

# Forage FOCUS

April 2010

## Canadian Forage & Grassland Association Formed

A new Canadian Forage & Grassland Association has been incorporated! “A national voice has been a long-term goal for many of us in the forage and grassland sector as well as those who make their living in the forage and grassland industry,” says Wayne Digby, new Executive Director. “We have worked long and hard to create an entity that will represent our forage and grassland industry at home and abroad and are very pleased with how it’s coming along.”

According to Wayne, the development process began in earnest about a year and a half ago and has moved along with monthly conference call meetings with a small working group and quarterly meetings with a larger national group. As well two workshops were held; one in Saskatoon in December 2008, and one in Ottawa in 2009 to formulate the direction for the organization. The meetings were attended by a broad cross section including representatives of forage associations across Canada, representatives from the forage export and livestock sector as well as representatives from Government research and extension.

As the association develops the CFGA will be working closely /page 2

## Mission to Middle East

Nine Canadian forage & livestock representatives are now on a fact-finding mission to both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East. This week long expedition is being led by veteran Middle East visitor and former Saudi inhabitant Ed Shaw, owner of International Quality Forage, in Calgary, Alberta. Ed travels regularly between Alberta and Saudi Arabia as his primary forage business has been sourcing hay out of Canada, the States and Spain for use in the equine and camel racing market in the Middle East, UK, Ireland and U.S. The group, representing the Canadian Forage & Grassland Association, will explore potential / page 4

### Manitoba Forage Marketing Group Forms

A group of forage producers and those in related businesses have gathered together to launch a marketing group to promote Manitoba forage products to new and existing markets. These members are dedicated to improving the quality, availability, marketability and profitability of our home-grown products and will do so through a variety of methods.

Producers and processors are welcome to join the group and as members will receive a number of benefits. All members will receive free marketing services on the / page 3



Dubai, United Arab Emirates

# Canadian Forage & Grassland Association

(continued from page 1) with members of the beef, dairy, sheep and equine industry to ensure that all the major user groups are represented.

Ed Shaw, owner of International Quality Forage in Calgary, AB will be the CFGA Chair and Ray Robertson, Manager of the Ontario Forage Council will be the Vice Chair. The board of directors will consist of representatives from across the entire forage industry including the Eastern and Western Canada Provincial Forage Associations/Councils, the forage export sector, the livestock sector and research and extension.

The CFGA will be housed in Brandon, and our very own Executive Director, Wayne Digby will also be taking on the role of Executive Director of CFGA.

## What will the Association do?

The new association will assist producers, processors and exporters in their regions by providing a coordinated approach to addressing some of the challenges and opportunities of the industry. The first project has been the commissioning of a Long Term International Marketing Strategy for Canadian Forages. This strategic plan for the forage export sector was supported by funding from the AAFC AgriMarketing Program and will serve as a guide for the development of forage export markets.

The Long Term Strategy (Plan) is in its final stages according to Allen Tyrchniewicz, the Consultant commissioned to develop the Strategy. In it Allen has analyzed forage export markets and notes that Canada is able to produce top quality forages for these markets. Forage products from Canada are in demand by many importing countries, however, there is a historical lack of a strong forage sector and industry support in Canada. It also tends to be fractured regionally, and this has had a significant impact on the forage sector in Canada. As well, his report says that there are several barriers that restrict market access in a competitive way; transportation costs, currency rates, protocols, energy costs and market demands. To overcome these and other barriers that impact growers and processors, the Association will promote Canadian forage products through trade missions with current and developing markets, the enhancement of current trade protocols and the development of protocols for new markets. The CFGA will be a voice for forages on issues such as transportation and will also focus on the development of a hay certification/traceability program and new product development.

A key aspect of the CFGA will be that of developing programs and providing a national voice for forage and grassland user groups including beef, dairy, sheep and equine. This will include: supporting forage and grassland research and adaptation trials; promoting the use of forages in crop rotations and in fragile soils to improve the environmental sustainability of Canadian agriculture and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, philosophies and research findings for all those involved in the industry.

Communication will be a very important component of the CFGA so stay tuned for regular newsletters, press releases and the CFGA website.

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# Forage Marketing Group continued

MFC website, an MFC membership; thereby receiving discounted MFC event registration fees, plus the opportunity to participate in study tours/fact finding missions. For example one of the members participated in the mission to Saudi Arabia and UAE in March/April 2010 and will relay important market information to his fellow members upon his return. Another important Manitoba forage product venue is World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin each fall. The group will have representation there and members will have access to the potential buyer names collected during the World Dairy Expo last fall and previous World Dairy Expos.

## Marketing Members Website

A new site for **members only** will be utilized to share the names of potential buyers, market conditions, transportation issues and solutions, reputable buyer lists, export and domestic market information, new product development such as cubes, pellets, compacted forage and any opportunities/issues regarding the marketing of these and other forage related products.

There are six individuals who are the founders of this group. One member is Ken Harms of Snowflake, Manitoba; a hay grower and broker who markets primarily to Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. Ken is very interested in getting this group going. “We would like to develop it further and share exclusive info that the forage council is garnering – this is the kind of info you would get.” Ken is hoping other hay sellers will buy into “buying the concept of extra info”. Some examples would be knowing what’s happening in the U.S. market and what to watch for. Ken says that the Wisconsin milk price is projected to decrease 6 – 10% this spring and therefore it will be difficult for some operators to come up with operating cash as banks hold back on funds. “This kind of info as well as who is paying their bills and who is not, is very relevant information. We have to know who the reputable buyers are and who the stinkers are!”

“We would like to develop it further and share exclusive info that the forage council is garnering – this is the kind of info you would get,” Ken Harms, founding member.

Ken is hoping other hay sellers will buy into “buying the concept of extra info”.

The Manitoba Forage Marketing Group will support and benefit from any export market development initiatives of the newly formed Canadian Forage and Grassland Association. This group will function within the Manitoba Forage Council and will be supported by MFC’s Executive Director, Communications Coordinator and Financial Officer.

## Membership Fees

Fees to join this group will be based upon the forage acreage grown for export and domestic sales. \$500 per member (covers the first 500 acres) and \$1/acre exported, \$.50/acre sold domestically (based on previous year’s acres).

If you are interested in joining this marketing group, contact the Manitoba Forage Council at (204) 726-9393 or [mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca](mailto:mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca)

Watch our website and our June newsletter for details on the Provincial Pasture Tour.

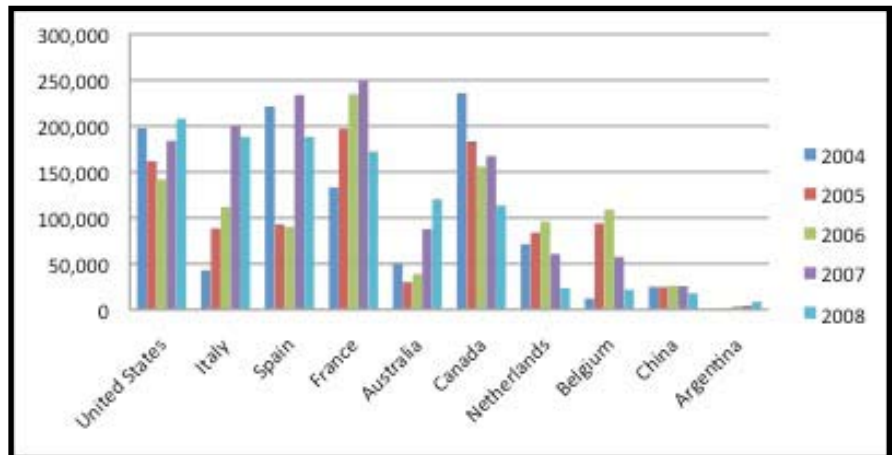
# Mission to Middle East

(continued from page 1) opportunities for the Canadian export hay and hay product market.

Currently in Canada, there are approximately 36 million hectares (ha) of forage in use for livestock grazing and the production of forage crops; 26 million is native range, 4 million is cultivated pastures and 6 million is forage crops. Supplying the forage markets around the world is handled by 4 main forage producers, the United States, Australia, Canada and Spain. These countries represent over 7/8ths of the forages exported, and the United States is responsible for approximately 1/2 of all forage exports. Canada is the third largest exporter of forages, and has approximately 10 percent of the world market share.

## Top Ten World Exporters of Forage (tonnes)

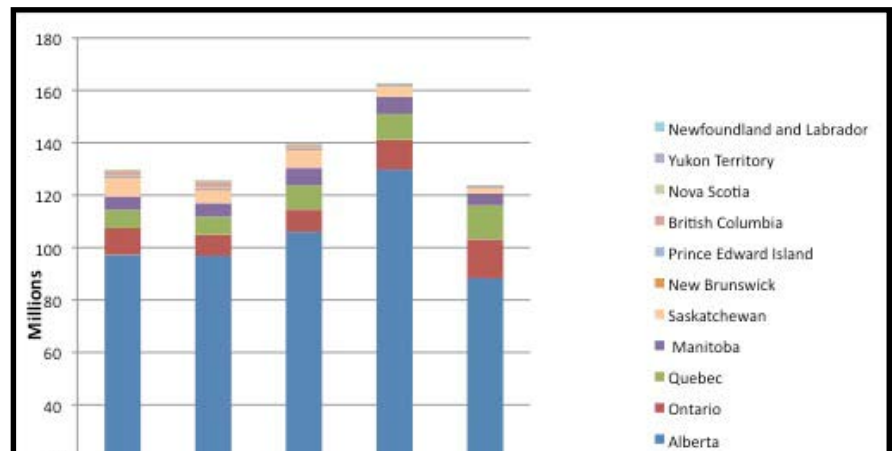
Source: Global Trade Information Services, 2010



## Provincial Forage Production (Tame Hay)

This chart indicates the percentage of Canada's forage production, broken down by province.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2009



## Tim Clarke - Ashern Forage & Pasture Specialist

Welcome to Tim Clarke – the MAFRI Interlake Forage & Pasture Specialist. Tim will be working to help producers use forages to improve soil quality & productivity, sequester carbon and improve the environment. He is also working to help producers provide quality livestock feed with low inputs.

Tim brings to the table a wealth of experience. As a teenager he worked on both mixed and dairy farms in Ontario and since 1989 has owned a commercial and purebred cattle farm with his wife Caron and their three children. Tim graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture in 1985, worked in the crop protection industry for 17 years and then as a crop adjuster for the Farm Stewardship Association of Manitoba.



Tim joined MAFRI in the summer of 2008 and has been a welcome addition. Thank you for your support for our forage council activities Tim!

# Wayne's Clippings



The last few months have been very busy as the Manitoba Forage Council has provided valuable support to a number of forage and grassland events and initiatives. I have highlighted a few of these major developments:

**Provincial Forage and Grassland Strategy** – work on the strategy has developed to the point that we now have a draft final report. We are now receiving final comments from members of the Stakeholders Group and over the next month I will be meeting with many of these Stakeholders to fine tune a Work Plan for the priority areas identified in the strategy.

**Canadian Forage and Grassland Association / Association Canadienne Plantes des Fourrages (CFGA/ACPF)** – in the previous newsletter we tried to keep you up-to-date on the progress of the newly forming CFGA. The CFGA is now officially incorporated. Operating out of the Manitoba Forage Council office in Brandon, the CFGA/ACPF will provide a much needed national voice for the forage and grassland sector. Having the head office located in Manitoba will provide unique opportunities for Manitoba as we move ahead with the development of programs in support of forage and grasslands at the provincial and national level.

**Manitoba Forage Market Development Group** – we have featured the development of the Manitoba Forage Market Development Group in this newsletter. Manitoba is uniquely positioned to provide high quality forage products to both domestic and export markets. The members of this new group should be commended for not only recognizing these opportunities but also the benefits of working together in the development of new forage markets and the promotion of Manitoba forages in existing markets. If you are in the business of marketing forages please consider being a member of this group.

**Roger Sheldon Retires** – THANK-YOU, THANK-YOU, THANK-YOU RODGER. During my time with Manitoba Agriculture and now with MFC I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from many fine Extension staff dedicated

to helping farm families. Rodger, you are one of the best. On behalf of the Manitoba Forage Council and farm families – thank-you. And if you ever get just a little bored – please keep us in mind.

**Manitoba Grazing School, Western Canadian Holistic Management Conference, Beef and Forage Week Seminars, Hay Day** – WOW what an excellent group of events. Evaluations were very positive and indicate the value that farm families place on these workshops and conferences in upgrading their forage and grassland management. Thank-you to all of our partners in helping to make these events possible.



Wayne Digby  
Executive Director

## Happy Retirement Rodger Sheldon!

With 33 years of service under his belt with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Rodger Sheldon the Farm Production – Extension Pasture and Grazing Specialist from Ste. Rose has retired. Rodger was well known for his



skill and his ability to answer any questions for producers and staff. He worked in many fields of the department from the Farm Business Management Branch to the Extension Branch. His extensive knowledge of crops and livestock ration calculations were invaluable. Rodger worked countless hours on rations for producers

right across the Northwest region.

Rodger was also a great organizer of many field days and farm events. He organized summer crop and pasture tours in the Ste. Rose area and the annual Parkland Rancher's Seminar. Rodger was a great mentor to new staff entering the department and will be greatly missed.



## Board News


# New MFC Site Launched

A fresh new look for the forage council site is here! By changing up the navigation process we've simplified things for the users. Check out the new site and look up easy to find fact sheets, our forage and grassland reference manual, upcoming events, grass fed beef information, grazing club activities, marketing information and more.

## Missed an event and wished you hadn't?

The new site features videos and podcasts from past events. This year's grazing school had Bruno Wiskel as one of the keynote speakers – a highly energized motivational speaker who showed how you - with a little ingenuity can make something out of nothing and turn it into a tidy profit.

Check out our popular resources section on our home page to find the video as well as our speaker podcast.



**2009 Grazing School Proceedings**

Over 200 participants attended Grazing School despite the large volume of snow that fell on the city of Brandon. Bruno Wiskel, one of our key note speakers provided a lot of food for thought. His presentation entitled The Joy of Farming provided not only laughter, but thoughtful, innovative ideas to transform a farm into a diverse profit. The video presentation is broken down into 7 parts.

See the next 6 videos of Bruno Wiskel's presentation.



## Most Viewed Pages

- 1 Home page
- 2 forage & grassland manual
- 3 upcoming events
- 4 grassfed beef
- 5 forage & hay marketing

## Numbers of Note

Statistics on the MFC Website (Between Jan 1, 2009 and Jan 1, 2010)

25,952 visitors came from 150 countries/territories

20,809 new visitors

5,143 returning visitors

525 pages were viewed 57,050 times

# Another Successful HM Conference

by: Pam Iwanchysko, MAFRI

The second Western Canadian Holistic Management (HM) Conference was held on February 9th and 10th, 2010 in Russell, Manitoba with over 225 delegates in attendance. Presentations were made by many keynotes including John Ikerd of Missouri, a well acclaimed Agricultural Economist and Terry Gompert from the University of Nebraska. Many break-out presentations were made on the practical side of Holistic Management by producers who are practicing Holistic Management. Open bear-pit sessions also took place at the beginning of day 2 relaying thoughts and comments on the personal side of HM, the financial side and the cropping and land management side of HM. These break-out sessions were delivered by the Canadian certified HM educators of HMI in Albuquerque, NM. In addition there were keynote presentations made by motivational speakers Rolande Kirouac of Winnipeg, MB and Darci Lang of Regina, SK.

The conference was held at both the Russell Community Center and the Russell Inn. There were 12 agribusiness and industry displays set-up at the community center.

Sponsorship registration costs for the delegates remained extremely cost effective at \$170.00 per person which enabled producers from across Canada to attend. Delegates from British Columbia across to Ontario were in attendance.

Thank you once again to our conference sponsors.

## Platinum (\$2,000.00 +)

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives  
Agriculture Sustainability Initiative  
Succeeding Generations Initiative  
Manitoba Forage Council  
Greencover Canada  
Western Producer  
The Manitoba Co-operator  
Sustainable Development Innovations Fund – Manitoba Conservation  
Holistic Management International  
Agri-Environment Services Branch



Conference delegates at the Russell Community Center listening to Ann Adams present Holistic Management at Home.



John Ikerd (Keynote) from University of Missouri, sitting in the front row with Certified Educators Don and Bev Campbell.

## Gold (\$1,000.00 +)

Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council – MRAC  
Western Farm Leadership Council  
Russell Inn  
Assiniboine-Birdtail Soil and Water Conservation Group

## Bronze (\$500.00 +)

Heifer International  
Power Flex Fencing  
Northwest Livestock Foundation



# Events Review

# *Manitoba Hay Day – Research & Opportunities*

by: Jane Thornton, MAFRI

Hay Day was held this February 17th in Brandon. Dr. Dan Undersander, researcher and Forage Agronomy Professor from the University of Wisconsin, provided some excellent information on the benefits of grass in alfalfa stands, making good quality hay, and new technology in alfalfa breeding (low lignin varieties). It has been a number of years since Dr. Undersander's last visit to Manitoba and it is always a treat to listen to this very knowledgeable speaker. The rest of the day had reports on export markets and information about shipping goods through the port in Churchill.

## **Preserving Feed Value**

Dr. Undersander talked about how important it is to dry hay quickly to preserve the feed value. This is particularly important to dairy producers and for hay shipped to export markets. One very important way to get hay to dry quickly is to widen the swath, something that today's equipment doesn't necessarily allow to the degree that he feels is necessary. His recommendation is based on studies that shows that a plant's stomata, a small opening in the leaf structure allowing gas exchange, closes when the plant leaf does not have access to daylight. By widening the swath more, leaves are exposed to the sun and the plant can shed moisture more quickly through these open stomata. If the swath is narrowed, more leaves are shaded causing the stomata to shut, hampering dry down. You can take about one day off of drying time by using this strategy. Another benefit of rapid dry-down is that the forage has a higher energy level since the plant respired for a shorter period of time. A plant needs to reach a level of 40 percent moisture for respiration to stop.

## **Grass/Alfalfa Hay – now Gaining Acceptance**

Information from Dr. Undersander confirmed that the dairy industry is starting to accept more grass in alfalfa hay since recent studies show that the fiber in grass is a more digestible fiber than in alfalfa. New laboratory tests can confirm these findings and relate the information to livestock producers. This is good news for Manitoba hay producers since alfalfa and grass make a viable stand that provides longevity and ease of drying. Another topic discussed was on research of GMO low lignin alfalfa. While the digestibility is better than its standard counterparts Dr. Undersander thinks the real benefit to hay producers will be found in the increased yield that can be obtained due to delayed cutting while not sacrificing quality. Research indicates that yield increases may be 17 to 25% per year. This could be a significant benefit to hay producers.

## **Export Opportunities?**

The day also saw three presentations on market related topics. The first, Glenn Friesen of MAFRI, discussed the opportunity in Dubai, UAE. This country is currently cutting its water use to agriculture and is in need of high quality hay. Many countries are already supplying the UAE, the USA and Spain being the main ones but opportunity does exist for Manitoba. In 2007 the UAE bought 600,000 tonnes of alfalfa; in 2010-11 it is expected to increase demand to 1.2 million tonnes. The second speaker was myself, Jane Thornton and I reported on a trade mission into Florida and Kentucky in early 2009. While some Manitoba producers have marketed to Florida it was found that Manitoba is usually considered to be too expensive due to transportation costs. However it was also found that Saskatchewan and Alberta supply hay to this area which may indicate that Manitoba needs to work on transportation costs since Manitoba is a shorter and more direct route to the southeastern USA than the other prairie provinces. All that said since the trade mission visited Florida and Kentucky the recession has hit those states very hard and it will be some time before the hay brokers will be in a position to resume normal hay volumes. For the time being it looks like Manitoba's opportunities there will be delayed. The third, Bill Drew from the Churchill Gateway Development Corp. gave a very interesting presentation on the Churchill Port. Recent work on the rail line between The Pas and Churchill has ensured that the port will be accessible and further infrastructure is planned for the Port. Opportunity exists for Manitoba to ship hay products through Churchill at competitive rates. This could open many markets for Manitoba as it is the only prairie province with an ocean port.

As well, Allen Tychniewicz of Tychniewicz Consulting presented information on his recent study on future options and strategic planning for the Canadian forage and grassland industry. His work for the newly formed Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association (CFGGA) will provide valuable market related information. The CFGGA will give the Canadian forage industry a unified voice and provide a coordinated Canadian approach for the industry.

# 2010 Manitoba Beef & Forage Days

by: Juanita Kopp, MAFRI

Due to a severe winter storm Eriksdale's Beef and Forage Day was cancelled; attendance at the remaining events was good even though the weather was not cooperative. The approximate combined attendance of Ste. Rose du Lac, Holland, Rosa and Tuelon was 450. The total number of displays was down but each location was supported by agri-business and government program displays, and the organizing committee is very appreciative of their continued support.

Beef and Forage Days is a means to disseminate extension information to beef and forage producers and industry representatives. One objective of Beef and Forage Days is to provide information on new programs that can benefit producers. One such program is the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) Beef Advantage Initiative in which one section is piloting the Beef InfoXchange database (BIXS). This database can help producers improve the genetics of their herds; improve feeding and animal health practices. Larry Thomas, National Coordinator for BIXS and Rob McNabb, General Manager of Operations for CCA, gave presentations that discussed the advantages of this new information system.

The BIXS program is a voluntary national cattle and carcass information exchange system that will improve communications and information sharing across the beef supply chain (cow-calf to slaughter). When finishing and carcass information is provided back to producers from the packing plants they can improve how they finish their animals. BIXS will help validate specific brand claims such as age of cattle, environmental stewardship (how the animals were raised) and animal care practices. It should also be noted that the BIX program will also work in conjunction with the Verified Beef Program. For more information please visit their website: <http://www.cattle.ca/what-bixs-offers-the-industry/>

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## Manitoba Grazing School

Manitoba Grazing School marked its 12th consecutive year at a new venue in Brandon this year. The event, formerly held at the Keystone Centre was held at the Victoria Inn. First day participants competed with near blizzard like conditions to arrive at the Grazing School, learn from our many keynote speakers and meet and greet fellow producers and our informative display representatives. Attendees came not only from Manitoba but from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, and Oregon, USA.

If you would like to catch a replay of one of our keynote speakers, go to [www.mbforgouncil.com](http://www.mbforgouncil.com) and view the video of Bruno Wiskel from Alberta. Bruno's presentation was entertaining, educational and showed how he and his wife parlayed a vast array of businesses out of his farm in Alberta. Their path was fraught with ups and downs but they succeeded by diversifying. As well, check out the podcast library on the MFC site to download keynote presentations. "Everything I know I learned from a cow! By Duane McCartney" can be downloaded to your ipod to listen at your convenience. MFC will continue to post podcasts and videos of speakers as time goes on.



### Congratulations - Graziers of the Year

Rhonda and Alan Vergouwen of Toutes Aides, MB, John and Kelsey Beasley of Boggy Creek, MB and Ted, Beck & Matt, Atrz of Lyleton, MB



*Events Review*



# Attention Horse Enthusiasts

The Midwest Horse Fair (April 16-18th in Madison Wisconsin) is just around the corner. Even if you can't make it – these events & clinicians can inspire you from afar.

Just like the Celebrity show “Dancing with the Stars” you can watch “Jumping with the Stars!”



The beginner rider celebrities who will be participating in the Jumping with the Stars! event have started taking riding lessons with their trainers. Follow their progress from now until the April 18 Jumping with the Stars! event. Visit [http://midwesthorsefair.com/index.php?page=home\\_detail&post\\_id=4265](http://midwesthorsefair.com/index.php?page=home_detail&post_id=4265) and read their blogs, profiles and even watch videos of these area celebrities as they practice their growing horsemanship skills.

## *Clinicians can be inspiring too!*

Maybe you can't attend these shows but who says you can't look them up on the web, buy their books and garner some quality information?

Susan Behringer of Susan B. Designs LTD, presents an informative, yet fun way to enhance your living spaces in today's economy. By the creative use of color, furniture placement, and accessorizing, a new environment can be achieved that is uniquely yours. Susan targets the lifestyle of the horse enthusiast, regardless of riding style, and discusses latest trends, colors, techniques, as well as economical ways to update your home's look. Susan also offers options for furniture placement and items already found in your home, ensuring that each space is individually harmonious as well as functionally competent. She generously uses accessories to reflect the uniqueness of the home and the personalities of the owners.

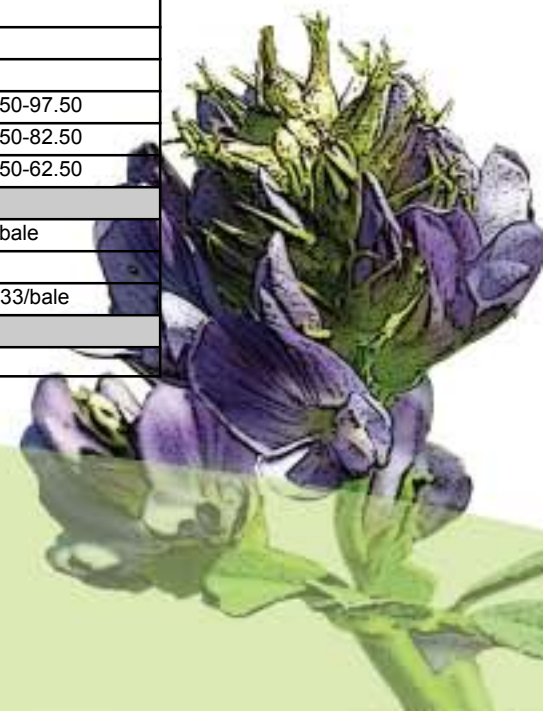
AQHA Professional Horsemen Bob Jeffreys and Suzanne Sheppard strike a perfect balance between the English and Western riding disciplines that inspires equine enthusiasts worldwide. From pleasure rider to pro, Bob and Suzanne have taught horse lovers around the world how to bring out the best in their horses, and themselves. For over 25 years Bob has been helping riders develop their horsemanship skills to produce the most rewarding relationship possible with their horses. His unique Vowel Method of Applied Pressure enhances the rider's ability to communicate using the most effective techniques available to gain control over the horse's specific body parts. Bob writes columns for various equine publications, has been featured on both radio and equine TV shows, and has authored a book, “It's All About Breakthroughs!” Suzanne's love of horses and their beautiful movement, in-depth understanding of correct biomechanics and teaching expertise have all come together in her work as a horse trainer, and Centered Riding© clinician. Together, as international performers of the “horse whisperer” variety, Bob and Suzanne train horses, write books and columns, have created and co-produced seven DVDs on horsemanship, and run the ProTrack Horse Trainer Certification Program. Visit their website, [TwoasOneHorsemanship.com](http://TwoasOneHorsemanship.com), for free training tips, articles and videos.

Asia Voight, Professional and International Animal Communicator, has worked with over 32,000 animals during her 11-year career and has been featured on ABC, CBS, and Fox TV. She has been highlighted in numerous newspaper articles, including the front pages of the Wisconsin State Journal and the Fitchburg Star. Asia has also been on the cover of Women Magazine, which was rated the “most popular issue ever.” Communicating with animals since she was a child, it was a near-death experience from a car accident that propelled her to share her gift of animal communication with the world. Believing that everyone can communicate on some level with animals, Asia teaches people how to communicate with their beloved animal friends through weekend workshops. Become a fan of Midwest Horse Fair® on Facebook and follow their tweets on Twitter.

## *Coming Events*

# U.S. Auction Mart Prices

US Auction Mart Prices	March 23, 2010			
Prices are US dollars/ton except squares \$/bale	Rock Valley Hay Auction, South Dakota	Midwest Hay Auction, Maurice Iowa	Platte Valley of Nebraska	Pipestone, Minnesota
<b>Some prices not available</b>				
<b>ALFALFA</b>				
<b>Small Squares</b>				
Supreme				
Premium		155.00		
Good				
Fair				
<b>Large Squares</b>				
Supreme				
Premium		152.50	120-150.00	
Good	92.50-95.00	112.50-120.00		
Fair				
Utility				
<b>Large Rounds</b>				
Premium	105-120.00			125-127.50
Good	80.00-97.50	90-110.00	80.00-95.00	82.50-97.50
Fair	70.00-75.00	75-82.50	65-75.00	70.00
Utility				
<b>ALFALFA MIX</b>				
Large Rounds (Good)	85.00			125-140.00
Large Rounds (Fair)	70.00-77.50			85-102.50
Small Squares (Premium)	155.00			137.50
<b>GRASS HAY</b>				
<b>Small Squares</b>				
Premium		135-145.00		
Good		110.00		107.50
Fair				
Utility				
<b>Large Squares</b>				
Premium			100-130.00	
Good				
Fair				
Utility				
<b>Large Rounds</b>				
Premium		140.00		87.50-97.50
Good	85.00	92.50	75-90.00	72.50-82.50
Fair	72.50-77.50		60-70.00	57.50-62.50
<b>BEDDING</b>				
Small Squares				28/bale
Large Squares				
Large Rounds				25-33/bale
<b>PELLETS</b>				
Dehydrated Alfalfa 17 pct.			175-185.00	



# Position Created to Increase Forage & Beef Research & Programming

Congratulations to Jennilee Bernier who has taken on the new role created to increase forage and beef research capacity and programming within the province. Although still a MAFRI employee, Jennilee will work out of AAFC's research station in Brandon, MB.

She will support the tri-party agreement between AAFC, MAFRI and the Manitoba Cattle Producer's Association (MCPA) and support and promote the activities of Manitoba's forage and beef community, which includes MAFRI specialists, industry associations (such as the MFC), and other research facilities such as (but not limited to) the University of Manitoba.

Jennilee will also be responsible for brokering and conducting research projects to evaluate and verify research results, as well as providing platforms for transferring relevant and important research information to producers, industry, researchers and MAFRI specialists. Furthermore, she is also responsible for fostering communication and alliance building between researchers, cattle producers, processors and other MAFRI specialists.



Jennilee is currently working part-time at this position while she finishes up her Master's thesis on environmental sustainability and nutrient utilization of beef cows overwintered on low-quality, forage-based diets supplemented with dried distillers grain with solubles (DDGS) at the University of Manitoba, (under Dr. Kim Ominski and Dr. Karin Wittenberg). She will begin full time on July 1, 2010. She can be reached at: (204) 362-0760 or Jennilee.Bernier@gov.mb.ca



## *Large Unsecured Bales Can Kill*

Three farmers have died in recent years when the bales they were handling fell on them. Large round and rectangular bales of hay or straw may weigh as much as one tonne. If one or more of these bales falls from a loader, trailer or stack they can cause significant property damage or kill people or animals.

### **Prevention measures:**

- The loader being used must be large enough to safely handle the bale without becoming unstable.
- Bales must be speared or clamped by the loader so that the bale does not fall back onto the loader operator or onto nearby animals or equipment.
- Bails loaded on trailers must be secured to prevent them from shifting or falling off during transport.
- No one should be permitted near the trailer when loading or unloading bales, as bales being loaded/unloaded may push those bales opposite to them, causing them to fall off the trailer.
- No one should be permitted to climb on stacked bales. Anyone required to approach a bale stack which has shifted or appears to be leaning should be very cautious.
- When working at night or with reduced visibility, exercise greater care and awareness for shifting loads and other persons and animals nearby.

# Alfalfa Winter Kill Risk Factors

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

With the recent warm weather alfalfa winterkill maybe a problem in southeast Manitoba. Last year a large number of our acres suffered from ice sheeting during a February thaw and rainfall. This left the alfalfa vulnerable to winterkill. This year the early thaw hasn't likely caused that type of damage but it does have the potential to damage this year's crop under certain conditions.

Winterhardiness is dependant on many factors, including dormancy, cold tolerance, root reserves and disease resistance. Hardening is the process of cold tolerance development, and is initiated by shorter fall days and cooler temperatures. During the hardening process, plants store carbohydrates in crowns and taproots. The starch is converted to sugars and this gives the plants some "antifreeze" protection. Plants also lose some cellular water to reduce freezing damage. Long fall periods with cool, dry, sunny conditions favor winter hardening.

There are a number of risk factors associated with winterkill that we can control, while others we cannot. The factors that affect winter survival I have discussed many times, but they include harvesting before the critical rest period in the fall, selecting winter hardy varieties and adequate snow cover.

This winter we had adequate snow cover of at least 6 inches to insulates the alfalfa crown and root and maintain moderate soil temperatures above -12 C. Where we might have a problem, although it is becoming less likely, is with fluctuating winter temperatures with lows below freezing and highs greater than 5 degrees C, without snow cover. These types of temperature swings can cause plants to break dormancy and be less resistant to freezing if the nighttime temperatures and of daytime temperatures drop to or below the -15C range.

Below is a web connection to YouTube entitled Alfalfa stand assessment: Is this stand good enough to keep it is narrated by Dr. Dan Understander and it looks at how you can assess your alfalfa fields both by looking at the new growth and the condition of the roots or crowns. Again these are thinks that I have spoken about and written about over the years but this short video sums up everything you need to know to make a better decision on whether or not to keep a stand.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jujW3-FE4zE>

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**Check out this  
youtube video -  
how you can assess  
your alfalfa by  
looking at the  
new growth  
and condition  
of the roots  
or crowns.**

[http://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=jujW3-FE4zE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jujW3-FE4zE)





The Manitoba Cattle Producers Association continues to passionately pursue and diligently work toward the implementation of effective solutions to a number of critical issues facing the cattle industry in Manitoba today. The MCPA has developed workable solutions and strategies toward their implementation in each case that, if embraced and jointly implemented by both the province and cattle producers, could indeed resolve these issues in a mutually beneficial manner.

This past summer the Canadian Cattlemen's Association indicated that Canada's beef cow herd will shrink by 2010 to its smallest size in ten years, and that the North American cow herd is at a fifty year low since 1959. The cattle producers of MB need programs available to them that will provide stability in an industry which has historically been one of the most significant contributors to the overall Manitoba economy. Following is a brief overview and outline of a number of issues currently receiving our focus.

### **1. CATTLE PRODUCTION INSURANCE PROGRAM**

The Cattle Insurance program would have a number of similar functions to that of the Crop Insurance model. The breakdown formula would have the producer contributing the entire premium, with both federal and provincial governments committing to backstop the program in the event the claims were more than the amount of producer premiums collected, or in the event of a disaster.

This insurance program would also help to keep small and diversified farm operations on the landscape. Sustaining the diversified landscapes of both cattle and grain by providing insurance for both, would provide the stability for cattle operations that presently exists on the grain side. The CCA is moving forward to promote an affordable and effective cattle price insurance program. Along with the CCA, the MCPA believes these programs are needed on a national scope.

### **2. TB IN THE RIDING MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEM**

An important trade-related issue for the cattle industry is the on-going presence of wildlife-borne bovine tuberculosis (BTb) in the Riding Mountain Ecosystem. For almost two decades, Manitoba cattle producers have lived under the risk of either a province-specific U.S. border closure to Manitoba cattle, or a mandatory TB testing regime for all Manitoba cattle because of the failure to fully eradicate this disease from inside the park. Consequently, should future cases of BTb continue to migrate outside of parkland boundaries and into the surrounding wildlife and livestock, all of Manitoba's cattle industry is at risk of further economic hardship.

The MCPA recently submitted a comprehensive feedback paper to the department agencies involved in the review of developing a strategy to eradicate the disease. This paper includes the development of an aggressive disease eradication plan, and outlines a necessary financial commitment from the Manitoba Government. The Province of Manitoba also has the legislative power to enact the Animal Disease Act on all lands within the targeted zones.

MCPA insists that adequate budgetary dollars be in place to meet the recommendations of a rapid eradication approach, as different stakeholders will require different levels of compensation to ensure a unified and collaborative approach to maintain a commitment to the process.

### **3. HAY AND PASTURE INSURANCE PROGRAM**

In February 2009, MCPA presented Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) with recommended changes to the Hay and Pasture Insurance Program. MCPA believes that the proposed changes to the Hay and Pasture Insurance Program are valuable to livestock producers as these changes are necessary tools to handle unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

The MCPA is pleased that the Province has taken the first steps toward implementing some of these recommended changes and that the government is moving toward the development of a pilot project with respect to this program.

### **4. ECOLOGICAL GOODS AND SERVICES PROGRAM**

There has been discussion among different stakeholders in the province that "no use is not the best use". MCPA is one of the main promoters of the concept that land produces greater ecological benefits through pasture or grazing.

There is growing concern over Manitoba's Water quality, and as we have seen through research projects conducted by Ducks Unlimited and Water Stewardship, there has been a long-term reduction in wetlands and perennial cover. Speaking from our perspective as cattle producers, it is our farm operations and our land use decisions today that are maintaining what is left of the valuable natural capital needed to supply the public with carbon sinks that mitigate climate change, natural water filtration and nutrient cycling, habitat for biodiversity, biosecurity and soil conservation; not to mention, important social benefits such as cultural & aesthetic heritage and domestic food security.

# Rangelands Team shines at Society of Range Management Annual Conference

by: Gwendolyn Donohoe  
Graduate Student  
Department of Soil Science

On February 7, 2010, the University of Manitoba Rangelands Team embarked on its first journey to the Society of Range Management (SRM) Annual Conference, in Denver, Colorado. This year there were a total of 23 Universities from across Mexico, the United States, and Canada, and a total 209 undergraduate students at the conference. Three undergraduate students from the Agroecology program, Lindsey Andronak, Rachel Evans, and Alicia Leroux, and their coaches, Gwen Donohoe and Mae Elsinger, represented the U of M in three of the student events: the Undergraduate Range Management Exam (URME), the Rangeland Cup, and the Undergraduate Student Presentations.

The University of Manitoba had a great showing for its first time at the SRM conference. In the URME, a 90 minute exam consisting of 130 multiple choice questions dealing with all aspects of sustainable rangeland and resource management, the students placed 37th, 55th, and 105th out of 209 students. The University of Manitoba team placed 4th in the Rangeland Cup, where teams were asked to prepare a poster and/or video on “future predictions about the state of a prairie ecosystem in 20 years, considering climate change, policy, economics, invasive species, and management practices”. The prairie ecosystem the U of M chose to highlight was the Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve.

The team had a great experience at the conference and were able to meet many of the students and coaches from other universities. The U of M’s excellent placing in the Rangelands Cup and URME competitions can in part be attributed to all of the presentations provided to the group throughout the past year from staff with Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives, Conservation Districts, Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, and the U of M, who took time out of their busy schedules to speak to our group. We also owe a big thank you to Department of Animal Science, the SRM Prairie Parkland Chapter, Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, and the Manitoba Forage Council for sponsoring our team.



Photo: from left, Rachel Evans, Alicia Leroux, Lindsey Andronak and Gwen Donohoe



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### Agriculture Quotes

Of all the occupations by which gain is secured, none is better than agriculture, none more profitable, none more delightful, none more becoming to a free man.

*Cicero*

No other human occupation opens so wide a field for the profitable and agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought as agriculture.

*Abraham Lincoln*

Agriculture is the earliest and most honorable of arts.

*Rousseau*

I know of no pursuit in which more real and important services can be rendered to any country than by improving its agriculture, its breed of useful animals, and other branches of a husbandman's cares.

*George Washington*

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