



Grey Wooded Forage Association

*Creating an Awareness of Forages*

# **Annual Report**

## ***2017-2018***



*Photo by Ginette Boucher*

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## ***Mission Statement***

To promote environmentally and economically sustainable forage and agricultural practices.

## ***Vision Statement***

The community is engaged in regenerative agricultural production methods.

## Message from the Chair

Amy Leitch



Well with Spring in full swing finally, we all know Summer will be on the doorstep in no time. As producers, we are all busy with a to-do list that never ceases to end. This continuing change in Nature's Seasons is mimicked in day to day life and in Associations like ours across the province. We change our AGM place every year to encourage members from the different Counties and Municipalities we support, in hope of getting the ideal time and place for them to attend. This is a moving target as always since all our lives as producers are usually at the mercy of something else from weather-family-crops. I sincerely Thank You for the time you have taken to attend this AGM and hope you enjoy the food, entertainment and atmosphere.

As with the never-ceasing change of our roles as producers, change occurs everywhere all the time. You as members are going to continue to see change within the GWFA in the coming season from Board Members to Events and Staff. It is like the never-ending circle of Nature's Seasons, things continue changing as they have in the past and will in the future. We recently had our Forage & Livestock Specialist Devin Knopp move on to another exciting position within our Agricultural Community and as we wish him well in his change, the GWFA is actively looking to fill that position.

We will be adding another big change to our association, Ginette Boucher is moving on into another phase of her career and stepping away from GWFA. She was a great asset to the organization for many years with many transitions and changes to add to her experience and knowledge. Ginette's organizational & operational expertise will be greatly missed by the board. She has instilled in the past and current board members the importance of governance in an association. Her role within the GWFA will be a real job to fill. We wish her well in her next phase in her career. We will actively search for the right candidate to fill the administration and marketing manager position.

Along with spring comes the flourish of new life, this is the case within our organization as well. I encourage you all to take the time to appreciate it from the fresh blade of grass (easy enough we are all watch for it with eagle eyes), baby animals, worms (dirt geeks will get it), pollinators and insects. All these are the goal of spring each year. Enjoy and reap the benefits of them. Give yourselves a pat on the back. Without our dedication to our walks of life, there would be a much less of life flourishing.

As GWFA goes for forward, there will be some changes in office and in the field. We are going Grass Roots and starting small producer grazing groups. Do you want to attend a casual yet interesting evening of discussion in a pasture, learning the successes and failure we can all have, in your community? If you do, contact Amy Leitch 403-845-8044. Our first Producer Grazing Evening is June 10 near Alhambra, Ab.

I want to encourage all our GWFA members and Blade readers to take the adequate steps and awareness for spring farm life safety. We all want to see each other around our communities in the coming months.

Enjoy the sun and the rain, for they bring what we are here to enjoy—Life.

-Amy



# Grey Wooded Forage Association

## 2017—2018 Board of Directors & Staff

<b>Chair</b>	Amy Leitch	Alhambra
<b>Vice Chair</b>	vacant	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Vance Graham	Rocky Mountain House
<b>Secretary and ARECA Rep</b>	Ken Ziegler	Rocky Mountain House
<b>Director and Publicity Chair</b>	Theodore Chastko	Lacombe
<b>Project Chair</b>	Andrew Ritson-Bennett	Red Deer
<b>Directors</b>	Benz Rufenacht, Bluffton	Megan Snell, Oyen
	Jason Bradley, Sundre	Cy Newsham, Sundre
	Gil Hegel Sundre	
<b>Ex-Officio</b>	Yadeta Kabeta, Lacombe	Maria Champagne, Bluffton



**Back row, left to right:** Andrew Ritson-Bennett, Cy Newsham, Megan Snell, Vance Graham, Benz Rufenacht and Yadeta Kabeta.

**Front row, left to right:** Ted Chastko, Maria Champagne, Ken Ziegler, Amy Leitch and Gil Hegel—Director

### STAFF



Ginette Boucher;  
Administration and  
Marketing Manager



Devin Knopp;  
Forage and  
Livestock Specialist



Enna Graham;  
Summer Intern



Heather Lyon  
Bookkeeper

## Manager's Final Report

Ginette Boucher



In the past four years of managing GWFA, I implemented an email marketing system and grew the digital distribution to 754 active email addresses. This enabled us to market our events, activities and *the Blade* to very easily reach our members, sponsors, collaborators, county partners and associates. We continue to benefit from this email distribution system.

Our membership has grown and has hovered around 160 paid members each year.

We have been delivering a program based on the needs assessment that was developed by staff and distributed electronically to our membership. We feel that we are responding to our producer needs. Please ensure you complete the survey provided in your AGM package.

A greater collaboration has been developed with our county partners, local and provincial researchers as well as the University of Alberta, Olds College, Envigour HX, Delta Genomics and Livestock Gentec. This has been a productive year regarding the continued building and development of collaborations.

I have worked to ensure GWFA has a strong financial position. When I took over the management of GWFA in spring 2015 the organization was in an extremely poor financial position to the point of bankruptcy. Through strong financial management and sound budgeting, our association is now in a good financial position. I feel that my contribution to this association has been genuine and fruitful.

I have greatly benefited from working for GWFA. Because of my sound financial management, I made some wise personal investments and developed my residence. I have made a great deal of contacts and learned about forages and grazing management.

The board governance training grant I applied for helped me understand board governance more clearly. My greatest enjoyment in this past year was the delivery of the Environmental Farm Plan and learning from producers.

### Here are some areas that the board needs to improve to be effective and retain staff:

- Respect & appreciation for the staff
- Transparency
- Communication with staff and the membership
- Must be fluent with the roles, responsibilities, commitment and governance of being on a board
- Creation of job descriptions that reflect the actual requirement of the job (a job description isn't an endless to do list)
- Develop a policy manual for the staff, including chain of command
- Update and review outdated bylaws
- Develop a board recruiting committee to ensure skilled and qualified board members
- Increase advocacy – MLA's, Municipalities, Alberta Government and others
- Establish a consistent and stable source of funding. Executive committee to develop and implement a financial plan and review GWFA progress as indicated in our Strategic Plan 2017-2021

### Here are a few points that I would like to share with the membership:

- Get involved with the association and provide feedback
- Hold the board accountable for their work
- Participate at board meetings to ensure long term success of the association
- Participate in committees such as projects and publicity
- Ensure the board communicates with you and keep you abreast of developments
- Ask questions

So long to all of you, it's been a pleasure serving you. I wish you all success in your farming operations; my cell phone number will remain the same 403-507-5478. I would be happy to hear from all of you.

*Kindest of regards,  
Ginette*



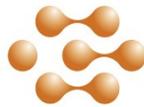
Thank-you to our corporate sponsors who support our organization and all of its activities throughout the year!



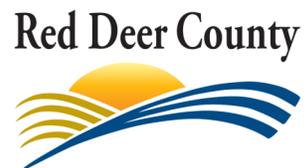
Rocky Mountain House



Thank-you to our AGM sponsors



Thank-you to the counties who support and collaborate with us!



## The Blade

The monthly publication is an important vehicle for regularly supplying event announcements and information to the members. The Blade is currently 16 pages and we continuously search for content of quality and value for our readers. We are constantly looking for articles to improve our publication. If you should have some thoughts for content, please be sure to share it with us.

The Grey Wooded Forage Association publishes The Blade monthly and distributes five hundred copies digitally, and prints to distribute by mail and other methods over 200 publications. Our board also distributes copies; we provide publications to our sponsors, and bring several to our many events to create awareness of our association and develop new members. One of our goals is to grow our digital distribution into the thousands and reach beyond our borders. We have been working at developing The Blade into a publication that is of high enough value that people want to be GWFA members just to get it.

The Blade is available on our website, [www.greywoodedforageassociation.com](http://www.greywoodedforageassociation.com)



### Publications Available to Members

A few of the publications available to members, some are available as handouts, others are available in our library. Feel free to contact us at any time for these publications. We are often out of the office at events or meetings. Please contact us ahead of time to be sure there is someone in the office to greet you.

Office: 403-844-2645

A list of our library resources is available on our website.

## Advanced Fencing for Precision Grazing—May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017

This event was hosted at the Clyde Ranch near Bearberry in Mountain View County. Grey Wooded Forage Association had the opportunity to give a short grazing talk discussing pasture planning.

The talk was well received and many attendees reached out to us after the talk to further discuss pasture planning. New GWFA memberships were developed from this event.

This was a one of a kind event: Greenedge Precision Fencing has developed new electric fencing technology based on aerial mapping, production planning and laser-guided, robotic fence installation technology; using aerial data for effective and economical grazing systems. The company, under the ownership of founder Lloyd Quantz, has been noted internationally for its innovative and safe post vibration and wire installation methods.

Fotocure is headed by Douglas Greff and supported by skilled pilots and data-analysis experts, specializing in

aerial data acquisition and management. It is focused on the best ways to bring drone and data cloud technology to the challenge of observing and recording plant growth data and animal management and movement records.

We received two demonstrations of the capabilities of these technologies and many producers have shown great interest. Other presentations included Marvin Jackson of Sundog Solar. Marvin presented a dugout watering system that was previously installed at the site as well as a dugout aerator.

Gallagher also did an electric fencing presentation. Mountain View County supported this event. This farm site had several Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) projects that were presented on this day.



Jeremy Clyde



Marvin Jackson



Garth Hein



Lloyd Quantz



## Pasture Walk with Jim Bauer June 26, 2017

Our pasture walk took place at the JB Ranch in Acme. There was a small crowd that came out for the day. Jim and Barb took us out into the pasture behind their home.

There we saw some of their work with different forages and grazing techniques to allow themselves a variety of forage species.

They also discussed how they managed their grazing to meet the needs of the livestock and the land. Jim went through some of the calculations each producer should do to estimate the carrying capacity, rest period, and grazing duration. Because we had a small group, it allowed a lot more time for everyone to get a chance to ask Jim and Barb about grazing management at a more in-depth level.

Everyone who attended felt the event was very worth while, well delivered and everyone learned a lot from Jim. Those who attended expressed interest in attending another event of this type in the future. Jim also demonstrated how to utilize temporary electric fencing to manage pastures, reduce overgrazing, improve soil health & increase profits. Total producers 13.



## Red Deer County ALUS Program in 2017

By Ken Lewis, ALUS Red Deer County Program Coordinator



Our fifth year of delivering an ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) Program in Red Deer County was in 2017.

As a reminder, ALUS pays agricultural producers for their management, that produces increased ecosystem services on their farms and ranches. ALUS makes these payments in 2 ways: a) cost-sharing on project establishment, and b) making annual payments for ongoing management, for a contracted period of time.

2017 was a milestone year, in that at some point in the year, we allocated our “millionth dollar”. That is, via our ALUS Program, we are now paying over \$1.1 million dollars to Red Deer County ALUS Farmers, for their production of increased ecosystem services.

There are many types of projects that our ALUS Farmers and

Ranchers are doing in Red Deer County with this funding. They include riparian management fencing, providing alternative / off-site watering sources, installing creek crossings, providing alternative, portable shelter, planting trees and shrubs, and converting marginal cropland in and around wetlands, to permanent cover.

2017 was also our third year of doing Riparian and Range Health Assessments with Cows and Fish, of most of the ALUS Projects. The idea is, when a producer does an ALUS project, we go in at the beginning of the project, and do a Health Assessment, to get a baseline of ecological conditions at the project site. Then, in 4 or 5 years, we can go back and do the Health Assessment again, and compare the baseline (before) conditions, to the current (after) conditions. This allows us to measure the environmental impacts of the ALUS Program.

We continue to greatly appreciate the involvement of the GWFA in our ALUS Program. GWFA staff are members of our ALUS Partnership Advisory Committee and provide technical advice to the Committee and to ALUS farmers as they complete their projects.

Any Red Deer County producer who would like to learn more about the ALUS Program, can contact me anytime at 403-505-9038 or one of our ALUS Farmer Liaisons: Stephen Smith (Pine Lake) 403-318-3371 or Tom Towers (Red Deer) 403-352-6901. Or have a look at the ALUS webpage ([www.alus.ca](http://www.alus.ca)).



**KeyAg Kubota Demo Day—June 30, 2017**



Grey Wooded Forage Association collaborated with KeyAg Kubota in this demo day at Bower Farms near Red Deer to demonstrate some of their hay and silage equipment.

Disc mower conditioners, balers, wrappers, rakes & tedders were demonstrated to show their efficacy as tools for haying equipment. GWFA set up a booth in the field alongside Gem Silage Products. The day was planned to be a full day affair where anyone that was interested could come by at any time and test out the equipment.

There was no formal program for talks or demonstration, it was a day meant for farmers to gather, see and test drive the equipment. We had many opportunities to engage with producers and signed up a few new members. It was an interesting day. More than 70 producers attended.



## Multi-site Legume Tour—August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017



Grey Wooded Forage Association hosted a tour within the Annual Cow-Forage Gentec Tour, A High Legume Pasture Tour. Partners included Livestock Gentec, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, University of Alberta, Alberta Beef Forage & Grazing Centre, Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and GWFA. The GWFA tour began at the Lacombe Research Station where Dr. Vern Baron took the group to the alfalfa field plots and discussed the varieties and research being done. GWFA also had the opportunity to share with producers the demonstration plots we have at Doug Skeel's farm south of Rocky Mountain House. Following these presentations, the group proceeded to Murray Abel's farm. Murray is our sanfoin /alfalfa project collaborator. At Murray's site the discussion revolved around the successes and learnings of the sanfoin/alfalfa plots and how to improve establishment. Murray commented on how valuable it is to incorporate legumes in pastures to improve productivity, soil health and animal weight gain when pastures are managed appropriately. This was a well worth while collaboration with many partners. Many producers saw the advantages of adding legumes in pastures. Future events of this sort are extremely valuable. Eighty-eight producers attended this high legume pasture tour.



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et  
Agroalimentaire Canada



## Forage & Cows: Working Together to Improve the Perfect Pairing

By Clinton Bons, Livestock Gentec



Thank you to the Grey Wooded Forage Association and its members for collaborating with Livestock Gentec in the 2017 Cow Forage Gentec Tour held with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Lacombe Research Centre. This event showcased ongoing research and allowed participants to discuss the best practices involved in alfalfa, cicer milkvetch, and sainfoin forage production “in the field” with GWFA producer Murray Abel before returning to the Centre to talk about the cattle and the economic benefits of optimizing herd vigour with EnVigour HX™. Expanding on this initial success, our two organizations continue to work together.

It was great to have GWFA participate in Gentec's 2017 “One Genome One Health” conference where genomic application across topics ranging from beef production, to forestry, to human health were discussed as a way to build upon the achievements in each of these various fields.

In 2018, we look forward to working together to pair genomics with the best forage and beef production practices so that beef producers have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from practical on-ranch validation and research.

EnVigour HX™



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL,  
LIFE & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

## Environmental Farm Plan update

Environmental Farm Plan had an interesting and exciting year in 2017-18. The revamped online system has proven effective and online completion of EFPs has been widely adopted. In total 179 EFPs were completed, with 143 (80%) completed online versus 36 (20%) paper versions. From January to the end of March, the numbers were 131 online versus 8 paper. Since renewal is now a feature of the EFP program, the simplicity of online renewal is seen as a big advantage. The uptake in EFPs was related to the newly instituted renewal period. As producers became aware that renewal was required, more accessed ARECA (EFP) staff and the online system. Many were able to complete and submit their EFP by the time they had been assigned a technician. All in all, both the renewal period and online system have worked well.

Ongoing developments include the development of habitat/biodiversity conservation content, the redesign of the website to enable mobile users to access and work on their online workbooks from all devices, and a review of all resources associated with the online workbook. All of these developments will help producers complete and update their EFPs more easily in future.



-Paul Watson, EFP Director

## DELIVERED ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLANS

**Environmental Farm Plan  
Free Online Workshop**

**Register by Oct 27, 2017 to reserve your spot**

Coffee & Lunch Provided  
Please bring your own laptop. One will be provided if needed.



**Space is Limited**  
To register contact  
Kim Barkwell:  
780-387-6182  
GWFA: 403-844-2645  
<https://county-of-wetaskiwin-efp.eventbrite.ca>

November 2, 2017

Registration Begins at 9:30  
10:00-3:00

**County of Wetaskiwin Office**  
243019A—Hwy 13



Nov. 14, 2017

Registration Begins at 9:30  
10:00-3:00

**Mountain View County Office**



**Environmental Farm Plan  
Free Online Workshop**

**Register by November 10, 2017 to Reserve Your Spot**

Coffee & Lunch Provided  
Please bring your own laptop. One will be provided if needed.

**Space is Limited**  
Register by Nov. 10  
<https://environmentalfarmplanworkshop.eventbrite.ca>  
For Information Contact:  
Daniela 403-335-3311 Ext. 204  
dlemus@mvcountry.com



**Environmental Farm Plan  
Free Online Workshop**

**Register by Nov 24, 2017 To Reserve Your Spot**

Coffee & Lunch Provided  
Please bring your own laptop. One will be provided if needed.



**Space is Limited**  
**To Register:**  
<https://ponoka-county-efp.eventbrite.ca>  
**For Information Contact:**  
GWFA: 403-844-2645

**November 30 2017**

Registration Begins at 9:30  
10:00-3:00

**Ponoka County Office**  
4205 Highway 2A  
Ponoka



**Free Environmental Farm Plan Workshop**

**Register by Jan 22, 2018 To Reserve Your Spot**

Coffee & Lunch Provided  
Please bring your own laptop. One will be provided if needed.



**Space is Limited**  
**To Register:**  
<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=mh9gfvaqab&oeidk=a07eev7uqfq4da89d49>

**January 25th 2018**

Registration Begins at 9:30  
10:00-3:00

**Lacombe County Office**  
  
**Lacombe**

**For Information Contact:**  
Ginette (GWFA):  
403-844-2645



## Generating Electricity from the Sun—October 4, 2017

Grey Wooded Forage Association partnered with Ponoka County, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Solar Energy Society of Alberta and Vern Steinborn to deliver a one-day workshop on grid-tie solar options for Alberta Farmers.

Rob Harlan gave the bulk of the presentations through the day, about developing, building, managing, and using a solar system effectively.

Vern Steinborn gave a short presentation of the On-Farm Energy Management program, regarding Growing Forward 2 and the new CAP program that will be rolling out in April 2018.

Finally, we heard from Paul McLauchlin. He is a Ponoka County Councillor and recently finished his Masters Thesis around the economics of installing solar systems. Paul also discussed his experience with installing solar systems on his own farm. 29 producers attended.



Paul McLauchlin

Event	# of Questionnaires	Total Attendees	Land	Acres	Livestock	Number
Solar Workshop	17	30	Pasture	3445	Beef	526
			Hay	1451	Feeders	7
			Crop	5120	Ewes	35
					Other	37



## Young Agrarians Winter Mixer—January 13-14, 2018



By Megan Snell, GWFA director

It was a privilege to attend the Young Agrarians Winter Mixer Event on January 13th and 14th. The event was held outside of Alix, Alberta at the Deer Meadow Valley Camp. Our weekend was filled with many different activities and workshops, that involved a variety of unique farming skills and techniques. Throughout the weekend we had the opportunity to share our background in the agricultural industry, plans for the future, as well as many laughs shared. I found it interesting to hear the many different perspectives and ideas that everyone had come up with for a career in agriculture. Overall I would recommend the Young Agrarians event to anyone, because of the opportunity to absorb information and how it changed the outlook on agricultural industry in the most positive way.



## Ladies Livestock Lessons—January 20, 2018

The Red Bow Agricultural Partnership is a municipal collaboration created with the purpose of sharing resources, information, knowledge and facilitating networking opportunities for the benefit of sustainable agriculture within the rural communities in which they operate.

The current partnership consists of M.D. of Bighorn, Clearwater County, Kneehill County, Mountain View County, Red Deer County, Rocky View County and Wheatland County. Since 2007 the committee has hosted two annual events: Ladies Livestock Lessons and Ranching Opportunities.

Ladies Livestock Lessons is a workshop designed specifically for women in the ranching industry.

This workshop includes indoor classroom time, outdoor hands-on sessions and lots of socializing and networking.

This project is hosted by a subcommittee consisting of M.D. of Bighorn, Kneehill County, Mountain View County, Rocky View County and Wheatland County as well as partners Cows & Fish, Foothills Forage and Grazing Association and Grey Wooded Forage Association.

Over 120 participants attended Ladies Livestock Lessons workshop in Acme on January 20th. It was a day full of presentations, but some of the more notable ones were: Passing The Torch-Succession Planning by Shawna Feth; Canadian Round Table for Sustainable Beef by Fawn Jackson; Bovine Calving Management by Dr. Gord Krebs, and the Calving Clinic by Dr. Gord Krebs, Dr. Lisa Misener, and Chantal DeBeurs.

The planning committee brought in Lucy, a full-size calving model along with two table top models, to provide an opportunity for attendees to experience and practise delivering a calf and

learn how to use a calf puller and chains. An excellent day! Congrats to the committee for an excellent job done.

If anyone is interested in attending a future workshop, please be sure to contact any of the partners in the Red Bow Agricultural Partnership.

-Ginette



**A full house of 111 registrants took part in Ladies Livestock Lessons, held on January 20, 2018 at the Acme Community Hall.**

## Gate to Plate—February 15, 2018

Gate to Plate was held at the Ponoka Legion in Ponoka County. Our main partner in this event was Ponoka County.

The purpose of this event was to engage the attendees in discussions on how to grow your business and market locally grown products. We started off with letting each producer share a bit about themselves and their operations.

This was the key to the success of this event. Once we broke the ice, producers shared among each other their resources, their production methods and learned from one another. This was a very successful day.

Fourteen registered guests and 6 panelists representing three farms. Total attendance was 24 people, including speakers, attendees, county and GWFA staff. The feedback received was very positive.

Many people communicated with us after the event and felt it was very informative and a few asked if we were going to host a similar event in the future. This is on our radar for a future event; we need to be more targeted in our marketing efforts to reach the right groups of people.

Ellen Goddard was our keynote speaker of the day and discussed various aspects of social license and the impacts it has on agriculture and community as well as a how to build and retain public trust. Christine Anderson, Local Foods Specialist of AAF was another speaker who shared her principles of selling direct and wrote an article in the April 2018 publication of *The Blade*.

Our producer panel was also very successful; this included Brian Luce (at the back of the room in the above photo), a long time GWFA member and holistic manager, Clint Erickson another GWFA producer as well as Honest Meats of Caroline. Each had time to share their production methods and how they market direct.



Dr. Andrew and Kristen Ritson-Bennett  
with their newest arrival

## EnVigour HX Information Sessions—November 28, 2017

### EnVigour HX™ Information Sessions

The newest genomic product specialized for commercial beef production, proudly presented by:



Interested in what genomics can do for crossbred cattle?

Join Delta Genomics for an evening to learn how EnVigour HX™ can help you manage your herd.

Six free information sessions will be hosted around Alberta. Register for the one nearest you at:

<http://bit.ly/2lzeY45>



To learn more about EnVigour HX™ & Delta Genomics:

780.492.2538

[envigourhx@deltagenomics.com](mailto:envigourhx@deltagenomics.com)

[www.deltagenomics.com](http://www.deltagenomics.com)

Grey Wooded Forage Association partnered with Delta Genomics to deliver an EnVigour HX producer session at the Eckville Legion on November 28, 2017.

Twelve producers attended to hear Michelle Miller, CEO of Delta Genomics discuss the benefits of DNA testing and learned how EnVigour HX can help manage the herd, and what it can do for crossbred cattle.

The presentation took place with plenty of time for questions and discussion from the attendees.

Most producers left with something to think about when it comes to their commercial herds and another tool to help them make management decisions that best fit their operations.

Since this collaboration GWFA continues to develop a collaboration with Olds College, and Delta Genomics.

A grant application to assist producers in getting started with DNA testing is currently in progress.



## Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta

### Message from Executive Director, Alan Hall

Looking ahead to the coming year, ARECA/myself will be working hard with all member and non member associations, commissions, companies, research community, Municipalities, Alberta Government and others to build and finance the services and initiatives to bring solutions to issues and capture new opportunities facing Alberta's farmers.

Along the way we will be strengthening ARECA's approach to advocating the benefits and results of the efforts of our network of associations. This is important as it shows those who invest and fund the work of our associations, that they are getting a very good return from their investments and funding.



This paves the way for renewed and growing investment in our associations as we move into the future. ARECA is repositioning itself to focus on this advocacy and fundraising role and in so doing will shift out of running projects. I have recently been meeting with associations, Commissions and others discussing these shifts. There is good support for this change of direction. However, the journey has only begun.

I look forward to working closely with associations and others over the coming months. Building from the ground up rather than from the top down will fetch results.

An old friend of mine often tells me "people support what they help build." From my past experiences I can only say how true this is!

Looking forward to the journey.



### Report from Previous Executive Director, Janette McDonald

ARECA and its 9 member associations had an important place in rural Alberta again in 2017.

**Raising the Bar on RVTs:** ARECA was pleased to focus attention on Regional Variety Trials again in 2017. We held two excellent training days, one in April and one in July. Thank you to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the University of Alberta for their support of this project. A special shout out to Kristine Polziehn who was a resource for our members for 2016 and 2017. This summer a significant number of **Pest Monitoring** activities were carried out by LARA and other associations. The 171 canola black leg surveys and 287 site visits for insect pest monitoring are important contributions to Alberta's pest surveillance.

Pest monitoring expands our activities well beyond our membership.

Pest monitoring is a team effort that involves public employees (federal and provincial), municipal agriculture service boards, the scientific community, and not for profit groups like us.

Together we create a pest monitoring and surveillance system that is the envy of many provinces. ARECA and its members were quick to respond to **Operation Pollinator** in 2017. This shows how well we are connected to producers, and can quickly deliver initiatives that have support from the greater community.

This project creates the opportunity to connect with those outside of the agriculture community on a common topic. The ability of our associations to mobilize collaborators and get the seed in the ground in such a timely fashion says a lot about our community engagement and the nature of ARECA members.

This year, ARECA and its members launched the **Carbon Pasture Management** project. It is exciting to see ARECA step into the arena and become a conduit for information and engagement on the value of pasture and grazing lands for carbon capture and storage. There is a lot of discussion about the public goods and services (water quality, carbon capture, biodiversity, and habitat) provided by well managed grazing lands.

This initiative puts our associations in a place to give valuable input, provide collaborators, and communicate about farming to the general public. I look forward to seeing how this evolves in 2018 and beyond.

Congratulations to former ARECA Chair, Ian Murray for being awarded Alberta Beef Producer's Environmental Stewardship Award in 2017.

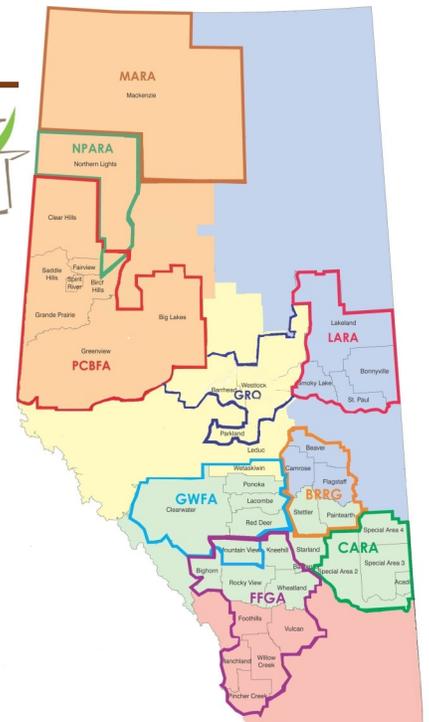
You can all be proud that Ian was your representative at the provincial level in 2015 and 2016.

Thanks to ARECA staff: Paul Watson, Lisa Nadeau, Val Fadden and Sean Chuan for their support and hard work through 2017.



## Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta Member Associations

Battle River Research Group	Forestburg
Chinook Applied Research Association	Oyen
Foothills Forage & Grazing Association	High River
Gateway Research Organization	Westlock
Grey Wooded Forage Association	Rocky Mountain House
Lakeland Agricultural Research Association	Bonnyville
Mackenzie Applied Research Association	Fort Vermillion
North Peace Applied Research Association	Manning
Peace Country Beef and Forage Association	Fairview/High Prairie



## SUMMARY OF A PASTURE REJUVENATION STUDY

By Dr. Surya Acharya – Lethbridge Research Center



Direct seeding into existing pasture is expected to improve pasture productivity and nutritional quality while reducing the time necessary for rejuvenation. To accomplish this, experiments were conducted to determine appropriate method of pasture rejuvenation using bloat-free forage legumes. Four sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia* Scop.) and three cicer milkvetch (CMV) (*Astragalus cicer* L.) populations were seeded into alfalfa and grass pastures using three seeding methods to compare their ability to establish and persist in the mixtures. At Lethbridge the resident pasture was an alfalfa pasture, whereas at Red Deer and Ponoka the resident pastures were predominantly grass pastures. The following were the major observations:

- When new sainfoin populations were drilled into the pasture they were observed to contribute more than 20% to the total biomass of the alfalfa pasture at Lethbridge whereas in Red Deer and Ponoka their contributions were less than 10% of total biomass. Ten percent or less is not considered sufficient from a rejuvenation success stand point.
- Old sainfoin cultivar Nova and the two new sainfoin populations Mountainview and LRC3432 can improve the existing alfalfa pasture and has the potential to improve grass pastures in some parts of western Canada.
- CMV cultivars contributed well below sainfoin cultivars in all locations during the two years observations were recorded, thus we suggest that CMV cultivars should not be used for quick pasture rejuvenation.
- Mixed alfalfa and bloat-free legumes stands can be established by completely breaking up the stand and reseeding a pasture with new sainfoin populations or Veldt cicer milkvetch.
- Test at Lethbridge clearly indicated that introducing new sainfoin cultivars into a resident alfalfa pasture can contribute >20% in total DM yield. Use of sainfoin cultivars not only adds up in

total biomass production but can prevent pasture bloat in grazing cattle.

- The study demonstrated that alfalfa cultivar AC Blue J used in this study can be planted immediately after breaking the old alfalfa stand along with sainfoin without waiting for a rest period.
- Drilling seeds of new sainfoin cultivars into existing pasture can be a successful rejuvenation strategy for improving productivity and quality of non-

leguminous pastures while reducing bloat risk associated with use of legumes in some parts of western Canada.

- Between the two bloat-free legumes sainfoin contributed higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) proportions of plants to the pasture mix compared to the CMV populations.
- Grass-legume mixtures with >10% legume stands increased soil available nitrogen in 2 years. Although in two years sainfoin and CMV mixed pastures did not sequester organic carbon in soil, they increased microbial carbon biomass and enzyme associated with C-cycling.
- Drilling legumes in grass pasture can improve some physical, chemical and biological properties of soil indicating that pasture rejuvenation approach using the bloat-free legumes is sustainable in some but not all parts of western Canada.

Along with the above information this study generated the following questions or future work that needs to be done to improve pasture rejuvenation:

- Can alfalfa seed be directly seeded into alfalfa pasture and would there be cultivar differences in this regard.
- Determine carbon sequestration and other changes in soil quality parameters due to rejuvenation effect on pasture.
- Study soil microbial composition and diversity of pastureland following use of different rejuvenation methods and management practices.

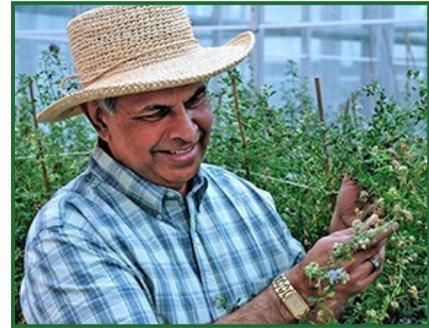
## ***GWFA adds Webinars to its Extension Program***

GWFA invested in some Citrix software “go to webinar” to add a new method for delivering extension information for our program. In 2017 we hosted 2 weeds webinars; and another called Forage Research at the Lethbridge Research & Development Centre by Dr. Surya Acharya. We received great response to these webinars. Many producers and industry members attended these webinars and benefitted from this information.

Below is a summary of the 2017 webinars:

- Introduction to Weeds, by Devin Knopp
- Grazing Your Way Out Of Weeds, by Devin Knopp
- Sainfoin Story, By Dr. Surya Acharya, Lethbridge Research Centre

The advantage of the webinars is that we can record them and make them available for members later. Another great advantage is we can have speakers from across the country and around the world that can share their knowledge & information at a fraction of the cost to bring them in and they can deliver their information from the comfort of their business office. GWFA should continue utilizing the webinar as a delivery method for our program and continue to utilize this very sophisticated software.



***Dr. Surya Acharya***

## ***2017 EAT Tour***

Grey Wooded Forage Association participates annually in this Educational Agriculture Tour (EAT).

Devin Knopp taught Grade 4's about soils. Schoolchildren attending the tour also learned about forages.

The EAT tour is hosted by the county and the Rocky Agriculture society.



## ***2018 Farmers'/Farmerettes' Bonspiel***



To increase our community investment, Grey Wooded Forage Association participated in and sponsored the Rocky Farmer's/Farmerette's bonspiel at the end of January 2018. Devin Knopp participated in the farmer's bonspiel and Ginette Boucher participated in the Farmerette's bonspiel.

The GWFA-sponsored Farmerette's team took second place. I enjoyed the experience, as well as meeting new people. I distributed over 50 Blade publications. This was a worthwhile community investment activity. GWFA should continue to support this initiative.

*-Ginette*

## Projects: 3D Fencing

**Project #:** 2011C

**Cooperators:** Otto Seidel, Darryl Murphy & landowner, Rene' Poirier

**By:** Mountain View County & Grey Wooded Forage Association

**Funding:** Agriculture Opportunities Fund (AOF)

**Sponsors:** Mountain View County Agricultural Services, PowerFlex Fence Canada & Gallagher Canada

Farmers across Alberta are dealing with elk and deer feeding on and fouling their winter feed stacks, bale yard, swath grazing and other feed supply. To find solutions for these serious problems, we have initiated two 3D fencing project sites in the Sundre area of Mountain View County.

We located two cooperators in the Sundre area that were having



significant elk damage to their winter hay supplies. Both Otto and Darryl agreed to be cooperators for the project. GWFA staff with the help of our cooperators, Otto and Darryl, built the fences around the bale yards at the two locations.

Fence construction consisted of a 4 wire, high tensile electric fence about 4 feet high. An additional one wire fence was built outside of that, 3 feet from the 4 wire fence and 3 feet high. Gates were built to have the same configuration. Once the fences and gates were built, fence energizers and ground fields were installed. We also flagged the fence and attached foil cups with scents to attract cow elk.

During the winter the sites were continually monitored, doing some occasional maintenance to the fences and keeping the elk attractant scents fresh.

January 2015 a large herd of elk visited Otto's site with half a dozen getting inside the fence. Judging by the tracks it looked like they were jumping the fence. Besides the few elk that got into Otto Seidel's site, a few mule deer were seen inside the enclosure at Darryl Murphy's site.

The tracks showed that they went under the outside fence and

over the inside fence.

After more research a decision to modify the fences, by adding wires and flex posts to the 4-wire fence at Otto's farm, to increase the height by 2 feet.

Flex posts were also added to position a single wire into the space between the outer fence and the inner high tensile fence to give the overall fence more depth.



The winter of 2015/2016 was very mild and there was little to no game pressure. The game cameras did capture a few deer in the late spring making it through the fence, but the wires had slackened through the winter and the deer could duck the outside fence and crawl through the slack wires on the main fence.

The winter of 2017/2018 we finally captured some meaningful data. A large herd of elk began pressuring the fence at Darryl Murphy's.

The snow is very deep on the fields about 3.5 to 4 feet of snow. The elk were willing to brave a shock of 8.5-9Kv to access the feed. Unfortunately, they managed to do a fair bit of damage to the fence.

We have a broken post and a gate that need to be replaced in the spring. However, we have data and imaging that shows the elk braving the fence.

Though elk got into the feed, the entire herd did not. There were approximately 100 elk in the area, but only a dozen or so were actually getting into the fence.

The feed loss could have been a lot worse.

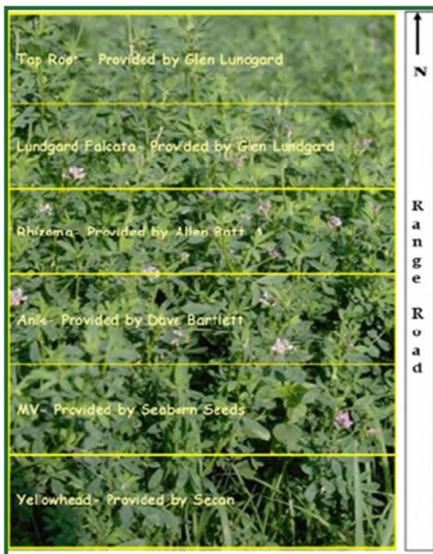
-Devin Knopp

## Projects: Hardy Alfalfa Varieties

**Project ID:** 2013A

**Cooperators:** Doug and Deb Skeels

**Sponsors/Collaborators:** Clearwater County and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada



In 2013, the Grey Wooded Forage Association (GWFA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) supported by the Beef Cluster (Beef Cattle Research Council and AAFC), Alberta Beef Producers and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, embarked on a joint alfalfa demonstration project at the Skeels farm, southeast of Rocky Mountain House.

This project originated from discussions within the GWFA regarding the lack of longevity

of alfalfa stands in the West Country.

All of these, with the exception of Yellowhead and Seaborn's MV Blend, are from very old seed stands, some over 30 years old. When they were selected, GWFA expected them to differ from original plantings due to cross breeding from outside cultivars. In 2014, Yves Castonguay from AAFC's Quebec Research and Development Centre genotyped each species and found Rhizoma and MV Blend to be genetically similar, Anik and Lundgard's Falcata to be very similar while Yellowhead and Lundgard's taprooted cultivar were relatively unique. They established that Anik and Lundgard's Falcata were diploids (two sets of chromosomes) and the others tetraploids (four sets of chromosomes). Most of the alfalfa we grow are tetraploids; tetraploid plants are larger than diploids and should be more competitive in mixtures. Even though Rhizoma and MV Blend are closely related they don't look alike. Rhizoma has a wide base with rhizomes, while MV Blend is much more erect. Seaborns are from Rocky Mountain House.

ity of alfalfa stands in the West Country.

On July 1, 2013 six cultivars were planted in a plot format designed to allow us to assess the winter hardiness and resistance of different alfalfa cultivars to grass invasion. The six alfalfa cultivars were based on their longevity reputations on grey wooded soils and presence in Central and Northern Alberta. These species included the following four producer-based populations, Rhizoma (Allen Batt), Anik (D. Bartlett) Lundgard's Falcata (a Siberian creeping rooted type) and Lundgard's taprooted cultivar (G. Lundgard) and two from local seed companies, MV Blend (Seaborn Seeds) and Yellowhead (Secan). The seed from seed producers came from Fairview and Fort Vermillion, AB;



Table 1: Comparison of 2017 summer and fall alfalfa yield of ungrazed and grazed alfalfa plots

Alfalfa Type	Kg/Ha			
	Ungrazed Alfalfa Production		Grazed Alfalfa Production	
	July	September	July	September
Yellowhead	1729	360	2931	799
MV	1636	661	2776	1091
Anik	1989	547	3839	555
Rhizoma	2485	744	2487	1365
Lundgard Falcata	3057	884	2722	687
Tap Root	2054	1968	1802	1757

\*Not analyzed statistically



The cover data illustrate the dominance and persistence of genetically similar MV Blend and Rhizoma in their stands from year to year.

In the absence of grazing the alfalfa cover of all cultivars decreased with the exception of both Lundgard cultivars which actually increased. It will be interesting to see if these trends continue beyond 2016 and 2017. The demonstration at Skeels farm is a part of a larger research project. We have all of these populations space-planted in dormancy vs. winter survival tests at two locations in Quebec, Swift Current, SK. and Lacombe, AB.

-Devin Knopp



**Deb and Doug Skeels**  
**Rocky Mountain House**

Over the last two growing seasons, the eastern half of each cultivar plot has been harvested in late July as one cut per season and the western half of the plot has been harvested in late July, and then grazed in the fall.

Annual yield clips and alfalfa cover estimates have been completed to measure productivity and the encroachment of other species into the individual alfalfa stands.

These measurements will continue in 2017 with a slight adjustment. We are going to clip and sort the sample so we have a better understanding of how much of the total yield we are seeing is alfalfa and the remainder is grass and forbs that have encroached on the site.

*Table 2: Comparison of summer and fall grass/forb yield of ungrazed and grazed alfalfa plots. Compared to the actual total yield of alfalfa and forbs in the plot*

Alfalfa Type	Kg/Ha							
	Ungrazed Grass/Forb Yield		Total Ungrazed Plot Production		Grazed Grass/Forb Yield		Total Grazed Plot Production	
	July	September	July	September	July	September	July	September
Yellowhead	3914	1224	5643	1584	3313	797	6244	1596
MV	3515	836	5151	1497	3491	997	6267	2088
Anik	3621	1251	5610	1798	2638	1130	6477	1685
Rhizoma	3182	861	5667	1605	2958	783	5445	2148
Lundgard Falcata	2739	884	5796	1768	2819	980	5541	1667
Tap Root	3776	867	5830	2835	6984	952	8786	2709

\*Not analyzed statistically

# HIGH LEGUME PASTURES

Creating profit above ground and wealth below.

## High Legume Pastures...

- increase calf and yearling weight gains or cow body condition scores.
- extend pasture productivity and quality during and beyond the "summer slump" of tame grasses.
- add biodiversity of plant multi-functional species to increase interactions with soil organisms for increased soil health.
- fix nitrogen to reduce fertilizer costs and increase forage production/profit as well as capture soil carbon.
- provide root systems to different profiles in the soil, therefore increasing utilization of soil moisture and increasing carbon capture depths.
- are more drought averse to help stabilize yields in drier years.

### AAC Mountainview Sainfoin...

- is a no-bloat legume containing tannins that can greatly reduce the risk of bloat from alfalfa when in a mixed stand.
- was developed by Dr. Surya Acharya, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge.
- has a similar growth and regrowth pattern to alfalfa as well as yield.
- competes with alfalfa, ensuring it stays in the pasture longer to provide bloat control.

*In partnership with eleven forage and applied research associations, twelve producers across Alberta, through the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA), and in consultation with high legume grazing mentors with financial and economic analysis, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) staff coordinated a two year field trial to demonstrate the potential of sainfoin in a high-legume pasture mix on field scale level.*

#### Take away lessons...

**Establishment 2016:** When establishing forages, seedbed preparation is key. Ensure the seedbed is firm prior to seeding using harrow packers or equivalent.



**Grazing 2017:** Seed set matters. Enough plant material needs to be left after grazing that at least some of the plants get the chance to set seed and drop viable seed for new plants to grow. Forage establishment is an ongoing yearly process to ensure the longevity of the pasture stand.



\* The project's goal was 60% legume establishment in the pasture with the remaining 40% grass/legume the choice of the producer.

\* Grazing research at Lethbridge and Swift Current has shown a **95-98%** bloat reduction when **25%** sainfoin is present in an alfalfa/sainfoin stand.

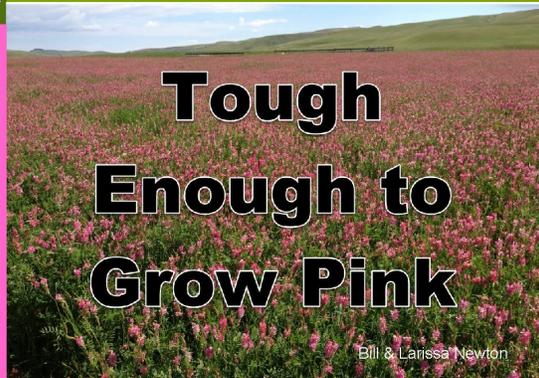


#### Forages for Soil Health

In this thought provoking BCRC webinar, Henry Janzen from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, discusses the links between growing perennial forages and soil health. [BCRC webinar—February 21, 2018](#)

#### Practical Applications of Forage Rejuvenation

Dr. Mike Schellenberg, Range and Forage Plant Ecologist at AAFC in Swift Current, outlines things to consider when rejuvenating a forage stand. [BCRC webinar—February 24, 2016](#)



# Tough Enough to Grow Pink

Bill & Larissa Newton

#### Let cattle do the seeding

A number of cattlemen are doing just that, letting the cattle do the seeding to rejuvenate or add to their existing pasture stands.

Legume seeds are well suited to this manure/seeding technique due to their hard seed coats. Many of the seeds pass through the animal's digestive system without being damaged. Letting some of the pasture plants mature and set seed then turning livestock into graze is a great strategy for redistribution of the seeds in the manure. [October 27, 2016 BCRC Blog](#)

## Projects: Operation Pollinator

**Cooperators:** Kim Nielsen, Vance Graham, Alana Schamber

**Sponsors/Collaborators:** ARECA, Manitoba Conservation Districts Association (MCDA), Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association (SSCA), Syngenta and the Soil Conservation Council of Canada

Operation Pollinator is a program focused on research and partnerships to promote the health and well-being of bees and other pollinators given their essential role in agriculture and nature. The program's mandate is to support activities that enhance biodiversity, habitat and other practical initiatives that contribute to healthy pollinator populations. Originating in the United Kingdom, the Operation Pollinator program has since been expanded to several countries around the world, including Canada.

In the winter of 2017, GWFA had the opportunity to take on the Operation Pollinator Project offered through ARECA. We reached out to our members and local producers to find interested producers willing to plant this project. Vance Graham and Kim Nielsen both signed on to do the project on their farms.

Kim Nielsen and Vance Graham planted the operation pollinator project in different ways.

At the Graham farm, they planted the project in a tilled field that had previously been barley. They were in the process of returning it to permanent forage, and felt seeding a small two-acre patch in the back of the field would be beneficial to their permanent forage and the neighbouring environment. The catch was very successful and upon visit of the site there was an utter "buzz" about the whole site.

When standing still and listening, it was amazing the insect activity at the site.

Kim Nielsen had a very small pasture piece that he was willing to rejuvenate and take out of

production for the project.

Kim heavily mowed the planting site and direct seeded into the sod.

Upon visit, it was quite evident that the germination was successful. However, the pollinator mix wasn't at nearly as advanced a stage as at the Graham farm.

It was a very interesting side experiment to see how the germination and stand differed under these two different planting methods.

Since the stand was not near bloom yet, there wasn't the pollinators present as at the Graham farm.

It will be very interesting to see how both locations look in the summer of 2018.

The third location is with Alana Schamber.

They have a small farm up near Wetaskiwin. They signed on to the project to late in the season to plant in 2017. They will be planting their location this coming spring and we will be visiting that site later to see how well it established.

This is a rather exciting project to be involved with. Though data collection will be minimal, we are looking at the environmental value that these projects bring along. Pollinators are a major contributor to agriculture and making sure to improve their habitat will have benefits to the surrounding environment.



## Biological Control of Canada Thistle Using Weevils

**Cooperators/Sponsors:** Lacombe County, Medicine River Watershed Society, Mountain View County, County of Wetaskiwin

In the spring of 2016 there was some interest from the GWFA projects committee and board in trying out different biological control agents for weed control. After some research and discussion with some of the other Forage and Applied Research Associations, GWFA decided to develop a couple of projects to test weevil success. GWFA reached out to its membership and its partners to see if there would be any interest in partnering on a project with the Canada Thistle Stem Mining Weevil.

Through the summer GWFA staff developed two different projects and protocols for running the trials. The first is the Monitoring Project.

It is a set area of about four meters by four meters.

Thistle stand counts were done to determine an approximate population within the test area. Then one cup of weevils would be released into the center of the test area. A cup of weevils contains 105 weevils. Since the weevils would be released in the fall there wouldn't be any reproduction occurring in the fall. The following summer thistle dissections would be done at random to determine if the weevils are reproducing and get an approximate population. In year three we would do plant stand counts and thistle dissections to determine if we are seeing a reduction in thistle population and growth in the weevil's population. This will be a long-term project and we hope to maintain our locations for at least a five-year period. GWFA has partnered with Lacombe County, Medicine River Watershed Society, and County of Wetaskiwin in this style of project.

GWFA is managing the local locations and County of Wetaskiwin is using our protocols to run their own project, but will be providing us with the data they collect.

The second project we developed protocols for, is a longer term multi test location project.

We would like to see if there is any benefit to 'overloading' a thistle population initially to speed up control and what would be a release rate that would increase the rate of control without being cost prohibitive.

We will have 4 tests, a check with no weevils, a single release, a two-cup release, and finally a three-cup release. These sites will be separated, but will need to represent similar climates, topographies, and land use.

The size of the test sites is the same as the monitoring project. Currently we have setup and released weevils at two locations with Mountain View County. The sites were selected in spring of 2017 and the initial setup was done during the summer and the release followed in September

We source our weevils through West Central Forage Association, they go down to Montana to pick up the weevils.

They were delivered to us and we released them at each of the sites. The weevils were placed at the center of each test plot on green actively growing thistle plants.

They will feed for a few weeks, and then go underground for the winter.

They should reappear in the early spring to breed and lay eggs on the thistle. The eggs will hatch in a few days and the larvae will enter the thistle stem and reek havoc on the thistle.

The data will continue to be collected each year.

-Devin Knopp



## Alberta Beef, Forage and Grazing Centre Update

By Karen Schmid

### Background

The concept for the Alberta Beef, Forage and Grazing Centre arose from concerns expressed to the Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (now Alberta Agriculture and Forestry) by individual beef producers and forage/beef interest groups about a lack of essential applied forage research and extension available to beef producers in Alberta. A research-extension group called the Western Forage Beef Group had operated as a federal-provincial organization out of the Lacombe Research Station, from 1995 to 2005, and had a focused approach to these issues. The concerns and inquiries expressed the necessity for a similar group to address current industry issues. Subsequently, focus groups were organized and carried out by a third party, which confirmed the interest and the need for a renewed research and extension effort in the forage-beef area. This led to the formation of a steering committee in the summer of 2011, with representatives from ARD, AAFC, University of Alberta (U of A), Alberta Beef Producers (ABP), Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC), Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA), Alberta Forage Industry Network (AFIN) and the Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association (CFGAs). Support for the concept was recognized throughout all levels of industry and government.

In April of 2015, The Alberta Beef, Forage and Grazing Centre became a reality, with a tripartite agreement between Alberta Beef Producers (ABP), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF). It has the mission of developing and transferring knowledge, innovative processes and tools to improve the forage/beef industry. The Centre utilizes existing AAFC and AF facilities and staff, with a small cash infusion from ABP to assist with core funding and extension initiatives.

### Objectives

The Centre has six strategic objectives, with a long term (20 year) time horizon.

- Reduce winter feeding costs by 50%
- Reduce the environmental footprint of the cowherd by 15%
- Improve cow efficiency by 15%
- Reduce backgrounding costs by 50%
- Improve late summer/fall pasture productivity by 30%
- Build and maintain research and extension capacity

### Recent Activities

#### Annual Meeting

The Centre held its second annual meeting on February 7, 2018 in Lacombe. This provided an opportunity for the Management Committee, Research and Extension Advisory Committee, and Industry Advisory Committee to interact face-to-face and provide direction for the upcoming year. Presentations on research activities and strategic initiatives within industry and government provided a starting point for the excellent discussion that followed. The Centre is also considering hosting or co-hosting a summer event, so stay tuned as those details become available.

### Rancher Researcher Pilot Project

With funding from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's Industry and Market Development program, the Rancher Researcher pilot is underway, under the Centre umbrella. This project's main objective is to link research directly with producers to examine new management practices or innovations that are applicable to their production systems. There are eight ranches across the province participating in the pilot. Detailed interviews with each ranch gives an overview of their production system, and ideas about what technologies, innovations, or management practices they are interested in utilizing on their operation. As interviews are completed, ranchers are provided with contact information for researchers working in that area and basic information about the innovation, technology or management practice. They are also encouraged to talk one-on-one with the experts in the particular area(s) they are interested in pursuing further. There is a small amount of offset funding for each operation to implement the new ideas on their ranch. In addition, the economic cost/benefit of adopting these innovations will be provided to the producers, and we are also exploring attitudes regarding why or why not certain practices or innovations are or are not adopted. The pilot is scheduled to be completed in March 2019.

### Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) Project

Again, with generous support from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, the Centre will be undertaking an ambitious KTT project over the next three years. While the exact details are still to be determined, the overall goal of the project supports Outcome 1 of the National Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy, by establishing collaborative working groups to assemble, update, or create comprehensive technology transfer resource packages focused on a particular topic or outcome and encourage industry wide-utilization of those resources to reach and maintain desired adoption levels.

The project objective is to compile and disseminate an extension package based on the following themes:

- Managing grazing in average and extreme weather conditions
- Perennial and annual forage variety selection for regional applicability
- Animal nutrition and feed quality

Specifically, we will collect and review related existing resources applicable to each theme, develop new or updated resources as appropriate, develop a feedback mechanism to track adoption rates, and dissemination of the resource package to various audiences using a variety of approaches. The ARECA groups and other stakeholders with close connections to producers will be a key element when it comes to delivery of these extension materials, and we are excited to see this project unfold.



**ALBERTA BEEF,  
FORAGE & GRAZING  
CENTRE**

## Alberta Beef Producers Update

Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) is proud to be a democratic and representative organization of producers, run by producers, speaking and working for producers. A critical element of the success of our organization is the quality of grass roots producers who accept the responsibility of leading ABP. We have a strong tradition of renewal in our delegate body and Board of Directors and we are always seeking a good balance between the experience and organizational knowledge of our longer serving delegates and the bright ideas of our new delegates. This year, almost one-quarter of the delegates who were successful in our fall elections are new to ABP. We also have six new directors on our Board of Directors and two of our four Executive members are new to their positions.

The theme of our 2017 Annual Report was risks and rewards, sometime also described as challenges and opportunities. The ABP strategic plans for 2018 will be focused on mitigating risks and taking advantage of rewards, while the ABP staff will be working to help producers address the challenges and seize the opportunities facing the industry this year. Once again, we will be guided by the comments and suggestions we have received from producers at our fall meetings through the successful producer engagement exercises we have conducted for the past two years.

ABP 2018 Strategic Objectives are as follows:

- Increase the understanding among producers of the value they receive from the investment of check-off funds in industry programs and activities.
- Increase the level of knowledge and understanding of agriculture, particularly the cattle and beef industry, among young consumers and students.
- Increase engagement with the Alberta government to ensure that land, water, and environmental policies support the interests of farmers and ranchers.
- Ensure the sustainability of our industry by creating conditions supporting viable succession in the industry.
- Ensure that investments in research and technology provide Alberta cattle and beef producers with information and technology that will support sustainable and competitive operations.
- Ensure that the implementation of health, safety, and labour legislation in Alberta recognizes the unique requirements of farming and ranching operations.

All farmers and ranchers will be challenged to understand and deal with the full implications of Bill 6, *The Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act*, and other new legislation related to employment standards, labour relations, youth employment, and occupational health and safety. Through our membership in the AgCoalition, ABP will be continuing our dialogue and consultation with the government to make the legislation and regulations reasonable and achievable for farmers and ranchers. ABP is working with our industry partners to develop Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) guidelines that will meet the intent of the OHS regulations, while still being practical for farmers and ranchers. We also welcome the opportunity for the AgSafe Alberta Society, a newly formed industry-led farm and ranch safety association, to coordinate the awareness, education, and training activities that will make all farm and ranch workers safer.

We do see 2018 as a year of great opportunities for increasing industry investment in research and market development activities that will make our industry stronger and more prosperous. We proceeded with an increase in the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off from \$1 per head to \$2.50 on April 1, 2018, bringing the total check-off per head to \$4.50.

ABP is also excited about the potential of the Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund (ALIDF). The ALIDF would be created using the additional revenue available to the industry with a non-refundable service charge. We have received clear direction from producers at our fall meetings to pursue a non-refundable service charge, and changes in the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* last year now allow service charges to be non-refundable. The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry has stated that he would not make a service charge non-refundable without a plebiscite of producers and after reaching an agreement with the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA), ABP hopes to give producers the right to make this decision in the fall.

The agreement between ABP and ACFA would see the organizations collaborate on the development and implementation of the ALIDF and allocate the funding from a non-refundable service charge. Under the agreement on the allocation of a \$2 non-refundable service charge, five cents would continue to be paid to check-off remitters, \$1.30 would be retained by ABP, 40 cents would be contributed to the ALIDF, and 25 cents would be used to support the work of ACFA. Producers who do not want the 25 cents per marketing to be contributed to ACFA would be able to direct this money to the ALIDF.

Hopefully, this year will see a lasting resolution to the long-standing debate over refundable or non-refundable service charges and allow us to turn our attention to other pressing challenges and exciting opportunities. There are many of these challenges and opportunities that will make this another interesting and busy year, but we are looking forward to working on issues that will move the industry forward instead just preventing a backward slide.

-Rich Smith, Executive Director



## Field Crop Development Centre Update

In Alberta, the total area of forage cereal harvested for greenfeed and silage nears a million acres annually. Barley is by far the most widely used (about 50% of the total), but oats, spring wheat, mixed grain, triticale, and dry peas are also important crops for silage and greenfeed.

The Field Crop Development Centre (FCDC) breeds barley, triticale and wheat for feed, malt, food, and forage uses. The Centre has developed close to 50 varieties of these different crop kinds since its establishment in 1973. Many of these varieties are suitable for feed and forage uses, and are relied on by the Alberta beef and dairy industries.

### Four new varieties in 2018

Continuing its variety development efforts, the FCDC is releasing two triticale varieties and two barley varieties this spring. These new varieties are now making their way to commercial production.

**T256** is a new spring triticale variety. The main strength of T256 is that it exhibits reduced awn characteristics. Combined with its high grain and forage yields and superior fibre digestibility, this makes T256 suitable for forage uses. Additional agronomic attributes of T256 is that it is shorter and earlier than the check Pronghorn, with improved lodging resistance.

**SR14501** was released in 2017, and has now been officially registered as **AB Cattlelac**. The strengths of this variety are its high grain and forage yields and good standability ratings. Seeds for this variety will be available through Alliance Seed Corporation.

### Varieties in the pipeline

On top of the new varieties mentioned above, several other lines are also coming up through the breeding process. These promising lines are currently being evaluated in the final stages of pre-registration trials. If they continue to show good performance, one or more of these lines may be proposed for release in 2019.

Several barley lines are being tested in the final Western Canadian registration trials. These include both two-row and six-row barley that could bring advancement in forage yield and quality. FB481, FB484 and FB485 are three of the promising barley lines coming up. FB481 is a six-row barley with good grain and forage yield. FB484 is a standard height two-row barley line, with excellent forage yield. FB485 is also a two-row line, with short stature. The later line FB485 has apparently good forage quality and we expect this to be a more effective source of fodder than the current standards.

On the triticale side, T257 was recommended for registration by the Prairie Recommending Committee for wheat, rye and triticale earlier this year. We are looking for a seed grower to commercialize this line. It is a standard awn type spring triticale, with evidently superior agronomic performance. This line shows a high grain yield potential, with improved lodging resistance and excellent disease resistance package.

### The future of forage cereal breeding at FCDC

FCDC plans to strengthen forage cereal breeding work to better support the Alberta livestock industry. From its recent research strategy exercise, FCDC identified development of forage cereal varieties as a priority area.

With this renewed effort, improvement in whole plant biomass yield remains an important breeding objective of forage cereals. Forage quality (especially fiber digestibility and overall energy value) and other desirable agronomic characteristics (standability, a longer window of harvest for silaging, and smooth awn for barley/reduced awn for triticale) will also be given due consideration, for maximum benefits to the livestock industry. We intend to work closely with Grey Wooded Forage Association to further prioritize routes for enhancing the forage value of barley and triticale.



#### T256 – new spring triticale

reduced awn type, very early maturity, two days earlier than Pronghorn.

Grain yield is 101% of Pronghorn and 114% of AC Ultima dry matter yield is 105% of Pronghorn.

Shorter height than Pronghorn with improved lodging resistance, better forage digestibility than Bunker and Taza.



#### AB Cattlelac (SR14501) - Six-row barley

Semi-smooth awned, forage yield is 108% of Vivar and 105% of AC Ranger, higher percent plumps than AC Ranger, better lodging resistance than AC Ranger, better than average combination of disease resistance.



#### T256 – new spring triticale

Reduced awn type, very early maturity, two days earlier than Pronghorn, grain yield is 101% of Pronghorn and 114% of AC Ultima, dry matter yield is 105% of Pronghorn, shorter height than Pronghorn with improved lodging resistance, better forage digestibility than Bunker and Taza.

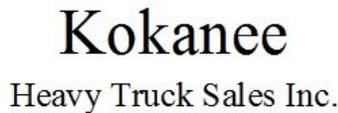


#### WT0010 – new winter triticale

Superior grain yield with 161% of Bobcat, 150% of Metzger, and 138% of Luoma. Dry matter yield is 123% of Bobcat and 105% of Luoma, significantly higher forage digestibility, checks lodging resistance, good resistance to leaf spot, powdery mildew and tan spot

Contact Erin Collier at 403-877-0953 or e-mail: [erin.collier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:erin.collier@gov.ab.ca).

We especially would like to thank our major funder, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, for supporting our program. We would also like to thank ARECA (the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta). ARECA unifies all the member applied research associations and forage associations in Alberta. ARECA helps us get funding, channels funding and gives our associations a level of strength that we would not have done alone.



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