

Forage FOCUS

January 2011

Forage & Grassland Priorities - *We need your help!*

One of the key recommendations coming out of the Manitoba Forage and Grassland Industry Strategic Plan was the need for a well developed set of forage and grassland research priorities and recommendations for research initiatives. This recommendation also stressed the importance of involving a broad cross section of the forage and grassland sector in this process.

With this in mind the Manitoba Forage Council pulled together a preliminary draft of possible research needs and called an initial research priority setting meeting during Grazing School. A number of hardy souls showed up for an early breakfast meeting to provide input. We will be developing another draft and will be expanding the distribution to ensure that we are getting good input from across the forage and grassland sector. Agriculture and Agri-food Canada is planning a research consultation meeting to take a look at the Brandon Research Centre Forage and Beef Program. They are quite anxious to have input from this research priority setting process.

So what does this mean to you? We need your input. Let us know what research you think should be occurring. Either email us or give us a call - mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca or (204) 726-9393.

Manitoba Forage Symposium

February 17, 2011
Victoria Inn, Brandon, MB

Education at its finest!
Gather up in Brandon
&
bring the educators to you!
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Direct Farm Marketing Conference

March 4 & 5, 2011
William Glesby Centre, Portage la Prairie

Meet John Stanley, retail guru and leading horticultural consultant from Kalumunda, Australia. His expertise is "perishable goods retailing" which can easily be translated across all industries including agriculture. His presentation will give you tips on how you can grow your market in 2011. The conference will also feature three excellent workshops. Read more on page 9.

**Canada-Manitoba Feed & Transportation Assistance -
available to all Livestock Producers - read more on page 11.**

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Farewell to Dr. Shannon Scott, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada: Brandon Research Centre (BRC).



The Manitoba Forage Council would like to extend our congratulations to Shannon as she moves on to pursue a Research Officer position with the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency in Edmonton, Alberta. Shannon will help manage the Research and Development Program to develop leading edge basic and applied initiatives in the livestock and meat production sectors.

During her time in Manitoba, Shannon made significant contributions to the Forage & Livestock industry and the Forage & Beef Research team in Brandon. She is an excellent research scientist and an effective communicator. She initiated some valuable research at the Brandon Research Centre on the health value of forage finished beef and was instrumental in the development of extension material that highlighted many of the forage and beef research projects at the Centre. She was a very effective team builder, working with MFC to determine research needs and playing a major role with various extension events such as the Manitoba Grazing School and the BRC Pasture Tour.

We would like to express our gratitude for your enthusiasm and dedication to our industry. All the best in your new position!



Wayne's Clippings

December was a very busy month with the Manitoba Forage Council Annual General Meeting and then a week later the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) first Annual General Meeting in Winnipeg.

The MFC – AGM took on a different format this year being held during Grazing School. Holding the AGM during Grazing School provided an opportunity to create greater awareness of the role of the Manitoba Forage Council and have more people participate in the AGM. The questionnaires that participants completed show strong support for events such as Grazing School and for the involvement of the Forage Council in these events. Interesting that a number of respondents indicated how much they appreciated the Forage Focus newsletter put out by the Council. Hats Off to Corie!

The MFC Board has taken on a different look with three Directors stepping down and Shannon Scott moving to Alberta. I want to express my gratitude to retiring Directors Russel Chapman, Clark Combs, Don Green and Shannon for their contribution to the Manitoba Forage Council Board of Directors.

One of the recommendations in the Forage and Grassland Strategy is to assess how the Manitoba Forage Council can be more effective. This will involve looking at the MFC Board governance, size of the Board, Committee structure, etc. As we are going to review the Board structure, it was decided not fill the vacant Director positions at this time.

The CFGA AGM and Workshop on Advancing the Forage and Grassland Industry was well attended with very good participation from across the forage and grassland sector. There appears to be very strong support for the CFGA as we move forward. During the CFGA Annual General Meeting the Manitoba Forage Council was recognized for taking the lead and for their on-going support to this newly formed national organization. Manitoba will be well represented on the CFGA Board of Directors with Ken Gross of Ducks Unlimited representing the Manitoba Forage Council and Ray Armbruster representing the Canadian Cattle-men's Association.



Sincerely,

Wayne Digby
Executive Director

OUTGOING DIRECTORS

**Thank you for your valuable contributions to the
Manitoba Forage Council**

Russell Chapman Shannon Scott

Don Green Clark Combs

Manitoba Forage Benchmarking Project

Final Report in Progress

The Manitoba Forage Benchmarking Project was initiated in 2004 with the objective of collecting forage yield data on Manitoba's native pasture and rangelands. Currently, this information is extremely limited. The data collected from this project will therefore serve as baseline data to guide future extension activities relative to rangeland management. In addition, the data will assist in the calculation and determination of rental rates for agricultural leased Crown land.

Manitoba's native pasture and rangeland provide a significant contribution to the agricultural and livestock industry. Census data lists unimproved pasture land at approximately 4 million acres, which would include the principally native 1.5 million acres of leased agricultural land and .5 million acres of AESB (formerly PFRA) community pastures. It is estimated that the 1.5 million acres of leased Crown land provides feed for 20-25% of the provincial beef herd, reconfirming the significance of native range/pasture land to the livestock industry as well as the importance of the Manitoba Forage Benchmarking Project.

To determine whether there are any regional and/or climate differences, data was collected in 4 separate regions. Each region was further separated on the basis of soil type with 3 separate soil types or categories (good, average, poor) being chosen for each region. Data was collected on all vegetation types (replicated 4 x) for each of the soil types/categories. Clipping was conducted twice (end June/early July and end August/early September) throughout the growing season. All processing of samples (sorting of samples into grasses vs. forbes vs. woody, drying, weighing, etc.) was conducted at the Brandon Research Centre.



4 eco-regions x 3 soil types
 (Group 1, Group 2, Group 3) = 12 sites
 12 sites x 5 vegetation categories x 4 reps = 240 cages

- Woodland
- Open Woodland
- Upland Meadow
- Transitional
- Lowland Meadow

In order to help quantify the basic raw yield data, the project also incorporated a number of factors including:

1. species composition (at beginning and end of project)
2. feed quality (3 years, all samples)
3. climatic data (precipitation, temperature, ground moisture)
4. litter cover study (U of M)
5. soil survey (on site determination/verification)
6. roaming cages for 2009 in Northwest (yield comparison for roaming vs. fixed cages)
7. documentation of the grazing management history

In essence, the Manitoba Forage Benchmarking Project is a first stage attempt at using measurements of herbage production and species composition, stratified by eco-regions, soils and vegetation types to describe and define the carrying capacity of Manitoba rangelands.

What is envisioned as a main product of the final report is a predicted range in yield for the associated vegetation types, differentiated by soil type and eco-region, using all the various factors (range conditions, management regime, climatic conditions) to help make that determination.



Other potential spin-offs or deliverables from this project could include:

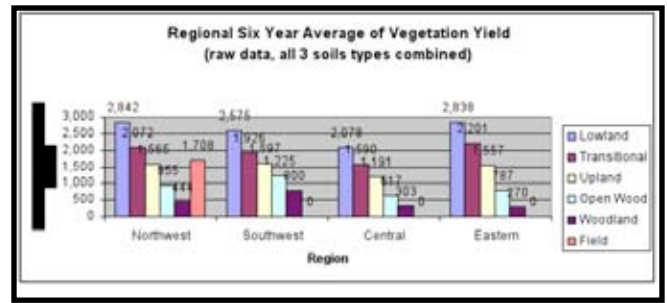
1. Extrapolating soil based information associated with this project to apply to all soil types in the province. This in turn could lead to the development of a forage production rating system similar to the CLI system for crop production (Forage Index 1 vs. Forage Index 2 vs. Forage Index 3).

2. Development of computer software program(s) that link a Forage Index System to the digital provincial soil data base.

3. Expansion of the project into rangeland classification/eco-site description and plant community reference guides.

To assist in the development of the final report, Western Rangeland Consultants has been engaged, whereby it is recognized that the consultant's role is best fitted to analyzing all the data, developing any relationships or linkages and making conclusions from it, including stocking rate recommendations.

The final report is in progress with anticipated completion sometime in early 2011. ARDI has been the major funding source for this project. This report will "fill the gap" for this much needed baseline information and lead to future extension activities relative to rangeland management for various types of grazing lands.



Manitoba Grass Fed Beef Association Update

After a busy summer and fall, the Grass Fed Beef Association continues to make progress with its goal of branding "Manitoba Grass Fed Beef" and pursuing partnerships with suppliers.

"Our members are striving to provide all the beef they can, but demand is growing faster than the supply. We need more quality suppliers for the high end cuts," says Jim Lintott, Grass Fed Beef Association member. Jim has seen demand for his product increase steadily. The longer and less predictable production schedule for grass fed beef versus grain fed is creating some supply problems for our value added products. A larger supply and more steady supply of grass finished beef would help with the value added market development.

"As our list of suppliers increases we can provide more steaks, roasts and the value added sausages, meat pies, pate etc.," continued Lintott. The Association is currently working on retail labels for a group of 8-9 value added products. The goal is to create similar looking labels for each product that will identify the Manitoba Grass Fed Beef family of products for the consumer to "spot and grab." These will be very important to take

the product into a full retail environment.

We continue to pursue avenues to market our product. Our existing retailers: St. Norbert Market and Crampton's Market provide excellent avenues during the summer but we are pursuing a partner(s) for year round retail.

We have also updated some of our communication pieces. Our new website is for consumers and for producers and provides information about production, recipes, health information, etc. We have also developed another newsletter which has recently been distributed and can be read on our website www.manitobagrassfedbeef.ca If you are interested in becoming a supplier please contact us at info@manitoba

"Our members are striving to provide all the beef they can but demand is growing faster than the supply. We need more quality suppliers for the high end cuts," says Jim Lintott, Manitoba Grass Fed Beef Association Member.

grassfedbeef.ca
or call Bragi Simmundson
at: (204) 376-2369.



Canadian Forage & Grassland AGM/Workshop sets direction for the Association

The first ever conference and AGM for the Canadian Forage & Grassland Association/Association Canadienne pour les Plantes Fourragères (CFGA/ACPF) was held in Winnipeg this past December and included over 60 active participants from 5 provinces.

The workshops on “Advancing the Forage and Grassland Sector” included experts from the U.S. and Canada addressing topics relevant to production and to the export of our hay and hay products. Another very important aspect of the meeting was direction setting. Break out groups brainstormed to help set priorities for the role of the new Association, its Board make-up, membership options and fee structure.

The new Board of Directors will include one representative from each of the Provincial Forage Councils/Organizations, from the beef sector, dairy sector, and one from either the sheep or equine sector. As well the Board will have one representative from each of the US Exporters and the Overseas Exporters. The various organizations are now in the process of identifying their representatives and a Board of Directors conference call meeting will be held shortly to elect the CFGA Executive. Although not complete yet, the CFGA Board at press time is as outlined in this chart to the right.

What has been accomplished so far:

- There is very strong support for the CFGA/ACPF as a national voice for the forage and grassland sector.
- We now have a Board structure in place along with a business plan, membership structure and a number of committees to do the work so we can move forward.
- The success of the CFGA/ACPF will revolve around the development of partnerships with other organizations and user groups.
- We can now move ahead addressing the challenges and developing opportunities.

Wayne Digby has been the interim Executive Director throughout the start up phase and is now the official Executive Director of CFGA. Corie Arbuckle will be the Communications Manager and has overseen the development of the website and will continue to add more to the site and develop e-newsletters throughout the year. Chris Yuzdepski of Selkirk, MB will be the CFGA Accountant.

CFGA Board (at press time)

Germain Lefebvre - Quebec Forage Council
Ray Robertson - Ontario Forage Council
Ken Gross - Manitoba Forage Council
Janice Bruynooghe - Saskatchewan Forage Council
Doug Wray - Alberta Forage Industry Network
TBA - B.C. Forage Council
Darren Guidinger - Overseas Exporters
Josh Mullin - U.S. Exporters
Ray Armbruster - Canadian Cattlemen's Association
TBA - Dairy Farmers of Canada

Wayne Digby - Executive Director
Corie Arbuckle - Communications Manager
Chris Yuzdepski - Accountant



Participants provide input into the role of the CFGA/ACPF at the first ever AGM (held at the Canadian International Grains Institute in Winnipeg).

If you would like more information please contact Wayne at (204) 726-9393, w_digby@canadianfga.ca or go to: www.canadianfga.ca

Manitoba Forage Marketers (MFM) tour Alberta plants

By Jake Heppner, Member

On December 2- 4, 2010, Phil Friesen, Chris Kletke, Darren Chapman and I flew to Calgary on a “export driven” tour. We met up with our guide Ed Shaw, owner of International Quality Forage from Carstairs Alberta. Ed showed us 5 different compacting and drying facilities from Olds to Lethbridge, Alberta.

We started at Gill Dellziel’s plant in Innisfail. Gill unrolls round bales and bales them into small squares, 14 x 18 inches, and moves them to the dryer where the strings are cut. The small squares are moved through the 40 foot long dryer on walking plates 9 inches wide. The dryer has fans pulling and pushing air through. The first stage in the dryer had down pressure, second stage up pressure, third stage down pressure and the fourth stage is the cooling cycle. The hay is then moved to the compactor to be re-baled.

Next we drove to Lethbridge and met with Peter Ball, the Vice President of Green Prairie International. The Green Prairie compacting plant processes timothy and alfalfa. They also grind up poorer quality alfalfa, blend it with better quality and place it in a sleeve which can be handled with a forklift and loaded into a container for shipping.

The third place we toured was the Wilbur-Ellis Compacting Plant, also in Lethbridge. This was mainly a timothy processing plant and not running at the time; a nice clean facility.

We returned to Olds, Alberta for the night and the next morning we drove to Jorsuicks Farms Inc. (Olds area). They have Veda Hay Dryers with diesel engines that turn fans that are 30 inches wide by 72 inches high. Air is pushed from the top and bottom of the bales and exits through the sides. Jorsuicks use a Krone Baler to make denser bales and place probes in the bales at 4, 6, 8 and 12 inches to know exactly how evenly it’s drying. This type of drying system starts from the inside or middle of the bale and goes out. They also used a soil compaction tester to check out how even the density is.

Then it was off to Alberta Gold Seal Forage Corp. of Innisfail, which is run by Jim Huisings. This compacting facility uses a hay press with twine rather than bands to tie the compressed bales.

U.S. Plant
dries hay in
just over an
hour - read
more page 12

Looking for Members for MFM

The Manitoba Forage Marketers (MFM) have been making a lot of progress with their group. In addition to the above described tour, the members meet regularly through conference calls to set direction.

The website has been launched which profiles everyone’s farm and shows their hay inventory complete with protein, moisture etc. Requests have been received for hay purchases which are directed to each member.

The group has also agreed to front a portion of the costs again to host a booth at World Dairy Expo with the Canadian Forage & Grassland Association next October. The MFM is a long-term prospect - even though there is not excess hay on all the members farms, there will be in future years.

If you are in the hay business please consider joining the Group. Contact Phil Friesen (204) 873-2448 or Chris Kletke (204) 736-3580.



MFC Reports

Manitoba Forage Symposium

Thursday, February 17th, 2011

Victoria Inn, Brandon, MB

Our Speakers:

Dr. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin

Dr. Dan Undersander grew up on a dairy farm in central Minnesota. He coordinates the multi-department Extension forage program at the University of Wisconsin, conducts forage variety trials, and does research on grazing, forage production, forage utilization and near infrared reflectance (NIR) prediction of forage quality and other parameters.

Dr. Bruce Coulman, University of Saskatchewan

Dr. Coulman is a professor in the Plant Science Department. His research program focuses on the breeding and genetics of perennial forage grasses and annual cereal forages; he also carries out research on forage agronomy and grass seed production.

Glenn Friesen, MAFRI

Glenn was raised on a mixed farm in southern Manitoba with a commercial beef herd, grain and hay land. He has worked both in the private industry and the public sector, and is the Business Development Specialist - Forages with Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives. In his spare time he farms with his brother on the homestead where they have a small commercial beef herd.

Ed Shaw, Owner of International Quality Forage

Ed is part owner of an equine forage company, International Quality Forage and Feed Inc. which sells horse quality hay and related products into the US, Europe and the Middle East. Ed has also set-up another equine supply company, Integrity Hay Inc.; bringing the first ever low-density press into Western Canada. This press re-processes large square bales into two and three string bales in a single press format. Ed has also played a huge role in launching the recently formed Canadian Forage & Grassland Association, having served as interim Chair.

Registration Fees:

Manitoba Forage Council Members \$50.00

Non Manitoba Forage Council Members \$75.00

Registration and payment by credit card can be made at www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca or by calling Joanne at (204) 768-2782.

AGENDA

9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Dr. Bruce Coulman - Forage Research Activities in Canada

10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

P.A.M.I. - Lorne Greiger, Commercial Hay Drying Equipment and Techniques

10:15 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m. to noon

Dr. Dan Undersander - Forage Nutrition, Use of Grasses to Improve Milk Production & Rumen Health, Aphanomyces/ Nutrition Interaction, Harvesting Techniques

12:00 noon

Lunch

1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Ed Shaw - Review of Economics of US Farms, Irrigation Policies of Export Market Countries and Transportation Issues, Protocols on Exporting to China, Role of Canada Forage & Grasslands Association Export Committee

2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Glenn Friesen - Middle East Fact-Finding Mission

3:00 p.m.

Break

3:15 to 3:30 p.m.

Phil Friesen/Chris Kletke - Introduction to Manitoba Hay Export; Marketing group/value in membership, Issue & Opportunities in Export Forages

3:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Wayne Digby - Update on MFC Churchill Gateway Development Project

Direct Farm Marketing Conference

March 4 & 5, 2011 Glesby Centre, Portage la Prairie,

Our keynote speaker is John Stanley of Australia – a perishable goods retailing expert named one of the top 50 entrepreneurs in 2010. John Stanley is a coach, consultant, author, speaker and trainer, based in Kalumunda, Australia. He has been described as a ‘retail guru’ and the leading horticultural consultant in the world today. His expertise in perishable retailing; food, plants, flowers, and pets apply equally to all fields of retail including agriculture & tourism. John’s retail talent is obvious in his best selling retail management books: *Just About Everything a Retail Manager Needs to Know*, *Think for your Customer*, and *Setting up Shop*.

Farm retailers have an opportunity to grow the market in 2011, but they need to be proactive in the right way. This keynote presentation will cover:

- The changing marketplace and your role in it
- Understanding the consumer of 2011 and how to address their needs and wants
- How to promote your farmers direct campaign to the new consumer
- What you need to do to grow sales
- Implementing these changes in the real world

On Friday, attendees can choose one of 3 workshops

- MarketSafe food safety program for farmers’ market vendors, hosted by Hugh Skinner from Assiniboine Community College – Limited to 30 participants (10 to 4 pm)
- Internet Marketing, building your businesses online presence (Facebook, blogs, twitter, etc.) (1 – 4 pm)
- Marketing for Entrepreneurs with Little to no Budget, using public relations tools to maximize your media exposure, hosted by Lisa Tinley (1 – 4 pm)

Conference Costs

Full Conference \$110 before Feb 13th, 2011. After \$135

Full Conference Additional Family members or Employees \$90 Before Feb 13th, 2011, After \$115

Day Pass \$75

Trade Show Display \$15

Additional Banquet Tickets \$20

AGENDA

Friday, March 4th

10:00 MarketSafe Workshop (10 – 4 pm)

11:00 Registration

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Workshops

A. Marketing for entrepreneurs on little to no budget. (1-4 pm)

B. Build Your social media presence (1-4 pm)

C. MarketSafe Workshop (continued from 10:00 am)

4:00 Sessions end

6:30 “Celebrate Local Flavours” banquet, Glesby Centre

Saturday, March 5, 2011

7:30 Registration and breakfast

8:30 Marketing to urban consumers in a changing world: John Stanley, Australia

10:30 Select-a-session

A. Prairie Fruit Growers Association Annual General Meeting

B. Farmers’ Markets Association of Manitoba Annual General Meeting

C. Developing the People-side of your business

12:00 Lunch – Open farm day presentation

1:00 Select-a-session

A. Freshness makes the difference in retail farm marketing

B. Niche potato varieties

C. Foods for health. Capitalize on consumer awareness

2:00 Select-a-session

A. Where do we go from here

B. Building successful markets

C. Building farm and food connections with culinary tourism

3:15 Germinating Ideas: John Stanley, Australia

4:00 Adjourn

Register online at

www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca or

call Carma Levandoski; MA-

FRI: Phone: (204) 867-6572

with your credit card.

Coming Events



2010 Grazing School enlightens

Congratulations to our 2010 Manitoba Graziers of the Year who were recognized at the Manitoba Grazing School this past December!

Left to right (Allan Preston, Assistant Deputy Minister, Graziers – Robert Chapman and Jeff Elliott (of Chapman Farms), Virden; Rob and Charlene Graham, Holland; Gerald and Jeannie Bos, Rapid City.

This past December over 200 guests attended the 13th Manitoba Grazing School in Brandon, MB. As usual an excellent round of speakers were brought in by the Grazing School committee to help with the production and marketing of farm commodities.

Here's an excerpt from one of our keynote speakers.

Jim Gerrish, Idaho, U.S. speaks about his Management Intensive Grazing System - the Grassroots of Grass Farming

The Management Intensive Grazing System (MiG) is a strategic approach to grazing land management based on understanding basic plant-soil-animal relationships and managing those relationships in context of time and space. We always emphasize it is management that needs to be intensified, not just grazing. Many livestock producers have embraced intensive grazing, but have left the management behind.

The first basic principle to fully comprehend is there are only four ingredients needed to produce any agricultural product. These are solar energy, carbon dioxide, water, and soil minerals. What we do in our grazing practices has profound influence on how effectively we capture solar energy and CO₂ with our pasture plants, how well our soils absorb and hold water, as well as efficiency of mineral cycles in our soils. Understanding and managing these flows and cycles is the foundation of profitable ranching.

Jim referred to these 4 items as important tools in his toolbox:

- 1)** Match stocking rate to carrying capacity. Carrying capacity of any pasture or range unit is determined by forage production, target utilization rate, animal intake requirement, and duration of the grazing season. If stocking rate exceeds carrying capacity, forage production declines, the soil degrades, and the water cycle collapses. This principle is the first and foremost foundation of sustainable ranching.
- 2)** Balance rest and use. Leave taller residual – 6 – 15 inch sward height for optimum intake. Use the “take half, leave half” rule to prevent the root growth from being restricted.
- 3)** Maintain forage intake at optimum level. Animals only produce if they get enough to eat. Too many graziers leave stock on paddocks too long. Post-grazing residual has about 4x the impact on forage intake than does pre-grazing forage mass. In other words, what you leave behind is more important than what you take. Grazing too short is the greatest cause of poor animal performance.
- 4)** Graze as many days of the year as possible. It is almost always lower cost than stored feed. Make the animals work for you. Don't work for the cows!

Jim Gerrish is an independent grazing lands consultant providing service to farmers and ranchers on both private and public lands across the US. He currently lives in the Pahsimeroi Valley in central Idaho and works with numerous ranchers in the Intermountain West using both irrigated pastures and native rangeland. To view other presentations from our other speakers go to: www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca/resources/



Grazing Clubs tour Bismark, N.D.

By Michael Thiele, Grazing Club Coordinator

Last September 13 producers crammed into two mini-vans for a great trip to North Dakota. Excellent hospitality was provided by our host Ken Miller, producer and technician for the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District (BCSCD).

We joined the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District annual summer tour which showcased how implementing cover crops in a rotation benefits the soil. We spent the morning touring the farms of two local producers who use cover crops. The first person we met was Glenn Bauer, a grain producer from Regan, N.D. who uses cover crops after early harvested grains to improve the soil resource. Our second stop was at Darrell Oswald's ranch at Wing, N.D. Darrell practices intensive grazing and uses cover crops to enhance his operation.

Later that day we joined the Conservation District tour at their research plots. The theme of the tour was Soil Health: "It's about Balance" and it highlighted "cover crops as a crop" in a regular rotation. Discussion included livestock integration and the benefits of animal impact, cover crop mixtures following annual crops, and advantages of full season cover crops to address soil resource concerns.

Interested in joining a Club? Go to www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca/grazing-clubs/

Canada-Manitoba Feed and Transportation Assistance Program

This program is open to ALL livestock producers in the province. There are 3 components of the program; Feed Shortfall Assistance, Transportation Assistance and Feed Testing Assistance. You can apply for one or all of the components.

Feed Shortfall Assistance:

A forage feed assessment needs to be completed by MAFRI staff. This consists of meeting with MAFRI and inputting your numbers (# of livestock, 2010 forage production, and average forage production) into the spreadsheet. This will calculate your Feed Shortfall for the 2010 feeding season. If you have a calculated shortfall, you will be paid \$30/ton of the shortfall.

Transportation Assistance:

Assistance will be provided for the transportation of feed or livestock to feed. You must be short of feed to be eligible. Although, you do not have to apply for the shortfall assistance to be eligible, it may not hurt to do the spreadsheet to see if you are eligible for some assistance there too! The program will not give assistance for feed that is 'normally' purchased. The feed/animals must be transported a minimum of 25km (15miles). All invoices must accompany the application.

Payment rates are:

- \$0.22/metric tonne/loaded mile for hay, straw & greenfeed
- \$0.12/metric tonne/loaded mile for concentrated feedstuffs
- \$0.10/head/loaded mile for cows, bulls, bison, elk & horses
- \$0.06/head/loaded mile for calves
- \$0.04/head/loaded mile for sheep, goats, llamas & alpacas

Feed Testing Assistance:

The program will pay 50% of the cost of a maximum of 3 feed tests. This is NOT retroactive; therefore feed tests already completed are NOT ELIGIBLE. You don't have to apply for the Shortfall or the Transportation Assistance Program to apply for the Feed Testing Assistance Program.

For more information or help with your spreadsheet preparation contact:

Andrea Arbuckle, BScAg.

Extension Coordinator, Ag

Brandon GO Center

1129 Queens Ave. Brandon, MB R7A 1L9

Phone: (204) 726-6482



Events Review

New York State Business dries down hay in One Hour!

Forget about the 4 to 5 day hay making process, Top Quality Hay Processors in Romulus, New York has developed a system that dries down hay Super Fast! The owners use a 184.5° radiant-heat oven that turns green forage into dry hay in about an hour. The end result is high quality green hay.

The company purchases standing alfalfa from growers, mow it with a modified windrower, and convey it directly into dump wagons or trucks to be delivered to the plant for drying and baling. The entire process takes about 4 hours.

100 motors run the operation, 36 of them for the fans and the rest for conveyers that move the hay along. A computer is used to control and monitor the alfalfa's temperature, the moisture sensors and electric eyes.

During the process, enough heat is applied to dry alfalfa stems and kill bacteria. The moisture is brought way down and added back to be between 10 and 11%. Following drying, the hay is packaged in 40 pound bales or bagged for shipping.

This 4 million dollar plant was created in an old Army Depot in Seneca County and is staffed by locals. The owners have been increasing the number of production lines at this plant (they started with one and are adding up to 4) and are also expanding into a neighbouring county. They are also selling franchises to groups of growers who will build plants to process their own hay.

To read more about Top Quality Hay Producers go to: www.tqhp.com



Top Quality Hay Processors Green Hay



Manitoba Forage Symposium Mark your calendars - February 17, 2011, Brandon, MB

learn about hay dryers, dairy nutrition, Middle East opportunities & shipping opportunities via Churchill. Register at www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca or (204) 768-2782



AAFC Research promising

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada's Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre (SPARC) in Swift Current, SK has several scientists looking into the management of grazing and forages, including alfalfa and many native prairie species.

Here is a couple of interesting projects.

Purple Prairie Clover - a native forage legume for grazing with lots of potential

Overview

Purple Prairie Clover is a palatable legume that can be grazed at various stages of maturity. It is warm-seasoned, tap-rooted, drought-resistant, nitrogen-fixing and grows to a height of 30 to 75 cm. In terms of forage quality, its digestibility averages 50 to 65% and protein content averages 12 to 20% from the vegetative to seed pod stage, respectively.

Why is this work important from the producer's point of view?

Since Purple Prairie Clover is a warm-season forage legume, much of its growth is during July and August. Generally, this is the time when many of our cool-season grasses are in that mid-summer nutritional slump (forage quality is declining as the plant matures). This makes Purple Prairie Clover an excellent addition to a pasture, as it can improve the nutritional profile and help to extend the grazing season. This clover is also nitrogen-fixing which helps in the development of a sustainable pasture system.

What is the success to date? What is the future benefit?

Researchers at AAFC-Lethbridge and AAFC-SPARC have found that Purple Prairie Clover contains unique condensed tannins, properties which not only improve protein utilization by cattle, they also inhibit the growth of E coli. Purple Prairie Clover is also considered bloat-safe and is a prolific seed producer.

Studies are under way on how to best utilize this clover in a grazing system for western Canada. Work will continue until 2012.

Sainfoin - a non-bloating legume with excellent grazing preference

Overview

Sainfoins are perennial herbs of the legume family. The name is derived from Old French sain foin or "healthy hay." In partnership with several other organizations, AAFC is researching the ideal use of sainfoins on the Canadian prairie. →



AAFC Research continued

Sainfoin - continued from previous page

Why is this work important from the producer's point of view?

Sainfoin has similar nutritional value to alfalfa but does not cause bloating. Since its forage quality does not decline as rapidly, sainfoin can be grazed at full maturity. Cattle preference for sainfoin is very high, which contributes to good livestock performance and forage utilization. It has other advantages over alfalfa; it can tolerate drought and starts growing and flowering early. However, poorer stand longevity and forage production are two traits that must be improved before it can be a real contender to alfalfa.

What is the success to date? What is the future benefit?

Researchers at AAFC-SPARC and AAFC-Lethbridge are comparing new sainfoin germplasm to Nova, one of the currently available cultivars. Different sainfoins are being evaluated with alfalfa in a 50:50 mix to determine stand longevity, biomass productivity and bloat control under continuous and rotational grazing. In addition, several small plot studies are comparing the different sainfoins in pure stands and mixes with alfalfa in brown and dark brown soil areas.



Cow enjoying sainfoin.

For more information:

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*Direct Farm Marketing
Conference*

*March 4 & 5th, 2011
Portage la Prairie, MB
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Benefits of Bale Grazing

Excerpts from Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives “Benefits of Bale Grazing Beef Cattle” Fact Sheet

Bale grazing beef cattle during Manitoba’s long winters can save producers time, effort and money and, with proper management, reduce environmental risk. It involves setting a large number of feed bales out in the fall and regulating the cows’ feed intake using electric fencing. Producers move cows to a new set of bales in two-to-five-day rotations. To ensure all cows have equal access to the feed, a minimum of two days of feed per move is needed. The longer the rotation cycle, the more feed is lost as a feed source on the field.

While bale grazing does reduce the amount of manure concentrated in a confined feeding area, nutrient management is still necessary. Producers should adopt management practices that maximize benefits and minimize risks on bale-grazed fields.

The number of cows you are feeding and the length of feeding time are used to calculate the amount of land and the number of bales required for bale grazing. Here’s a handy formula for calculating the number of bales needed.

of cows X cow’s weight X dry matter (DM) intake per day % X feeding period (number of days) = feed (dry matter) needed

$$\frac{\text{amount of feed (DM) needed}}{\text{feed dry matter \%}} = \text{feed needed (as-fed)}$$

$$\frac{\text{feed needed (as-fed)}}{\text{bale weight}} = \text{bales needed}$$

Note: The amount of dry matter/feed needed will be 2.5 % to 3 % of each cow’s bodyweight.

The amount of feed waste can be up to 20 per cent of the feed needed and must be included in the calculations.

Example

You have 200 cows, each weighing 1,400 pounds (635 kilograms). Daily dry matter/feed intake is 2.7 per cent of cow’s body weight and the feeding period is October to December (92 days). The bales are 1,200 pounds (544 kilograms) each and the feed is 85 per cent dry matter.

$$200 \times 1,400 \text{ lb (635 kg)} \times 0.027 \text{ per day} \times 92 \text{ days} = 695,520 \text{ lb (315,488 kg) DM}$$

$$\frac{695,520 \text{ lb (315,488 kg)}}{0.85 \text{ DM}} = 818,259 \text{ lb (371,162 kg) as fed}$$

$$\frac{818,259 \text{ lb (371,162 kg) as fed}}{1200 \text{ lb bale}} = 682 \text{ bales}$$

*Remember to allow for feed waste.

See calculation below.

682 bales X 20% = 136 bales in addition to the 682 bales calculated may be needed for feed wastage.

Locating the bales

Seeded perennial fields are preferred and should have at least one rhizomatous grass species present (smooth bromegrass, quackgrass, Kentucky bluegrass). Bale grazing on native prairie is not recommended because native species do not usually respond to elevated soil nutrient levels. Bales should also not be located in an area where spring run off occurs. For more information contact your MAFRI office.



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