



Forage Focus

Manitoba Forage Council

Volume 1, Issue 3

Fall 2003

Another Successful World Dairy Expo

Members of the Manitoba team at World Dairy Expo were kept hopping with the hundreds of American, Canadian and international visitors to the Manitoba booth.

"We heard from other people buying hay that it (Manitoba hay) is a very good product, and we want information about Manitoba hay and producers," said Michael Lang from Germany, who visited the booth.

"We were here last year and talked to a lady; we are interested in good quality hay that is cheap and reasonable," said Peter Hansen of Fox Lake, Wisconsin, another one

of the enthusiastic visitors to the booth.

According to Manitoba Forage Council executive director Roberta Currah, there was high interest from all visitors – but particularly from producers in drought-stricken Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. She said a registry of interested buyers has been compiled, using the contacts made at the booth.

Many thanks to those who "peopled" the booth – including Andre Grenier, John Bryant, Murray Combs, Robert Fillion, Gerald Bos, Glenn Chychota, Jake and Esther Heppner, and Clark, Shan-

non, Kyle, Ryan and Jillian Combs.

Also sincere thanks to Alfalfa Products Ltd., Chapman Brothers Farm, Frontier Forage Services Ltd, Ed and Elaine Newfield (Kooistra Farms), Steven Smith, Sunridge Forage Ltd. and S. and B. DeBates for donating the hay for the booth.

To view the Forage Seminar presentations given at the 2003 World Dairy Expo please proceed to www.dfrc.wisc.edu/wfa.html

World Dairy Expo was held September 30 to October 4 in Madison, Wisconsin, and hosted over 65,000 visitors.

Inside this issue:

-New Specialist Forage Week	2
-Feeding Strategies Website	3
-Affiliated Members Update	4
-Research Greencover	5
-Hay list Free Processors Corner	6
-Hay Marketing Seed Guide	7
-Coming Events	8

NOTE:

The Manitoba Forage Council's Annual General Meeting will take place at the Manitoba Forage Symposium March 24, 2004.



Superbowl Results

With nearly 250 entries from 24 states and two Canadian provinces in the Dairy Expo's Forage Analysis Superbowl contest, three Manitoba hay producers managed to place in the top 20.

Congratulations to Delichte Holsteins for placing 12th in the Dairy Hay Category and to B. J. Hupalo Hay Farms and Andre Grenier for plac-

ing 14th and 18th respectively in the Commercial Hay Category.



Commercial entries were judged on lab analy-

sis (70%) and visual criteria (30%). Dairy division samples were judged on lab analysis (60%), visual judging (20%), herd production information (10%), and calculated milk per ton (10%).

Winners for the 20th anniversary of this prestigious contest were announced October 2. Four other Manitoba producers also entered.



Meet Manitoba's New Forage Specialist



Manitoba's new provincial forage specialist is Glenn Friesen, a University of Manitoba master's graduate, an experienced agronomist, and a partner in his

family's farm.

Mr. Friesen's career has taken him from Kroeker Farms, to UGG, to

Interlake Forage Seeds and then to Cargill. During that time, he also obtained a master's degree, specializing in native grasses. He began his new duties at Manitoba Agriculture, Carman, in October.

Mr. Friesen says one of his key interests is grazing management for extended grazing, so that more animals can be finished in the province. He sees a potential in the dry grain that comes from the alcohol distilling industry, but also believes there are

many other feeding opportunities out there that need to be researched.

Other areas he has targeted include better feeding efficiencies, coordinating the information exchange among specialists, and "looking forward to learning from farmers."

If you're interested in talking to Glenn about native grasses or other forage topics, give him a call at 745-5672.

Forage Week Provides Wealth of Information

Although feed may be in short supply, feeding and management information is not – thanks to Manitoba Forage Week, held earlier in October.

Approximately 350 cattle producers turned out at five locations across the province to hear a day-long slate of experts – including Dr. Paul McCaughey (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada researcher), Dr. John Popp (Manitoba Agriculture and Food livestock specialist), Grant Lastiwka (Alberta Agriculture pasture specialist), and Don Green (former forage specialist, now full-time farmer).

Dr. McCaughey spoke on "bullet-proofing the ranch," and dealt with both short and long-term strategies for survival – including sustainable economic, environmental and management practices. One of the key elements of his presentation was to encourage increased use of pasture – for weaning, backgrounding and finishing – because it's more economical, cleaner and healthier for the animals.

Dr. John Popp discussed considerations for beef cow management and nutrition in the winter months, and provided a number of valuable insights into feed performance and feeding strate-

gies. Grant Lastiwka presented information on ongoing pasture planning and management in order to survive a drought.

Don Green shared personal experiences from his family's cow/calf operation – including economics and management ideas, as well as survival techniques from a pasture "wreck" last season.

In addition to the feed and management talks, Patricia Walker from the federal Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program gave a presentation on ways in which greenhouse gas can be reduced in cattle production. She also discussed the potential of future "carbon trading"

markets that can be cashed in on. As well, Janet Smith from the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line spoke on coping with stress.

Forage Week was sponsored by the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Manitoba Agriculture and Food, and the Manitoba Forage Council.

If you missed Forage Week, but want any of the valuable information that came out of it, you can order the proceedings for just \$5 from the Manitoba Forages Council (contact info on back page).



Feeding Strategies for This Winter

If you're planning on backgrounding this winter – whether by choice or through circumstances – here's some important information from the specialists at Manitoba Agriculture and Food.

Customized Diets to Match Genetics

It's essential to maintain target weights for specific breeds so that already-low selling prices will not be discounted further, says Provincial Cow/Calf Specialist Melinda German. Therefore, you should be looking at the animals' genetics and plan your feeding strategies accordingly.

- Small-framed British and British-cross animals (Hereford, Angus) need to gain slowly over the winter in order to give the carcasses time to develop. Target gains should be just 0.5 to 1.5 lbs/day, because otherwise the animal will fatten but the carcass will remain too small. An all-forage diet over the winter will achieve this slow gain, and animals will compensate when they are put out on pasture in the spring. If you are short on forage and this type of diet is not a possibility, there are other options (see section on alternatives that follows) – but it's strongly recommended that you work with your ag rep to develop suitable rations.

- For moderate-framed British and Exotic breeds, a 1.5 to 2.5 lb/day weight gain should be the target, utilizing a forage/grain diet. As with the smaller animals, you can't push too hard because the animal will fatten before the carcass develops, cautions Ms. German.

Larger-frame Exotic and Exotic-cross calves (Charolais, Simmental) are late maturing, so you can fast track their weight gain by using a ration similar to one used for finishing. Target weight gains can be three or more pounds per day. However, says Ms. German, you must intensively manage this type of diet or it could cause digestive problems that will affect gain and feed efficiency. She strongly urges that you work with someone who specializes in animal nutrition – either herself or the nutritionist at your feed company.

Alternatives to Traditional Diets

The biggest message from Provincial Animal Nutritionist Karen Dupchak is "test, test, test." She advises that any feed being used as an alternative to hay and/or grain, or any previously untried feed, should be tested for nutritional quality. When comparing feeds, you should compare the same components – that is, energy to energy, protein to protein,

and \$/kg of nutrient to \$/kg of nutrient.

- With hay in short supply, straw is a necessity for many producers. Nutritionally, legume straw tends to be the best, followed by grass and cereal straws. However, with any straw, compaction is a risk, says Ms. Dupchak., so you must ensure energy and protein are balanced. Straw is low in minerals and palatability, so be prepared to add mineral supplements to boost nutritional quality and molasses to increase palatability. Chopping also increases intake.

- Canola hay or silage can make good forage.

- Any crop that has suffered stress or damage has the potential to produce excess nitrates that are highly toxic to beef cattle.

Other alternate feeds include grain screenings, wheat middlings, canola screenings, and ammoniated oat hulls. Also, recent research has shown that medium quality forage can still produce good gains, and high-grain diets on a limit-fed basis can achieve excellent costs-per-gain ratios.

Contact your Provincial Ag Rep or Livestock Specialist for information on specific alternate feeds.

Check Us Out!

The Manitoba Forage Council website has a new look! It's been re-designed to provide more information to members and to non-members – and it's easier to navigate, too. Check us out at www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca.



AFFILIATED MEMBERS UPDATE

Manitoba Forage Seed Association Meets With Agriculture Minister

In August, members of the Manitoba Forage Seed Association, along with several members of the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association, met with Agriculture and Food Minister Rosann Wowchuk to discuss issues concerning both associations.

One of the goals of the meeting was to discuss the impact on the industry of controlling mosquitoes in order to prevent the spread of West Nile virus, says Manitoba Forage Seed Association (MFSA) president Kevin Blight. The minister's response was that her staff would work with MFSA, the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association, and Manitoba Health to develop a contingency plan to minimize the impact of future large-scale adult mosquito control programs on bees and pollinators. This would

include allocating money toward a compensation program.

Mr. Blight notes that spraying mosquitoes did not pose a problem this year for those in the industry, but the fact that there are currently over 100 human cases of West Nile Virus reported in Manitoba means that they have likely not seen the last of the problem.

He said the delegation was pleased when Minister Wowchuk informed them that the two vacant apiarist positions in the Department were to be filled. She also advised them that the apiary inspection program has been expanded to include chalkbrood inspections, and that chalkbrood disease has been officially added to the Bee Act.

In response to discussions on the establishment of a Canadian Apiculture Center of Excellence in Manitoba, Ms. Wowchuk indicated she would lend her full support for this initiative and commended the delegation for their proactive approach in addressing opportunities and challenges. The facility would provide research, extension and education in the areas of bees, beekeeping and pollination.

Mr. Blight said that the meeting was not only beneficial for dealing with the issues at hand, but it also identified a strong allegiance between MFSA and the honey beekeepers of Manitoba. He believes there will be more opportunities in the future to solidify that partnership.

News From MCPA

Ian Thorleifson, Communications Co-ordinator with the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association (MCPA) is elated with the support and encouragement cattle producers have recently received in response to the BSE crisis.

"The old saying 'nobody loves you when you're down and out' sure has not applied to the Manitoba cattle and beef industry during the 2003 BSE crisis," he said.

First, Manitobans and all Canadians responded with full support for Canadian beef, he says, noting that this is the first time that a country has been hit with BSE and consumption of beef has **not** dropped.

"In fact, Canadians purchased 62% more beef this summer, a sure sign that they trust and support Canada's food safety system and the farmers who produce their beef," Mr. Thor-



leifson said.

Secondly, Manitobans have done much more than buy and eat more beef, he notes. They have organized numerous awareness and fund-raising barbecues, beginning with the Great Canadian Beef BBQ in Winnipeg at the famous Portage and Main inter-

section. Eight thousand burgers were served up in a two-hour period!

Since then, many communities in Manitoba have had similar events, raising morale and funds for cattle producers and for MCPA, the producers' principal lobby group.

The various provincial and federal assistance programs announced this summer have meant some easing of the pressure for some sectors of the industry, Mr. Thorleifson says, and MCPA continues to work with government to improve delivery of these programs. Assistance is still available for transportation of feed to drought-affected areas and for top-ups on slaughter cattle that sell below the U.S. market price.



Research Looks at Effects of Rumensin®, Alfalfa and Fertilization on Grass Pasture

Results are in from a University of Manitoba and Agriculture Agri-Food Canada research project to determine the effects on productivity of cow-calf pairs when fertilization, legumes and Rumensin controlled-release capsules are added to a meadow brome-grass pasturing system.

The four years of trials produced the following conclusions:

- Cows treated with Rumensin consumed less (2.3 % body weight compared to the control cows at 2.5

% body weight), but intake was not influenced by fertilization or alfalfa introduction.

- Alfalfa and fertilization improved pasture quality, and resulted in higher crude protein and lower NDF (neutral detergent fibre).

Rumensin improved cow average daily gain on unfertilized grass and alfalfa-grass pastures, but did not influence gains of cows on fertilized pastures.

- Fertilizer, legumes, and

Rumensin showed no affects on milk yield or milk composition.

- Average cow daily gains were the same on both fertilized/unfertilized all-grass and grass-legume pastures.

- Calf gain was lower on unfertilized grass pastures, probably as a result of the high fibre and low protein content of pasture forage, but the addition of alfalfa and fertilizer increased calf gain.

The cost of the additional

calf gain for fertilized pastures averaged \$1.08 and \$0.79 for each additional kilogram of gain, but no extra costs were incurred in adding alfalfa to the pasture.

The U of M's Animal Science head, Dr. Karin Wittenberg, PhD student Juanita Kopp, and AAFC scientist Dr. Paul McCaughey (Brandon Research Station) were involved in the project. For more information, contact Dr. Wittenberg (474-9139) or Dr. McCaughey (726-7650).

Greencover Program Pays to Convert Unproductive Land

Through the Land Conversion component of the federal government's Greencover Canada, you could qualify for financial assistance to convert environmentally sensitive crop land to forage, trees and shrubs.

If you have land that has severe limitations for growing annual crops, or is severely degrading due to wind and water erosion, salinization, or loss of organic matter, you could be eligible for the program. The land must have been in

annual crop production as of July 1, 2002.

If you qualify, you must seed the land to shrubs, trees or forage using minimum standards for seed selection, quality, rate and seeding method. Then you must enter into a land-use agreement to ensure the land remains in perennial cover for a minimum of 10 years. This agreement will begin once the forage or trees are established.

If you are accepted into the program, you will be given a lump-sum payment

for seeding and a subsequent payment upon signing a land-use agreement.

Greencover Canada is a five-year, \$110-million federal program designed to promote sustainable land use and to expand the land base covered by perennial forage and trees. It consists of four components – Land Conversion, Technical Assistance, Critical Areas and Shelterbelts. Details on the three other components of the programs will be announced later this year

The application deadlines

for Greencover's Land Conversion component are January 31, 2004, and again in 2005. January 31, 2006 will be the final application date for the program. For more information about the Land Conversion component or the Greencover Canada program, call 1-866-844-5620 or visit the Greencover Web site at www.agr.gc.ca/greencover-verdir.



U.S. Haylist Free to Buyers and Sellers

Reprinted from Forage Connection (Fall 2003)

Minnesota Forage and Grassland Council

If you're buying or selling hay, you may want to look into the the U.S. Upper Midwest Haylist. It's a self-service tool that enables buyers and sellers of hay (straw too!) in the U.S. and Canada to announce and search available or needed hay lots, and to view haylot summary data.

The service deos not charge to list hay or to search hay listings, and you do not need to register with the system for searches. You are required

to register to buy or sell, and you will receive a haylist ID that allows you to easily revise, add or remove your lots. Lots remain in the system for 60 days.

Since haylot information is not verified by the sponsoring organizations, sellers assume all responsibility for accurately listing their haylots.

The Upper Midwest Haylist is is a co-operative effort between the Extension Services and Forage Coun-

cils of Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. For additional information, contact Paul Peterson by e-mail at

peter072@umn.edu or call 612-625-3747.

For more information on the Minnesota Forage and Grassland Council phone 651-484-3888 or email:

mnforage@comcast.net

Processor's Corner

New Forage Processor Operating in Dauphin

Intermountain Forage of Dauphin is putting the finishing touches on set-up of its last pieces of equipment, and will be functioning at full capacity within the next few weeks, says co-owner Glenn Chychota.

Manitoba's newest timothy processor began operating last winter on a limited basis as it was being outfitted, and was able to ship about 15 containers to Japan last spring. Now, with all the equipment up and running, it will be full speed ahead.

"We are set up to handle medium-square bales

measuring three by three by eight feet, but we can also handle the small squares," Mr. Chychota said. "We will also be able to unwrap and re-process large, round bales into small squares for compacting, but they must be in good shape with no deterioration around the edges."

Mr. Chychota notes that Intermountain is the only forage processor in the province to handle the large round bales.

All timothy going into the plant comes out in dense, hard compacted bales measuring 18 by 16

by 22 inches, and weighing 95 pounds. They are then packed 600 to a shipping container, with a single container weighing in at 25 metric tonnes. The containers are then trucked to Winnipeg, rail-roaded to Vancouver, and shipped to the Asian market.

Japan and other Asian countries are the biggest buyers of timothy because, although they can't grow it themselves, they prefer it for roughage in their cattle diets, explains Mr. Chychota. They prefer the highest quality, so farmers can make a good

dollar on high-quality hay.

"It must be inspected first so that we know it meets export standards," he said. "It must be pure timothy, free of quack grass, foxtail or anything else."

If you are interested in selling timothy to Intermountain Forage, contact co-owner Rod Fisher at 622-8800.



Hay Marketing Tips From a U.S. Expert

Reprinted from Hay and Forage Grower eHay Weekly (September 8, 2003)

Marketing, rather than just simply "selling" will greatly increase sales and price for a valued product offered in combination with customer service, according to Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin extension forage agronomist.

"Many hay growers simply sell hay," he relates. "They are selling a commodity to low bidders rather than developing a market for a product. Bringing factors other than price into the market such as forage quality, consideration of customer needs, prompt delivery, steady supply and appreciation of business can increase value and salability of product."

Taking the time to market the product can mean continuing rewards. "If

price is the only determining factor, someone is always waiting on the sidelines to undercut your price," Undersander says.

Undersander offers the following seven tips to help producers improve marketing strategies when selling hay.

Determine the Buyer's Real Interests: What kind of hay does the buyer want and what type of animal is the individual feeding? Ask how a customer determines quality of the product – by forage analysis, leafiness or other criteria. Is presence of grass desired or not? Other important traits a buyer may consider important may be lack of dust, color or a preference for small bales.

Determine Terms of Pric-

ing: What is the point of sale? Is the price at your barn or stack, loaded on the buyer's truck, delivered on your truck or something else? Will you accept a counter offer?"

Tonnage to be Purchased: What is the contracted amount? Is all hay to be delivered at one time, or over some specified period of time?

Effective Date of Price: How long is the price good for – one month, one week, etc.?

Payment Terms: What are the payment terms? Will payment be collected on delivery, one month after delivery? What payment type do you want – cash, cashier's check?

Delivery Considerations:

Can your truck get access to the site where the hay will be stored? Are you expected to unload and stack? How much help will the buyer provide? When will the buyer be present to help, provide access to a storage area or to pay?

Follow Up: It is important to call the buyer after delivery to ask how the product is being accepted. Is there any room for improvement? Following up may be the difference between a single sale and several years of business. If a customer is satisfied and you have more hay to sell, ask if the customer knows of other potential buyers.

Source: Dan Undersander, Focus on Forage.

Seed Guide Update

A native forage section will be added to *Seed Manitoba* this year, says cultivar evaluation co-ordinator Dave Campbell.

Native varieties that are registered and actively being marketed in Manitoba will be included in the publication, along with available

data. As well, any company currently marketing registered native seed will be included as a seed source.

Mr. Campbell, a crop specialist with Manitoba Agriculture and Food, notes that there will be a change in the distribution of this year's *Seed Manitoba*. It will

now be produced and distributed by the Farmer's Independent Weekly; watch for it on December 11.

The Manitoba Forage Council co-ordinates the cultivar evaluation program, in partnership with Manitoba Agriculture and Food,

Covering New Ground, and the Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative (ARDI).



Manitoba Forage Council

346 Belvidere St.
Winnipeg, MB
R3J 2H3

Phone: 204-889-5699

Fax: 204-897-4086

Email: mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca

Forage Focus is the Quarterly newsletter of the Manitoba Forage Council distributed to all members.

Written by: Val Ominski

Editors: Roberta Currah and Fraser Stewart



Plan Now to Enter the Provincial Hay Competition

Winners showcased at the Manitoba Forage Symposium

March 23 and 24, 2004 Victoria Inn, Winnipeg

Categories

- A. Legume
- B. Legume/Grass
- C. Grass
- D. Greenfeed
- E. Horse

Prizes in Each Category

Entry Details

Contest open only to Manitoba producers

Entry fee – \$25

25-pound sample required per entry

Deadline: Friday, February 13, 2004

Call the Manitoba Forage Council for entry forms – 889-5699

Mark Your Calendar!

- **All About Beef and Forage Seminars**
November 18 – Russell, November 19 – Swan River, November 20 – The Pas
- **Wyett Swanson, Grazing Club Speaker** November 25 evening Ashern, November 26 morning Riverton, evening Fisher Branch. Call 768-2781 for details.
- **Eastern Interlake Grazing Seminar** November 27, Selkirk Recreational Complex. Call 785-5012 for details.
- **Ranching for Profit School** November 30 to December 6, Regina. Call 707-429-2292 for details.
- **Challenges of Production Forage and Beef Daze** December 2 – Dauphin
- **Western Canadian Forage & Grazing Conference** December 3 to 5, Radisson Hotel, Saskatoon
- **Manitoba Conservation Districts Association** December 8 to 9, Brandon Keystone Centre
- **MB Seed Industry Days** December 11 to 12, Brandon Keystone Centre

2004 Events

- **Manitoba Cattle Producers Association Annual Meeting** Royal Oak Inn, Brandon January 9th
- **Beef and Forage Days**
Holland, Jan 12th; Eriksdale Jan 13th; Ste Rose Jan 14th; Rosa Jan 14th & 15th;
Teulon Jan 16th; Miniota Feb 3rd and Belmont Feb 4th. *Stay tuned for details!*
- **2004 Canadian Forage & Turf Seed Conference** January 12-14, Saskatoon host Saskatchewan Forage Council
- **Managing the Water's Edge Workshops:** Russell – January 15, Swan River – January 27
- **Manitoba Ag Days** January 20-22 Brandon Keystone Centre www.agdays.com
- **Manitoba Forage Seed Conference and MFSA Annual Meeting** January 25 to 27 Delta Hotel, Winnipeg
- **Manitoba Forage Symposium** March 23 to 24 Victoria Inn, Winnipeg - *Stay tuned for details!*

Featuring: Provincial Hay Competition, Manitoba Forage Council Annual General Meeting, Annual Fundraising Auction