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FORAGE COUNTRY

SUMMER 2012

New Extension & ASB Project Coordinator and Summer Technician for Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

Hi, I would like to introduce myself, Karlah Rudolph, as the new Extension and ASB Project Coordinator with Peace Country Beef and Forage Association, working out of the Provincial Building in High Prairie.

I grew up on mixed farm in southwestern Saskatchewan where my family continues to grow oilseeds, pulses and grains and manages a small cow-calf herd on tame pasture and remnant native prairie. I completed a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan in 2006. My studies there and a term position with the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority developed a skill set in managing range and riparian health and identifying useful stewardship practices that can be adopted on prairie farms.

A trip to Ethiopia in 2006 influenced me to pursue further education exploring global food systems. I developed a passion for emerging local food and direct marketing initiatives in prairie agriculture. It was with these interests in mind that I more recently completed a Master of the Environment through the Environmental Conservation Lab at the University of Manitoba. My program explored the exchange of healthy local foods between northern and southern regions in Manitoba in order to create alternative “flows” of food.

I am pleased to be working on the PCBFA team and I am looking forward to learning from farmers, ranchers and colleagues in addition to sharing my own knowledge and enthusiasm.



Hi Everyone! My name is Kaitlin McLachlan, and I'm the new Summer Student here at PCBFA!

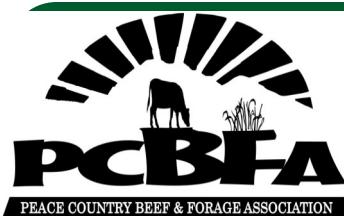
I grew up on a family cow/calf operation south of Fairview in the Dunvegan area where I still work with my parents Elden and Valerie and my brother Allan. Together, we run 120 head of commercial cows and background a couple hundred calves. My dad gave me my first Angus cross cow when I was 6, and my herd has grown exponentially over the years to a whopping 25 head of mainly commercial Angus and Shorthorn cross cows (who are currently putting me through College).

Growing up, I was heavily involved in local 4-H. I was a member of the Fairview 4-H Livestock Club for 9 years with market steer and beef female projects. Through 4-H, I attended many cattle shows, summer camps, and qualified as a provincial finalist in public speaking last April. Even though I am no longer a member, I still enjoy helping out with local 4-H events and project days.

I graduated from Fairview High School in 2011 and have recently finished my first year at Lakeland College in Vermilion, where I am enrolled in their Agribusiness diploma program majoring in Livestock Production & Marketing. In this program I have been learning about farm and financial management and how to apply it to beef production scenarios. Upon my completion at Lakeland next spring, I hope to move on to the University of Alberta to complete my Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics, and then return to the Peace Country to farm and stay involved with the beef industry.

I am looking forward to a great summer working, learning, and getting to know my fellow Peace regional beef producers!





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Kaitlin McLachlan, Summer Technician

Locations

Fairview Campus, Animal Sciences Building
780-835-6799
High Prairie Provincial Building
ARD/AFSC Office

780-523-4033

Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

“Forages & Beef; Partners in Profits”

“Whole-Farm Systems Analysis for Beef Cattle Production” and “Management of Environmental Responsibilities on Beef Cattle Operations”

The Peace Country Beef & Forage Association believes that the sustainability of rural communities in the Peace River region will be dependent upon a strong agricultural economy with livestock production as its foundation. Our goal is to improve the profitability and sustainability of the forage / beef industry in the Peace region through the transfer of leading edge forage and beef technology to producers, students, and industry representatives through innovative extension activities and initiatives. This will be accomplished by providing forage / beef producers with the management tools needed to manage their beef and forage operation as a unit, rather than individual components. To contribute towards sustaining this foundation, the Peace region beef industry will need to embody the following objectives:

- Create awareness of nutrients, nutrient distribution, collection and management on farm from wintering sites to pastures to crop land and to increase distribution and utilization of farm resources.
- Increase animal performance by enhancing utilization of feed stuffs through improved feeding strategies and better forage/feed selection.

- Improve management strategies of annual and perennial forage species.
- Improve livestock facilities and manure management operations that pose a significant risk to water quality.
- Enhance riparian function and condition through improved grazing management.
- Reduce environmental impact of livestock production/wintering systems and create an environmentally and economically sustainable beef cattle production system.

Project Line up for Summer 2012

1. New Forage Evaluation Plots— Spirit River & Valleyview
2. Stage at Swathing Oats for Green-feed or Swath Grazing
3. Effect of Manure and N Fertilizer on Corn Production
4. Brassicas (Tillage Radish & Turnip) & Warm Season Cereals as Alternative Feed Resources
5. Livestock Seeding of Cicer Milkvetch and Anik Alfalfa Mix
6. Fall vs Spring Seeding of Perennial Pasture Mixes
7. Stockpile Forage Evaluation
8. Examining year round watering Systems & Alternatives
9. Corn Varieties For Grazing (6 locations)
10. Riparian Pasture Site Demos
11. 3D Wildlife Fencing
12. Whole Farm Nutrient Management

Get to Know the 2012-2013 Directors for the Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We graze cows. At one time our herd was at 300 but more typically we're somewhere between 100-130 cow calf pairs. We also purchase yearling heifers and breed them. This year we have 220. We keep the top 10% for ourselves and put the others up for resale as bred heifers. They range on tame forage which we also cut for hay and we also feed some grain. We're working towards more legumes in our stands to keep them healthy.



Ryan Leiske
President, SW
Idlewild Ranch
Saddle Hills County

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

We moved here 7 years ago from near Strathmore, Alberta.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

I hope to improve the grass and run a larger number of animal units per acre.

We've started using the Agrowdrill as part of our program and we're looking forward to what we will learn through the whole farm nutrient management project with PCBFA.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I hope it remains strong and at least stays where it's at. I think we need to look at what we're putting into animals in terms of the health of our soils and our forages. If those aren't healthy, genetics won't help us. So, I think we need to focus on the ground and work up from there.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

We're experimenting with renewable energy sources like solar and wind and playing with that to see how it works out. We have a small wind turbine we use for pumping water and we're playing with solar water pumps. I would like to see this farm become energy independent.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We run about 300 mother cows. I grow silage for myself and put up some hay for the winter most years. We calve about 40 in the fall and we would like to get to the point where we're calving 100 in the fall and 200 in the spring. We keep our numbers constant by keeping quality replacement heifers.



Peter Tindall
Vice President, SE
7tbar Ranch
M.D. Big Lakes

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

We moved here in 1975 from the Wainwright area.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

We are just maintaining for 5-10 years as we head towards retirement.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I hope we can maintain the prices we have now and climb a little higher to where it should be considering the cost of fuel and repairs.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

We have solar watering and gravity-fed watering systems in place and fencing to keep the cows out of the dug-outs. We have next to no foot rot because there is a good solid base around the troughs. Also, at breeding time, the bulls don't leave the water trough. The cows come up to them when they're thirsty and we have 80% or better success in the first cycle that way.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

Our main business is cattle and we're down to about 35 that we're calving this spring. At times we background them, but only in years when we have adequate feed. We have about 300 acres of hay which we bale and usually sell. We are members of the Woodlot Association of Alberta and have interest in harvesting trees for lumber and firewood. I have been planting over 1000 spruce and pine trees every year.



Elton Kauffman
Director, N

Kauffman Farm
Clear Hills County

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

We moved from south of the river in 1990 and have been here working with cattle for 22 years now.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

It's hard to know, but we're looking into less labour intensive crops and winding down as we head into retirement.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I'd like to see it continue to go in this direction of things like swath and bale grazing and paying attention to nutrient utilization. I think it needs to continue to move more towards grass-based feeding systems. The other thing I see is that farmers are getting away from having to calve in the barn and calving later in the spring instead. As the sizes of herds increase, that independence becomes a necessity and goes back to breeding and selection of sires.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

I'm figuring out what I can do with direct seeding with the Agrodrill. We've tried both fall and spring seeding and the results are mixed so there's no clear picture yet.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We have 400 cow-calf pairs which we background on tame hay.



Denis Bouvier
Director, At Large

Bouvier Farm
M.D. Smoky River

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

We've been here since 1988 and we are originally from Southern Saskatchewan.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

I'm as big as I want to be and hopefully now I'll make some money!

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I hope prices are maintained. I don't anticipate any big changes although I see that some producers are breeding heifers.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

We began bale grazing through the winter. The increase in grass production due to the manuring was phenomenal. Snow trapped underneath the bales melted more slowly in the spring and the ground was able to soak it up. Grass started to grow on the tops of hills where it never could grow before.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We have a 77 head cow-calf operation on tame pasture.

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

I've been here all my life. I bought my own farm in 1973. I had \$4000.00 in my pocket and a '69 Chevelle and I built from there!



Lawrence Andruchiw

Director, SW

Andruchiw Farm
Saddle Hills County

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

I'm phasing out of cows currently as we're getting ready for retirement.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I hope for a steady market and that we don't get into any sort of diseases like hoof and mouth. I really hope nobody brings that into our country.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

If I was a bit younger I would be looking into gravity-fed frost-free pumps. Water systems that don't require energy or a lot of maintenance would save a producer a lot of time and also money. Also used free standing cattle panels and found them to be very useful.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We're running 140 cows right now on 1200 acres. Our cow-calf numbers range from 150-200 and we have a 250 head feeder/backgrounder operation as well. Depending on the year we may bale and put up forage or do some cropping as additional feed for the livestock.



Corey Beck

Secretary, At Large
Pleasant View Farm
County of Grande Prairie

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

We farm on my wife's family's homestead. We settled here in 1995 and she is the third generation on her family farm. I'm from the Keg River area originally.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

I'm always observing the cattle industry and seeing where there are economic opportunities.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I hope to see the beef industry become profitable in order to start drawing younger generations back to it. Raising cattle needs to be seen as an economically viable career choice in order for that to happen.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

The most interesting experiment I've tried was to stockpile forage over the winter. I had a section of land in forage and I grazed it once in the growing season. In the fall, I baled half of it and just left the other half. By May 15th, the baled side was showing cracks in the soil from moisture loss whereas the side we left was about three inches taller and the soil was still moist. Eventually, the difference in height due to moisture conservation came close to a foot.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We run 100 red Angus cows on about 800 acres. We have 10 horses, including one pregnant mare. Our cow herd is complemented by a new addition of a couple of pregnant Berkshire sows to work up the ground where overgrazing or weed management is required. This idea to add pigs to our operation came from attending the Joel Salatin seminar with my 2 daughters.



Steve Johnson

Treasurer, N

Johnson Farm

M.D. Fairview

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

We're from Stavely originally. My wife Peggy and I moved to Fairview in 1974 so she could take the AHT program at Fairview College.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

For now, we're looking at genetics a bit more. We'll probably start with AI again this summer.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I am interested in working towards building our cattle herd genetics with a focus on feed efficiency. I hope more grass-fed, direct-marketing ideas catch on and that people will try new things with their land. Farmers are a resourceful bunch finding different ways to make new things work. We are taking advantage of 40+ years of genetics in Angus cattle and hope to continue with that programming.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

From attending many forage association functions, we have implemented electric fence for rotational and bale grazing, establishment of multicultural species in pastures and use of water pipelines. This has contributed to developing our soil and making the land more productive. ***Taking care of the land so the land can take care of us*** is a real focus of our farm.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

I farm with my father-in-law. We have 47 cows and are primarily a cow-calf operation on a mix of native prairie and tame pastures. We do grow some grain – mostly oats and barley. We feed or sell the grain depending on the year and bale some of the forage for winter feeding.



Randi Kuriga

Director, N

Kuriga Farm

M.D. Fairview

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

I grew up in a cow-calf operation near Fairview and moved to this farm after I got married.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

We hope to at least sustain ourselves and then grow our herd back up to what it was at before these recent drought conditions.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I hope industry starts appreciating farmers and the work they do for the industry. Hopefully farmers can get a bit more profit out of it so we can continue to see small beef operations and not simply industrial businesses. In turn, I hope farmers become more ecologically friendly and work towards keeping their operations minimally invasive, recognizing the impact they have on the environment around them.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

I joined the association to get more information about what's available. My dad was a prior president of the PCBFA and learnt a lot during his time. When I was growing up, we did everything on horses and calved in the pasture. One thing I've found is that this way is much easier on the animals and less stressful. They really prefer the pasture.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We ranch just a little over 100 head of cows and we background the calves through to spring or summer. We try to raise most of our own feed for the winter so we can be self-sufficient. We grow some grains to feed through the winter and if there is excess we will sell that.



Gary These
Director, N

NV Land and Cattle Co.
County of Northern Lights

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

We moved up here in 1995 from just south of Edmonton in the Hay Lakes area.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

Depending on how things go, I think we may increase our cattle herd a bit, as we had dropped down with the drought.

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I hope we avoid anything that takes the industry down like BSE did. I hope we continue onward and upward and that the natural forces of the industry prevail and we have a few good years to make up for these past years. Basically, I hope the industry can survive and thrive.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

The most interesting project was the turnips. If the conditions are right with moist falls with a lot of fall showers, they can just explode and grow like crazy. The cows graze them and thin them out a bit about 60 days after seeding and then go back to the field in September and October, right up until freeze up. In better years, turnips can yield 12 dry tonnes per acre.

Can you tell us a bit about your operation?

We raise 200-250 cow-calf pairs. My wife also runs a 90-ewe sheep operation. We buy our forage standing and feed a lot of swamp hay. Our herd is a Simmental-Black Angus cross and we breed the heifers with Welsh Black bulls.



Guy L'Heureux
Director, SE
L'Heureux Ranch
M.D. Big Lakes

How long have you been in the region? Where are you originally from?

I was born and raised in this area. My dad was a rancher and also farmed mink. I homesteaded this ranch about 35 years ago and have been in cattle for 25 years. I've been involved in municipal politics for 26 years.

Where do you see your operation heading over the next 5 years?

Well, we are looking forward to retirement shortly, so we hope to be winding down!

Where do you hope to see the beef industry go over the next 5 years?

I think we need more people involved so we can keep the beef industry producer-driven. Rather than constantly having to get bigger, I'd rather see smaller operations paid well for what they do.

What is the most interesting project you've tried on your farm and what were the results?

My most interesting projects and biggest challenges have been around watering livestock. We run solar pumps and have discovered that fencing dugouts is a waste of money. If the water is available, the cows won't go into the dugout. If the water is not available, the cows will go into the dugout whether there is a fence there or not. This year, I'm experimenting with corn through the PCBFA. I'm always curious about what other people are doing and that's part of why I'm involved with the PCBFA.

Peace Country at Risk for Grasshopper Infestation in 2012

by Karlah Rudolph

The 2012 grasshopper forecast has producers in the Peace region feeling nervous, especially considering the damage these insects caused to some fields in 2011. The forecast is compiled based on data collected by Agricultural Fieldmen in early August of 2011. The Fieldmen count the number of adult grasshoppers within a square metre and also sweep the area with a net in order to identify which species of grasshoppers are present.

Economic thresholds have been developed to help producers determine when control is necessary (fig 1).

	Number of grasshoppers/ m²	
Control	<i>Field</i>	<i>Roadside</i>
Control not usually required	0-6	0-12
Control may be required	7-12	13-24
Control required	13+	25+

Figure 1

Source: Government of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

These thresholds also depend on the crop in question and unfortunately, there is limited data available on forage losses. For instance, the in-field economic threshold for an alfalfa seed crop is considered to be 12 or more grasshoppers per square metre. However, data from Alberta Agriculture indicates that even a moderate infestation of 10 grasshoppers per square meter can consume between 16-60% of available forage, depending on stand health.

As you can see in the forecast map (fig 2), several Municipal Districts in the Peace Region reported moderate, severe or very severe risk ratings in August last year. Producers in the M.D.s of Big Lakes, Greenview, Peace, Fairview, Clear Hills and Spirit River and the County of Grande Prairie should consider how grasshoppers could impact their production this year.

A Word to the Wise

While the forecast is a useful tool in identifying high risk areas, there are other factors which may either increase or decrease the severity of the infestation in 2012. A long, hot and dry fall creates perfect egg-laying conditions. Consider the weather from late April to mid-May in 2012. Warm and dry springs result in early maturing nymphs in greater numbers whereas cooler weather with rain delays egg and nymph development and promotes fungal diseases that attack both eggs and nymphs. The perfect storm of grasshoppers occurs when many adults are scouted in an August followed by a long, dry and hot fall and a warm and dry spring. Severe winters and weather events prior to the last week in April are unlikely to affect grasshopper numbers as the nymphs are still safely encased until late April.

Natural, Cultural and Chemical Control

Natural responses depend on being aware of natural processes that will reduce high populations.

Grasshopper eggs and nymphs are preyed on or parasitized by an array of natural enemies. Birds and mammals such as gophers, badgers, coyotes and bobcats make a nice light snack out of either the eggs or the nymphs or both.

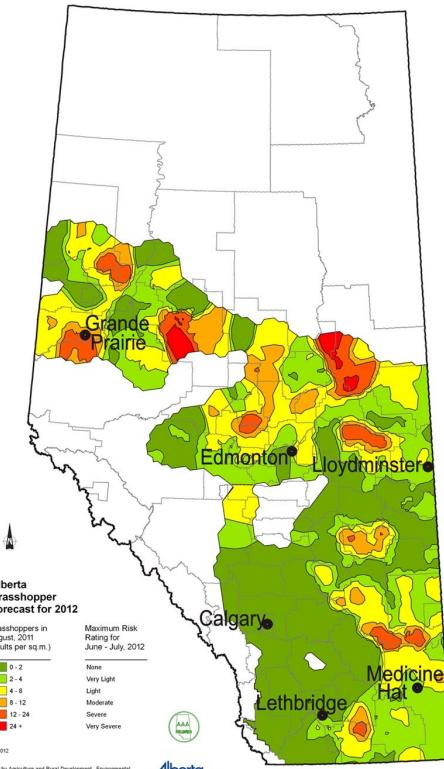


Figure 2

Source: Government of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Like something from a 70's horror movie, flies will lay eggs inside a grasshopper. The developing maggots feed off the insides of the grasshopper and finally kill it when they emerge. Even more diverting is the fungus *Entomophaga grylli*, which alters the grasshopper's brain chemistry, driving it to climb to the very tip of tall grasses and cereals, leaving an empty shell clinging and waving in the wind. Both *Entomophaga grylli* and another parasite, *Nosema locustae*, have been targeted for commercial development as bio-insecticides, but no products are available. The general consensus is that, as these organisms exist in the soil already, their numbers will increase in response to ideal conditions (warmth and humidity) and that introducing the organism in large quantities is a prohibitively expensive venture. Under ideal conditions, these natural defenses can reduce grasshopper populations by as much as 60%.

Cultural responses depend on a producer's own knowledge and ability to respond to prevailing conditions with wise agronomic practice.

Early seeding is a useful practice. Grasshoppers hatch in mid-May and go through 5 or 6 instar stages before reaching maturity in mid-July and are most damaging after reaching the 3rd stage (fig 3). The older crops are when they encounter a grasshopper hoard, the more resilient they are. Unfortunately, the very conditions which delay grasshopper maturation (cold and rain) also often delay a producer's ability to get into the field. Late fall seeding can give forage crops a head start, but is risky as temperatures need to remain below 2°C to prevent germination. Late summer seeding should be avoided in a high risk year.

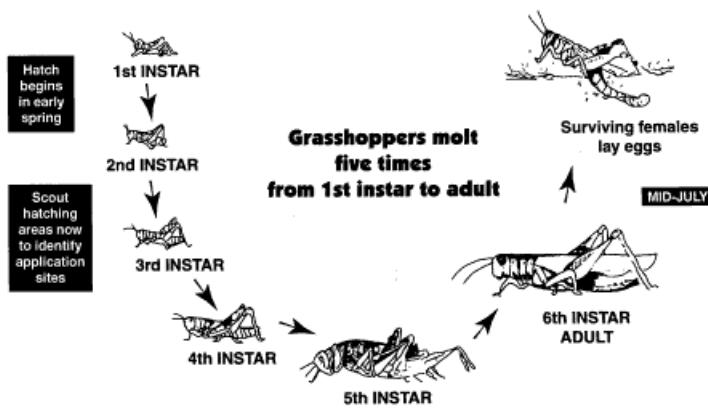


Figure 3

Source: North Dakota State University

Crop rotation is another useful cultural practice. Grasshoppers will have laid their eggs near green growth last fall and prefer to lay their eggs in unbroken sod. This is why new sod-seeded forage crops should be observed carefully in high-risk years as grasshoppers have been known to cause establishment failure. Grasshoppers do not prefer either oats or peas. These species can be used as guard strips around the edges of more vulnerable crops such as newly establishing forage stands.

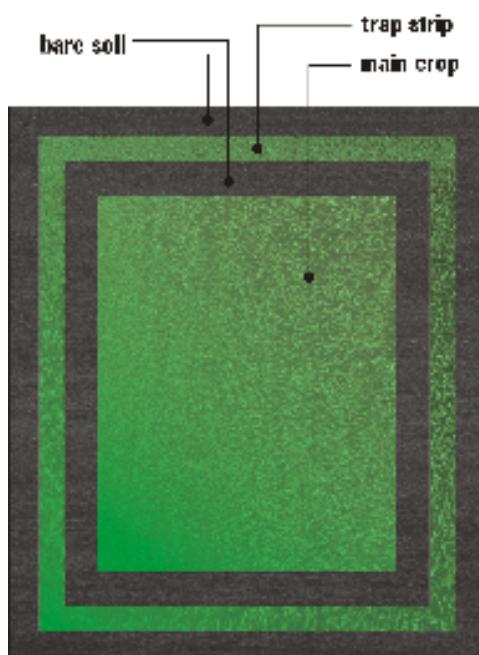


Figure 4

Source: Government of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Tillage is an additional cultural response. It is possible to starve out the young instars by making sure areas that were green in the previous fall are deprived of green growth in the spring. The instars cannot fly until stage 3 and will die of starvation if there is no food available where they hatch. Tillage should not be used in an attempt to destroy or expose eggs or in situations where erosion is a risk.

One innovative cultural practice is the use of *trap strips* (fig 4). In a field that is under attack, till a 10 metre wide perimeter. Moving towards the interior of the field, leave a 10 metre wide green strip and then till another 10 metre wide perimeter. The grasshoppers will be attracted to the green strip in between the two tilled perimeters which can then be targeted for chemical control. This practice concentrates the pesticide application into a smaller area of higher impact in an economical and environmentally friendly way.

Chemical responses are the final category of control. Eco-Bran (fig 5) can achieve control with only 2-5% of the chemical used in liquid applications and is the most environmentally responsible insecticide on the market. This product comes in pellet form and may be used in pastures while cattle are grazing and can be spread on forage crops without risk to leafcutter bees, honey bees or any other pollinators. However, this product is much more effective on immature instars. United Farmers of Alberta is a main distributor of Eco-Bran across the Peace Region. With liquid insecticides, read the label for re-entry periods for grazing cattle and be sure to warn neighboring honey-bee operators of your intent to spray, particularly when the target field is flowering.

Scouting and Identification

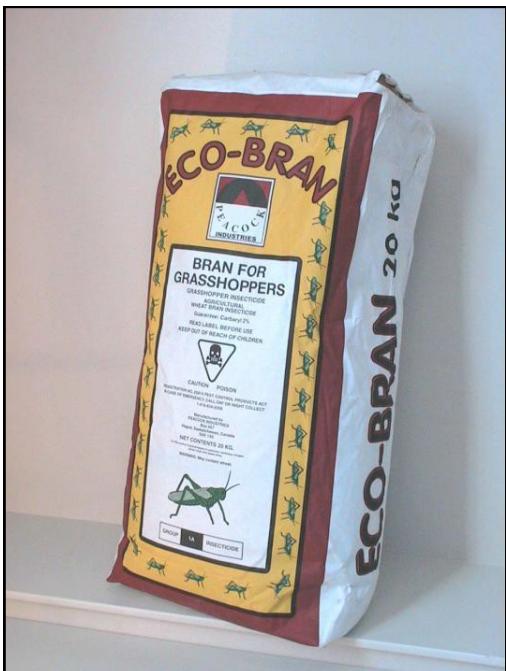


Figure 5

Source: Colorado State University Extension

A farmer's best defense against losses is early and frequent scouting. Areas showing early growth in spring – field margins, fence-lines and roadsides – will also give you the earliest indication of what grasshopper populations will be like in your area. Scouting is most easily accomplished by walking through the field holding an L-shaped, 1 meter-long measuring stick at crop height, to help visualize the number of grasshoppers within 1 square meter.

Importantly, only 4 out of approximately 85 grasshopper species present in Alberta typically pose significant economic risk. All of the economically significant grasshoppers are hatched from eggs that were laid last fall and will be small in the spring whereas other species may be larger. The Two-Striped Grasshopper (fig 6) is brown as a spring nymph and is partial to lush foliage, feeding on alfalfa and even on shelterbelts and naturally occurring tree bluffs. It is typically the most damaging grasshopper in the Peace Region.

Participating Agricultural Fieldmen will have scouted for eggs this spring and can provide you with more information about potential numbers in your area in addition to helping you identify any grasshoppers you catch and bring in. In addition, Agriculture Alberta is preparing an identification manual which will be available sometime this summer. In a worst-case scenario, establishment failure or significant damage caused by grasshoppers is covered in most crop insurance packages.



Figure 6

Source: Government of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Dan Johnson

MIX IT UP

Article by Debbie Furber of Canadian Cattlemen

A study carried out by the Peace Country Beef and Forage Association (PCBFA) shows that inter-cropping strips of various species of annual crops to obtain a forage mix could improve the nutritional quality of greenfeed compared to the individual crops on their own. Strip intercropping is a production system where different crops are grown in wide strips (usually the width of a seeder) in the same field.

Individual crops were grown side by side in 20-foot-wide strips down the length of the plot and then swathed across the width of the plot to obtain the forage mixes. Samples from the individual crops were hand cut from the centre of each strip before swathing. The inter-crop combinations tested were: barley-peas-oats; barley-peas-canola; barley-canola-oat; barley-canola; and oat-canola. (see diagram)

PCBFA program co-ordinator Akim Omokanye explains that inter-cropping the individual crops in strips rather than sowing seed mixes through the drill is advantageous because it eliminates competition for water, light and nutrients between crop species, which may result in lower yield.

The plot was grown on a 10-year-old mixed forage stand that had been used for grazing on the John and Jean Milne ranch near Fairview. PCBFA chose to terminate the forage within the 10-acre plot with glyphosate and direct seed into the sod because of the cost savings on fuel and labour compared to using multiple tillage passes to prepare a cultivated seed bed. The Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta's (ARECA) province-wide energy conservation and energy efficiency project showed that sod seeding requires 2.5 litres of fuel per acre, whereas the traditional cultivation method requires 15.76 litres of fuel per acre.

In the first year (2010) of the trial, the plot was sown on May 19, 15 days after the glyphosate treatment.

Omokanye says that the ideal practice would be to terminate your old stand the fall before sod seeding. In the second year (2011), the plot was sown on May 24. No prior spraying was done before seeding.

A nitrogen-phosphorous fertilizer blend (28N:26P:0K) based on soil nutrient test was applied in the seed row at 100 pounds per acre (28 pounds actual N per acre) for all crops. A granular inoculant was applied at seven pounds per acre with the peas. Another advantage of inter-cropping over sowing seed mixes is that producers could fine-tune the fertilizer rate for each crop type when necessary, he adds.

A 10-foot Agrowdrill was used to sow the plot. The strip widths were measured before seeding so that all strips of one crop kind could be sown before changing over to the next crop kind. Producers could use this method at home, however, they would have to make sure that strips are of equal width to accommodate this rotation scheme, and also use a strip width compatible with their equipment.

Crop	Variety	Seed rate (lb/ac)	Seeding depth
Barley	Cowboy	102	1.5-2.0"
Oats	Mustang	108	1.5-2.0"
Peas	Eclipse	204	1.5-2.0"
Canola	Pioneer 45H29	5.6	0.5-0.75"

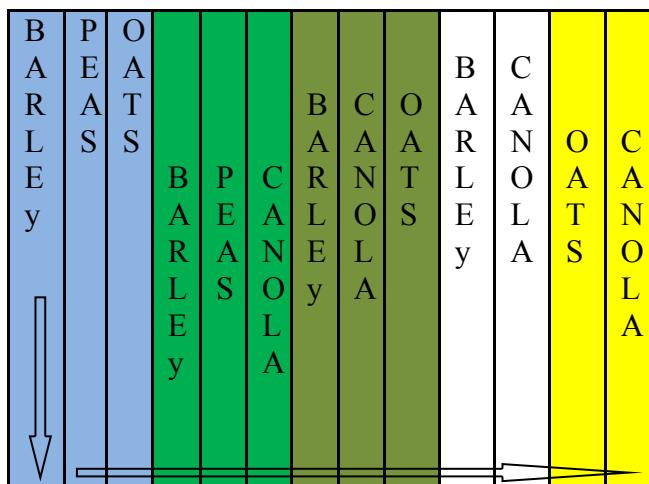


Figure 1. Crop arrangement:

Notes: The vertical arrow shows the direction of strips of crops in a particular treatment. The horizontal arrow shows how cutting across the strips of crops was carried out to create forage blends.

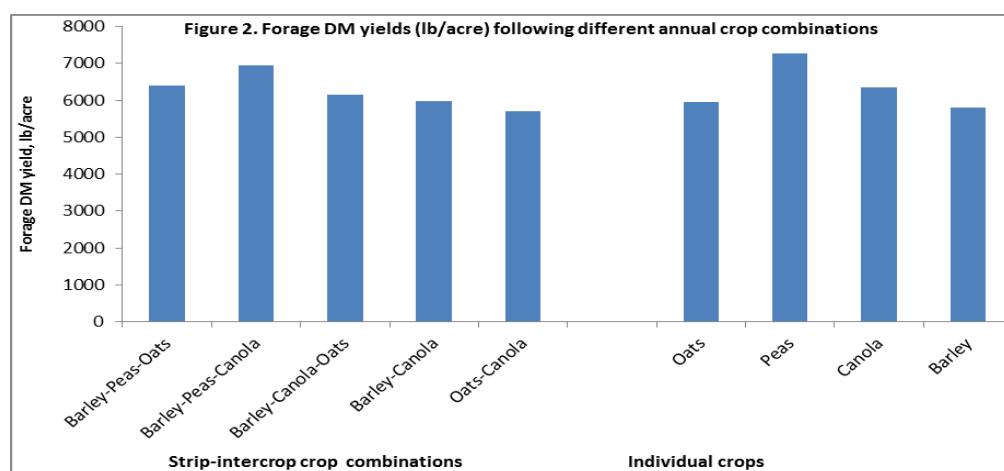
An air drill and a global positioning system would help to prevent overlap in field-scale seeding. A disc drill such as the haybuster drill that has more seed tank compartments, which can seed up to two or three crop varieties at different rates would simplify the seeding operation.

The plot was swathed on August 18, which corresponded with the soft-dough stage for the barley, the late-milk to early-dough stage for the oat, and the mid-pod stage for the canola and pea crops. Omokanye says the early to mid-pod stage – when the pods are half filled – is the ideal time for cutting legumes to optimize hay tonnage and quality, and also achieve adequate dry-down for greenfeed purposes.

Yield Results

Overall, intercropping strips of annuals didn't have a significant effect on dry-matter (DM) forage yield compared to the individual crops. The average DM yields were comparable at 6,237 pounds per acre for the inter-strip combinations and 6,344 pounds per acre for the individual crops.

The DM yield was highest for the pea strips at close to 7,500 pounds per acre, and the combinations that included a pea strip. Omokanye estimates that the peas contributed to about 40 per cent of the total forage DM yield in the barley-pea-oat combination and the barley-pea-canola combination. At 6,943 pounds DM per acre, the **barley-pea-canola** combination yielded the best of all of the combinations and the oat-canola combination had the lowest yield at 5,702 pounds per acre.



Crude Protein

Inter-cropping strips of peas and, or canola with cereals produced forages with crude protein (CP) content of at least 10 per cent. This is well above the seven to nine per cent CP requirement for beef cows at all stages of gestation and meets the 10 to 11 per cent recommended post calving. Of the combination plantings, the **barley-canola-oat** forage had the highest CP level at 12.5 per cent.

As expected, pea and canola on their own had the highest CP level at 14 per cent and 16.5 per cent respectively. However, with CP levels between eight and nine percent, neither of the cereals on its own met the post-calving requirement.



Energy

The TDN of the combination forages ranged from 55.7 per cent for the barley-pea-oat combination to 59.6 per cent for the **barley-canola** combination, which was slightly less than the TDN for barley alone and well above the 56 per cent TDN of the oat strips. The TDN of the pea crop was highest at 61 per cent.

As it has been established, for a mature beef cow to maintain her body condition score (BCS) through the winter, the ration must have a TDN energy level of 55% in mid pregnancy, 60% in late pregnancy and 65% after calving. Based on the 55.7% to 59.6% TDN obtained in the forage combinations, some form of energy supplementation would be necessary, depending on the state of the cows. This also applies to all individual crops.

Fibre Content

The neutral detergent fibre (NDF) content of a forage is an indicator of how much of it a beef animal will be able to consume. A cow's digestive system is capable of handling only 1.2 per cent of her body weight in fibre before she

feels full. As the NDF increases, the amount she will be able to consume decreases. The NDF of a plant increases with maturity, so the stage of maturity at swathing will have a significant impact on its NDF content.

The NDF of the pea forage, at 45.55 per cent, and the canola forage at 54.27 per cent was significantly lower than that of the cereals at 60.70 per cent for the barley and 69.97 per cent for the oat strips. The high NDF for oats in this study was probably due to the time of cutting (late milk/early dough), as this was a little on the late side for oats. The recommended optimal stage to cut oats for greenfeed is early to late milk stage.

Due to the high NDF of the oat crop, the forage combinations including oats had the highest NDF, however, inclusion of peas and or canola, did have the effect of reducing the NDF of the oat combination forages by two to six per cent compared to oat alone. The barley-pea-oat forage, with NDF of 67.82, had the highest NDF of the combination forages.

Acid detergent fibre (ADF) reflects the percentage of the forage that isn't digestible at all. A higher ADF is associated with lower feed quality.

Of the individual crops, pea at 34 per cent, and barley at 36 per cent, contained the least ADF. Canola had 40 per cent ADF and oat had the most at 44 per cent. However, including pea and or canola didn't always reduce the overall ADF of the combination forages compared to the individual crops.

The combination forages with canola included seemed to lower ADF content, with the **barley -canola** combination having the least at 37 per cent. The barley-pea-oat combination had the most at 45 per cent.

Minerals

In every respect, inter-cropping peas and, or canola with the cereals improved the calcium (Ca) and phosphorous (P) levels of the forage compared to the cereals alone.

The P content of the combination forages met the requirements (0.22-0.25% P) of mature cows regardless of the stage of gestation, while barley and pea fell short on their own. The forage combinations including oat had the highest P content. All the combination forages met and far exceeded the Ca content

requirements (0.18-31%) of dry pregnant and lactating beef cows. The Ca content of barley and oats were not sufficient. Both pea and canola by far exceeded Ca content requirements of beef cattle.

Though pea had the highest Ca content at 1.08 per cent, it didn't have as much effect on the Ca content of the combination forages as one would expect, relative to the inclusion of canola with 0.98 per cent. The combination forages including canola had highest calcium contents, with the **barley-canola-oat** combination the highest at 0.59 per cent

Crop combinations	% Ca	% P	% ADF	% NDF
Barley – Peas - Oat	0.37	0.30	44.95	67.82
Barley – Peas – Canola	0.45	0.26	41.72	62.64
Barley – Canola – Oat	0.59	0.30	43.20	64.03
Barley – Canola	0.53	0.27	37.02	55.88
Oats – Canola	0.48	0.30	42.16	65.46
Mean	0.48	0.29	41.81	63.17
Individual crops				
Barley	0.18	0.19	36.24	60.70
Oat	0.13	0.22	44.24	69.97
Peas	1.08	0.18	33.94	45.55
Canola	0.98	0.24	40.38	54.27
Mean	0.59	0.21	38.70	57.62

The critical factor in balancing rations is the ratio of calcium-to-phosphorous ratio (Ca:P). The ratio for mature cows should be within the range of 2:1 to 7:1. Even though the calcium and phosphorous content of all of the combination forages met the requirements for those minerals, the ratio was very low ranging from 1.23:1 to 1.96:1. The low ratio could be remedied using feed blends or commercial minerals.

In term of forage yield, the **barley-pea-canola** combination was the best combination in this trial. But based on feed quality, the combinations that include canola are the best all-around – more specifically the barley-canola combination. Though, its yield was slightly lower than the barley-pea-canola combination, but its CP level was a tad higher, the TDN was by far the best of all the combinations, the Ca:P ratio was almost balanced at 2:1 and both the ADF and NDF were the lowest of all of the combinations.

Crop performance in this strip intercropping is a function of species selection. More work is needed on the potential of the crops species and combinations for net gains in yield and economic returns. Management practices such weed control, specific crop nutrient requirement and other unidentified factors could play a role in the overall cost benefit analysis.

SAVE THE DATE!!



"GRASS ROOTS OF GRAZING"

November 27 - 29, 2012
 Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, Red Deer AB

Keynote Speakers: Neil Dennis David Irvine Charley Orchard Glen Rabenberg

For More Information Contact: West Central Forage Association
westcentralforage@gmail.com (780) 727-4447



High Prairie Grass Plots:



Coming into spring, the biggest observation at the High Prairie grass plots is the distinct difference in new plant growth in relation to cutting time. The first cut, (far right side) has considerably more growth than the late and second cut plots. The late cut plots (far left side) are also showing more growth than the second cuts (middle). The more the plants were allowed to re-establish in the fall, the better they are coming back this spring.



High Prairie Legume Plots:



Once again, the thing that stands out at the High Prairie legume plots is the distinctive difference between cut times. The first cut (far right) has significantly more growth, followed again by the late cut (far left) and then the second cut (middle). Winterkill here was an issue. Both varieties of clover are almost completely winterkilled. What is growing looks as if it is coming from seeds that have dropped from mature plants last fall. All the alfalfa plots however, have sustained little to no damage to winter kill.



Fairview Grass Plots:



The grass plots in Fairview show some interesting contrasts to those in High Prairie. On average, we find that the late cut grass plots are actually showing more growth than the first and second cut plots. Interestingly enough, the first cut plots actually seem to have suffered more over the winter and spring on average than the first and second cut plots,



which had less regrowth going into the fall and winter. Excesses growth on some first cut plots seem to have actually inhibited the regrowth of some grass species considerably enough that there is very little to no new growth this spring.

Fairview Legume Plots:



Like the High Prairie plots, the first cut plots in Fairview generally have more new growth than the late and second cut plots, however, the second cut plot has surpassed the growth of the late cut plot. The Fairview plots have also sustained some loss to winterkill in the clover plots, however not to the same severity of the High Prairie plots. All alfalfa plots, like the High Prairie plots, are also showing little to no signs of winter kill.

Fishing Line Recycling Program

In the summer of 2010, a local watershed steward named Marnie Squires approached the LSWC board with a request for support for a fishing line recycling program in our watershed. She and her family have spent many summers at Lesser Slave Lake and noticed that there is a lot of fishing line washed up on shore or discarded at marinas. As you know, this poses a hazard for birds, in particular, as well as fish and other animals that live and feed along the shores.

The project involved construction of recycling receptacles and design of an interpretive sign which together are mounted on a sign post and installed at all lake and river access points. The recycling vessels are made of pvc plumbing pipe and are simple to construct and the interpretive sign is to the point and easy to read. The monofilament (fishing line) is collected from recycling bins and cleaned of hooks, leaders, weights, and trash by volunteers. It is then shipped to the Berkley Pure Fishing Company in Iowa. Berkley melts the line down into raw plastic pellets that can be made into other plastic products including tackle boxes, spools for line, fish habitats, and toys. It is not made into more monofilament line.

The LSWC board agreed that this would be a great stewardship project for our area and agreed to help Marnie find funding to deliver this program in our watershed. Meghan, the LSWC Executive Director, applied to Alberta Ecotrust for financial support to get this project off the ground. Our application was approved and we are preparing to build and distribute the fishing line recycling stations throughout the spring and summer of 2011.

Our staff and volunteers will collect the fishing line and return it to the LSWC office where it will be shipped back to Berkley. It is our hope that this project gets more people involved in lake and watershed stewardship. This may seem like a simple concept but it gets people thinking about fish and wildlife and what they can do to keep their habitat safe and clean.

For more information about this project or to request a recycling station and sign for your boat launch or beach get in touch with the LSWC.



This recycling station is located at the Joussard Marina.



Weighty Watering Issues

by Morgan Hobin,

Water is one of the most important nutrients involved in a productive beef cattle operation. However, it sometimes can be overlooked and taken for granted. Many producers like to take the easiest route when supplying water to their animals, which generally seems to be the most economical. Or is it? Allowing animals direct access to streams and dugouts does utilize the least infrastructure possible, but the overall cost to the operation may be greater than those that have implemented alternative watering systems.

Water supplied from dugouts and streams generally contain more organic material and minerals. This is partially due to animals entering the water and defecating in it. These added solids have the potential to decrease palatability, increase disease spread and cause unfavourable interactions with dietary components. Water that has been pumped from said sources and delivered to the animals through a trough system tends to be of higher quality. This water quality can have a major impact on the performance of the cattle and the overall returns to the producer. This is evident, since when given the choice, cattle will select better quality water sources.

Research, here in Alberta, found that there was a 23% increase in weight gains over 71 days for yearling steers drinking well water versus those who were drinking from a pit. In addition, studies have shown a 20% difference in animal weights when exposed to different water sources for a 30 day period. These watering sources included water pumped from a dugout to tanks compared to the cattle drinking directly from the dugout. Other Alberta studies documented a 9% greater weight gain in calves with cows drinking water from a trough compared to those consuming water directly from a pond. Steers in this study, under the same environment, also showed a 16-19% increase in weight. The Western Beef Development Centre in Lanigan, Saskatchewan, during a 5 year study, found that yearling steers drinking aerated water pumped to a trough gained 0.2 lbs/day more than those drinking directly from a dugout. There have also been studies conducted in Oregon that found that in a winter feeding system, cattle preferred to drink out of a tank rather than a stream, when given equal access to both. The study also found that the time spent in the stream was reduced by 90%. Water quality and weight gain is also linked to the fact that cattle will drink more clean water and subsequently will consume more forage, which then leads to the greater weight gain.

Not only is there an economic benefit to animal gains when watering from a trough, but when livestock are allowed direct access for watering, the loss in dugout water storage and additional maintenance costs range from \$300 to \$600 per year for an average pasture dugout. Most alternative watering systems can be paid for through additional weight gain and improved herd health within an acceptable period of time. Therefore, supplying cattle a watering source that is easily accessible and free of contaminants can increase profits while being environmentally sustainable.

Sources: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Montana State University, *Journal of Range Management* (55: 452-460, Sept 2002).



On-Farm Evaluation of Alternative Feed Resource for Yield, Quality and Grazing

Collaborating Producer: Odell & Lillian Raymond

Why other feed resource?

Many livestock producers try to extend the grazing season to reduce feed costs, which accounts for 50-70% of total cost of cow-calf production. Grazing annual forages is another such way to not only graze livestock longer into the fall or early winter, but also provide potentially higher quality forages. Brassicas, such as turnips, are one example of an annual forage that can be grazed effectively by cows. Turnips are high quality, high yielding, fast growing crops that are particularly suitable for grazing by livestock in the fall. Both tops (stems plus leaves) and roots (tubers) can be grazed and are very nutritious. Turnips produce forage of exceptionally high (often 85-95%) digestibility and the roots are rich in carbohydrates. Turnips tolerate temperatures down to -8 degrees C and require several days of temperatures continually below freezing to be killed.

There has been considerable interest in testing the grazing potential of warm season annual crops for their suitability in extending the grazing season in parts of the Peace. This is because grazing warm season crops, such as corn, can lower winter feed costs, reduce operating expenses and save time, as no harvesting is required and winter supplemental feeding is limited. In addition to these benefits, warm season crops like Proso and German millets can provide a high-yielding alternative to barley and oats, that can be utilized for greenfeed and swath grazing. Although, there are higher costs related to grazing warm season annual cereals, including high input costs of fertilizer and seed, the extension of the grazing season should still be considered an alternative low-cost method. Two separate trials were carried out in 2011 to evaluate 3 warm season cereal crop species, turnips (alternative feed resource), and a cool season cereal crop for yield and quality.

The Evaluation Procedure

The trials took place at Odell and Lillian Raymond's farm, north of Peace River. One trial involved testing 8 corn varieties (corn heat units varied from 2000 to 2400), 2 millet varieties and a forage sorghum variety for forage yield and quality. The second trial involved looking at forage yield and quality of: (1) oat seeded alone, (2) oat—turnips intercrop and (3) turnips seeded alone. These were all field scale on-farm trials.

For the warm season crops (corn, millet & forage sorghum), before seeding, a broadcast fertilizer application of 75 lb N + 20 lb P/acre was done and the site cultivated with a vibra shank cultivator. The crops were seeded on May 26, 2011. Corn was seeded with a 12-row corn planter at 32,000 kernels/acre. The corn planter was set at a spacing of 22 inches between rows. Millets and sorghum were seeded at 15 lb/acre. For corn, weeds were controlled with Roundup @ 400ml/ac and for millet and forage sorghum, 2,4-D amine was used 1 month after seeding.

Purple top turnips was seeded at 2.5 lb/acre using a field cultivator with a Valmar on May 23, 2011 (for turnips alone field) and May 20 (for turnips-oats intercrop and oats alone fields). Purple top is a common turnip variety used for grazing. The oat variety used was Derby and this was seeded at 2.5 bushels/acre for the turnips-oats intercrop and oats alone fields. A hoe drill with a 7-inch spacing was used for seeding oats after turnips. The fields received 50 lb/acre N. No herbicide was applied to any of the treatments. All the crops were sampled for dry matter yield determination on September 1, 2011.

Results & Discussion*Warm season crops*

All the corn varieties tested out yielded the two millet and the sorghum varieties (Figure 1). Generally, corn forage DM yields were over 12 t/acre, with the top four (P7213, 39V05, P7443R and X70B144R1) yielding over 16 t DM/acre. German millet had the least DM yield (3.9 t DM/acre).

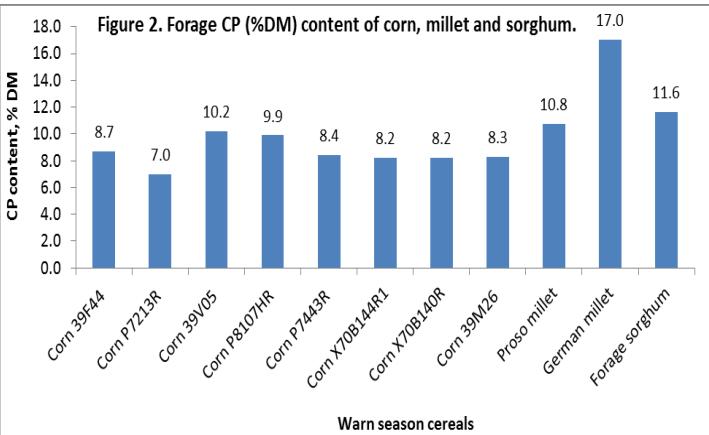
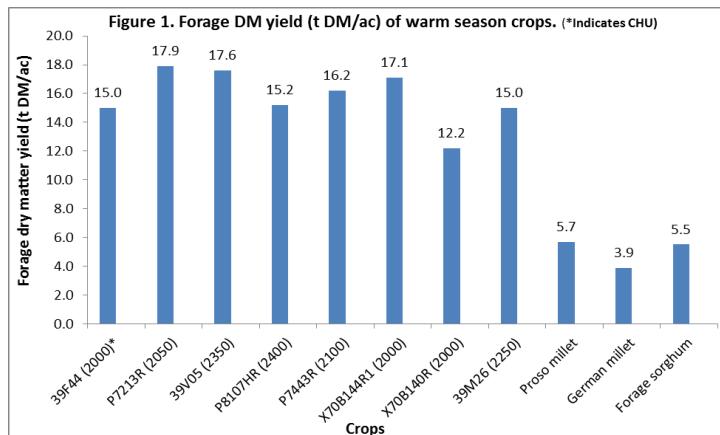
The CP content of the crops varied from 7% for corn variety P7213R to 17% for the German millet variety (Figure 2). Corn varieties generally had a lower CP content than those of millet and sorghum. Levels of

protein and energy (TDN) for all corn varieties were within the recommended values required to maintain or provide gains for cows in mid late pregnancy under normal winter conditions. The levels of CP obtained for millet & sorghum were either adequate or more than adequate for cows after calving. The energy levels of millet & sorghum varieties obtained in this study were only adequate for cows in the mid pregnancy state.

The CP content of the crops varied from 7% for corn variety P7213R to 17% for the German millet variety (Figure 2). Corn varieties generally had a lower CP content than those of millet and sorghum. Levels of protein and energy (TDN) for all corn varieties were within the recommended values required to maintain or provide gains for cows in mid late pregnancy under normal winter conditions. The levels of CP obtained for millet & sorghum were either adequate or more than adequate for cows after calving. The energy levels of millet & sorghum varieties obtained in this study were only adequate for cows in the mid pregnancy state.

The cost comparison of seeding corn was compared to oats. Total direct (input) cost was lower for oats (\$71.10) and higher for corn (\$200.00), giving a difference of \$128.90/acre between the two crops. The high input cost for corn is expected because of the higher cost associated with corn seed and fertility. Corn has a high fertilizer requirement, but costs may be lower if manure is applied. Soil analysis may also help further reduce fertilizer cost. In this study, the producer was able to save 25 lb N + 20 lb P/acre in fertilizer by soil testing. The savings were due to the fact that the site had been grazed for 6 years and used to winter cows for 2 years prior to seeding the warm season crops.

Cow grazing days per acre and cost per cow per day are closely related to the maturity and yield potential of a corn crop. A mature corn crop with good yield potential will result in a higher number of cow grazing



days and a



lower cost per cow per day. In the present study, we estimated a cost of \$0.56 per cow per day. This is a huge savings considering the fact that it costs a cow-calf producer an average of \$0.90/cow/day in feed during the winter months. The producer grazed a 30-acre corn field with 108 cows for 72 days. Grazing corn cuts down on machinery costs. There is no expensive harvest equipment, no feeding equipment required, just a low cost electric fence and limited yardage costs.

Turnips and oats

Forage DM yield was highest for the oats alone field (9678 lb/acre) and lowest for the turnips alone field (5569 lb/acre) (Table 1). For the turnips, the roots (tubers) formed the bulk of the total DM yield. The CP content of the crops was in the order of: turnips > turnips – oats intercrop > oats (Table 1). The high CP content obtained from the turnips (whole plant) resulted from the leaf component of the plant, which on its own had 23% CP compared to 12.17% CP from the tuber. Generally, oats alone forage consistently had lower mineral (Ca & P) and higher detergent fibre (ADF & NDF) contents than the turnips – oats intercrop or turnips alone.

The oats alone forage had insufficient amounts of Ca and P to meet the suggested beef cattle requirements for both minerals. Though, turnip – oat intercrop had lower DM yield than the oats alone, in terms of quality, the turnip – oat intercrop was of higher nutritional quality. Cows eating the turnip – oat intercrop would have adequate amounts of CP, Ca and P needed for any stage of production.

Table 1. Dry matter yield (lb/ac) and feed quality (% DM) of turnips alone, oat alone and turnips-oat intercrop. Generally, turnips had excellent nutritional value with a high energy content (leaves have 68% total digestible nutri-

Crop treatment	DM yield	CP	Ca	P	AD F	ND F	TD N
Turnips (whole plant)	5569	19.1	1.22	0.40	19.9	28.8	68.2
Turnips - Oat inter-crop	8401	12.9	0.41	0.34	30.4	50.5	62.3
Oats	9678	9.6	0.21	0.24	33.1	52.2	61.6
Turnip leaves	1662	23.5	2.52	0.32	20.3	32.9	68.1
Turnip tubers	3907	12.2	0.36	0.45	15.1	28.7	70.6



ents; roots have 71% total digestible nutrients), and good protein levels (leaves have 23% crude protein; roots have 12% crude protein). In addition, the turnip – oat intercropped forage would have the tendency to be preferred and consumed more than the oats alone because of the lower NDF value. Their digestibility is also likely to be higher than those of the oats alone material, going by the ADF values. Earlier studies elsewhere have shown that turnips retain their nutrients late into the fall and are good in providing high quality and quantity forage for grazing livestock in the fall. Livestock eat the leaves and roots of turnip plants. Cattle will also dig the turnips up out of the ground. However, it is important to note the growth performance of turnips was not impressive in the turnips-oat intercrop. The turnip leaves and roots were small and in most cases, their roots were substantially smaller than those of the turnips alone field.

Grazing

Cattle (108 cows, 98 calves, 7 yearlings & 4 bulls) were given 3/4 of an acre per day in the turnip-oat intercrop field, which resulted in approximately 21 days of extended grazing time. When placed in the turnips only field, animals were given 1 acre per day, which should have resulted in approximately 30 days of extra grazing. However, due to excessive moisture, turnip yield was lower, therefore fewer grazing days were actually available. At this feeding and stocking rate, animals were consuming approximately 2.5% of their body weight.

Summary

With emphasis on having livestock graze rather than mechanically harvesting feed, the flexibility and productivity of grazing warm season annual cereal crops and brassicas such as turnips can be an attractive alternative.

Making the Most of Marketing: Maximizing Your Money!

by Morgan Hobin

Some days cattle marketing can seem like a test. A test of the nerves, one's sanity and pocket book. Currently however, there may be some joy in taking cattle to the market, since many have a pretty good idea that the prices won't have them seeing red. The only decision to make is, do I sell now, or do I wait. But do remember that marketing cattle should be done in the best interest of the operation. Just because the neighbor is selling, doesn't mean their management system fits with yours! When making these decisions and asking the tough questions, it is always important to think of the long term impact of either retaining or selling the animals. The following questions and topics are just a few of the things one should try and keep in the back of their mind when deciding on a marketing strategy.

First off, it is beneficial to have a marketing strategy or plan. This will challenge you to identify your costs, develop price goals, consider price and production risks, and to review price and market outlooks. This will help to reduce any guesswork and emotion that may come into play when having to make key marketing decisions. It also aids in achieving farm goals and objectives. Just be sure to make the plan realistic, keep it manageable and monitor your progress. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs suggest that there are **7 essential elements of a marketing plan:**

Know Your Cattle and Your Business. This is tying together your production and financial situation in order to achieve the farm's business goals. It also includes fitting production plans (type of cattle, number and when they are available to sell) into your cash flow to ensure that all financial commitments are covered in a timely fashion. Reviewing your current financial situation and business goals will help to align your marketing plan with your overall business objectives.

Cost of Production. In order for marketing to be effective, the cost of production per animal needs to be known. A cattle budget will determine the number of cattle to be produced, the costs involved and establish a production flow. It is suggested, for simplicity, to break out the costs into animal replacement, feed, other variable and fixed costs. This will also help when trying to establish price targets.



Market Information. A tip to remember: good market information gives the producer marketing power! This information includes market prices, fundamentals, analysis, outlook and strategies. Understanding these fundamentals provides sound decision making practices that will help capitalize on market pricing opportunities. The challenge always lies in the future perspective that should include current market conditions, seasonal trends and historical information. In order to develop your outlook, resources such as advisors, newsletters, bulletins, websites, emails, seminars and courses can be utilized. However, it is very important to choose reliable information. As the market changes, your plan should be capable of responding.

Marketing Tools. This area of the plan is where producers evaluate the pricing and delivery opportunities available to them. Not only should you be looking at selling options, but contacting your lender may be a good idea to see what tools are available to manage currency risk. It is important to know the pros and cons of each tool and to understand if there might be any special requirements needed for them to work successfully. There are many tools suited to producers who are adverse to risk to those who don't mind using a strategy that might be seen as a bit risky.

Price Targets. Knowing and understanding your cost of production helps you to establish target prices and recognize the market price that is compatible with your financial situation and marketing plan. Key target prices that compensate for specific costs are important to have in those years when opportunities to cover all costs are limited. Three price targets to consider are: 1) Survival Price: the lowest acceptable price based on cash outflow; 2) Acceptable Price: the breakeven price based on total costs and; 3) Favourable Price: the breakeven price plus a return to management and risk.



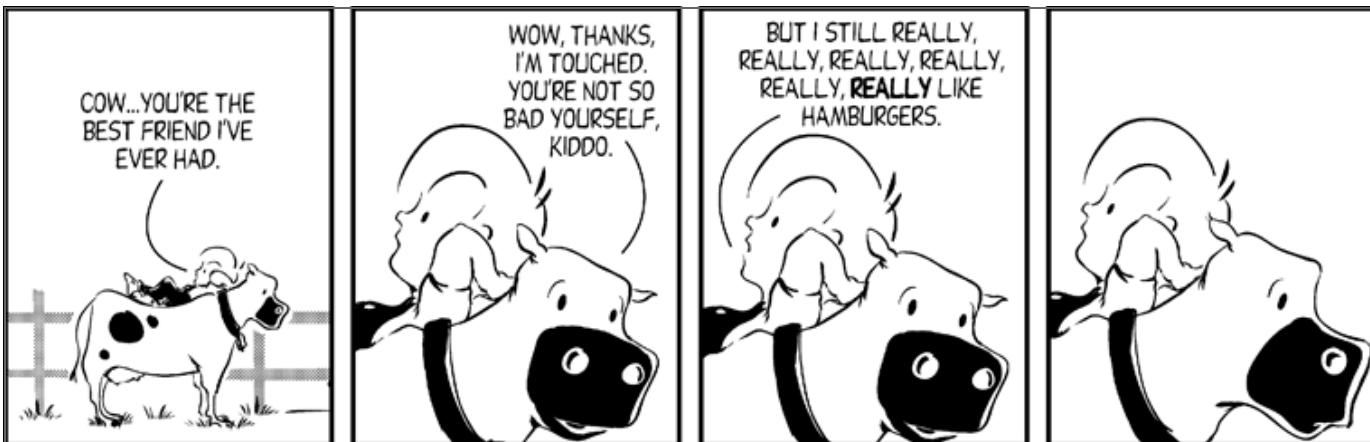
Take Action. Actively making the decision on pricing or marketing will likely be the hardest part of all. Having a plan in place and evaluating the “what if” scenarios prior to making the decision will be very beneficial. You may want to put someone in charge (yourself, spouse, etc) of making sure the marketing plan comes to fruition and make sure they have support from the rest of the team (yourself, spouse, market advisor etc).

Evaluate & Monitor. Producers are very good at monitoring their cattle and subsequent production, this should be the same for the marketing plan. This can be done by using a market log book to record market information that will assist you in executing and evaluating your plan. The information to be included can range from cash prices to notes on why a decision was made. Be sure to set aside enough time to review the markets and your marketing goals and objectives.

It is also imperative to understand factors that affect price, what certain sale terms mean, what conditions are put on cattle sales and what different avenues are available to you when you are trying to sell your cattle. All of this knowledge will put you on the front foot and in a position where you can increase profits.

Understanding the factors that affect the general trend of the world market is the first step in determining what is the best way to market cattle. It is also important to be informed, do your homework and make wise decisions. You do not have to take the price for your cattle on any given day, challenge the markets by determining your costs and what you are willing to sell for.

For more information on cattle marketing visit www1.agric.gov.ab.ca or contact your local beef specialist!



Summer 2012 Events

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT	COST
PCBFA Pasture Walk Series #1 <i>Guest Speaker: Grant Lastiwka</i>	June 14-16	10:30am /6:00pm	14th —Gary & Jean These (Peace River) 15th — Steve & Peggy Johnson (Fairview) 15th — Christine & Wally Lentz (Whitelaw) 16th — Pieter & Nancy VanHerk (Hines Creek)	Karlah Rudolph 780.523.4033	\$25/\$40 Member \$30/\$45 Non member
PCBFA Pasture Walk Series #2 <i>Guest Speaker: Jim Gerrish</i>	July 11-13	10:30am	11th — Rob Elzinga (Valleyview) 12th — Kirk McLaughlin (Kinuso) 13th — Birch Hills Colony (Wanham)	Karlah Rudolph 780.523.4033	\$50/\$75 Member \$65/\$90 Non member
PCBFA Fairview Farm Tour <i>Guest Speaker: TBA (Pioneer) TBA (Solar)</i>	August 7	10:30am	GPRC Fairview Campus PARDA Research Farm Dynamic Seeds	Karlah Rudolph 780.523.4033	\$25/\$40 Member \$30/\$45 Non member
PCBFA Farm Tour & Pasture Walk #1 <i>Guest Speaker: Calvin Yoder</i>	August 8-9	10:30am	8th — Lawrence Andruschiw (Spirit River) 9th — Roland Cailliau (Valleyview)	Karlah Rudolph 780.523.4033	\$20/\$35 Member \$25/\$40 Non member
PCBFA Farm Tour & Pasture Walk #2 <i>Guest Speaker: TBA (Pickseed) TBA (Tillage Radish)</i>	Mid—Late August	10:30am	Guy L'Heureux (Joussard) Grant Gaschnitz (HP)	Karlah Rudolph 780.523.4033	\$20/\$35 Member \$25/\$40 Non member
PCBFA Beef School	Late August/ Early September	9:00am	Heart Valley Processors (Wanham)	Morgan Hobin 780.835.6799	\$75/person

For more information about any of our field tours, pasture walks 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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