



Forage Focus

Manitoba Forage Council

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Winter 2004

MFC Needs Your Support

The Manitoba Forage Council works for producers, and for the forage industry as a whole, as it fosters partnerships between industry members, government and researchers. The MFC is also involved in results-oriented marketing activities and research projects, and in transferring the raw information it obtains from these endeavours into demonstrations, seminars and publications that can be accessed by everyone.

Why should you be an MFC member? Because the Manitoba Forage Council is working very hard to promote a healthy industry that will sustain forage production in this province. Without support from everyone in the forage industry – including yours – this may not be possible.

Highlights of 2003 **Who we are involved with and what we have done...**

Developing and Maintaining Relationships

- Manitoba Forage Seed Association
- Forage seed industry
- Equipment manufacturers and technologists
- Manitoba Sheep Association
- Manitoba Cattle Producers Association
- Manitoba Milk Producers
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Producers
- Forage processors
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- University of Manitoba

- Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program for Canadian Agriculture (Canadian Cattleman's Association, The Soil Conservation Council of Canada, Dairy Farmers of Canada and Canadian Pork Council)
- Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration
- Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council
- Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative
- Covering New Ground
- Expert Committee on Forage Crops
- Manitoba Forage Crop Committee
- Amazing Grains (Agriculture in the Classroom)

Marketing Manitoba Forage

- World Dairy Expo trade mission
- Hay to Mexico trade mission
- Presentation to Canadian International Grains Institute's international clientele – An Overview of Canadian Forage Industry
- Hay Certification Program and Listing Service

Fostering Research Activities

- Forage Variety Testing
- Production of Beef for the Health Food Market; Enhancement with Conjugated Linoleic Acid and Omega 3 Fatty Acids
- Pocket Gopher Control : "Odors and Lures to Improve Pocket Gopher Capture Success"

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NOTE:

The Manitoba Forage Council's Annual General Meeting will take place at the Manitoba Forage Symposium 7:45 am March 24, 2004.





Highlights of 2003 cont.

Promoting a Healthy Industry

- Promotion of forage production techniques and grazing management through clubs, libraries, demonstrations, tours, and hands-on projects
- Manitoba Conservation Districts Association meetings
- Joint projects with over 10 strategic partners
- Provincial Hay Competition

- Display at Manitoba Ag Days, Beef and Forage Days

Transferring Technology to Producers

- Manitoba Reference Manual
- Manitoba Grazing Clubs – 24 clubs established in the province
- Manitoba Greenhouse Gas Initiative activities – 9 demonstrations, 10

tours/seminars, 3 provincial conferences

- Stockpile Forage Quality fact sheet
- Manitoba Forage Symposium
- Beef and Forage Week
- Manitoba Grazing School/Forage Week 2003 ❖

News Briefs

Changes to the MFC Board of Directors

Dyck Heapy, the representative from the Manitoba Milk Producers, has stepped down from the MFC Board of Directors after serving a two-year term. He is replaced by Maurice Delichte of St. Alphonse, who has served terms on the MFC since its inception. Thank you Dyck, and welcome back Maurice!

Also joining the MFC Board to represent Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives is Glenn Friesen, the provincial forage specialist located at Carman. Welcome aboard, Glenn! ❖

Hay Certification Program on Hold

The Manitoba Hay Certification Program, co-sponsored by the Manitoba Forage Council and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, is on hold for 2004.

"First of all, because of the drought and because producers are holding onto more cattle than they planned to, there is no hay around to certify," said George Bonnefoy, MFC director and former provincial forage specialist who has been involved with the program right from the beginning.

"Also, if a producer is selling into the U.S., he generally has already established a relationship with his customers, and certification is no longer required as a selling point," he said.

Use of the program has dropped off in recent years, but Mr. Bonnefoy is quick to point out that if there is demand, it will be reinstated. ❖

"The" Website of Forage and Beef Production

If you have a computer, be sure to check out www.foragebeef.ca, the new industry website that brings together all forage production information in Western Canada. It's run by researchers from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, but contains production information from many sources in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. ❖

To Register or Not to Register

The Lowdown on the New U.S. Bioterrorism Rules

The new Bioterrorism Act rules, implemented by the U.S. on December 12, have caused confusion amongst Canadian Food Exporters, however there is a website and a phone number that can provide information. In a nutshell, though, here's what the rules for Hay Exporters say:

Registration with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is required only if you are brokering hay; otherwise you do not need it.

Regardless if you are registered or not, you must give prior notice to the FDA before you ship.

The website is <http://www.fda.gov/oc/bioterrorism/bioact.html> and the phone number is 301-575-0156. Or you can e-mail your questions to furlis@fda.gov. ❖



Feeding Straw Can Cause Serious Compaction

Feeding straw to cattle, especially in cold weather, can result in compaction which usually leads to death, warns provincial cow/calf specialist Melinda German.

Because hay is in short supply this winter due to drought and the high number of cattle being held back, many Manitoba producers have turned to straw. However, straw has a high fibre content and does not move easily through the rumen, she says. In cold weather, the problem is compounded because a cow will increase its feed intake in order to stay warm.

Straw does not supply enough energy and protein to the bacteria in the rumen that break down the feed, so even in lower amounts, straw may be difficult for the cow to pass through its system.

Ms. German points out that straw on its own does not have enough protein and energy to meet any beef cow's needs – no matter what stage of production. The protein in straw is only 3.5 to 5 per cent on average – and a beef cow needs approximately 7 to 12 per cent. TDN is 43 to 48 per cent on average, while a beef cow needs approxi-

mately 58 to 65 per cent.

Always test your straw, and work with a nutritionist to come up with a balanced ration, she advises. Straw should be balanced with hay or grain products such as barley, grain screenings, canola meal, or dry distillers' grain – and all diets should be supplemented with a good vitamin and mineral mix that is high in calcium and vitamin A. Straw itself is low in these two substances, but grain is low in calcium, too, and so calcium deficiencies are quite a common problem.

For pregnant animals, Ms. German recommends straw and hay early on, followed by a ration of straw, hay and grain.

"Once the cow has calved and is lactating, she should not be fed straw at all," she said. "Her energy and protein requirements are too high for straw, and not providing them could affect her fertility in the future." Please visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/livestock/beef/baa01s35.html> for further nutrition information. ❖

Welcome to Province's New Forage Specialist

The Eastern/Interlake Region has a new regional forage specialist who comes very well equipped for the job. Dwayne Summach is a grazing ruminant nutritionist who has worked in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and is a master's graduate from the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Summach took up his new position in the Beausejour office of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives in November. Prior to that, he was a ruminant nutritionist with Unifeed in Olds, Alberta, and before that, a rangeland agrologist with the Grazing and Pasture

Technology Program in Unity, Saskatchewan. He has also worked with the Western Beef Development Centre as a forage specialist.

"I look forward to the opportunity of working with primary producers," he said. "Forage is the key, and I want to be involved in the conversion of this primary commodity into a saleable product."

To contact Mr. Summach, call 268-6014 or email dsummach@gov.mb.ca. ❖

AFFILIATED MEMBERS UPDATE

Alfalfa and Forage Seed Conference Open to All

The Manitoba Forage Seed Association's annual meeting and conference, January 25 to 27 at the Delta Winnipeg, promises a full slate of experts to tell about the latest developments in the industry.

For example, Rhéal Lafrenière of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives will speak about 2003 chalk-brood research, while Thor Kofoed from Denmark will discuss how the restructured EU subsidy will affect the

forage seed industry. As well, Norm Davey of Agrotain International will discuss his company's involvement in forage seed production, and Janice Stoner of SW Newfield seeds will discuss China and the forage industry.

There will be numerous other speakers, as well panel discussions and a trade fair. For more information, call the Forage Seed Association at 376-3309 or 3304. ❖



AFFILIATED MEMBERS UPDATE CONT.



MANITOBA SHEEP
ASSOCIATION INC.

Sheep Producers to Meet with Ag Minister

The Manitoba Sheep Association (MSA) have a meeting planned with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Rosann Wowchuk in order to discuss industry issues – especially the impact of the border closure on the lamb industry.

The MSA is concerned because there are no longer enough kill facilities in the province to service both the lamb and the cattle industries. This situation has developed due to an increased demand for local slaughter facilities by cattle producers who

can no longer move their animals into the U.S. market. Prior to the BSE situation, demand for local kill facilities meant a six-week waiting period, but now, it's three months.

Also up for discussion will be the effectiveness of the border-related market compensation programs. The first federal provincial program called for the killing of animals before compensation was paid out, and since most lambs are marketed live, the program did not benefit lamb producers. The second program ran out of

money in November, before sheep producers could take advantage of it. However, the third program, in effect now for compensation of culls without killing, looks like it will be more industry responsive.

"Minister Wowchuk has always been very supportive of our industry, and we'd just like to take the opportunity to update her," said MSA director Randy Eros, who is also chair of the Canadian Sheep Federation. See <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/lives/stock/sheep/bsa01s00.html> ❖

Why Canadian Beef is Safe

A Synopsis from the Manitoba Cattle Producers

Ian Thorleifson, Communications Co-ordinator for the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, provided the following history to illustrate just how safe Canadian beef is.

-After the major BSE outbreak in the United Kingdom in the 1980's and 1990's, Canada restricted all imports of bovine material from the affected countries.

-In the early 1990's, a purebred cow that had been imported directly from England was diagnosed with BSE on a farm in southern Alberta. That entire herd, all of the cow's offspring and all cattle in Canada that had been imported from the UK were destroyed and tested for BSE. No other infected animals were found.

-This discovery did not significantly change Canada's animal health status nor interfere with trade.

-Throughout the 1990's and right to the present, Canada has complied with all international agreements regarding

BSE surveillance and all preventive actions recommended by experts in the field.

-In 1997, Canada implemented a complete ban on the feeding of ruminant Meat and Bone Meal (MBM) to ruminants. Compliance with this ban has been very thorough.

-In early 2003, in response to the single cow diagnosed with BSE in northern Alberta, a thorough investigation, approved by all international authorities, showed that the cow was born in Canada, and was old enough to have been fed infected MBM prior to the feed ban in 1997. This is the accepted conclusion regarding the BSE source in this cow.

-Similar conclusions can be made for the infected cow found in Washington State – another animal born just months before the feed ban went into place.

-Canada and the United States are regarded as having similar risk levels for the discovery of BSE. The Harvard Risk

Assessment concluded that risk to be very low, and the risk of a case of BSE spreading and causing a considerable outbreak to be even lower still.

-Canada's risk of having another case of BSE is low, and the only logical possibility would be in another older (older than six years of age) cow that might have been exposed to the same infected feed.

-In partially closing its borders to U.S. beef products after the Washington case of BSE, Canada used the same criteria the U.S. used – which is not animals under six years, but those less than 30 months (under three years) of age for immediate slaughter, for feedlot, and as fresh (chilled or frozen) meat.

-Add to this the introduction of harmonized policies restricting the handling of Specified Risk Materials (SRMs), and the BSE risk associated with consumption of beef has continually diminished to near zero. ❖





Forage Variety Testing Update

In 2003, the Manitoba Forage Council (MFC) continued to run the Manitoba Forage Cultivar Evaluation Program sites at Arborg, St. Pierre, Neepawa (operated by Proven Seed), and Roblin (operated by the Parkland Crop Diversification Foundation).

"We can all agree that Mother Nature wasn't especially kind in the 2003 season, with many areas of the province experiencing drought – some worse than others," said Stacie Tait,

co-ordinator for the program. "The testing sites were no exception, and yields were down at all four sites compared to the last three years."

Data was collected from the various sites for Western Forage Test (WF) alfalfa and Timothy (including plots seeded in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002), WF 2001 Cicer Milkvetch, and WF 1999 Crested Wheatgrass plot, said Ms. Tait. Also at the various sites, two Bromegrass trials were har-

vested, from plots established in 1999 and 2001, as well as from Orchardgrass trials established in 2001 and 2002.

Two new tests were established in 2003 at each site – including a WF Alfalfa trial containing 10 varieties and a WF Tall Fescue plot consisting of two varieties.

Detailed information on yield data for each site and variety can be found in the Manitoba Forage Cultivar Evaluation Program 2003

Report, available from the MFC office call 889-5699, or through your local ag rep.

As a result of long-term test results, the evaluation committee approved the following varieties for registration recommendation: R922 – Proven Variety Alfalfa; R923 – Proven Variety Alfalfa; 4241 – Interlake Forage Seeds Variety Alfalfa; Vivi – Proven Variety Red Clover. ❖

Specialty Beef Project on Track

The specialty beef project lead by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Dr Shannon Scott and funded by the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, is moving into its final stages. The project, you may recall, is looking to develop finishing diets that will prevent a drop in conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) and omega-3

fatty acids (O3FA), while maintaining a high grading.

CLA and O3FA are shown to prevent cancer, obesity and heart disease in humans, and are found in enhanced rates in pasture finished beef. However, pasture finishing can result in inconsistent grades.

Feeding trials for the project were completed in No-

vember, using whole sunflower seeds to increase CLA levels, as well as carnitine, a vitamin-like compound, to increase fat deposition and marbling. Animals have been slaughtered, and samples are currently being analyzed. Once the data is assembled and analyzed, results will be released – probably in

March.

Partner organizations in this project are Manitoba Forage Council, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, University of Manitoba, Prairie Sun Seeds/Fraser Ag Services, Lonza Group Inc., and the Beef Cattle Research Council. ❖

Processor's Corner

Focus on Canadian Greenfield Forages

Located in Teulon, Canadian Greenfield Forages provides a timothy processing service not just to the Interlake, but to producers as far away as Gladstone and Cypress River.

Owner Irvin Helwer says his plant, which has been in operation for five years now, works mostly in

processing 35 kilogram bales for the Japanese and Korean market. In 2001, a year in which the forage crop was particularly good, he processed 5,500 tonnes of timothy. This year, however, with the poor hay crop, he estimates production was down by a half.

Mr. Helwer says any producer who's got timothy he thinks is export quality can get in touch with him once the crop is off. It will be graded according to international standards – which are mostly based on colour – and anything that grades low premium, number 1 and number 2 will be

accepted.

Canadian Greenfield Forages also processes timothy straw for the export market, and once again, producers can contact Mr. Helwer to sell their straw. For more information, call 886-2676. ❖



**Tuesday, March 23rd &
Wednesday, March 24th 2004**

**Best Western Victoria Inn, Winnipeg
1808 Wellington Avenue**

You are cordially invited to attend the Manitoba Forage Symposium!

This forage symposium is a fantastic opportunity to meet with fellow FORAGE producers to share ideas, concerns and check out the latest industry developments at our trade show.

Discover More About...

Quality Hay Production Techniques	Markets and Marketing
New Innovations in Haying	Understanding the Weather
What's New in The Forage Industry	

**Manitoba Forage Council Fundraising Auction -
Evening March 23 - Banquet tickets available.**

**Manitoba Forage Council AGM - Morning
March 24 - Breakfast provided.**

For More Complete program information contact:

Roberta Currah at the Manitoba Forage Council (204) 889-5699

Or a Manitoba agriculture, food & Rural Initiatives Forage Specialist

A Joint Initiative Between:

MANITOBA FORAGE COUNCIL

&

MANITOBA AGRICULTURE, FOOD & RURAL INITIATIVES



Attention Agribusiness

Interested in sponsorship or trade show opportunities?

For More Information Contact Manitoba Forage Council 204-889-5699



New Grazing Clubs Brings Number to 24

Four new grazing clubs have been established under the Manitoba Grazing Club Initiative, bringing the total number of clubs in the province to 24.

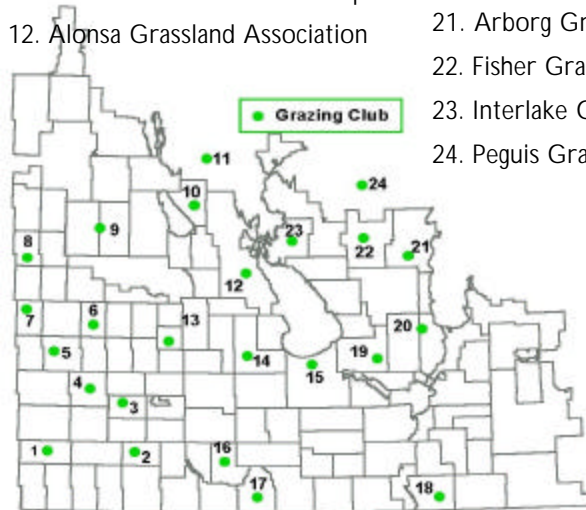
The new clubs are:

- Boissevain-Minto Grazing Club – Boissevain Ag Office, c/o Scott Day;
 - Northwest Grazing Club – Dauphin Ag Office, c/o Pam Iwanchy-sko;
 - Mid Assiniboine Grazing Club – Mid Assiniboine Conservation District, c/o Kim Pop-pel;
 - Assiniboine Bird Tail Soil and Water Inc. – Russel Ag Office, c/o Luanne Berjian
- Grazing Clubs are a source of information

and a way in which producers can share experiences in forage and beef production. Through the federal government's Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program, each club received a grazing library. Through meetings, demos and tours, club members are able to share information amongst themselves and learn from other experts who come from outside their region.

The Manitoba Forage Council has coordinated the initiative, with cooperation from Ducks Unlimited and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives. For further information, contact the MFC – 889-5699 or your local Ag Rep Office.

1. Reston and Area Grazing Club
2. Boissevain-Minto Grazing Club
3. Mid Assiniboine Grazing Club
4. Woodworth Grazing Club
5. Miniota and Area Beef Producers
6. Shoal Lake Grazing Club
7. Border Grazing Club
8. Assiniboine Bird Tail Soil and Water
9. Northwest Grazing Club
10. Lawrence Cattleman Coop
11. Meadowhen Cattleman Coop
12. Alonsa Grassland Association
13. Minnedosa Beef and Grazing Club
14. Benchland Forage Consortium
15. Delta Grazing Club
16. Lizard Lake Grazing Club
17. Cartwright Grazing Club
18. Stuartburn Piney Ag Development Association
19. Argyle Farm Progress Association Inc.
20. South Interlake Land Management Association
21. Arborg Grazing Club
22. Fisher Grazing Club
23. Interlake Grassland Group
24. Peguis Grazing Club ❖



Call for Project Proposals



The same program that brought Grazing Clubs to Manitoba forage producers in 2002, and then followed up with demos and seminars on efficient cattle production in 2003, is now offering additional funding for new projects in 2004.

The Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program for Canadian Agriculture (championed by Canadian Cattleman's Association), administered through the Manitoba Forage Council, is now offering individuals and groups the opportunity to establish projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Money is available for demonstrations, tours, seminars and other projects that fit the criteria.

If you are interested in developing a project in 2004, apply for funding now by contacting the Manitoba Forage Council – 889-5699, or email mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca. There is a maximum of \$40,000 available for Manitoba (\$10,000 for each Manitoba Agriculture Region) and the deadline for applications is March 15, 2003.

A total of 19 projects were

funded by this program in 2003, including the following sampling:

- ration-balancing and feed testing trials to eliminate over-feeding and lost energy;
- a demonstration of winter bale grazing and swath grazing as an alternate to confined winter feeding and associated manure build-up;
- five rotational grazing demonstrations on five producers' sites to show efficiencies and demonstrate techniques;
- Legumes will be added to

an existing forage test plot site to demonstrate appropriate species available for increasing the legume content in pasture stands;

- presentations on greenhouse gas mitigation at regional and provincial forage seminars.

Project monies available through the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program (project championed by the Canadian Cattleman's Association) sponsored by the Government of Canada, Action Plan 2000 on Climate Change and the Manitoba Forage Council. ❖



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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



Reminder Provincial Hay Competition entry deadline is fast approaching!!

**Winners showcased at the Manitoba Forage Symposium
March 23 and 24, 2004 Victoria Inn, Winnipeg**

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

Notice: Annual General Meeting

7:45-9:00 am - March 24, 2004 Victoria Inn, Winnipeg

By-Law Amendments are available from MFC office, and will be presented at the AGM.

Nominating Committee Chair: Vaughan Greenslade Phone: 239-3366

Resolutions Committee Chair: Gordon Otto Phone: 635-2230

Please contact Vaughan or Gordon if you have a nomination or resolution to bring forward.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Mark Your Calendar!

Manitoba Forage Seed Conference/MFSA Annual Meeting

January 25 to 27 – Delta Hotel, Winnipeg; call 376-3309 for details

Managing the Water's Edge Workshop

January 27 – Swan River; call 784-4358 for details

Beef and Forage Days

February 3 – Miniota February 4 – Belmont

Canadian Hay Association Conference 2004

February 5-7 - Saskatoon, SK Call 1-888-541-0911 for details

Manitoba Sustainable Agriculture Association

February 17-18, Ag Extension Center Brandon Call 785-5038 for details

2004 Hay Business Conference and Expo

March 9-10 - Kansas City, USA Call 1-800-722-5334 for details

Manitoba Forage Symposium

March 23 to 24 – Victoria Inn, Winnipeg; call 889-5699 for details

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

Introduction to Ranching for Profit Concepts - with Dave Pratt; Ranch Management Consultants

March 25 Brandon and March 26 Dauphin - Locations To Be Announced - Stay tuned for details