.34% P for Grain (Table 1). A mature beef cow requires 0.16-0.26% P depending on its physiological state, an indication that in this survey only Grain had adequate P required by a mature beef cow.

The resulting average Ca/P ratios in the present study varied from 0.41:1 for Grain to 8.92:1 for 2nd cut Alfalfa/Grass Hay (Table 1). The Ca/P ratio for a mature beef cow should be within the range of 2:1 and 7:1, assuming actual required grams of each are adequate. Ratios outside this range need to be addressed using feed blends or commercial minerals. With the exceptions of Greenfeed, Grain, Corn forage and 2nd cut Alfalfa/Grass Hay, which were either below 2:1 or above 7:1, all the other forage/feed types tested in the survey were well within the suggested range of 2:1 and 7:1 of Ca:P for a mature beef cow.

The Mg requirements for a mature beef cow vary from 0.12% Mg for a cow in mid and late pregnancy to 0.20% Mg for a nursing cow. In this survey, only Straw and Grain fell short of meeting these values (0.12-0.20% Mg).

All forage/feed types examined in this survey exceeded the K requirements of 0.6-0.7% K. Only Greenfeed, Cover crop cocktail mixtures and Straw had adequate Na for a mature beef cow, which requires 0.06-0.10% Na depending on its physiological state.

Cows in good body condition can be fed poorer quality hay or a straw-grain ration for most of the gestation period. This program could provide significant savings over the winter feeding period. Mixing straw with medium to good quality hay, grain and in some situations, a protein supplement to provide a balanced ration is possible. The nutritional quality of straw can vary greatly. Testing is necessary to establish the quality of any straw. The voluntary consumption of straw is directly related to the fibre component in the straw. Cows have a higher voluntary intake of barley and oat straw over wheat straw. Though canola straw was not tested in the present forage/feed test survey, canola straw is a feed that is gaining popularity for use as part of a pregnant cow ration in some parts of Alberta. Cows are able to consume a limited amount of straw per day without adversely affecting total feed intake. A cow should not be expected to consume straw at rates higher than 1.25 to 1.5 per cent of body weight per day. When feeding straw at higher levels, the daily feeding of additional grain and a protein supplement are required.

### **Conclusion**

In the present survey, only Grain, Cover crop cocktail mixtures, Greenfeed, Silage and Corn forage conveniently met the TDN required by all categories of a mature beef cow. For other forage/feed types, that fell short of TDN requirements some cereal grains (e.g. oats) would be needed to address the energy shortfall particularly under cold stress. In this survey, only Cover crop cocktail mixtures had sufficient Ca, Mg, K and Na (but fell short of P for a nursing cow) for a mature beef cow. Supplemental minerals would therefore be needed in a free-choice mineral mix or force-fed in the total mixed ration when feeding any of the forage types tested here. Producers are encouraged to test their forages in order to determine the amount of supplemental feed required to provide adequate nutrition for their livestock prior to the start of your winter feeding program.

**Don't forget that your PCBFA Membership entitles you to 2 FREE feed samples every year!**

## Highlights From the Western Canadian Grazing Conference

by Stacy Pritchard

The 2014 Western Canadian Grazing Conference was hosted by ARECA from Dec 9-11 in Edmonton. The theme this year was *Going Beyond Sustainability*, because producers want to be more than sustainable by improving soil health and productivity and biodiversity while increasing their profit margins and the environment. The WCGC had something for everyone, with one of the main focuses being on soil health. This year there were 270 attendees coming from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and consisted of producers, industry representatives and members from the research community. There was a great deal of information shared with new ideas brought forward and old ideas reinforced. The response of the event has been overwhelmingly positive and provided everyone with an incredible networking opportunity. There were a number of Peace Country producers make the trip to Edmonton, including past and present board members. I know the PCBFA staff enjoyed themselves and came out with new knowledge and new ideas for the coming year.

The week started with an evening of mingling, networking and visiting the tradeshow. The first full day began with Judith Schwartz's keynote address "*Cows Save the Planet.*" Judith is a journalist and author and she talked about her work looking at soil health and the environment from an outsider's perspective. We learned that because of the way land has been conventionally farmed, much of the Carbon that was in the soil, is now in the air and she spoke of her travels across the US, as well as to Africa where she saw that simple management practices can drastically alter soil. She talked about Christine Jones' work (who we saw in Rycroft in November 2014) and how photosynthesis by plants draws carbon back into the soil. Grasses are the most efficient photosynthesizers and grazers (ie cows) keep grasses growing and keep them active at the roots and keep them drawing down carbon. This presentation re-emphasized the information surrounding land management that PCBFA members have recently gained from our events with Christine Jones and Gabe Brown. One statement that I think summarizes Judith's keynote is "ruminants and grasslands evolved together, so that the land needs the animals in the same way as animals need the land, and that land can be undergrazed as well as overgrazed."



**Sainfoin**

Photo credit: <http://sainfoin.eu>

Next, we were able to breakout into smaller sessions. The topics on Day 1 were *Grazing Sainfoin, Alfalfa, Legume Pastures and the Economics* with Dr. Alan Iwaasa, Grant Lastiwka and Dale Kaliel; *Pasture Rejuvenation and Weed Control in Mixed or Legume Pasture* with Duane McCartney and Graeme Finn; *The Value of Grazing Management* with Jim Bauer; and *Challenges of Grazing Sheep* with Vicky Horn from Tangle Ridge Ranch. Some of the highlights from these presentations were the presentation by Vicky Horn, talking about direct marketing from a producer's perspective and tips to get started.

Jim Bauer talked about how by managing grazing, we can feed our herds better, and this results in more even distribution of grazing, manure, urine and residual grass that feed the land and makes for more productive land. Alan, Grant & Dale's presentation

brought to light current information on the new AC-Mountainview Sainfoin variety and talked about how evaluating your whole system – grazing management, pasture mixes, AUD/ac and cost/AUD – can change for individual situations and knowing this information can provide producers with the information make changes to their management practices to increase their bottom line. Duane and Graeme talked about rejuvenation and weed control from both a research and producer perspective, about management practices that can help control weeds and rejuvenate tired stands. They touched on biological control of weeds and spoke about pasture rejuvenation methods without resorting to working fields up and reseeding them.

The afternoon wrapped up with the second keynote speaker of the day, Dr. Dianne Knight who presented *How Legumes Feed the Soil*. She talked about not all inoculants will work with all legume species, and how this can present a problem when we are not aware of this. Dianne also talked about how nitrogen fixation by the legumes in our stands peaks 2-3 years in a perennial legume stand. How long peak nitrogen fixation lasts depends on the legume species. Another interesting point Dianne made was how increasing the inoculation rate (double/triple inoculating) doesn't always result in more nodulation or more nitrogen fixation. There has also been some recent research into inoculating a tired perennial legume stand, this doesn't appear to be able to rejuvenate the nitrogen fixing ability of the stand, but it is an area of ongoing research. Dianne's topic tied directly into the soil health theme of the week.



One of the main highlights of the week was the banquet presentation by Greg Johnson – The Tornado Hunter. His amazing images of tornadoes were both terrifying and awe-inspiring. He showed us a year of tornadoes in photos, and with every image, we felt a different emotion. Taking photos that invoke an emotion is what Greg strives for, and he definitely accomplishes that. The evening was capped off with some amazing stories of the people and places Greg and his team have been over the years.

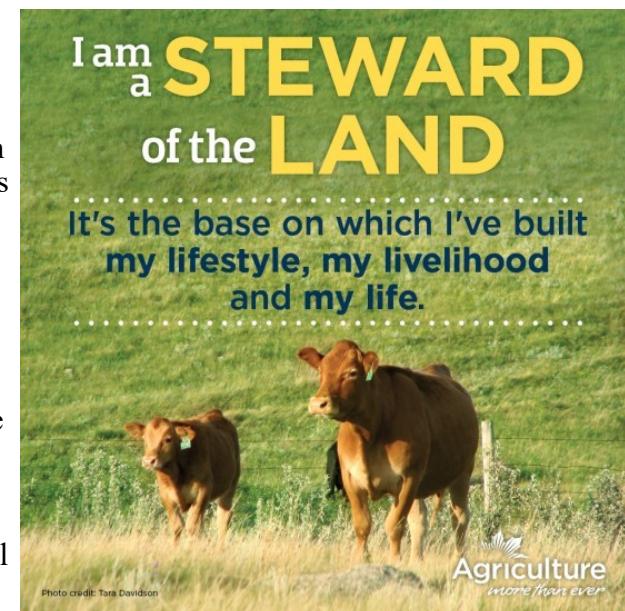
Day 2 started with Josh Dukart, who is a Certified Educator of Holistic Management from North Dakota, he started off the morning with a Keynote presentation, and followed up with breakout sessions as well. In both his keynote and breakout, he talked about asking questions in the right order. Rather than What, how and then, if ever why? We should be asking Why we are doing things first. When we ask Why first, we get to the root of what we are doing it, and how we should doing it to accomplish the Why. By doing this, we look at the Big Picture and can connect the dots between the social, economic and environmental aspects of agriculture.

Also on Day 2, Dylan Biggs did a Low-Stress Cattle Handling seminar, where we heard about his experiences that led to the way he now sees cattle handling. He talked about how most of the issues we have handling cattle come from human instinct that actually works against us when we're working cattle. Once we become aware of these instincts and tendencies, we can become much more effective handling our cattle. To move cattle efficiently and effectively, we need to be able to turn them left and right, speed them up, slow them down and stop them. All of which can be done with body position and by working with their natural flight zone. For example, often backing away from an animal can get it to stop, and moving side to side behind a single animal or a herd instead of pressing into it can move it forward without having animals hook out. These are just a few examples that Dylan provided from his 20 years of doing clinics and a lifetime of experience working cattle.

Dianne Westerlund from the Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) spoke about the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), which is an intergovernmental organization between Canada, Mexico and the United States, and was established under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). Right now the CEC is supporting a ranch pilot project encouraging beneficial management practices (BMP's). They recognize the link between cattle production and native rangeland conservation, and are working across the 3 countries with different projects targeting that link. In Alberta there are currently 4 projects underway: 1) Invasive Weed Control – Veno Ranches, Hanna; 2) Portable Windbreaks for Managing Winter Grazing of Native Pastures – Veno Ranches, Hanna and Dolen Ranches, Spirit River; 3) Portable Windbreaks for managing Winter Grazing Resources – Gould Ranches, Consort; 4) Enhancement of Winter Watering Resources – South 7 Ranches, Barrhead. All of these projects are under the CEC's *Catalyzing North American Grasslands Conservation and Sustainable Use Through Partnerships* initiative. Two of the ranches involved with these projects were represented, Marj Veno and Matthew Gould, and were able to give their experience with the projects they are involved with.

The last presentation of the event was a Producer Panel with Dr. Gabriel Ribeiro, Leon Specht and Art McElroy on *Transitioning Yearlings to Pasture*. Dr. Ribeiro talked about the science behind the changes that occur when transitioning from pen feeding to grass. He included strategies for managing animals, microbes and plants by using rotational grazing, as this allows producers to get the most out of their animals and land. Allowing the microbial populations in the rumen to adapt to the change in diet will also allow them to maximize gains when returning to pasture. Leon and Art both walked us through their typical management strategies for being successful on pasture. This was a great way to wrap up a wonderful week!

All in all, the 2014 Western Canadian Grazing Conference was a huge success with a great deal of knowledge taken away. We look forward to seeing you at the next one in 2016!



## High Prairie Riparian Action Team

by Kristy Wakeling—for HPRAT

### Who is the High Prairie Riparian Action Team (HPRAT) and what do we do?

The HPRAT is a not for profit group working to promote stewardship of riparian areas and educate local landowners and the public on the ecological importance of riparian areas. The HPRAT is a multi-stakeholder group made up of organizations and individuals that are passionate about riparian stewardship including: Cows and Fish, the Peace Country Beef and Forage Association, the MD of Big Lakes and Environment, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and individual landowners / operators. The group works together to implement ‘on the ground’ projects through partnerships with local landowners that assist in the protection and management of riparian ecosystems. Some examples of projects that have taken place in the High Prairie area include: cattle exclusion fencing along creeks, design and implementation of riparian grazing pastures, off site watering projects and riparian management planning.

### Promoting Riparian Education and Stewardship

What is a riparian ecosystem? It is an often overlooked, yet very important habitat that may exist on your property. The riparian area or riparian zone is the transitional area between the aquatic community in our rivers, lakes and wetlands and the terrestrial ecosystems which support upland vegetation like trees and grasses. The riparian area can often be overlooked as being overgrown or not useful because they can be heavily saturated with water, however, riparian areas can be some of the most important areas on your property supporting a wide variety of ecological processes. Riparian areas also provide a valuable service to our watersheds in assisting to maintain water quality through the filtration of surface water entering waterbodies and the promotion of healthy water quality parameters in the aquatic plants that filter surface water. These densely vegetated near-water habitats also provide a refuge and habitat for birds, fish and wildlife. With riparian area representing a very small percentage of habitats, riparian areas are more valuable than you think!



Producers gathered around a watering system at John Prinse's where several HPRAT projects have been completed. Photo credit: Monika Benoit

### High Prairie Riparian Action Team – 2014 Updates

Since the early 2000s the High Prairie Riparian Action Team (HPRAT) has been leading projects in the MD of Big Lakes community. This past year the HPRAT has taken on a project to review and assess the projects that have been completed with landowners over the past decade. The assessment looked at both the satisfaction of landowners who had completed projects as well as the ecological benefit the projects have provided. Through the initial phases of review the survey shows that past HPRAT projects have been a success. 90% of those who have completed projects stated that they had a noticeable benefit on their land or in their livestock production. Riparian health surveys were completed by Cows and Fish as a partner in assessing the ecological benefits of management of riparian ecosystems. Results of these surveys should be completed in early spring and we are looking forward to compiling the information we've collected to better serve and guide the community to better promote and enhance riparian health and water quality.

If you have a riparian project that you think you may want to partner with the HPRAT on please contact Kristy Wakeling at [Kristy.wakeling@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Kristy.wakeling@gov.ab.ca) for more information.

## Progress on Whole Farm Nutrient Management Projects (2012 - 2015)



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## Thank You To Our Industry Sponsors!

Gold



Silver



# Upcoming 2015 Events

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT
<i>Managing Information for Profitable Cow/Calf Production</i>	February 10	High Prairie	780-835-6799 780-523-4033
<i>Peace Country Crop Production Workshop</i>	February 12	Spirit River	780-835-6799
<i>PCBFA Annual General Meeting</i>	February 20	Fairview	780-835-6799
<i>Land Acquisition &amp; Planning for the Future at the Peace Country Classic</i>	March 13	Grande Prairie	780-835-6799 780-523-4033
Dugout Workshop	March 17	Valleyview	780-835-6799 780-523-4033
Sprayer Tech Workshop	Late March	Eaglesham	780-835-6799
EFP Workshop	Late March	Eureka River	780-835-6799

***Check Out Our Website For More Details***  
***[www.peacecountrybeef.ca](http://www.peacecountrybeef.ca)***



For more information about any of our field tours, workshops or project sites please call either Peace Country Beef and Forage Association Office.  
**Fairview 780-835-6799 or High Prairie 780-523-4033**

# Thank you to all our Funding Agencies.



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