



## **Organic Farming – Gross Income Down, Net Profit Up!**

Gross income down, net profit up - that's how Kate Storey, an organic producer from the Grandview area sums it up.

In 1999, twelve years after Kate, Doug and their four children took over the family farm; they began the transition to an organic hay and beef operation. "It took three years to convert, but it has all been worth it," she says. "Yes, the certification process can be an obstacle, but you gain more than you lose. The product is worth more, and input costs are reduced because you're not spending money on fertilizer and sprays."

The Storeys operation consists of hay, grain and a 35 cow/calf operation. They ship their calves as grass yearlings through a co-op called the Manitoba Organic Marketplace Association, an organization that ships groups of animals to feeding stations in the U.S. or Alberta. Last year, the Storeys didn't have any excess hay to market, but when they do, they advertise it in a newsletter distributed by the Organic Producers Association of Manitoba (OPAM), or the MAFRI Manitoba Hay Guide, Organic Grower Section.

If you're interested in converting to organic production you need to contact an organic certifying organization that acts as a third party to ensure you are meeting the organic certification standards. "Right now there are slightly different organic standards based upon the certifying organization, but Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has just passed legislation which will standardize certification standards across Canada. This will come into effect December 2008," says Kate.

Trained organic certifiers inspect your farm once a year at the critical time for your operation. For example, if you sell grain, they inspect it during the weedy season to ensure you haven't sprayed; if →



The Storeys have found Shorthorns work well in their organic operation.

**—Provincial Grazing Tour—Join us—July 25-26, 2007—S.E. Manitoba—**

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**forage focus**

## Organic Farming Continued

you sell seed, they'll inspect your farm when you're cleaning it. They track your production, record what you grow, estimate your yield and therefore the amount of hay or livestock you can sell. Kate says, "the biggest hurdle in an organic operation is keeping track of everything you do. This means every calf that's born or shipped, and every time you walk a field!"

The fee for obtaining organic certification varies according to acreage and livestock numbers. According to Lara Scott, General Manager of OPAM (a Manitoba organic certifying organization), each year the producer pays \$395.00 for the basic farm inspection, \$75.00 for a livestock inspection (regardless of the number and species), and \$0.50 per acre for cultivated land, or \$0.25 per acre for non-cultivated land. Those seeking accreditation to export have some nominal extra fees. OPAM also gladly assists producers who are interested in making the conversion by assessing their existing operation and determining how long their conversion process will be. For more information contact Lara Scott at (204) 748-1315.

## Organic Milk Products—Made in Manitoba

Conrad Zacharias, Winkler, Manitoba, and four other Manitoba dairy producers are well on their way to becoming the first organic dairy producers in the province. Last August, the group formed the Manitoba Organic Milk Co-operative Ltd., after being contacted by Organic Meadow Co-operative Limited, an Ontario business supplying the Manitoba market. "Organic Meadow couldn't keep up with the demand and so they asked us if we wanted to work with them to supply the Manitoba market," said Zacharias. As a result, all five farms are in various stages of transition to certified organic production; Larry and Sue Black of Boissevain will be the first to begin shipping. Initial production will likely be cheese or butter until all farms are certified and in full production.

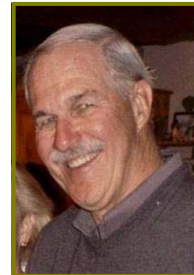
The process will be overseen by the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, so quota rules apply, however, the milk will be channeled through one provincial truck to a certified organic processor. "Manitoba consumers will soon be able to buy locally produced organic milk products, a fact promoted by Organic Meadow Co-operative", says Zacharias. "We are really excited about the opportunities this provides for all of the farm families involved in the venture. Our Manitoba organic milk products are estimated to hit grocers' shelves this fall."



## A few lines from our Executive Director

The Manitoba Forage Council held their Annual General meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007 during the Manitoba Forage Symposium at MacDon Industries in Winnipeg. Don Green, Chair of MFC ran the meeting. Highlights of the past year include:

- Membership in the MFC for the past year was 455 with a board of directors of seventeen; nine elected and the balance representing producer and industry organizations.
- Bob Elliott, Maurice Delichte, Irvin Helwer, Kevin Blight, Robert Smith and Dr. Karin Wittenberg retired from the board. Their efforts over the past years are very much appreciated.
- Heinz Nolting (Manitoba Forage Seed Assoc.), Dr. Kim Ominski (University of Manitoba), Marcel Gousseau (MCPA), Eric Thornhill (MB Sheep Assoc.) and Peter De jong (Dairy Farmers of Manitoba), Gary Halwas (Processor Rep) are the new association representatives. Jim Lintott of Oakbank and Gerry Simonson of Fannystelle were elected as producer directors for 2007/08.
- Financial assets of the MFC were \$193,900.81 as of April 1, 2007.
- There were a total of 33 different activities administered by the MFC in 2006/07. These include: 9 on forage marketing, 11 on extension and 5 on research projects. The value of these activities was \$791,103.29.
- MFC's income is derived from general membership and from administrative fees for managing projects.
- The Manitoba Forage Council has a staff of three who work on a part time basis: Fraser Stewart, Executive Director, Chris Yuzdepski, Financial Administrator, and Corie Arbuckle, Communications Co-ordinator.
- For 2007/08 there will be 32 projects being administered, some of which are new activities but most are on-going projects.



*Fraser Stewart*

## Farewell Tanis Sirksi

Tanis Sirksi - relief help EXTRAORDINARE is on the move once again!

Over the past three years we have had the pleasure of working with Tanis, as she stepped in for not only one, but three different employees as they took leaves. Tanis was instrumental in helping co-ordinate two successful Manitoba Forage Symposiums and Grazing Schools in her role as Farm Production Extension (Forages) in Dauphin and Ashern, and before that as Forage/Livestock Tech in Ste. Rose.



Thank you for your help Tanis and as always your abundance of enthusiasm!  
Best of luck with your return to University!

board news

## Welcome to our New Directors

**Jim Lintott (Director)** - Jim and his wife Carolyn grow hay, straw, forage seed, grain and oilseeds in the Hazelridge area, just east of Winnipeg. The hay and straw (small squares) is marketed locally to horse owners and their forage seed is shipped south to Minnesota. The Lintotts are also part of a group of six producers that run 120 cow/calf pairs.

**Marcel Gousseau (MCPA Rep)** - Marcel runs a mixed farm operation around Oakbluff, MB. He has approximately 150 cow/calf pairs and grows alfalfa and greenfeed for them. He is also a wholesale pedigreed seed producer of cereals, oilseeds and forage grass.

**Peter De jong (MB Dairy Farmers Rep)** - Peter milks 400 cows and grows 1500 acres of corn, 200 of winter wheat and 800 of alfalfa/grass near La Broquerie, MB. Their family includes 3 lively boys, aged 10, 9 & 7 who keep them extremely busy, especially with hockey!

**Heinz Nolting (MB Forage Seed Assn. Rep)** – Heinz runs a pedigreed seed farm including a licensed certified seed processing plant. Their business, Mei-West Enterprises processes all the cereal and grass seed grown on their 2500 acre farm near Rosser.

**Kim Ominski (U of M Rep)** – Kim is Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Science. Her research interest is beef, cattle and forage production systems with emphasis on greenhouse gas emissions.

**Eric Thornhill (MB Sheep Assn. Rep)** – Eric migrated to Manitoba in 1990 from the U.K. and as a result has proclaimed himself a “17 year old Canadian!” Eric then started up a small old fashioned mixed farm and is currently downsizing. He still manages to run sheep, chickens, dairy, horses, hogs and grains and carries out many Sheep Association duties.

**Gerry Simonson (Director)** - Gerry and his son run a 300 cow/calf pair operation on 20 acres (really!) around Fannystelle, however, they do rent our summer pasture in the interlake. Since their Red River land is so heavy, they rent out their land and purchase about 1500 bales per year for winter feed. They also use flax chives on the land to keep the cattle out of the mud during spring calving.

**Gary Halwas (Processor Rep)** - Gary is the owner of Sunridge Forage in Russell, MB, a processing plant that produces 15,000 tons of timothy per year. Gary and his sons Mark, Chris and nephew Dean grow 80% of the timothy on their 5,000 acres of land and ship the compressed timothy bales to Japan.

**Thank you  
Out-going Directors!**

**Many thanks to out-going  
directors: Dr. Karin  
Wittenberg, Irvin Helwer,  
Bob Elliott, Maurice  
Delichte, Kevin Blight and  
Robert Smith.**

### Share your Ideas for future Forage Symposiums

For the past 7 years, the Manitoba Forage Symposium has provided a yearly event for forage producers to learn and share knowledge on all aspects of the forage industry including; market updates, new technology and production topics. The Manitoba Forage Council, along with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and our generous sponsors have worked hard to provide knowledgeable speakers on relevant topics we believe are of interest to you.

**However, recent declines in attendance suggests we should investigate better ways to serve you – the producer.**

**Please complete the enclosed survey to help us provide what YOU want!  
Fax it to Manitoba Forage Council at (204) 482-1700 or mail it to:  
Box 1, Grp. 10, RR #3, Selkirk, MB. R1A 2A8**

## Grazing Clubs Invite Holistic Manager Gene Goven to speak

Gene Goven, a rancher with a cow/calf operation in Turtle Lake, North Dakota, attended his first holistic management course in 1985. From that day forward he says “I changed from being a cowboy to a grass manager, and gained an enjoyable, profitable lifestyle along the way”.

Gene told the producers at various grazing club meetings last summer how he transformed his enterprise. Gene began with a cow/calf operation, and made a host of changes to his grazing management. He moved to custom grazing on his native pasture; changing it from season-long grazing to a twice over system on multiple paddocks. He then incorporated a pipeline watering system into his new operation and focused on high density stocking, short grazing periods and long rest periods.

Gene also set out to achieve an increase in soil organic matter, stronger plant roots, plant diversity, and increased nutrient cycling and water infiltration. Gene’s success has been significant; he’s had a 1% increase in organic matter, increased the water infiltration by 8 times the previous rate and has enhanced the plant diversity. His beef production is up 2.94 times the previous level and his stocking level has risen 2.30 times. His calves gain on average 2.3 lbs. per day.

As well, the proliferation of native plant species on his pasture land has attracted a diverse population of wildlife. Gene and his family now collect extra income by marketing the prairie wildlife to viewers and hunters.

### Interest in Grazing Clubs Grows

“High caliber speakers such as Gene Goven attract producers to our grazing club meetings,” says Wayne Cowan, Grazing Club Co-ordinator for South Central Manitoba. “Goven is just one of the many speakers we’ve had on topics such as; the economics of beef leasing, organic beef production, proper back grounding and feeding of cattle and solar energy production. It’s a great way to learn how to improve your land and your profitability in a safe, comfortable environment.”

Two more clubs were started this spring in Morden and Carberry, bringing the total to 31 clubs in Manitoba. If you would like to find a grazing club near you go to: [www.grazingclubs.ca](http://www.grazingclubs.ca)



**Gene Goven, (center), chats with producers at the 2006 Manitoba Grazing School.**

## Forage Species for Saline Soils

A project funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Greencover Canada Program will help producers seed a proper forage mixture on their saline land. Establishing forages in saline areas helps return the productivity to the land and it also provides habitat for waterfowl and upland birds.

usually about 5 to 10 acres in size. We're really hoping to fill this gap by providing an appropriate salinity forage mix for producers."

Ducks Unlimited will partner with local Conservation districts to distribute the seed to producers. The goal is to establish 1,000 acres across the province on lands that typically produce little or no crop.

For more information on the project contact: Ken Gross, (204) 729-3507 or your local Conservation District.

*"Salinity can be a real problem for growers, especially since we've been in a wet cycle,"*  
Ken Gross, DUC.

Ken Gross, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), is the leader of the demonstration project. According to Ken, salinity can be a real problem for growers. "We have been in a wet cycle the last few years and that has raised our water table. Our dry fall allowed soil water to be drawn to the surface, bringing salts along with it. Seeding these areas to forages that absorb water beneath the surface during the entire growing season prevents the salt from reaching the surface. However, it's hard to find a suitable mix for the small amounts of saline land producers have – they're



mc reports

## Beef & Forage Week 2007

No matter how cold the weather gets, producers always manage to find time in their schedule to learn from the best. Beef and Forage Week Chair, Heather Martens of MAFRI, and her committee organized the 2007 event which featured speaker presentations and displays booths for nearly 1,000 attendees. If you would like to read any of the presentations please go to: [www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca](http://www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca)

Plans for the 2008 Beef and Forage Week have already begun. We are very fortunate to welcome our new chair, Juanita Kopp, who joined MAFRI last fall. Juanita was raised on a mixed farm in Saskatchewan, received her B.S.A. at the University of Saskatchewan, and then her Ph.D. at the University of Manitoba. Juanita was working at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development as a Forage Specialist in Stettler, Alberta before she joined MAFRI in October. Welcome Juanita!



**Juanita Kopp, MAFRI, New Chair of Beef & Forage Week**



## MidWest Horse Fair, Madison, WI

By: Jane Thornton, MAFRI

A keen group of producers headed down to the Midwest Horse Fair (MWHF) once again this April. Linda McCaskill, Gladys & Gordon Mason, NAERIC, Ed & Elaine Newfield, Cliff Kooistra, Ken & Clint Masse, and Brad Havixbeck with Manitoba Trade and Investment attended the Fair.

Horse owners in Wisconsin and surrounding areas have a very hard time finding good quality horse hay and last year was no exception. Ed & Elaine Newfield have established several loyal customers, however, most Wisconsin owners prefer to buy local hay even though the quality is substantially poorer. That said, don't give up on this market - hay acreages continue to increase so demand will increase. Manitoba is as close as the other U.S. hay growing states, so in ten years we could certainly see greater demand for our hay products. And each year our efforts at the MWHF have planted the seeds of change.

Next year the MFC has opted to try a different approach to reach potential southern buyers. Instead of attending the MWHF in 2008, we are planning a producer tour through Kentucky to visit some hay brokers, dairy producers, and large horse operations. Keep your ears and eyes open as you may want to attend this important trade mission.

## 2007 Manitoba Forage Symposium

Once again the Manitoba committee recruited some excellent speakers to address producers at the Forage Symposium. The focus was on marketing cash hay and the issues that surround production and marketing. Speakers from across Canada and the U.S. educated us on fertility management, trucking and transportation issues and insect problems.

**We are reviewing the Symposium process. Please complete the enclosed survey to help us SERVE you BETTER!**

## 2006 Hay Competition

By: Jane Thornton

The winners of the 2006 Provincial Hay Competition were also announced at the Symposium.

There were six classes for the competition.

- Class A – Legume
- Class B – Legume/grass
- Class C – Grass
- Class D – Greenfeed

These four classes are judged with 70% of the score coming from the feed analysis and 30% of the score coming from the physical attributes. High priority is placed on nutrient content and digestibility of this hay as it is used for livestock production systems such as milk production, weight gain or offspring. These classes are generally won by the hay with the highest nutrient content and highest digestibility. Class C, the grass class, is always interesting because some beautiful looking hay may not place as well as expected because maturity or perhaps species has decreased the hay's protein content and increased the fiber content. When it comes to nutrient content you truly can't rely on appearance to tell you the whole story.

- Class E – Horse Hay – Maintenance of the Mature Horse
- Class F – Horse Hay – Growth and Performance

These two classes were added to the competition because this hay can fetch a premium price, much like dairy hay, and I have found that there is less understanding about the horse's nutritional needs by both the hay producer and the horse owner purchasing the hay.

These classes are judged with 50% of the score coming from the feed analysis and 50% of the score coming from the physical attributes, including mold spore counts. More emphasis is placed on the physical attributes in the horse hay classes for the following reasons:

1. The horse's propensity to develop lung disease from moldy hay (cows do not develop these same lung diseases from moldy hay); →

## 2006 Hay Competition Continued

2.The horse's generally lower nutritional feed requirements because they are not being fed for production i.e. milk, meat, or reproduction – many fall into the hobby or pet category and;

3.The customers demand for an attractive looking product.

The relatively dry growing season had some positive and negative effects on the hay entries. On the positive side, mold spore counts were generally very low compared to other years and were not a big factor in judging the Horse Hay Classes.

Mold spores are always present, but weather, haying and storage conditions influence their abundance. Spore counts are taken from samples at 22°C and 35°C since different molds grow at different temperatures. If hay has heated, as you might experience when baled at high moisture content, a higher mold spore count is expected.

### Mold spore counts range from year to year and sample to sample:

Colony Forming Unit/g

Year	22 C	35 C	Lowest at 22 C	Lowest at 35 C
2005	260,000/g	152,000/g	6000/g	300/g
2006	65,000/g	18,000/g	6000/g	1000/g

**“My motivation for using spore counts in the judging is to bring awareness to the hay producer and buyer as they have a significant impact on a horse's health,”**

**Jane Thornton, MAFRI**

While I use these mold counts for judging purposes there is no research that indicates at what level they become detrimental to the horse's health. Therefore, my motivation for using them in the judging is to bring awareness to the hay producer and buyer because it has a significant impact on the horse's health.

In the classes with high alfalfa content, the growers had to contend with a dry year and as a result, poor leaf attachment. Points are lost for dustiness due to lack of moisture and leaf shatter. Moisture content ranged from 8% to 14% but most were around 9% and 10%.

Thank you to all the hay producers who entered this competition. Each year I see the true skill of our commercial hay growers! The hay displayed at the Forage Symposium attracted the attention of some hay brokers in attendance and I received many positive comments about the quality of our hay and the inclusion of horse hay classes in the competition. Thank you also to the R.G. Mazer Group supplied leather jackets for the first place winners.

Keep up the good work and I look forward to your entries in 2007.

*Jane Thornton, MAFRI*

**events review**

# 2006 Hay Competition Winners

## Class A – Legume > 75% legume

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Chapman Bros. of Virden – 3<sup>rd</sup> cut Pickseed 8925
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – David & Harley Henry of Rossendale – 3<sup>rd</sup> cut alfalfa
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Kooistra Hay Sales of Swan River – a 3<sup>rd</sup> cut alfalfa

## Class B – Legume/grass

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Dennis Friesen of Wawanesa – 2<sup>nd</sup> cut Proven Legend II alfalfa/Fleet MBG blend
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Kooistra Hay Sales of Swan River – 1<sup>st</sup> cut timothy/alfalfa blend

## Class C – Grass > 75% grass

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Chapman Bros. Farms of Virden – 1<sup>st</sup> cut Fleet MBG/Able alfalfa blend
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Dennis Friesen of Wawanesa – 1<sup>st</sup> cut Fleet MBG
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – E & E Newfield of Winnipeg – 2<sup>nd</sup> cut OG/MBG/ timothy and alfalfa blend

## Class E – Horse hay for maintenance of the mature horse

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – E & E Newfield of Winnipeg – 1<sup>st</sup> cut OG/MBG/ timothy blend
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Kooistra Hay Sales of Swan River – 1<sup>st</sup> cut native grass
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Dave & Harley Henry of Rossendale – 1<sup>st</sup> cut native grass

## Class F – Horse hay for growth and performance

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Chapman Bros. Farms of Virden - 1<sup>st</sup> cut MBG
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – E & E Newfield of Winnipeg – 2<sup>nd</sup> cut OG/MBG/timothy/alfalfa blend
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Kooistra Hay Sales of Swan River – 1<sup>st</sup> cut timothy/alfalfa blend

**1st Place Winners;  
with Fraser Stewart,  
Executive Director**

**Ed Newfield, (top)  
Darren Chapman,  
Dennis Friesen (not available)**



**Jane Thornton, Forage and  
Pasture Specialist, MAFRI**



events review

## Provincial Pasture Tour Coming Soon

### Discover the Eastman Advantage JULY 25 & 26, 2007

The Manitoba Forage Council, in conjunction with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - Greencover Program, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Dow AgroSciences, participating agri-businesses, and the MAFRI Forage, Range and Pasture Team, is pleased to present the annual Provincial Pasture Tour.

*Rub elbows with Manitoba's agricultural research community, identify effective ways to battle brush encroachment, discover the reduction in labour winter grazing can provide, see unique watering solutions, visit a large dairy that includes pasture a significant ration component 6 months of the year -- and find out why.*

Attendance will be limited to 165 participants. **Fee:** 2 days, Producers: \$50.00, Industry: \$150.00 *Includes: meals, accommodations (based on double occupancy), tour and seminars. Single rooms are an additional \$50.00.*

**Register online at [www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca](http://www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca) or call Jane Omichinski, MAFRI, with your credit card: (204) 268-6228. Deadline July 11, 2007.**

REGISTRATION FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE



### Highlights of the Tour:

**University of Manitoba - Marchand Site:** Learn what some of Manitoba's leading researchers have found out regarding grass, soil, manure, water and microbiology over the last three years at one of the most comprehensive, integrated, agricultural research sites. An excellent opportunity to ask questions, and challenge the experts in regards to animal production and its impact upon the environment.

**Walter and Trevor Panych:** Walter and Trevor will share their experience with extended season grazing, efficiencies in labor per unit of beef sold, utilizing cats and cows to open up bush, and the transition from hay producer to hay purchaser.

**Nyhoff Dairy:** How does an award winning dairy end up on a provincial pasture tour? Follow the profit. Albert will relate the mindset and paradigm shift the Nyhoff Dairy underwent during the past 6 years. Using perennial ryegrass pasture in an intensively managed environment to provide a portion of the ration requirements for their dairy herd has generated many benefits and added to their profitability.

**Krentz Pastures:** As hog production increased in the 90's, Robert Krentz embraced the opportunity to improve the carrying capacity of his pastures. He currently operates a stocker operation of 3,000 head on 6 sections of land using natural fertilizer.

The complete [agenda](#) and [bus departure times](#) are available at: [mbforagecouncil.mb.ca](http://mbforagecouncil.mb.ca)

coming events

## How Green is your Farm?

A recent project conducted by Ducks Unlimited Canada and Grazing Clubs Manitoba found some surprising answers. The project used a prototype Greenhouse Gas (GHG) calculator developed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, to compare greenhouse gas emissions from existing and improved pasture land practices.

Six farms already participating in a Ducks Unlimited cropland conversion program were chosen for this Greenhouse Gas project. Acres sizes ranged from 30 to 138, and improved pasture techniques included resting and rotation of pastures and proper stocking rates.

Mike Thiele, co-ordinator for seven Grazing Clubs in southwestern Manitoba, conducted the analysis of the emissions. He found that perennial pasture doubled the amount of carbon sequestration compared to the cultivated land. "This means the plants are taking up more carbon dioxide and turning it into more leaves, more roots, and more feed," explains Thiele. The study also showed that proper management results in grasses with less rough fibre, a positive effect as more fibre increases methane production. In fact, methane emissions were reduced by up to five times in grazing cattle during the study.

Further on down the cycle, additional CO<sub>2</sub> stored in the plants will eventually be converted to organic matter. Beneficial organisms and bacteria further enrich the soil and reduce the need for chemical fertilizers. All of this adds up to a net gain for the environment (reduced greenhouse gas emissions), and a net gain for producers (improved land and animal productivity and reduced input costs).

A new, user-friendly version of the calculator is being developed and should be available by this fall. For more information contact: Michael Thiele: [mthiele@mts.net](mailto:mthiele@mts.net)

## Holistic Management Conference Albuquerque, New Mexico

**November 1-4, 2007**

**From the Ground Up: Practical Solutions to Complex Problems**

Whether your focus is land desertification, food security, public lands, meeting consumer demand for organics, or global warming, you'll exchange ideas with knowledgeable experts and discover the solutions that are working now.

**Register: <http://holisticmanagement.org/store//page13.html>**



forage bits



# U.S. & Manitoba Hay Projections

By: Glenn Friesen

**USDA predicts** that hay acreage will increase 4% this year. "This prediction is somewhat misleading," says Glenn Friesen, Business Development Specialist – Forage, MAFRI. "Reports suggest that this increase will come primarily from harvesting grass pastures and producers may not have excess hay to sell as their on-farm supplies are low; having had some previous dry seasons." The U.S. has also experienced a slow start in hay production as a result of winter kill, spring frosts in the north, dry conditions in the south, and the conversion of perennial acres to corn for ethanol production. These factors will have a negative impact on production so we may see a strong demand for high quality Manitoba hay.

**In Manitoba**, on-farm hay reserves appear to be average to below average. It appears the relatively mild first half of the winter reduced potential feed shortages. As for this growing season, Manitoba's first cut of alfalfa appears to be off to a great start at 7 – 14 days ahead of schedule. An early first cut will set up an excellent second cut as more spring moisture will be available for the second harvest. Good fall soil moisture reserves in the northwest and eastern half of the Interlake regions will improve 2007 yield potential for those areas. Other regions may rely more heavily on timely rains this season. Winter injury has been reported as minimal across the province.

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## Mid-West Hay Business Report

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Glenn recently attended the Mid-West Hay Business Conference and Expo in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Here's some highlights of the conference:**

**The western to mid-west U.S. regions** irrigate their land, however, the cost of water has increased and new regulations are in effect to control usage. The resulting increase in grain prices has some feedlot operators using higher concentrations of high quality forages for finishing animal diets.

**Fibre based residue** is being used for ethanol production, so there is a shortage of straw and bedding.

**Increasing corn prices** are causing more feedlot operators to consider using higher concentrations of high quality forages for finishing animal diets. This will have a positive impact on the value of high quality stored forages.

**Equine producers** prefer smaller bales. Multi-balers are gaining popularity; they produce a 1000 lb. bale that consists of 8 smaller bales which are tied together to make one unit.

**The demand for weed free certified hay** is increasing and may become a non-tariff trade barrier to the U.S. market. New legislation requires that horse riders in national parks feed their horses certified weed free hay for a designated period of time prior to and during their visit. Some state parks are beginning to follow. MAFRI is working with Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation to develop a certification process, which may be available for 2007, and certainly for 2008. There is no premium for this hay at this time.

**Middle Eastern water shortages** are driving government policy to create incentives to import hay rather than produce their own. The United Arab Emirates (an oil-rich country south of Iran) has recently tendered 600,000 tons of hay for their horses, dairy, goat, sheep, and camels. Federal governments in Canada and the U.S. are discussing ways to organize and supply this type of demand.

**The U.S. National Hay Association** is working to increase milk use in key Pacific Rim countries (S. Korea, Vietnam, and China) and minimize trade restrictions for dairy quality forage.

**The U.S. demand for organic hay** is growing 20-30% per year (approx. 100,000 MT increase/year), and will require an 25,000 additional acres of production. The value is approximately 5-15% higher than conventional hay.

The recent injunction against **Round up Ready alfalfa** sales in the U.S. has become permanent until the USDA provides sufficient evidence that there will be minimal environmental impact from the production of the herbicide tolerant alfalfa. This should have little impact on alfalfa/grass hay mixtures, but will significantly affect the pure alfalfa hay supply.



forage bits

## U.S. Auction Mart Prices—Mid-May 2007

<i>Prices are US dollars/ton except squares \$/bale, Some prices not available</i>	East River, South Dakota	North East Nebraska	Maurice, Iowa	Pipestone, Minnesota
<b>ALFALFA</b>				
<b>Small Squares</b>				
Supreme	125.00		155.00	<b>172.50</b>
Premium			125.00	
Good				
Fair				39.00
<b>Large Squares</b>				
Supreme	125.00	> 185 RFV 140.00	125-130.00	
Premium		>170-185 RFV 130-		
Good	60-70.00	>150-170 RFV 115-120.00		
Fair		>130-150 RFV 90-100.00		
Utility				
<b>Large Rounds</b>				
Premium			120-130.00	115-125.00
Good		80-100.00		90-102.50
Fair		60-80.00		75-82.50
Utility				
<b>ALFALFA MIX</b>				
<b>Small Squares</b>				
				87.50-102.50 Good
<b>Large Rounds</b>				
			100.00 Good	115-122.50 Premium
<b>GRASS HAY</b>				
<b>Small Squares</b>				
Premium		100-130.00 (premium-good)	130.00	117.50-120.00
Good			110.00	92.50-97.50
<b>Large Squares</b>				
Premium			115-140.00	
Good				75.00
<b>Large Rounds</b>				
Premium				100-125.00
Good		80-100.00		80-100.00
Fair				50.00
Utility				
<b>Straw</b>				
<b>Small Squares</b>				
				3.75/bale
<b>Large Squares</b>				
		50-55.00 per ton		
<b>Large Rounds</b>				

forage bits



## ecoABC Puts Farmers in the Driver's Seat

April 25, 2007

By Ian Wishart, KAP Vice President

Farmers are one step closer to being in at the ground floor of Canada's emerging biofuel economy. Recently, the federal government announced the details of a program called ecoABC ecoAgricultural Biofuels Capital which provides incentives for ethanol and biodiesel production, based on the level of farmer investment in the projects. As the percentage of farmer ownership goes up, so does the federal level of support, ranging from 5 cents per litre up to 20 cents per litre. Another condition of ecoABC is that these facilities must use agricultural feedstocks like canola or wheat as the raw materials in the facility.

Biofuels will help to re-start rural Canada's economic engine, and it makes sense for farmers to be in the driver's seat. The benefits of alternate fuels should be felt in the rural communities that produce them, not just in the urban centres that purchase them.

Farmers have a unique opportunity to capitalize on biofuels to build their operations, diversify their investments, and drive more rural economic growth. At the same time, farmers can be part of the environmental solution, and that's always a good move.

## 2007 All Canada Sheep Classic

**Brandon, MB**  
**June 7-8-9, 2007**

The 2007 Classic will be held in conjunction with the Brandon Summer Fair.

Sheep arrive: Wednesday June 6th & Thursday June 7th

Wine and Cheese Reception: Thursday June 7th

Sheep Show: Friday June 8th

Banquet: Friday June 8th

Fleece Competition: Friday, June 8th

Sheep Sale: Saturday June 9th

182 sheep representing 16 breeds have been consigned by

43 purebred breeders from Nova Scotia to BC.

View the catalogue at [www.sheepbreeders.ca](http://www.sheepbreeders.ca)

For more information, contact Eugène Sabot at [esabot5@mts.net](mailto:esabot5@mts.net).

affiliated members

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### MFC Website Attracting Viewers

Interest in MFC's website continues to grow. The new website provides statistics which indicate how many visits we have each month and where the viewers are from. The first month, July 2006, [www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca](http://www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca) had 527 visitors and by January 2007, 1165 visitors per month. On average the site attracts 943 visitors per month. Viewers come from New Zealand, Australia, South & Central America, U.S., Canada, China, Russia, Taipei, India, Sweden and Britain.