

FORAGE FIRST

"Published by the Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia"

Sixteenth Edition

APRIL 1996

\$10.00

Have You Registered for the 1996 Summer Forage Tour Yet??

This summer your Association is renting a bus and taking a three day tour to visit "The Heart of Canada's Intensive Grazing Management Country" in Rimbey and Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. Confirmed dates are **June 24 and June 25th**. The Forage Bus will leave from a central location in Dawson Creek at 10:00 a.m. on June 23 and return to the same location in the very early morning of June 26th.

There are still some places available on the bus as this newsletter goes to press. Total price for the tour is \$150.00 per adult plus meals. **You may reserve your seat on the tour with a \$50 deposit** sent to the Association Secretary or give to any Forage Association director. *(Continued on page 3)*

PRASPS Funds Forage Projects in 1996

At a recent meeting of the Board, the Directors of the Peace River Agricultural Strategic Planning Society recommended approval of financing for four projects involving forage crops in the B.C. Peace. The Peace River Forage Association of B.C. will receive and administer these funds. **PRASPS will be contributing 36% of the budgeted funds for the 1996 Forage Varietal and Cultivar Testing Trials in the B.C. Peace.** The BCMAFF is contributing 34% of the project costs. Fairwood Croptek Inc., the B.C. Forage Council and the Peace River Forage Association of B.C. are contributing the remaining 30% of the \$44,100 project.

Test site locations are Bob & Joan Tubb's, Tyne Cara Farm at Tomslake; Grandview Dairy Farm (Viggo and Poule Pedersen) at Fort St. John, Odden Ranch, Groundbirch; Jim Collins Farm, Fort St. John. Please contact: Glenn Hogberg, Bob Tubb or Ernest Nimitz for further information.

A second important forage evaluation project will also be located at Tyne Cara Farms in Tomslake. Over one dozen legumes, grasses and winter cereal crops will be planted in strips approximately 4 m x 100M for each species. Photographs and yield measurements will be taken. **All of these species are suitable for grazing and the object of this study is to locate suitable species of forage to help extend the grazing season for local farmers and ranchers** and to thereby improve the profitability and sustainability of the beef and livestock industry in N.E. British Columbia. *(Continued on page 3)*

Forage Seminar a Huge Success

A very nice size crowd of 70 people turned out on a cold, wintery day at the end of January to participate in the annual forage crop seminar in Taylor. Again this year the seminar was co-hosted by the BCMAFF and your Forage Association. Our theme was a timely one: **"Good Animal Health and Good Forage Crop Management go Hand in Hand"**. It allowed farmers and ranchers to get a bellyful of information on both sound veterinary and forage management practices, two topics important to economic success for any livestock operation. *(Continued on page 3)*

EDITORIAL

First and foremost, thank you to **Grande Prairie Livestock Market Ltd** for sponsoring this edition of **Forage First**.

Thank you also to the sponsors of our **Forage Management and Animal Health Seminar** in January in Taylor: **Butler Farm Equipment**, Fort St. John, **Case Power and Equipment**, Dawson Creek; **Great Western Farm Supply**, Fort St. John, **Kenver Equipment Ltd.**, Dawson Creek; **RNC Sales Ltd.** Dawson Creek.

The Association has three major committees in place to help guide Association activities in 1996: **Wildlife Policy Development** (Burnem Grant 786-5566) **R and D** (Glenn Hogberg 843-7653) **Summer Forage tour** (Bob Tubb 786-5634) You may wish to get in touch with the contact person to keep yourself up to date.

And, special thank you is in order to Patsy Nagel for the pictures taken at the Seminar and of the Directors.

Association with the Forage Varietal and Cultivar Trials for the summer as well as our other Association activities.



In her capacity as Forage Technician **Dana Bentley** will be back to assist our



1996 Peace River Forage Association of B.C. Directors

Back: Don Pedersen, Vice President, Dawson Creek; Bob Tubb, B.C. Forage Council Rep, Tomslake; Glenn Hogberg, Treasurer, Progress; Horst David, Director, Tomslake.
Front: Keith Weaver, President, Tomslake; Ernest Nimitz, Secretary, Sunrise Valley.
Not Pictured: Ernie Fuhr, Director, Fort St. John.

1996 Peace River Forage Association of B.C. Board of Directors

President	Keith Weaver	Tomslake, B.C., VOC 2LO	784-7959
Vice President	Don Pedersen	Box 785, Dawson Creek, V1G 4H8	782-2474
B.C.F.C. Rep	Bob Tubb	Box 302, Tomslake, B.C., VOC 2LO	786-5634
Treasurer	Glenn Hogberg	Progress, B.C. VOC 2EO	843-7653
Secretary	Ernest Nimitz	Box 908, Dawson Creek, V1G 1L6	784-7080
Director	Horst David	Box 129, Tomslake, B.C. VOC 2LO	786-5931
Director	Ernie Fuhr	R.R. #1, Fort St. John, V1J 4M6	785-4808

Summer Tour Continued:

Confirmed Tour Stops: **Ray Fausek** (backgrounding, silage, custom grazing); **Jan Slomp** (dairy and high fertility orchard grass pasture); **Ron Soderberg** (backgrounding and high fertility pasture, piped water); **Don Halladay** (overall good management, including grazing management for legumes); **Ulla DeBruijn** (yearlings, low fertility pasture, piped water) **Cecil Hoven** (winter grazing). These six livestock producers all practice short duration grazing. **Dave Williams** (This is the historic Hendrigan farm where fescue based pastures are about 50 years old; a dugout ramp and nose pumps are used for water.) **Bison Barbeque** - To compliment these tour stops a bison barbeque is planned for Monday evening. The meat for the meal has been donated by Tate Creek Ranch (Burnem Grant and Crew) of Tomslake, B.C. We expect a good period of rumination to surround the evening meal with our hosts Myron Bjorge and Grant Lastiwka of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; plus, Kyle Greenwood, Manager of the Grey Wooded Forage Association and some of their directors, members and their families.

Don't miss this excellent opportunity to gather some sound forage management information which will allow you to become a better forage manager; and, hence improve your economic bottom line in these challenging times in the cattle business when the bloom's off of the rose!

PRASPS Fund Continued

Project number three relates to enhancing the seed production of various legume species through more effective pollination by wild bumblebees.

Wild bumble bees will pollinate a broader variety of legume crops than honey bees and will work effectively at lower air temperatures.

The object of this project is to develop reliable techniques to encourage wild bumble bee queens to nest in man made nesting boxes and to keep mice, ants and other predators from disrupting bumble bee nesting in these boxes.

A fourth project will involve funding from the Beef Cattle Industry Development Fund. Two new methods will be compared for renovating old creeping red fescue stands in lieu of the conventional plowing-discing-working down method. **It is felt that both the Aer Way Cultivator and the LeLo Power Harrow may provide a more economical method of extending the practical productive life of B.C. Peace Country hay and forage stands.** Once the funding is all in place, this project will be carried out over a two year period at Bavaria South Peace Farms, Mile 26, the Alaska Highway.

Seminar Success Continued:

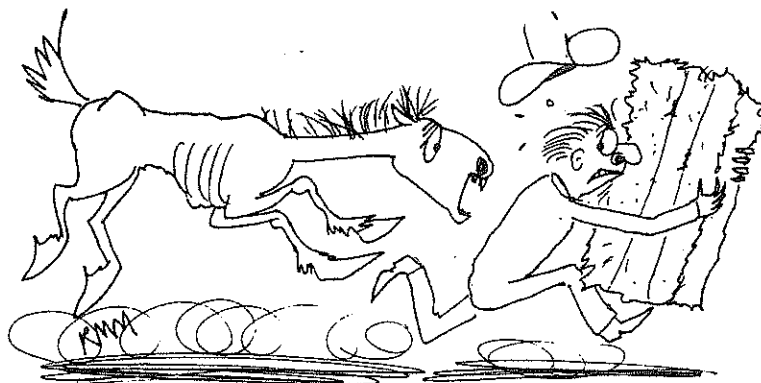
Speaking on the Animal Health side were: **Dr. Grant Scott**, Northwinds Veterinary Services, Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek and **Dr. Tom Pittman**, BCMAFF Livestock DA from Fort St. John. Their topics were respectively: Calving Management Tips plus Herd Health Management during Calving Season; and, Feeding for a Healthy Calf (Prenatal nutrition)

We had three speakers who addressed the forage side of the program.:

Lonny Steward, BCMAFF Williams Lake "Stored Forage as a Commodity" **Jim Tingle**, BCMAFF Prince George "Tools for Improving Forage Quality in Stored Feeds"

Duane McCartney, Ag Canada Research Station, Melfort, Saskatchewan "Forage Feeding Research". Duane's talk covered the newest forage research findings that have practical application for extending the grazing season and summer range forage management. Healthy question periods, a lengthy lunch break plus two coffee breaks allowed for a lot of mingling and useful visiting and information exchange.

If you weren't there this year, make plans to attend next years Seminar and find out what is new, exciting and profitable in the forage business.



January 1996

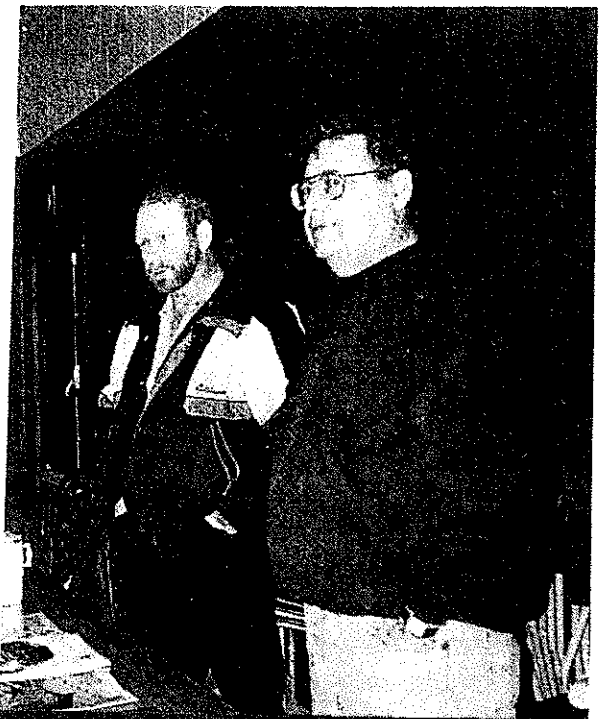
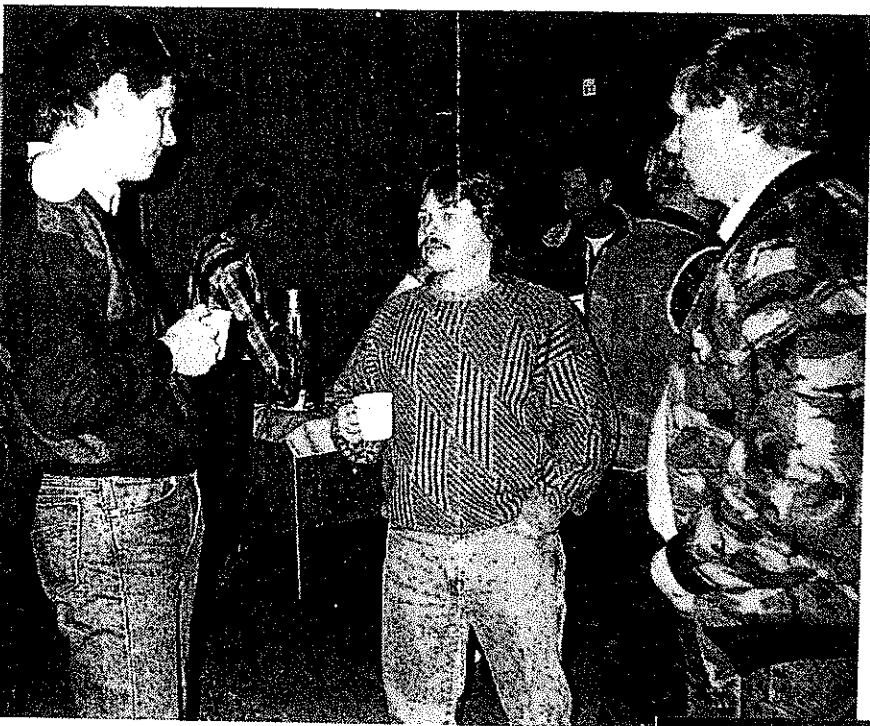


Animal Health and Forage Management

Seminar

Taylor, British Columbia





Local Ranch Wins Top Award in Western Canada

Our roving reporter, E.H. Bine, who lives over by Moco Mountain, was out to visit the Balertwine Bunch at the Runnemwild Land and Cattle Company the other day.

To get there he headed out past Moose Gravel Butte, up the Moo Rive and into the back of beyond. Mr. E.H. Bine realized that he was getting close when he saw all the Gallawhatzit white plastic posts and electric polytwine wandering all over the landscape.

This ranch is the recent recipient of the Fantastic Foraging and Conversational Conservationist Ranch of the Year Trophy awarded annually by the Royal Order of Loyal Fireweed Lovers, only after a vigorous selection process involving nominees from all over western Canada.

Once he finally got out there in his old 4 x 4 pickmeup, our roving reporter discovered that the Balertwine Bunch have a pretty nice outfit. As usual there were quite a few visitors around to help them enjoy the mountains, the river, the luxurious stirrup grass in the pastures and the tremendously productive, waving in the wind hayfields.

He was quite impressed. So he up and asked them what the secret was to their management success which has allowed them to win this award that is national in scope?

Well, the foreman of "the Bunch" replied, "it really is pretty simple: We just have a few tried and true Rules of the Ranch that we follow faithfully in our ranch management program".

* The old time ranchers used to say "What you haven't got done or at least well started up by 9:00 am ain't worth doing"; and, we reckon this parable has a pretty fair degree of relevance to our operation.

* Never hire anyone who drives on to your place with bull horns mounted on the front of their pickup, nor any couple who show up with hand tooled saddles. The first guys main strength will be shooting the bull while the other two will not have enough money left for riding lessons after paying for their fancy saddles.

* We wash our dishes and cooking pots regularly, sometimes as many as 3 to 4 times per week depending on the number of guests. Persons wishing to wash dishes more often are encouraged to bring along a set of their own so that we don't wear ours out.

* We always try to match the horse and saddle to the rider. Folks who figure there is a lot of traffic out in the bush; we give them a saddle with a horn. And, for those who have never ridden before, we have horses that have never been ridden.

* The Cardinal rule to remember if you plan to be successful in the cattle business: your cows should work for you as opposed to you slaving after them all the time.

* This is horse and hiking country and folks interested in these pursuits will be encouraged. On the other hand, hunting is not to be encouraged and is by prescription only.

* For any AG chemicals requiring us to put on heavy protective clothing and/or face masks in order to apply, we really don't want them on our land, livestock or crops.

* It is most important to be able to keep a good sense of humour in the cattle business because sometimes that is about all the net return you will get.

* Anyone who will put soapy water into either a coffee pot or a cast iron skillet to clean them, definitely should not be allowed to wash dishes without supervision.

* Only the people who have actual running water (they run out and get it) and use wood heat truly understand the value of clean water and a healthy forest.

* Every ranch needs a good blue dawg to help give it the proper personality by doing such chores as eating the neighbours chickens and keeping the free range pigs out of the vegetable garden.

* Whilst out building fence, remember it ain't so much the type of fence complex that you construct, because the best tool to keep your cows inside the fence is lots of palatable grass and forage for them to eat.

* Don't ever, ever forget: "cows aren't dumb; they know all they need to know to be a cow!"

* Computer knowledge and the ability to apply it appropriately is very important in this day and age; and, we are very computer compatible here. The husband knows how to spell "computer", the wife plays it like a violin virtuoso; and, the dawg sleeps under and cat on top and both dream of "Internet".

* We try to be good time managers. Our objective is to Rotatem Regular thru the bush and tame pastures in large numbers with a small time allotment. This practise is good for the cattle and wildlife; and, actually the entire ecosystem.

* Triple "E" Fencing is our forte' "Economical, Effective, Easy".

* Properly energized electric fence, portable and permanent, is the true answer to animal control and the economics of fence building. Once the animals "impact it" the first time, they just love to stay

in the proper pasture ever after.

* We place our emphasis on cow salad silage to get rid of so called noxious weeds instead of encouraging the government to hire more weed inspectors.

* For special noxious weeds like our buddies *Thistles Canadensis* and Tall Larkspur we reckon short duration - high intensity grazing at the stocking rate of 50,000 pounds of livestock per acre will do the job better than other costlier and better advertised alternatives.

* We try to spend a lot of time figuring out ways of grazing our cows for the maximum amount of time each year and a minimum of time thinking about big machinery and fancy barns that we don't really need to own (or finance!)

* A maximum of cow psychology and a minimum of brute force is regularly applied whilst working and sorting in our cow herd.

* Just like our leaders, the Government of BC, we like to get fees for our services rendered which leads to a better overall financial picture. Hence, we charge \$100 to read any government correspondence which we receive from our beautiful, bureaucratic buddies and \$200 to reply; and, regularly bill accordingly.

* Multiculturalism is big on our place. We strongly believe in a broad mix (multicultural ecology) of grazing species for our animals.

* One of our Bunch tries to regular chat with the Man Up Above and convince him to send the necessarily rain from May to September; and, we always try to remember that God must be a cowboy at heart because he created the grass, the trees, the mountains and a horse to call a friend; plus, trails to lead old cowboys home again.

* If bulls were so important we would have Bull Boys; so, we devote a lot of time and attention to understanding our cows and enhancing the maternal characteristics of our cowherd.

* Acquiring knowledge is often a better investment than keeping your nose to the farm grindstone 24 hours a day, buying more fancy machinery or a new herd bull; so we spend a lot of time in the knowledge acquisition direction.

* A good Smoky mare with a temperament to match her colour certainly helps the cows remember to do the correct thing at crucial times.

* We have discovered that you can never teach a pig to fly. It is not only a waste of our time but it annoys the pig.

* Remember that peer pressure is designed to contain anyone who shows a sense of drive. The best way for unsuccessful people to cope is to try and make sure no one is successful. You can't afford to be popular with negative thinking people. Surround yourself with people like the person that you want to become. You always become more like the people you associate with and less like those you don't associate with.

* Don't make it tougher on yourself (possibly too tough!) By trying

to drag bunch of squeeling resisting pigs up the success ladder with you.

* We try to take an eclectic look at things and to avoid a quasireligious attachment to a certain breed of cattle, a certain line of machinery or "the" grazing management system..

* We unitize work and work from a list on small units and try to build a brick at a time to allow for maximum annual accomplishment.

* We are pretty cautious about hiring any males in their 30's because they know everything and when they start to apply their vast knowledge then is when the ranch expenses skyrocket and the ranch income heads south.

* 40 years of experience in pasture management is a good thing, only if it is not 40 years of the same experience. This is especially true for riparian area management where situations are constantly changing; and, where proper forage management/ livestock use employing rotation is the key, and the old standard "fence it off" doesn't actually fit very many situations economically or ecologically.

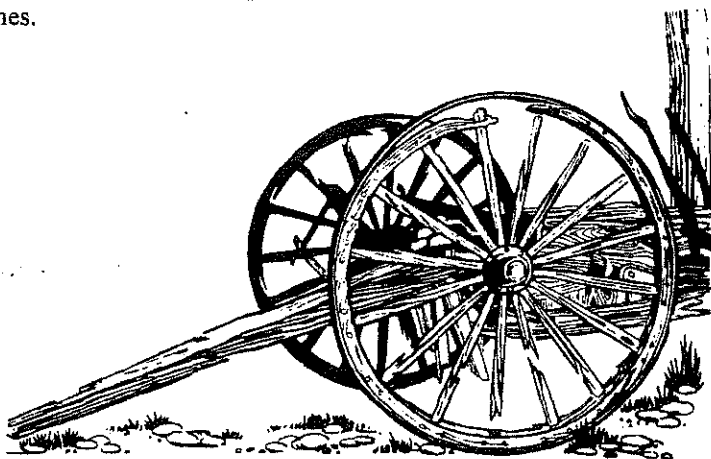
Mind over matter is usually where it is at for those who want to accomplish something, irregardless of the odds against. Therefore, the first thing to do to insure good grazing practices that provide the economic base for your ranch is to develop " A grazing attitude". For a lot of people this means they have to first discard the well established cattlemen's paradigm " I grow cows not grass".

Intensify your management and control your grazing if you really want to get somewhere, like to the bank regularly to deposit your money!

We like to talk to our wild cows, sooth them and tame them down like Bud Williams does; in this regard one of our most useful expressions is "Get on the truck, you wild Massey Ferguson Son of a Baobab".

* The deer, moose and bison "calve" in late spring and early summer and there must be an important message there for cattlemen in the late 90's.

We use two knots regularly: the Sunset Prairie Square Knot when we really want to tie something where it won't come loose and the Sunrise Valley Slip Knot with our elecetric polytwine.



Tired of Hauling Feed to Your Cows??

Try some of these ideas

Duane McCartney, Melfort Research Station

Traditionally farmers have turned their cattle on to grain stubble fields, old hay fields or slough areas in the fall after the cattle return home from the summer pastures. This is not necessarily a sound practice as the cows will often loose weight. Research at the Melfort Research Station is showing that there is a better way.

Crested Wheat Grass not normally grown in the Aspen Parkland can provide excellent fall grazing. Over the past ten years crested wheat grass has been used extensively at the Pathlow Research Grazing site to extend the grazing season by at least another two or three weeks in October depending upon stocking rates. These pastures have been fertilized with 80 lbs of nitrogen and 40 lbs of phosphorus the previous November, grazed first thing in the spring and then regrazed last thing in the fall on the regrowth.

Intercropping or seeding spring and winter cereals in the spring is another alternative for extra fall grazing. The Lacombe and Melfort research stations have evaluated the use of spring seeded fall rye, winter wheat, winter triticale, under seeded to oats or barley as a silage, fall grazing system. As the fall cereal is seeded in the spring, it remains in the vegetative state and can provide extra fall grazing from the regrowth. In this system the crop needs to be seeded first thing in the spring and harvested as early as possible in order to have enough heat days or growing days for the regrowth in late summer and early fall. We have found that barley can be harvested about 10 days earlier than oats thus giving extra time for regrowth of the winter cereal. If there is enough growing degree days and sufficient soil moisture then excellent fall grazing can occur. In the Melfort area, fall rye will over winter and could be grazed the following spring. However, we have found that the spring growth will use up the considerable soil moisture. In addition, if you graze in the spring, seeding will be delayed to mid June and this is too late if you want the intercrop to regrow in the fall. Rust on winter wheat and fall rye can also be a problem with decreased nutrient quality.

Italian Rye Grass is a new idea for late fall grazing in the Aspen Parkland. Italian rye grass has not been traditionally grown in the Aspen Parkland of Western Canada. It is the main grass in Europe and New Zealand and is grown to some extent in the Maritime Provinces and on irrigation in B.C. In Canada it is grown as an annual as it will not over winter. Seeded at 10 lbs to the acre and fertilized like a normal grain crop, it produces large yields of forage for late fall and early winter grazing. As the plants do not harden off for winter, they virtually keep growing late into the fall at which time the quality is still similar to barley silage. At the present time the Melfort Research Station is developing a management system to incorporate Italian Rye as an intercrop with barley for silage and fall grazing or as a mono crop for stock

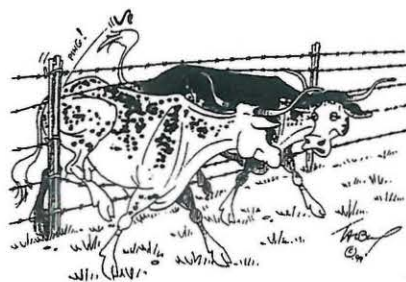
piling for late fall grazing for backgrounding early weaned calves. Last fall weaned calves grazed Maris Ledger Italian rye grass from October 26 to November 17 during several inches of snow. At a stocking rate of 9 calves per acre, the calves gained a total of 398 lbs per acre. Costs of production of the crop is similar to that of a grain crop. Seed costs about \$1.25 per pound or \$43.70 per acre for seed, fertilizer and herbicide costs. One must also add in the cost of fencing and ownership costs of the calves. This fall a large scale research project will evaluate the effects of early weaning calves in late August and backgrounding them on the Italian rye grass versus weaning in mid October and either weaning them on to additional Italian rye grass or backgrounding them on stored feed in a feed lot. This new project partially funded by Saskatchewan Beef Development Fund will evaluate the economics and additive effects of backgrounding beef cattle through extension of the grazing season by using Italian rye grass.

Winter Swath Grazing of late seeded oats is a method that can extend the grazing season long into the winter. Oats can be seeded the last week of June and swathed in the soft dough stage immediately after the first killing frost or about a week later as a nitrate precaution. It is important to swath the oats while they are still green yet late enough in the fall that you don't get spoilage in the swathes due to warm weather. An electric fence should be used to contain the cows in an area that they will clean up in one to two weeks. Otherwise, if they have access to the entire field, they will eat all the oat heads at the start and only have straw for the remainder of the winter grazing period. Be sure to supply a source of water and shelter for the cattle.

With the continued need to reduce costs, these fall grazing systems will reduce the winter feed requirements, labour, fuel and manure removal costs in your operation.

On any of our fall grazing work we feed a full feed of hay to the animals before they are introduced to the new forage and in some cases a bale of straw can be left in the field for the animals consumption.

Presented at Animal Health and Forage Management Seminar, January 1996.



"It must be greener or they wouldn't have a fence here!"