

Forage FOCUS

June 2009

Growing your Biz via the Net

So, you've got something you want to sell do you? Whether it's a home grown product like grass fed beef, horse hay, or your own bed and breakfast, you've got to promote your product or service. Traditional ways such as flyers and newspapers are still useful tools, but they're static, costly if using multiple print media, and require constant updates and renewals. And, most importantly, are you reaching your target market? Local papers work for local markets, but if your product has wide spread appeal, then having a presence on the internet is a must!

The internet has changed the way people search and comparison shop for goods, be it jewellery, hotels, or food products. Customers want to know about the company/person selling the goods and why they should buy it. Buying local is important for some, but for others, it doesn't matter – as long as they trust the supplier.

Making a commitment

Registering a business name is a big first step! Choose at least three names that reflect your service or product and do a quick search on google (or any search engine) to see if your names come up. If you find your name with a Manitoba address, choose another. If your name comes up with a non-Manitoba location, the name may still be available in Manitoba. However, it may be best to choose another name since that one is already on the net and it's the same type of business as you are.

Another item to check is whether there is a website with that name. Say, you want to use Wholesome Grass Fed Beef. Go to www.networksolutions.com and type in wholesomegrassfedbeef.ca and see if that domain name has been taken. You can choose various extensions like .com or .net but the .ca extension shows buyers you are located in Canada. In seconds you can see if that domain name is available. Domain registration ranges from \$12.99 U.S. to \$45 U.S. per year so it's good to shop around. Godaddy.com is \$12.99 per year and they also provide website hosting services for about \$15 U.S. per month and a free e-mail address.

Another company that provides hosting and e-mail services is 1and1.com When you register your .ca name, you will be contacted by CIRA, Canadian Internet Registration Authority to confirm registration.

Once you've got three names that are: 1) not showing up on google (at least on the top 2 pages) and 2) have the domain name available, trot on down to the Companies Office (1010-405 Broadway St. in Winnipeg) and have them search for your name and reserve it.



Each search costs \$40, however, they do a quick search on their system and let you know right away if the name comes up. This does not guarantee the name is available, you still have to pay to have it searched. If your company name is available, it can be registered for \$45.

That was the easy part! Here's the next decision to be made. Do you want to build your own site and have someone host it (the website is held on their server) or hire someone to build your site and make changes as necessary. Having someone build a basic site ranges from \$1,000 to \$3,000. This may or may not include annual hosting services (keeping the site on their server so it is on the internet) and e-mail addresses. Future updates are usually charged at an hourly rate or an annual rate.

If you're somewhat computer savvy, building your site and updating your website as required is the most economical. Programs like Microsoft Publisher or Mac's Iweb have templates that allow you to build a simple website. There's also tons of templates available on the web (just make sure you can add meta tags with the site template – keep reading to learn about meta tags). You don't need to know html code, but it's important to note that each html page will need a header with meta tags. When you're writing your copy for your site, tell your story, but keep it short and easy to read. Internet users are demanding. They won't read a page full of text, they'll hit the back button and move onto the next site!

The next step is to upload your site to your host's server – for e.g. at www.godaddy.com Uploading your website to the internet requires a File Transfer Protocol address (FTP) to communicate with. This is provided by the host and must be used every time the site is updated.

Optimizing your site

What good is a website if no one knows about it? The way to remedy this is to submit your site to as many search engines as you can find. But, before you do that – it's important to know what search engines want. Search engines look for meta tags (names that are used on the head section of each html page of your website to describe your business). A title of the site, a description, and keywords provide a concise overview of your business and must include words that you believe people will use to search for your merchandise or services. For example if you were marketing your grass fed beef business, you could include words such as: grass fed beef, forage fed beef, organic meat, Manitoba beef, home grown beef etc. It's a good idea to check out the top ranked site (for your type of good or service) by googling any keyword. (*See google search on next page.*) Go to your competitor's site and click on View in your menu bar, then Page Source. The title, description and key words are visible for you to see!

Submitting to search engines

Some website hosts submit your website to multiple search engines when they upload your site to their server, therefore, it's important to have your tags in place first. Another service they provide is an e-mail address with your website name, e.g. info@wholesomegrassfedbeef.ca Submitting on your own is a whole new ball game and requires a great deal of time and effort. Websitepublisher.net is an excellent resource to gain some insight on building a website and promoting it.

There's no question, as a novice, building your own site can be frustrating! But the cost is minimal, and the ability to update your site when you want (without fees) is a big plus. And of course, it's a reflection of you and your creativity - a work of Art!

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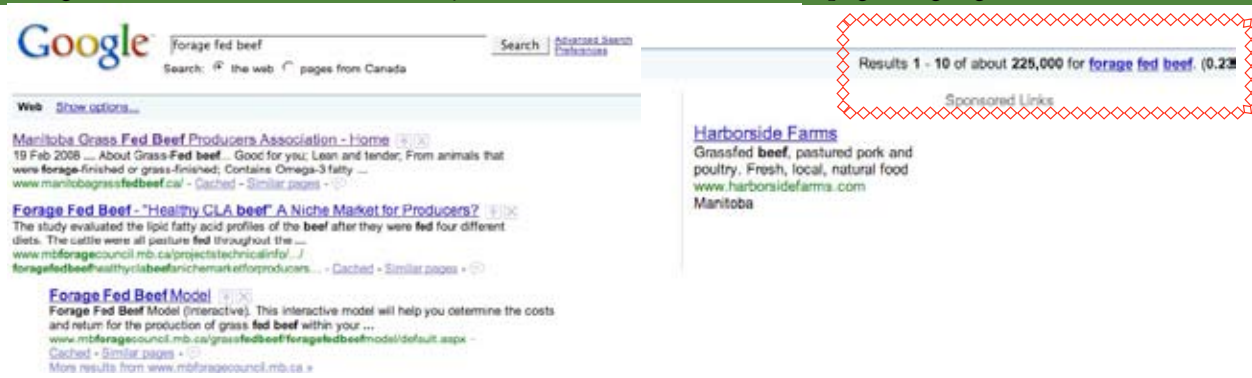
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Board News

When you search for forage fed beef, the Manitoba Grass Fed Beef Association gets top billing, followed by the Manitoba Forage Council website (this is where you want to be - in the first two pages of google).



Wayne's Clippings

Well it has been over a year since I started as Executive Director with the MFC. In looking back it has been a very busy and rewarding year for me and hopefully the MFC has not suffered too much during the changeover. I still maintain that Fraser must have very large feet because his shoes have been very big to try to fill.

In the following I want to touch on a few of the major events that have occurred and projects that we are working on:

Forage and Grassland Strategic Planning Workshop – April 8, 2009

An excellent turnout of approximately 80 participants provided input on the future direction of the Grassland and Forage Industry in Manitoba. A broad cross section representing the many different aspects of the forage and grassland industry provided lively input to the workshop groups. Ian Wishart, Producer and President of the Keystone Agricultural Producers, helped kick off the working group sessions by providing a very interesting overview of "The Future Role of Forage and Grassland in Sustainable Agriculture." Bob Ward, MAFRI, provided an update on the latest "Forage Industry Profile for Manitoba." I want to thank everyone who attended this important event. The level of interest is indicative of the very important role that forages and grassland has to play in our province.



Middle East Hay Marketing Mission

The MFC, with the support of a number of other provincial forage associations, has submitted an application for Agrimarketing funding to assist with a Middle East Hay Marketing Mission to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The purpose of this marketing mission is to assess emerging market opportunities in the Middle East for Canadian hay exporters, to share findings with Canadian exporters and producers, and to develop a long term international strategy for this region. This Middle East

Wayne's Clippings continued

market is expected to reach 1 million tonnes in the next 5 years. Industry analysts expect the combined Middle Eastern forage market to reach a combined 3-5 million tonnes/yr in the next decade (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Oman).



Wayne Digby, Exec. Director

National Forage Association

A major constraint to effective development of the forage and grassland industry in Canada is the lack of a National Forage Association. Without a national voice to represent the many different aspects of the forage and grassland industry it is very difficult to proactively address the many issues and opportunities. With this in mind a workshop was held in December of 2008 to initiate steps towards the formation of a National Association. Subsequently, a number of conference call meetings have been held to continue the process. The Manitoba Forage Council is playing a lead role in moving this process along. There is good support from the hay industry as well as the forage associations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec.

Manitoba Forage Council AGM

Manitoba Forage Council AGM

We held the MFC – AGM at the end of the Forage and Grassland Strategic Planning event. Thank you to all who stayed and participated in this meeting. I also want to thank everyone who gave presentations and helped bring us up to speed on the many activities that the MFC is involved in. A big thank you to the Directors who are leaving us this year including Ken Wright, Pieter De Jong (Dairy Farmers of Manitoba) and Marcel Gousseau (MCPA). Also a big welcome to Lorne Rossnagel who is joining the Board along with Larry Black (Dairy Farmers of Manitoba) and Greg Johnson (MCPA). Also Dr. J.C. (Kees) Plaisier (U of M Animal Science) has joined the board in the absence of Dr. Kim Ominski who is on maternity leave.



Being on the Board may not be this hilarious but who says you can't have fun!

Welcome to our newest directors!

Larry Black – Larry, his wife Sue, his son David and wife Ashley farm in the Turtle Mountains near Deloraine. The Blacks run the first organic dairy and are 3rd generation organic grain farmers. They milk 65 cows, and grow cereal grains and forages. David is representing the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba on our Board. He has served on the Dairy Farmers Board for the past 9 years.

J.C. (Kees) Plaisier, U of M Representative - J.C. is an Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba. He was raised on a dairy farm in the Netherlands and moved to Guelph, Ontario in 2000 to obtain his PhD in Dairy Cattle Nutrition. His research has focused on dairy cattle, specifically in the metabolic diseases of cattle, forage preservation, harvesting and the relationship between forage quality and animal health.

Lorne Rossnagel and his wife Debbie farm 5 miles north of Plumus. They run a herd of approximately 350 cows and make all their own hay. Lorne has been involved in forage and rangeland management for a number of years and is a Director on the Benchland Soil and Water Conservation Co-op.

We also welcome Greg Johnson of Baldur, Manitoba who is representing the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association.

Board News

MFC revising Website

A survey taken at the Forage & Grassland Planning Workshop & AGM indicated that 80% of those in attendance use the site on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, or 6-8 times per year). The pages people visit the most are the coming events, technical info, hay marketing, newsletters, forage and grassland reference, and of course the home page.

The Forage Council has evolved over the past three years and as a result the website has grown – at times making it difficult for users to find information in a quick fashion. The new site has addressed these issues; breaking information into categories to guide you in the right direction.

Our Resources section is a quick step towards our newsletters, technical information, and past event proceedings. Our Events section showcases upcoming events at a glance and archives all past events automatically.



The new site will be live in the coming months. Stay tuned to find out when we're up! Thank you to our sponsor: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Greencover Canada Technical Assistance Program.

Website usage continues to rise:

June 2, 2007 to June 2, 2008 (20,034 visits), June 2, 2008 to June 2, 2009 (27,156 visits). Up 35%.

Argentine Forage Fed Beef Publications coming soon



After taking part in the Technology Transfer Mission to Argentina, Glenn Friesen, MAFRI's Business Development Specialist in Carman, has written a 36 page booklet outlining the specific processes several ranches use to produce grass fed beef – many of which can be transferred to our industry here in Manitoba. This free detailed publication, as well as a 6 page summary (brochure) will be available in July through MAFRI and MFC. The publications will also be available at www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca Be sure to contact us if you want a hard copy or DVD.



MFC Reports

Thank you Grazing School Sponsors

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AAFC - Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Initiative
MAFRI
MB Cattle Producers Association
MFC
Managing Risk Education Program
Sustainable Development Innovations Fund
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Gold

Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council
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Bronze

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Dairy Farmers of Manitoba
Gallagher Animal Management Systems
MB Cattle Enhancement Council
TD Canada Trust
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Victoria Inn
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Manitoba Hydro



Ken Miller Workshop promotes Cover Crops

Kenneth Miller was featured at the Russell Grazing Club Meeting this winter. Ken is a District Technician with the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District in Bismarck, North Dakota who works with clients to design & install planned grazing systems, the Environmental Quality Incentive Program and the District No-till program. He has 35 years farming/ranching experience and operates 1200 acres of rangeland and 350 acres of cropland, of which 250 acres is irrigated for grain and alfalfa, with his wife and 5 children.



Their ranch in North Dakota receives approximately 15 inches of rainfall annually (Winnipeg receives about 16 inches).

Their intensively managed grazing system consists of 36 pie shaped paddocks that are on average about 30 acres in size. Power fences and centrally located water tanks are used and their system of rotational grazing has increased the carrying capacity of the ranch three fold. They run a small fall-calving herd of 40 head, a custom grazing herd of 125 to 150 head and a winter-feeding operation. Cows begin grazing tame-grass pastures in May and then begin a rotation (every 3 or 4 days) through their native pastures.

The ranch grows corn, alfalfa, barley and cover crops which are a very important element in their operation. Cover crops address resource concerns by:

- Reducing erosion
- Increasing soil organic matter
- Managing excess nutrients
- Promoting nitrogen fixation
- Increasing biodiversity
- Suppressing weeds and disease
- Managing soil moisture and
- Improving infiltration

Ken implements a number of different crops in his cover crop system. He will sow 7 or 8 different crops together i.e. cool season grasses & broadleaves as well as warm season grasses & broadleaves. This procedure has enabled him to increase his forage production while using less inputs. The legumes he uses produce nitrogen for the other species in the mix and the deep rooted crops open up the hard pan to allow nutrients from down below to rise and become available to the shorter rooted crops. Generally, these nutrients are just lost and aren't available to most crops.

Events Review

Discover the Interlake at the Provincial Pasture Tour

This year's journey will take you through the Interlake region of Manitoba where you will see demonstrations of brush management; including brush mulchers, and herbicide applications, as well as visits to farms to see rotational sheep and cattle grazing with working dogs, annual forages for grazing and the use of mining tires for water and silage troughs.

TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2009

9:30 am - ASHERN - Brush Mulcher/Chopper (Ray Bittner, MAFRI: Brush Management)

10:10 am - OTR Recyclers—Peter Schroedter, mining tires for water and silage troughs (virtually indestructible) (Rodger Sheldon, MAFRI: Pasture Waterers)

11:30 am - FAIRFORD—Jean Bolay Farms, rotational grazing sheep and cattle in the North Interlake wilderness with guard and working dogs, Deutz silage chopper/trailer, live floor semi for transporting bi-products for winter feed, (Larry Fischer, MAFRI: Rotational Grazing)

Bagged lunch served on bus

2:00 pm - SILVER BAY—TMJAY Charolais -Terry Johnson, annual forages for grazing millets, ryegrass, oats & turnips (no, not stones), view long-term effects on grass production, (Pam Iwanchysko, MAFRI: Annual Forages)

3:15 pm - CAMPER - JLB Limousins -Larry & Ben Busch, 2006 Grazon and Remedy for brush and poplar control, (Bill Gardiner, MAFRI: Remedy & Grazon)

T-Bar Ranch – glyphosate applied in 2006 for brush and poplar control, (Tim Clarke, MAFRI: Aspen/Poplar Control)

Arrive 10 minutes prior:

BUS A DEPARTURE TIMES (Southeast)

Tuesday, July 28

- 7:30 am Winnipeg Livestock Auction
- 7:45 am MTT Service, St Laurent
- 9:00 am Lundar Motor Hotel
- 9:30 am Ashern Auction Mart (Tour Start)



BUS B DEPARTURE TIMES (Southwest)

Monday, July 27

- 6:00 pm Brandon Shell/Smitty's Parking Lot (18th Street & Hwy #1) (park on South side of building)
- 6:30 pm Minnedosa (Uncle Tom's Restaurant on Hwy #16)
- 7:15 pm Onanole (if requested)
- 8:30 pm Arrive in Dauphin

Tuesday, July 28

- 7:30 am Leave Dauphin
- 8:00 am Ste Rose (Chicken Chef on Hwy #5)
- 8:30 am Eddystone (Westlake Community Club)
- 9:30 am Ashern Auction Mart (Tour Start)

Registration Fees: Producers: \$75 (\$100 with accommodations - double occupancy). Industry: \$175, Local Producers: \$40 (meet at Ashern Auction Mart). Fee includes: meals, bus travel and seminars. Accommodations will be provided for an additional \$25 per person based on double occupancy).

REGISTRATION FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE and include a Manitoba Forage Council Membership. Registration Deadline: July 17, 2008 Register early - space is limited!

Register online at www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca or by phone with your credit card – contact Joanne Bauch (204) 768-2782. Or mail cheque to: Joanne Bauch, MAFRI Box 260, Ashern, MB R0C 0E0.

Please make cheque payable to Manitoba Forage Council.



Coming Events

On the Cutting Edge



Manitoba Grazing School – December 1st & 2nd, 2009
Victoria Inn, Brandon, MB

This year's 2-day seminar tackles issues that can make you a leader in your industry. The course will showcase some new management techniques and financial considerations you can implement in your operation to garner a better bottom line for your business.

Here's a few of the topics lined up for the event:

How Diversified Farming Helps You Catch the Wave (converting your operation to a grass finished beef operation and marketing the product).

Extending the Grazing Season for Backgrounding Calves (using annual forages for winter grazing as swathed crops in backgrounding systems to improve profitability).

Are You Getting a Passing Grade in Farm Management? (seminar tackles a number of issues that relate to managing family businesses and combines serious and humorous discussions of basic principles, actual farm problems and practical, successful solutions).

Performance Analysis and Strategic Thinking – (new initiatives to implement professional managerial accounting systems and illustrates the overlooked linkage between financial analysis and strategic decision-making).

Changing the Way We Live in Rural Manitoba with High Speed Wireless Internet (Challenged by today's internet capabilities? MAFRI staff and wireless internet providers will outline your options).
Further details available at www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca

Register on or before November 13th to get the early bird rate!
Online registration will commence in October.



Determining Alfalfa Quality

By: John McGregor, Farm Production Advisor, Steinbach, MAFRI

Trying to optimize forage quality has always been a challenge for hay producers. It seems to be a balancing act between crop stage and mother nature and although there's not a lot you can do about the weather, predicting when your alfalfa will be at the right stage to cut and being ready to go can do a lot to reduce the affect mother nature can have.

For Southeastern Manitoba the average optimum cutting day to obtain forage at a RFV of 150 is June 12 (14 years of data). The range of dates over that same 14 year period has been from June 1st to June 20th. To help producers predict when they should be ready to cut there are presently three methods that have been proven very useful.

These include:

- 1) taking alfalfa clippings early in the season, determine the RFV decline per day using NIR;
- 2) using a PEAQ stick (Predicting Equations for Alfalfa Quality) to do infield estimates of RFV;
- 3) following the accumulated GDD (Growing Degree Days) for your area to determine when you'll reached 450 GDD (early bud) for first cut.

By using any or all of these methods you could know in advance when your crop will reach the optimum stage you desire. If it then looks like Mother Nature is offering you a window of opportunity around that time you'll be ready to take it.

See page 14 for more information on Hay Days.



Forage Bits

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” - Confucius

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”
- Mahatma Gandhi

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.”
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within. It is not what we see and touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy; it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves.”
- Helen Keller

”When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.”
- Alexander Graham Bell

“I am thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out of my nose.”
- Woody Allen

“

Challenges for the Beef & Forage Industry this Year

By: Rodger Sheldon, Farm Production Extension Pasture and Grasslands, MAFRI

With regards to feed supplies for Manitoba - I think things are going to be tight for hay supplies for beef operations. With the late spring and poor pasture growth beef cattle were fed longer than normal and there will be very little carryover of hay for next winter. Most tame alfalfa grass fields have seen little fertilizer applied in past 5 years due to "BSE economics". Lots of tame hay fields in the Interlake and Westlake areas had a lot of their alfalfa drowned out in 2008 due to excess moisture. Tame hay stands in the central and southwest regions were not as affected by excess moisture; they will require seasonal precipitation to produce average yields.

It was also a tough winter with extremely cold temperatures resulting in a higher level of alfalfa winter kill. There are good moisture levels for production but with the cold spring, lack of fertilizer being applied, combined with the drowned out/winter kill of alfalfa, tame hay yields will likely be below normal. Also, the high lake levels in 2008 and excess moisture resulted in very little native hay being put up in 2008. The excess moisture may have killed out a lot of the good native hay grasses. We won't know this for sure until late in June. Most beef operations are still under an extreme cash flow crunch given the economics of the past 6 years so there is little room for additional costs such as having to purchase extra feed. The Manitoba Forage Assistance Program which assisted producers with transportation of feed and the Manitoba Livestock Forage Assistance Program were utilized by producers especially in the hardest hit areas of the Interlake and Westlake to help cover a portion of the costs for purchasing additional feed in the winter of 2008-2009.



Forage Bits

Check Clients' Ability to Pay

Excerpt from e-HAY WEEKLY
April 14, 2009

Don't be timid when it comes to asking customers to fill out credit applications, advises George Twohig, a Chilton, WI, attorney specializing in agricultural law. Twohig, who heads up the firm of Twohig, Rietbrock, Schneider & Halbach, says custom operators and hay growers often shy away from asking customers for financial information even when they are concerned about the customer's ability to pay. "That's especially true if the customer happens to be a friend or neighbor," he says.

But that misses the point of what a credit application is all about. "The goal is to get a more complete picture of the potential customer's overall financial condition so you can assess his ability to pay you for the products and/or services you're providing," he says.

"Once you've sold the hay to someone or completed custom work for them, you become dependent on their business success. Full negotiations and clear understandings are essential to reduce the possibility that you'll become part of a customer's cash flow and other financial problems."

Twohig's bottom line: "Farmers routinely fill out credit applications when dealing with other businesses -- equipment dealers, co-ops, feed suppliers, lenders, etc. Why should it be any different when they're dealing with a hay grower or custom operator? Really, payment for custom services and feed should be committed as part of the farmer's operating loans or line of credit."

Manitoba Sellers Check Customers' Credit Rating

Ian Beavis, owner/operator of Haybuster's (a hay and straw brokerage firm) always checks the credit rating of his customers. "99% of my customers are in the States," he says, "I get the name of their bank and send down an application for them to complete." Ian hasn't had any trouble finding out about a client's credit rating.

Haybusters is based in Winnipeg and has been shipping hay and straw for the past 15 years. "90% of that forage is produced in Manitoba, I have a number of sources that I work with, it all depends on the weather in their area, but I have a great working relationships with them," says Ian. "This year has been a bit of a roller coaster. It hasn't been easy for some U.S. dairy producers; some are cash poor, and banks are making it more difficult to get credit."

Ken Harms, a hay seller from Snowflake, Manitoba gets references for his potential U.S. customers from their nutritionists or feed companies. "It really works well, if you call up a nutritionist and find out that the guy has been jumping around from company to company -- well it might not be a good sign," according to Ken. We have good relationships with our buyers and they have honoured their contract even with their troubles. "On one of my recent deliveries, I helped them out by reducing the price and they ordered another load right away." (continued next page)

"99% of my customers are in the States. I get the name of their bank and send down an application for them to complete."
Ian Beavis, Haybusters



Credit Rating continued

“It’s been really tough on the dairy producers. With our dollar jumping and their low milk prices, guys are just hanging on.” One of Ken’s buyers with 900 milking cows just sat down with his banker and agreed to pay interest only, no principal. They’re covering their employee wages but they’ve had to let some go. They’re not paying themselves or their families any wages at all.

With milk prices not expected to rise til possibly October, Ken wonders how many others will sell off their animals. Two brothers he knows grew tired of the roller coaster ride and sold their entire herd of 1800 cows. Fortunately for them, other dairies snapped up their stock (thinking volume would outweigh the low price) – probably for about \$1600 to \$1800 per animal. “They kept their farm so they might be back in business in the future, but I bet they’re out fishing right now,” laughed Ken.

A government buy out might come into play in the U.S. to reduce the supply. They’re looking at 100,000 to 300,000 cows that could be destroyed.

Since February Ken’s business had dropped right off. “Producers are feeding out lower quality hay to get by, they’re not buying our top Manitoba hay,” he says. But, he’s got buyers interested in his new crop. He got a call from a buyer (well situated with lots of investors) for 150 truckloads. This operation milks 10,000 cows so 150 loads is just a small part of their demand.



Sun Brightens North Dakota’s Hay Prospects

Excerpt from e-Hay Weekly
June 9, 2009

North Dakota livestock producers facing critical feed shortages were happy to see prolonged stretches of sunny weather in late May and early June, reports Julie Ellingson, executive vice president of the North Dakota Stockmen’s Association. “People are anxious to get going on the hay harvest,” she says. “It was wetter and cooler than normal for most of May. But in the last week to 10 days, we’ve been getting some sunshine and things have started to dry out a little bit.”

Even so, Ellingson notes, the start of the haying season will likely be delayed in some areas. “It varies a lot depending on where you’re located in the state, but we typically look at the end of the first week of June as a starting point for making hay. This year it will probably be a week or more later than that in many areas.”

An extreme shortfall in the state’s hay supply started to develop with widespread drought conditions during last year’s growing season. “That really crimped production, so we were already very short heading into the winter,” says Ellingson.

A long winter featuring heavier-than-normal snows and extreme cold and heavy spring flooding forced livestock producers to delay turning animals out on pasture. “A lot of people were really hurting for feed coming out of the winter,” says Ellingson. According to USDA, hay stocks on North Dakota farms and ranches as of May 1 totaled just 700,000 tons, down 44% from year-earlier levels.

The state ag department, utilizing \$750,000 in USDA grant funds and another \$250,000 from the state legislature, has set up the North Dakota Livestock Feed Transportation Program. It’s aimed at helping livestock producers offset extraordinary feed-related expenses or losses related to the harsh winter and/or spring flooding. Eligibility details and an online application can be found at www.agdepartment.com. Application deadline is June 15.

To contact Ellingson, call 701-223-2522 or email jellingson@ndstockmen.org.

International Quality Forage - doing business in Dubai

by: Corie Arbuckle

I caught Ed Shaw, owner of International Quality Forage (IQ) in Calgary, AB, the day before he was heading to Dubai – his third trip since February. In the mid 70's Ed was employed by Case Company and spent two years living in Saudi Arabia. From then on, he worked for Transfeeder, a business that shipped timothy to the Middle East. Having worked with the Arabians for the past 30 years, Ed is more than familiar with their customs and is quite at home dealing with buyers (including some Royalty). Ed's primary forage business has been sourcing hay out of Canada, the States and Spain and selling it for the equine and camel racing market in the Middle East, UK, Ireland and the USA.

I asked Ed how he thought the forage market looks for Canadian producers. "The markets seem to be OK but with the exchange rate going up, it's hard to say. Freight rates and shipping logistics make it really hard for Canadians to make a profit shipping hay." Ed noted that today he heard some big news - the announcement of awarding a large tender by the United Arab of Emirates (UAE) to seven successful bidders."

Ed was kind enough to explain why the UAE has tendered such a vast amount of hay.

With the cash windfall generated by oil sales in the 70's, the OPEC countries decided they would become self sufficient in food production. First, they targeted flour, since imported flour was frequently damaged. They built their own mills, imported wheat instead of flour and subsidized their producers until they met their goal. Next they targeted alfalfa and again subsidized production until they became so sufficient, they began exporting. To grow anything in the sand, you have to use copious amounts of water, as well as fertilizer. Recently, they have been worried about residue leaching into their aquifers, and the resulting decision was to cancel the subsidies for production of low value food products. The subsidy was \$400/T – the same cost as importing. End result – a 1,000,000 Tonne tender put out.

I asked Ed specifically about his policies dealing with buyers. "Credit applications are a must, we always do credit checks on our new customers. We also insure all of our customers from outside of Canada with EDC receivable insurance (a requirement of EDC)."



Congratulations to Kim Ominski and family on their new addition: Lizabeth Andi Jenelle!



Forage Bits

Provincial Green Gold Program helps find your Hay Day

“The provincial Green Gold Program has been revived and is now running,” says John MacGregor, MAFRI. “This is huge, because it hasn’t been around since 1994.” The provincial program is headed up by Jane Thornton and Glenn Friesen. The following information pertains to the Southeast section of Manitoba, however, you can obtain data for your area from your Forage Specialist.

Information from John MacGregor - June 10/09

Hay Day June 18th - (please note the changes to the NIR readings there was a problem with the equipment at the lab).

Here is your third release for the Scissor Clipping Project for 2009. With the present cool conditions the alfalfa has grown only one inch and is still in the late vegetative stage. CP has dropped 3 pts. The NIR test for the period June 1st to June 8th shows a drop of 2.4 pts/day. This will put hay day on June 18th which is just 10 days later than normal and similar to last year.

SITE	RFV	RFV	NIR	NIR	Height	CP	Variety
	PEAQ	PEAQ	June 1	June 8	June 8	June 8	
IDC East	287	268	185	212	12	31	Ranchers Choice
Kleefeld North	268	237	219	181	16	28	Stealth
Kleefeld South	244	230	237	180	17	26	53V52
Giroux	No sample	287		196	10	29	Forecast
La Broquerie	268	237	201	189	16	28	Ranchers Choice
Steinbach North	277	268	217	200	12	30	Magum 3801
AVERAGE	268	254	212	193	14	29	

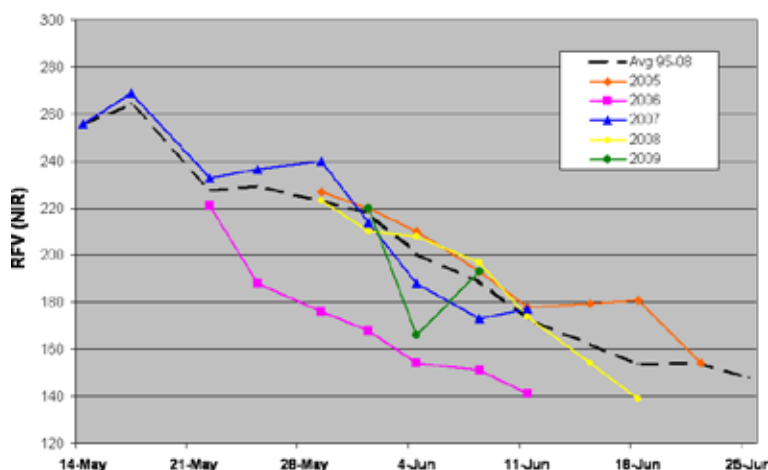
Last year the alfalfa was 19 inches on the 9th but 4 of those inches were from the 5th to the 9th.

The short stature of the alfalfa is maybe a concern. We will need some heat and sunshine to speed the progress, especially if the first cut is going to yield any significant tonnage.

Remember Hay Day is the estimated day that alfalfa will reach a RFV of 170. Past experience has shown that approximate 20 points are lost during the haying process and the time taken to get the entire crop cut, cured and baled. Silage shortens this process and therefore the quality can be higher. Grass/alfalfa mixes can and do reduce the RFV by 20-30 points depending on the % of the blend. With the way the season is shaping up there is no doubt that most of you will likely be taking an early-short first cut so that you can take advantage of getting your 2nd and 3rd cuts off in a timely fashion.

The next report will be June 15th. Contact John at (204) 371-1759 to be added to his e-mail list or contact your Forage Specialist.

Historic Relative Feed Value of 1st Cut Alfalfa - Steinbach



This chart shows the average Relative Feed Value of alfalfa samples harvested from the Steinbach area between 1995 and 2008 compared to the individual forage feed values of 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. Included in the chart is the current status of the 2009 alfalfa crop. It is important to monitor your alfalfa regularly to ensure it is harvested at the optimum stage. For example, the study showed the range of dates in which an alfalfa crop will reach the optimum harvest date (170 RFV) is approximately 3 weeks (June 1 to June 22), with the average being June 12.

Awards - NCLE Researcher Recognized

Karin Wittenberg, NCLE vice-chair and researcher, received the 2009 Pork Industry Education Award by the Manitoba Pork Council in recognition of her "outstanding contributions to the hog industry through her tireless efforts to make research accessible and meaningful for all" through her instrumental role in establishing both the National Centre for Livestock and the Environment and the soon-to-be-constructed Glenlea Farm Education Centre at the U of M's Glenlea Research Station.

Newly Funded Projects

Many new projects are planned for this year at NCLE – here are some of the most recent.

Mechanism of delivery of dried distillers grains with solubles (DDGS) in beef cattle diets: Implications for cattle performance and pathogen shedding in extensive overwintering feeding systems. This project, led by Kim Ominski and Denis Krause, is funded through the Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative (ARDI). For more information contact Denis Krause (denis_krause@umanitoba.ca) or visit the Livestock Management Systems research section of our website (umanitoba.ca/afs/ncle/ResearchProjects.html).

Downward movement of nitrate and phosphorus from liquid versus solid swine manure in an annual and perennial cropping system. This study site has been in place at Carman since 2006. Manure treatments began this spring. Funded by MLMMI, ARDI and SDIF. For more information contact Wole Akinremi (akinremi@cc.umanitoba.ca) or see the project summary and background information in the Soil and Crop Management Systems research section of our website (umanitoba.ca/afs/ncle/ResearchProjects.html).

Stock Broker - Making Hay

Farmer John's son, Sam, went to New York city to make his fortune.
Unfortunately, he became a stockbroker, and on Black Monday,
he lost it all and found himself reduced to shining shoes for a living.

At the same time, a run of unusually good weather resulted in an
abundance of late season hay back down on the farm. Thus,
the farmer makes hay, while the son shines.

Thank you
to the 80
members
who
attended
the
Forage &
Grassland
Strategic
Planning
Session

APRIL 8, 2009 Portage la Prairie



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The Forage Focus is the quarterly
newsletter for the Manitoba Forage
Council.

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Questions/Project Ideas??

*If you have any questions or projects you think
the Forage Council should initiate,
drop us a line at mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca
or call 204.726.9393*

We'd love to hear from you!

Directors

MFC
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