

Forage Focus

December 2009

National Forage Association being created

by: Wayne Digby

The formation of the Canadian Forage & Grasslands Association (CFGA) is moving along quite well and we appreciate very much the input of all who recognize the value of a national organization to speak for forage and grassland interests. Meetings planned for early December in Ottawa will provide an opportunity to move the formation of the CFGA along as we attempt to develop a Board structure that will represent the interests of the various groups across Canada. We are also moving forward with the incorporation of the association.



Photo: Jeannette Greaves

Western Canadian Holistic Management Course

February 8-10, 2010

Holistic Management® is not a new concept. In fact Holistic Management International has been restoring damaged land to health for over 25 years. It is in use today on more than 30 million acres on four continents. Land owners partner with nature to increase land productivity, optimize water resources, create sustainable livelihoods and remove carbon dioxide from our atmosphere.

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Middle East Fact Finding Mission

Plans for a trip to United Arab Emirates & Saudi Arabia underway / page 4

'A prairie boy's view' calendar available

A calendar commemorating the works of the late Glen Nicoll, photographer, producer and writer for the Manitoba Co-operator. Proceeds go to the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada / page 2

Calendar available - \$13

Proceeds to Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada

Glen Nicoll, a talented photographer, cattle market columnist, freelance writer and grass-fed beef producer, lost his battle with brain cancer June 29, 2009, less than a year after he was diagnosed with its most aggressive form, Glioblastoma Multiforme (Grade 4).

He remained optimistic and committed to helping find a cure until his illness claimed him while on a final visit to see family in his home province of Alberta. Glen spent part of his final winter selecting photos that could be used to produce a second calendar featuring his photography as a fund-raiser in support of Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada.

The first calendar project was sold out in weeks, raising more than \$6,700 for the charitable foundation, thanks to the generous support of the hundreds of people from across the Prairies. With help from the Manitoba Forage Council, the Grass-Fed Beef Association and Farm Business Communications, his family and friends have published this limited edition calendar to mark the sunset of Glen's life. But just as every sunset is followed by a sunrise, it was his hope that this effort will contribute towards a new dawn, one in which no family loses a loved one to this disease.

Cost is only \$13

Send your cheque to: Manitoba Forage Council

c/o 71 Inman Ave. Winnipeg, MB R2M 0R7. Calendars will also be available at the Manitoba Grazing School in Brandon on December 1st and 2nd.



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A Merry Christmas to all!

Wayne's Clippings



To say the least it has been a very interesting spring, summer and now fall. The long fall with very good weather into November has allowed many producers to finish harvest and get some of the fall work done before the snow flies.

Getting producers together is always a challenge and especially

when we happen to hit days when they can be in the field. My report includes some of the highlights of events and other major activities happening with the Manitoba Forage Council.

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting, held on November 2, was well attended in spite of the good weather. Main areas of discussion at this meeting included: the Manitoba Forage Council forage marketing initiatives; the role of MFC in the formation of a Canadian Forage and Grassland Association and the challenge of delivering programs and services to members while financial revenues are decreasing. The Board indicated their support for marketing initiatives such as attendance at the World Dairy Expo in Madison and involvement in the Middle East Fact Finding Mission and the development of the Forage Export Marketing Strategy. The Board remains committed to MFC involvement in the formation of a national forage and grassland organization. Support was also expressed for the various avenues that are being explored in moving towards financial sustainability.

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association

We have been having regular meetings with representatives from several forage associations across Canada, namely; Quebec, Ontario, and Saskatchewan about the formation of the Canadian Forage & Grassland Association (CFGGA). The creation of a national association will enable us to speak for the forage and grassland interests as a whole. Another meeting will be held in Ottawa in December regarding the Board structure. The incorporation of the association is in process.

Manitoba Forage Exporters meet and provide input for a long-term international strategy for forage/hay exports

On November 12 a good turnout of Manitoba forage producers/exporters met in Portage to express their views regarding some of the barriers, challenges and opportunities in existing and new markets for forages. This workshop was one of a series of Forage Export Marketing Workshops that are being held in various locations across Canada leading up to a National Forage Exporters Workshop in Ottawa on December 7. Tyrchniewicz Consulting, out of Winnipeg, is assisting with the process of gathering information and the development of a long-term international strategy for forage/hay exports. Information from the Middle East fact finding mission (see page 4) will also be fed into this strategy to develop a more coordinated approach to forage/hay export markets. Funding assistance is provided by the AAFC Agri-Marketing Program and the Manitoba Forage Council is providing leadership and administration for this process.

Provincial Forage and Grassland Strategy

The Forage and Grassland Strategy Stakeholders Group met on November 2 in advance of the Board of Directors meeting. The Stakeholders Group provided excellent input regarding the prioritization of areas that the strategy should concentrate on and also outlined some of the specific action plans that should be put in place. Kelwin Management Consultants is now meeting with a smaller group to obtain input and develop the recommendations for further action. The recommendations for action will then provide our forage and grassland industry with a number of "next steps" to move forward on. If you have further thoughts or input please contact Randy Baldwin at rbaldwin@kelwin.ca. We are hopeful that a draft final report of the strategy will be ready early in December.

Seasons Greetings,



Wayne Digby
Executive Director
mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca



Board News

Mission to Middle East



The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) has secured support from the AAFC AgriMarketing Program for a Middle East fact finding mission. “This expedition will help us gain a better understanding of the market and help build relationships,” says Glenn Friesen, Business Development Specialist with MAFRI. “The information gained will be invaluable as we move forward on the development of our long term international strategy on forage exports.”

There is a range of livestock being fed with tendered forage, thus a range of forage products are in demand. The Canadian mission would like to assess the specific needs of each of the livestock groups participating and offer information on the range of products: long fiber hay, processed hay, feed concentrates, etc. that Canada has to offer. The mission will also be used to build relationships between Canadian representatives and the government and industry representatives of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates for the purpose of developing long-term trade agreements and investment into the Canadian forage sector. The CFGA also plans to develop a Market Assessment Tool and Export Guide for the Middle Eastern markets. The guide will include detailed information on how to assess potential export markets, key issues to consider before exporting, logistical information, important

contacts, and steps to take to build a long-term sustainable export business.

Tentative plans are for the group to travel to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates from March 18 – March 25, 2010. Although not finalized, it is anticipated that the mission will include representatives from the Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario forage exporting sector, along with Government representatives. The Manitoba Forage Council is providing coordination and administrative support for this initiative.

Communication Report

By: Corie Arbuckle

Thank you to those of you who have paid for a membership online or via cheque. Every dollar helps us support our research projects and communicate the results through events, this newsletter and our website. Our re-vamped website is in the testing process and will be launched in the coming months providing even easier access to our publications, coming events, newsletters, and hay marketing.

Another initiative we have undertaken to ensure the longevity of the Council is the Friends of Forage and Grassland program. Participants have their logo or name placed on our home page with a link to an e-mail or their company website. For \$250 you can participate in this program, advertise to over 25,000+ viewers from Manitoba, Canada, U.S.A. and around the world. Please contact me at (204) 254-4192 for more information.

*become a friend
of forage and
grasslands*

Board News

Project Updates

by: Bill Gardiner, MAFRI

Garland Project - “Managed Grazing Systems on Hardwood Timber Harvested Areas” (The final report for the Garland Project is nearing completion and will be finalized in early 2010).

The Garland Project was introduced in 1997 as a research based initiative to assess resource interaction (grazing vs. hardwood timber harvesting). The main objective of the project is to design and evaluate grazing systems which will provide livestock benefits as well as allow for optimum regrowth to meet provincial hardwood stocking standards for future timber harvesting. The data collected from this project will ultimately assist in the development of provincial government policy relative to co-management of Crown land for the long term benefit of both resource users and thereby compliment the defining principle of multiple resource use in the provincial Crown land use planning process/system.

This project was established as a long term project to collect and analyse data from a forestry (stock density, growth and yield, health), livestock (weight gains) and forage (quality, quantity) perspective. The project is assessing different livestock stocking rates/strategies and seasons of harvest (winter vs. summer). Partners include MAFRI, Manitoba Conservation (Forestry), Louisiana Pacific Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, R.M. of Ethelbert, MFC and producers/cooperators. Funding has come from a variety of sources including Greencover Canada and the Agriculture Sustainability Initiative with MFC as the proponent.

The final report is being developed with the assistance of Western Rangeland Consultants Inc. based in Edmonton, Alberta. As mentioned, the report will assist in guiding and developing provincial government policy and will include recommendations to the province relative to co-management (forestry, livestock grazing), environmental protection and long term multi-resource sustainability. It is anticipated that one outcome will be the introduction of Crown land grazing leases with specific grazing management conditions to allow for regeneration of trees. Another outcome may be harvesting methods or strategies which are altered or designed specifically for grazing lands. The report will also provide technical information and/or guide future extension activities relative to rangeland management and assist private landowners manage their land resources.

Manitoba Forage Benchmarking Project

The Manitoba Forage Benchmarking Project (MFBP) is now in its final year and scheduled for completion by March 31, 2010. The MFBP was initiated in 2004 and has since collected baseline/benchmark forage yield data on native pasture in Manitoba. Yield data for native pastures in Manitoba is currently extremely limited.

The MFBP data is being collected in 4 separate climatic or ecozones in the province and on 3 different or distinct soil types or categories (good soil, marginal soil, poor soil) with each of the 4 ecozones. The data collected is also specific to 5 vegetation categories for each of the soil types in each of the ecozones. The vegetation categories include upland meadow, lowland meadow, transitional, wooded and open wooded. Four replications are included for each of the vegetation categories.

Translated, the number of sites and cages are: 4 zones x 3 soil types = 12 sites; 12 sites x 5 vegetation categories x 4 reps = 240 cages

Field activity has included such things as clipping (twice annually), species I.D., range condition assessment and litter analysis. Additionally, weather stations were placed at each of the 12 sites to collect precipitation, temperature and soil moisture/temperature data. Processing of samples includes sorting (grass vs forb vs woody), drying, (continued page 8)



Course shows how to adapt animals to your environment

By: Jane Thornton, MAFRI

Producers, agencies and researchers all enjoyed the “animal behaviour course led by Dr. Fred Provenza in early November. His work as a researcher and professor at Utah State University changed everyone’s view on how and why animals eat what they eat and choose the habitats that they do. One could easily see that he was only touching on the basics of a large and varied discipline that most of us have never really considered.

He stressed that optimum production comes from animals that are well adapted to their environment. Animals must be anatomically and physiologically adapted and have behavioural knowledge. So while the need for nutrients and a place to live are inherent, which foods to eat and which habitats to use are learned behaviours. Animals learn what to eat, what not to eat, and where to eat from their social interaction with members of their herd. The mother plays a large role early in an animal’s life but the young are also more experimental. So while most of us accept that cows don’t eat as much brush, thistle or leafy spurge as goats, for example; this behaviour can be modified by introducing the animals early in life to these foods. Some experiments even suggest that a cow’s diet in late gestation can influence the kinds of food that her offspring will eat. So this is interesting but what can it mean to a producer? The answer lies in the producers’ ability to identify problem plants on his farm and to train his herd to eat these plants. Aspen, buck brush, thistle, leafy spurge, the list goes on, all become forage instead of problem weeds.

Another interesting aspect to Dr. Provenza’s research was related to secondary plant compounds. While most of us easily understand the role of primary compounds like energy, protein, calcium and phosphorous, most of us give little thought to the secondary compounds like alkaloids, phenolics, tannins and terpenes and how they affect an animals preference, avoidance or intake of these foods. Experiments with endophyte infected tall fescue showed that the order a food is eaten changes the animal’s prefer-

ence and intake of the food. In this experiment they grazed tall fescue first or after the animals had eaten a diet high in tannins (birdsfoot trefoil) and saponins (alfalfa). If the tall fescue was eaten after the ingestion of the legumes the intake of tall fescue went up significantly.

Dr. Provenza’s last section was on satiation. This is simply that animals get tired of eating the same thing over and over. This concept leads us to the benefit of biodiversity. Biodiversity is something that many of us have thought of only in terms of wild lands or a concern of environmentalists but there it is – a benefit to our livestock industry. Choice increases performance and reduces costs since variety allows the animal to regulate intake of primary and secondary compounds. In confinement feeding trials, giving the animal a choice over total mixed ration they ate less, gained weight at the same rate and cost less to feed. In pasture situations they found that animals performed better on mixtures than on monocultures. When designing a mixture it is better if the plants are in patches rather than all mixed together. This presumably is because the animal can more easily select the plant they want rather than the tedious job of picking through all the unwanted plants.

‘most of us accept that cows don’t eat as much brush, thistle or leafy spurge as goats, for example; this behaviour can be modified by introducing the animals early in life to these foods,’
Fred Provenza



Dr. Fred Provenza, Researcher, Utah State University

To say the least there was a lot to learn and this is a very condensed version of two and a half days of learning. It changed my way of thinking and I’m sure it did for most of the participants. Now I look forward to how this information can help the producer get better production from the same land and without costly inputs. To learn more visit the Behavioral Education for Humans, Animals, Vegetation and Ecosystem Management (www.behave.net) web site. This site can explain it much better than I can and there are many interesting producer stories.

Despite the recession in the U.S. the world famous dairy

World Dairy Expo carries on!

show carried on. This year the show attracted 64,000+ people (comparable to past years), from 91 countries over the 5 day period. 2,551 people were international guests.

For 20 years now, Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives in conjunction with Manitoba Forage Council, Manitoba Competitiveness, Training & Trade along with interested Manitoba farmers have attended the World Dairy Expo (WDE) in Madison, Wisconsin, and Manitoba's hay is well respected as a result.

"The tone of the event was somewhat down as a result of the recession and the low price of milk," according to first time attendee Tim Clarke, Forage and Range Specialist with MAFRI. "But, it was still an amazing show," he continued. "There were 3800 head of cattle, and 800 exhibits and on the first day of the show there were lots of kids participating in 4-H events."

Hay producers who helped man the MFC booth are: Ken Harms, Snowflake, Clark Combs, Deloraine, Phil Landon, and Derek Friesen from Crystal City. The hay showcased in the booth was provided by the Friesens, Combs and Ed & Elaine Newfield. The Friesens also displayed the hay machinery they manufacture at an outdoor WDE booth.

Arturo Garteweg and Brad Havixbeck represented Manitoba Competitiveness, Training & Trade and Jane Thornton and Tim Clarke represented MAFRI.

Consumers interested in Manitoba hay

The booth showcased 2 medium square bales and 6 small square bales of high quality Manitoba grown hay. "People were really interested in our Manitoba grown hay, and would stop, smell and look at it and say, 'this is really good hay', a compliment to our producers," commented Tim Clarke.

At least 33 potential hay customers filled out their names and contact information identifying what type of hay products they are interested in purchasing when visiting the MFC booth and customers from China also expressed inter-



(L - R) – customers, Arturo Gardeweg (MB Trade and Investment), Ken Harms (hay producer), Brad Havixbeck (MB Trade and Investment), customer, Phil Friesen (Phiber), customer.

est in Manitoba hay.

U.S. impacted by China's Decision

The recession coupled with China's decision to increase their own milk production has had a detrimental effect on U.S. dairy producers.

According to The Main Street Economist, a publication by the Federal Reserve of the Bank of Kansas City, China's household income has increased more than 50% since 1991. With that increase, Chinese consumers have added more protein to their diet. Between 1975 and 2009 U.S. meat consumption rose 18% while China's rose 532%. Milk consumption also increased -- to an incredible 3,000% percent compared to 17% in the States. ▶



U.S. impacted by China's Decision

(continued from page 7)

China's decision to increase their milk production has had a huge impact on the U.S. Livestock producers have been hit with a double whammy - rising feed costs and dropping demand from U.S. and offshore customers.

Hog and cattle prices have decreased approximately 10% since 2008, and milk prices have fallen more than one third, to below the cost of production. The U.S. government has offered up three dairy buyout programs this year to reduce supply.

Project Updates (continued from page 5)

weighing and feed quality analysis.

In addition to the basic yield data being collected, the various add-on components (weather data, litter analysis, species I.D., range condition assessment, feed analysis etc.) will all be valuable in terms of predicting pasture production potential and/or an estimated range of yield for each of the vegetation categories for each of the soil types in each climatic/ecozone. It is anticipated that the information gathered from this project will serve as baseline data and assist in guiding future extension activities relative to rangeland management. Funding is currently via ARDI. Project partners for the MFBP include MAFRI, ASFC, U of M, MFC and producers.

Manitoba Grass-Fed Beef Association news

by: Jim Lintott

The most important event this past summer was the recent announcement that Keystone Processors of Winnipeg will receive both provincial and federal funding in the form of repayable grants to take the old plant in St. Boniface up to federally inspected status and E.U. certified. This is of significance as Keystone intends to be primarily a custom kill plant and geared to do small runs of identity preserved product. This will also allow producers to develop other niche market products and move it through the value chain to retail. That will allow grass-fed beef to be processed and value added here in Manitoba so that local producers and companies can access markets beyond our provincial borders and export out of Canada. This will also allow producers to develop other niche market products and move it through the value chain to retail. That is important as it could tie into Winnipeg's expanding international airport that is gearing up for more/better air freight export. Also, as Winnipeg is a major trucking centre for freight in all directions, our ability to move relatively small lots of product out of the province is a great advantage. There are other processors looking to expand their slaughter capacity and get to federally inspected status. That shows the level of interest in value added here in Manitoba, but all this will still take one to two years to be operational.

In the mean time, the grass-fed beef association has been busy working on the age old question of markets. We have continued to develop value added products to help move the entire carcass through the system in an orderly fashion. Through our work with "ag in the city" we met a very good chef here in Winnipeg. He has created three new recipes for us based on ground beef and Saskatoon berries. We finally have a recipe that is finding good acceptance through taste testing and sales at the St. Norbert Farmers' Market. This will give us a Saskatoon berry and meat pie, sausages and pâté. A Winnipeg based company that markets across Canada is interested in doing the production and marketing. We also have the standard smokies and farmer sausage that have always sold well. The rest of the cuts, the higher (continued page 13)



Western Canadian Holistic Management Conference

*Find out how you can improve your land and lifestyle
by participating in the*

Western Canadian Holistic Management Conference

February 8 – 10, 2010, Russell, Manitoba



According to Holistic Management International, Holistic Management enables land stewards to utilize resources available now to obtain these results:

- Reversal of desertification.
- More biologically active soils.
- More productive rangeland or cropland.
- Removal of existing Carbon Dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Less new Carbon Dioxide due to reduction of crop and forage burning.
- Reduced costs.
- Enhanced profits & livelihoods.
- Increased carrying capacity.
- Maximum benefit from rainfall.
- Protection from drought.
- Improved wildlife habitat.
- Better food security.
- Improved economic viability for organics production.
- Clean water.
- Healthier environment.
- Stronger family relationships.

If you are interested in achieving just one of the above goals then this conference is for you. Our diverse line up of speakers and panellists provide insight into what you need to do to meet any or all of these objectives and have you on your way to a new lifestyle that will help you achieve environmental, economic and social benefits.

Terry Gompert – How to survive and be a profitable farmer. Holistically speaking, grazing is the only known way to heal the land. Terry will share the principles of ultra high stock density grazing and the success stories of several graziers from around the world. Terry is a University of Nebraska Extension Educator and a Certified Holistic Management Educator.

John Ikerd – Finding purpose in peril. Science, at its best, is about attempting to understand the basic principles of nature by observing and studying the consequences of actions. The ecological, social and economic principles of purposeful living are the focus of this session, but the pathway from fear and toward true fulfilment, even in these times of great peril, begins with the principles of faith, love and hope. John was Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Economics at the University of Missouri Columbia before retiring in 2000 to focus on writing and speaking out on issues related to sustainable agriculture with an ▶

Coming Events

The Night before Christmas
(the rural version)

'Twas the night before Christmas and out on
the ranch
The pond was froze over and so was the branch.
The snow was piled up belly-deep to a mule.
The kids were all home on vacation from school,
And happier young folks you never did see-
Just all sprawled around a-watchin' TV.

Then suddenly, some time around 8 o'clock,
There came a surprise that gave them a shock!
The power went off, the TV went dead!
When Grandpa came in from out in the shed
With an armload of wood, the house was
all dark.
"Just what I expected," they heard him remark.
"Them power line wires must be down from the
snow.
Seems sorter like times on the ranch long ago."

"I'll hunt up some candles," said Mom. "With
their light,
And the fireplace, I reckon we'll make out all
right."
The teenagers all seemed enveloped in gloom.
Then Grandpa came back from a trip to his
room,
Uncased his old fiddle and started to play
That old Christmas song about bells on a sleigh.
Mom started to sing, and 1st thing they knew
Both Pop and the kids were all singing it, too.

They sang Christmas carols, they sang "Holy
Night,"
Their eyes all a-shine in the ruddy firelight.
They played some charades Mom recalled from
her youth,
And Pop read a passage from God's
Book of Truth.
They stayed up till midnight-and, would you
believe,
The youngsters agreed 'twas a fine
Christmas Eve.

Grandpa rose early, some time before dawn;
And when the kids wakened, the power was on.
"The power company sure got the line repaired
quick,"
Said Grandpa - and no one suspected his trick.
Last night, for the sake of some old-fashioned
fun,
He had pulled the main switch - the old
Son-of-a-Gun!
-Anonymous

(Holistic Management Conference - continued from page 9)
emphasis on the economics of sustainability.

Ann Adams – Living at home with holistic management. Ann will guide you through the steps required to make a solid decision. By focusing on what you want you can gather the critical information necessary to make the right decision. Ann Adams is Director of Educational Products & Outreach, Holistic Management International.

Rolande Kirouak – Disaster Proof. Find out the tools for managing life's ups and downs. When was the last time you did something just for yourself? If you're going to do great things you have to feel good. Rolande delivers seminars on change management and lightens a room with her attention to individual needs, her constant smile and her "at the ready" energy through her business Spadrole.

For an indepth look at all of our speakers or to register go to: www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca
Registration also at: (204) 622-2006
Early bird registration is \$120.00 for Members. Non-members \$170.00. Membership is \$40.00

Need a vacation down south?

The MidWest Horse Fair is an extremely affordable family event held in Madison, Wisconsin.

What is there to do at the Midwest Horse Fair®?

April 16, 17 & 18, 2010

Whether you are a horseless horse lover, new horse owner, or seasoned professional, there will be something that you'll enjoy at the Midwest Horse Fair®. Non-horse owners, families and children can meet the horses up close by touring the eight different barns. To help make future breeding decisions, mare owners have the opportunity to view stallions of all different breeds from around the Midwest in Stallion Avenue. Many different breeds of horses are represented during the breed demonstrations in the Coliseum. Hundreds of clinics, seminars and educational events are presented by some of the top horse professionals from around the country. Over 500 vendor booths offer shopping opportunities with something for everyone. Enjoy the "mane" event feature presentation focusing on the magnificent horse. Go to www.midwesthorsefair.com



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\$10 Advance
\$12 at the gate
3-DAY PASS
\$27 Advance
\$36 at the gate
General admission
for children 7 &
under is free.



\$1000 Excellence Award for Agricultural Students



The Canadian Farm Business Management Council wants to help agricultural students develop their communication skills by providing them an opportunity to give an oral presentation on a subject related to farm management. The oral presentations will be submitted in form of a video blog sent in by email or regular mail. The email can contain the video itself or a link to the video on a site, such as YouTube. The five winning videos will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and will be posted on at www.farmcentre.com Videos should include your name, year and field of study, program, and school attending. Your video should be 3-5 minutes in length and answer the question "How do changing consumer trends affect farm management responsibilities and styles?" The content should keep the attention of the audience while being informative and innovative.

Go to: www.farmcentre.com

Coming Events

Beef & Forage Workshops

December 7 to December 10th at various locations

Topics

- Extended Grazing On Farm Demonstration Results
- Renovating Run Down Tame Hay Fields
- Pasture Brush & Weed Control
- Forage Seed Selection & What To Grow
- Multi-Cropping – A New Opportunity?
- Financial Benchmarks For Cow-Calf Producers
- Environmental Program Dollars For Beef Producers

Date	Time	Place	Registration
Mon., Dec. 7	11:00 AM – 3:30 PM	Alonsa Community Centre	-----
Mon., Dec. 7	6:00 PM – 9:30 PM	Westlake Community Centre	(204) 447-4030
Tues., Dec. 8	12 Noon – 3:30 PM	Meadow Portage Community Hall	-----
Tues., Dec. 8	6:00 PM – 9:30 PM	Rorketon Drop In Centre	(204) 447-4030
Wed., Dec. 9	12 Noon – 3:30 PM	Ethelbert Drop In Centre	-----
Wed., Dec. 9	6:00 PM – 9:30 PM	Gilbert Plains Legion Hall	(204) 622-2006
Thur., Dec. 10	12 Noon – 3:30 PM	Roblin Chicken Delight Banquet Hall	-----

For more information contact Rodger Sheldon (638-2038) or Pam Iwanchysko (648-3965). To pre-register for complimentary suppers only, contact your local MAFRI GO Office - Ste. Rose 447-4030, Dauphin 622-2006.

Sponsored by: Ste. Rose Co-op Agro, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Agri-Extension Environment Program, Agriculture Sustainability Initiatives, Dow Agro Sciences, Pickseed Ltd., Alonsa Grassland Association, and Ste. Rose Ag. Rep. District Soil Conservation Group.



No plans for Roundup Ready® alfalfa commercialization in Canada

By: Corie Arbuckle, MFC

RRA in Canada

There is a great deal of confusion regarding the launch of Roundup Ready alfalfa (RRA) in Canada. To clarify this, I contacted both Forage Genetics International (FGI) and Monsanto Canada. Forage Genetics International is an integrated alfalfa seed business that provides services to bring to market new alfalfa varieties. Monsanto has licensed its technology to Forage Genetics and FGI is responsible for all commercial plans related to the introduction and commercialization of Roundup Ready alfalfa in Canada and the U.S. Monsanto is serving in the role of technology provider and will take the lead on regulatory issues and stewardship issues in Canada.

Monsanto received food, feed and environmental approvals by Canadian regulatory authorities in July 2005 to support the U.S. limited launch of Roundup Ready alfalfa in the fall of 2005. Monsanto Canada and FGI had not pursued the additional approvals for commercial production in Canada such as variety registration or Roundup herbicide use registration at that time.

Monsanto conducted small-scale field trials at 12 locations in 2008 and 2009, assessing crop tolerance and residue work for the use of Roundup on Roundup Ready alfalfa. This work has been completed and the data from these trials could be submitted to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) in spring 2010. Review and approval typically takes 12 to 18 months. If approved, the required product label for the use of Roundup over the top of Roundup Ready alfalfa could be granted sometime in 2011. At the moment, FGI has not begun the process to have RRA go through the variety registration process. According to FGI President Mark McCaslin, "FGI does not currently have plans for commercialization of the trait in Canada, and would not do so without a stewardship plan designed to protect sensitive export markets. We believe that the benefits of biotech traits will eventually offer a compelling value to Canadian forage producers and at that time will want to work with all stakeholders to develop a stewardship plan enabling coexistence of biotech and non-biotech markets in Canada."

RRA in the United States:

Roundup Ready alfalfa was approved by the Federal Government and planted by growers in the U.S. until the Centre for Food Safety launched its lawsuit. RRA production in the States has now stopped.

Forage Bits

Grass Fed Beef news (continued from page 8)

quality cuts will move easily through the restaurants that are increasingly looking for local and healthy choice meats.

Another important development is the tenderness testing. We are setting up to test the tenderness using the Werner-bratzler system of shear force testing at the University of Manitoba. This will allow us to test the beef for tenderness before it is cut and wrapped. This will help us determine what it is best suited to for retail. Also, we hope to use this test to determine a grading system that can reward producers for the quality they produce. Back at the farm, this testing will help producers select their best genetics and move those forward within the herd. We had some testing done this already this fall and the results are very encouraging, with high quality scores (low shear force numbers) proving that we can produce 100% grass fed beef that is comparable to the best grain finished. The market will demand this quality, we can not expect the grass fed market to grow on anything but the best quality.



So, I think the future looks very promising for grass fed beef. Even if you never intend to produce 100% grass-fed beef, the work that is being done on the genetic selection and grassland management will help all cattle producers produce high quality beef at a lower cost. Manitoba has the resources; we need to keep our goals focused on the ever changing demands of the consumer.

Step Up to the challenge and make a difference in the future of Canadian Agriculture!

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC) is pleased to provide Step Up, a program which brings beginning and experienced farmers together from all different kinds of farm businesses. Someone who is interested in starting their own farm business becomes a mentee and is matched with a mentor farmer who currently owns and operates the type of business they are wishing to pursue. The beginning farmer learns how to manage and operate the farm while the experienced farmer gains an extra hand from a youth keenly interested in the business who could bring fresh ideas and a new point of view to the farm.

The chance to see firsthand the type of farm business they wish to operate and be part of the management decisions is an excellent learning experience. The Step Up program opens many opportunities for learning and idea-sharing, encouraging lifelong learning across generations of farmers. Info at: 1-888-232-3262 ext. 32, heather@cfbmc.com
or go to: www.farmcentre.com



Register now for the:
Western Canadian Holistic Management Conference
February 8-10, 2010

www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca or (204) 622-2006



Rangelands Club formed at U of M

There is a new club at the University of Manitoba called the Rangelands Club. It is for undergraduate and graduate students interested in learning about rangeland and prairie ecosystem management and for making industry contacts in this area.

The students will be studying and preparing for (with help from industry professionals and researchers) written exams, group problem solving activities, and student paper presentations at the Society for Range Management (SRM) annual meeting and conference coming up in February 7-11 in Denver, Colorado. This year's SRM annual meeting is being held in conjunction with the Weed Science Society of America conference and the theme is invasive species management.

For more information contact:

Gwen Donohoe, M.Sc. Student

Room 329 Ellis Building, Department of Soil Science

University of Manitoba

(204) 620-1692, gwendolyn_11@hotmail.com or umdonohg@cc.umanitoba.ca

Can you help?
The SRM is looking for any interested industry representatives to meet with the students to help them prepare for the conference, particularly with invasive species management, forage establishment and rejuvenation, or grazing management as well as sponsorship to help cover costs.

U of M welcomes new assistant professor

Luciano González is a new assistant professor in sustainable grasslands and livestock production systems in the Department of Animal Science, University of Manitoba. He has extensive experience in teaching, research and primary production from several institutions and companies located around the world. His farming background and first experiences in the forage/livestock industry were obtained under grazing systems in Argentina. He later gained practical and research experiences in livestock production in USA (Nebraska and Minnesota), Spain, Scotland, and more recently while working for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Lethbridge (AB). Luciano wants to use his expertise to contribute to the advancement of Manitoba's cattle and forage production systems through collaborative research, outreach and involvement with educational programs at the university and in the community.

Luciano A. González
Assistant Professor
Dept of Animal Science
Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2
Canada
Ph: 204 474-9527; Fax: 204 474-7628



Manitoba Forage Seed Association

Wake-up Call for the Federal Minister of Agriculture

(This is an excerpt from a Roundup Ready alfalfa article printed in the fall issue of "Forage Seed News" and the "Manitoba Cooperator," October 15/09 issue).

The unmentionable has happened. On September 10, 2009, the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed reported finding the GMO flax variety, FP967 (CDC Triffid), a deregistered genetically modified flax in Germany. Because GM flax FP967 is not authorized in European Union, there is zero tolerance for the variety. In other words, any raw material or flax derivative tested to be positive for FP967 is not marketable in the E.U. Prices plummeted from a high of \$12/net bushel to a low of \$6.87/net bushel demonstrating how sensitive the markets can be.

This situation exemplifies the risks that the introduction of Roundup Ready™ alfalfa would pose if it is commercialized in Canada. In fact, the small field trial Roundup Ready™ alfalfa research plots Monsanto is presently conducted across western Canada create the potential for cross pollination. Many producers, professionals and groups in the forage seed industry, (including MFSA) believe that coexistence of genetically engineered (GE) and non GE alfalfa market is not a reality. Once Roundup Ready™ alfalfa is introduced into the environment it is likely it will be spread by pollinating insects and other means regardless of the intended use of the crop.

Glyphosate-resistant alfalfa is the first perennial GE field crop to be deregulated (June 2005) and to be commercially available in the USA. However, in March 2007, glyphosate resistant alfalfa was returned to regulated status pending a completion of a court ordered Environmental Impact Statement and Economic assessment. Therefore, why is Canada putting its forage seed industry at risk?

Forage seed producers are right to fear the genetically modified crop Roundup Ready™ alfalfa if commercialized in Canada. Proponents could submit trial data to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) by the spring of 2010. PMRA could grant the required herbicide product label in 2011, making the crop available for planting in 2012.

If Roundup Ready™ alfalfa is commercialized in Canada; the contamination of alfalfa seed crops is inevitable and would be irreversible! When the alfalfa seed export industry collapses, which in turn will shrink the industry and make it less viable, someone must be held accountable for the losses!

Strong leadership from our federal Minister of Agriculture is needed to prevent this from happening!

2010 MFSA Alfalfa & Forage Seed Conference

January 10 & 11, 2010
Victoria Inn, Winnipeg, MB

Tentative Agenda

Sunday, January 10

7:00 pm Meet & greet hospitality room / conference trade show

Monday, January 11

8:00 Registration & trade fair exhibits

9:00 **Canadian & U.S. forage seed markets** - TBA

9:45 **European turf & forage seed situation** – Adger Banken, DLF Trifolium Nederlands

11:10 **Manitoba forage seed report** – Doug Cattani, Forage Seed Specialist, MAFRI

11:30 **Equipment modification panel**

Seeding modification options – Producer, Foster Farms

Tillage options – Tod Botterill, Botterill Sales

Sprayer modification options – Foster Farms

1:15 MFSA Annual Meeting

2:45 **Residue management research** – Laura Woloshyn Grzenda, MFSA Research Manager

Concurrent Sessions:

Session A Grass Seed production

3:30 **U.S. Herbicide research update** – Calvin Yoder, Peace Region, AB

4:00 **Weed control in PRG & timothy** - Laura Woloshyn Grzenda, MFSA

Session B Legume Seed Production

3:30 **U.S. perspective** – TBA

4:00 **Alfalfa weevil management** – Wedlon Hobbs, Producer, Pollinator

General Session

4:30 **Alfalfa & grass seed production practices in Europe**

– Adger Banken, DLF Trifolium, Nederlands

Contact: MFSA at (204)

376-3309 to purchase your ticket. Full conference ticket is \$78.75.



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Writer/Design/Layout:
Corie Arbuckle
Masthead: Denice Girdner
Editors: Wayne Digby, Glenn Friesen,
Pam Iwanchysko

Manitoba Forage Council
125 Patterson Crescent
Brandon, MB
R7A 6T7
Phone: 204.726.9393
Fax: 204.726.9703
mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca
www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca

Seasons Greetings from the Chair

Hello all forage producers,

This past year has created some interesting and challenging stories for forage producers in Manitoba. Thankfully we have had a very unusual and open fall, allowing many of us to get some last minute baling done and hauled off the fields. We at the Manitoba Forage Council look forward to the change of season and soon snow will blanket our fields. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and hope you will take time to enjoy the season with family and friends. We trust the new year will bring many opportunities to your farm and that you will enjoy another rewarding and prosperous year on the land.

Take care,



Jim Lintott, Chair, Manitoba Forage Council.

Directors



MANITOBA FORAGE COUNCIL