

FORAGE FIRST

Published by the Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia

First Edition

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PEACE RIVER FORAGE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

At the July 27th meeting, the Board of Directors of your Association adopted as policy a dual approach to achieving a noticeable net profit increase for our members. **Firstly**, a maximum of information transfer leading to increased forage knowledge and the appropriate methodology to apply it effectively. **Secondly**, the necessary involvements by the directors and members leading to an optimum level of influence with the government, business and consumer sectors of our society.

Specifically, this information garnered and involvements occurring will lead our members to a better understanding of:

1. **Intensive Forage Production** - Silage, hay and tame pastures managed to maximize the yield of forage per acre at an economic level leading to high production of red meat per acre.
2. **Successful Use of Crop Rotations** - Balancing hay and tame pasture in the rotation with grain and oilseed crops to insure proper conservation techniques are applied consistent with achieving maximum economic yield per field.
3. **Holistic Resource Management** - Short duration grazing with high numbers of livestock, power (electric) fencing programs to assist in developing economic pasture rotation programs; and, other management techniques involving the balancing of ecology and economics to produce a long term sustainable agricultural operation.
4. **Newest and Most Efficient Harvesting Methods** - Successful systems for harvesting, hauling and storing a maximum of top quality winter feed for your farm or ranch.
5. **Forage as a Valued Commodity** - How to make money with forages and how to properly value each type of forage enterprise you have on your farm/ranch.
6. **Variety Trials and Seeding Techniques** - What annual and perennial varieties and mixtures yield best economically for your management conditions

for tame pasture and winter feed production; including the appropriate seeding rates and utilization of most effective seeding techniques to get a proper stand of forage established rapidly and effectively.

7. **Innovative Winter Livestock Feeding Systems** - Successful and economic equipment systems for feeding beef cows and other classes of livestock; plus, innovative, labour efficient techniques utilized by top line operators.
8. **State of the Art Grazing Management and Pasture Rotation Programs** - What is the best system to employ for your farm or ranch to achieve the optimum economic return per acre?
9. **Maximizing Proper Soil Conservation Techniques** - The encouragement of good soil management is the firm foundation for development of excellent forage production systems leading to economically viable livestock enterprises.
10. **The Politics of Food Production** - An awareness of the many powerful influences affecting individual agricultural producers from beyond their farm gate as epitomized by the current activities and future plans of governments and consumer/environment organizations and the willingness of producers to become involved in looking after their own welfare in this regard.

And, thereby encourage our members to adopt the various practices in these 10 categories suitable to their own individual farming and ranching operation to allow them to:

1. Promote, encourage, develop and protect the forage industry in the Peace River Area of British Columbia.
2. Represent those persons producing forage in the Peace River Area of British Columbia in all matters in which they are generally interested.
3. Encourage the production of the maximum net profit for each and every member.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our first edition of your association newsletter. The Directors decided at their July meeting to publish a newsletter to let all members and supporters of the Association know what is going on. You will notice it has a marked dollar value on it. That is because we believe the material included here is a good informational investment.

The Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia is affiliated with the B.C. Forage Council; and, we look forward to a good and useful relationship with them over the long term.

Henceforth, look for future issues of "Forage First: to accompany the BCFC Newsletter when it is mailed on a quarterly basis from their office.

This extremely dry year, perhaps the driest in recorded history, has pointed out short comings in forage management on virtually every farm and ranch in the B.C. Peace Country this summer, some very severe. Well now, we can't make it rain; but, we can sure help you better prepare yourself and your forage management for the present and future disaster situations.

Farmers and ranchers, join the Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia today and let us help each other solve our forage and livestock problems now and down the road.

P.S. In the next issue of "Forage First", we will publish a brief feature on who Andre Voisin is and why he is so important to world wide forage crop management, as perceived by one or more of our members.

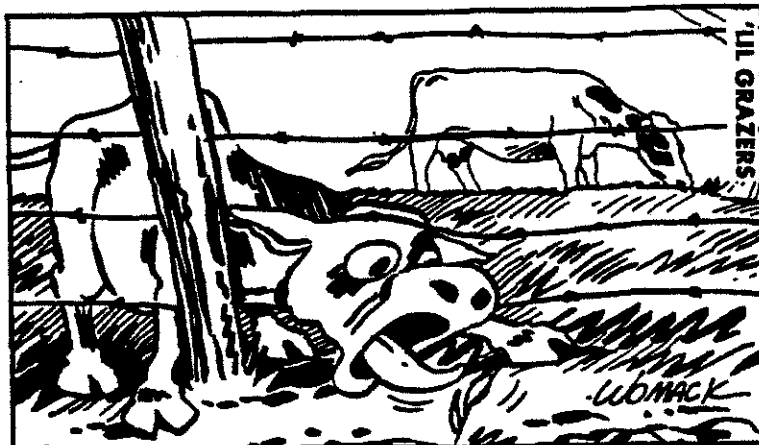
SHORT SNORTS

The next directors meeting will be held on **MONDAY, September 21st, 7 p.m.** at Harvey Wiles place located between Taylor and Baldonnel. ***** Watch for the date of our **first annual meeting and seminar** to be announced later this fall. To be held sometime between November 20 and December 10th. ***** On June 20, 1992 the B.C. Peace River Forage Association was officially organized in the Farmington Community Hall following an informational meeting sponsored by The Forage First Committee. Likely when all the dust clears our official, legal name will be the **Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia**. ***** Thanks to Nelda Bennett who made us two Association sign boards which enabled us to have Association displays at both the North Peace (North Pine) and Dawson Creek Fall Fairs recently. Both exhibits attracted attention from both the rural and urban public and let them know we are open for business. ***** We have a constitution pretty well formed up and we expect to have it ready in the early fall for review and **approval by the membership**. If you want a copy of it or want to make valuable inputs please contact: Box 908, Dawson Creek, V1G 1L6. ***** Winter is coming. Time to start getting your reading material in order soon. Recommended to those who want to learn how to balance ecology and economics with their family's social requirements on their farm or ranch: **Holistic Resource Management by Allan Savory**. Write to Box 908, Dawson Creek, V1G 1L6 if you want to know how to get a copy of this useful reference. ***** A special thank you to Ernie Hills, Manager of the South Peace Forage Association in Grande Prairie (1501 Provincial Building, 10320 99 Street, Grande Prairie, Alberta, T8V 6J4. (403) 538-5285) for helping us out with his useful presentation and knowledgable ideas at our organizational meeting on June 20th. His well established group has useful summer and winter programs that our members can take advantage of.

MORE SHORT SNORTS

A useful reference for directors and members of our forage association is: **Appendix Commodity Profile for Forages**. This is part of a series of reports dealing with Development of the Agrifood Sector in British Columbia. This Ag Canada report helps point out the importance of the Peace River agricultural region to the rest of the province: 26% of all B.C. winter feed production forage acres are located in the Peace. 19% of all improved pasture in B.C. is located up here. Plus, the only enormous area of forage land that can be brought into a higher level of production through better management practices to achieve future, increased potential forage production is here in the Peace. ***** All major farm organizations in the B.C. Peace have joined together to form the Drought Committee to pursue the current agricultural disaster with the powers that be. Hay and other winterfeed crop estimates vary from 15 to 50% of normal over a wide area of the B.C. Peace. By the first of July many people were short of pasture and things have not improved since. Lack of Livestock water for later fall and winter has reached crisis levels in most of this area. A \$15 million loss is anticipated to the cattle industry alone, based on \$240 per cow. The president and the vice president have been involved in this important project as active participants on behalf of our members. ***** An impressive project worth visiting is at Toms Lake and involves members Horst David, Bruce Kutschker, Ernie Pilz and Bob Tubb. It involves two things: a solar water pump system for 80 - 150 cattle units and a completely portable fencing system for high intensity, short duration grazing using Gallagher Treadin white posts and Gallagher white Turbo cord on reels and powered by a Gallagher energizer operating off a solar panel with a deep charge battery. Our next issue of **Forage First** will feature a complete economic analysis and practical summation of the merits of this project funded by PFRA and BCMAFF. ***** Another useful address in our Peace River Bioregion of British Columbia and Alberta (which is about the size of the state of Oklahoma and quite a bit bigger than several European countries) is **Bill Grabowsky**, Manager, North Peace Forage Association, Box 819, Fairview, Alberta T0H 1L0 (403) 835-2241. ***** Don't forget to enter the **Annual Forage Quality Competition**, Contact your local office of the BCMAFF for hay sampling information and entry forms. The Ministry pays for analysis of two samples per livestock producer and also will balance rations for you.

JX:

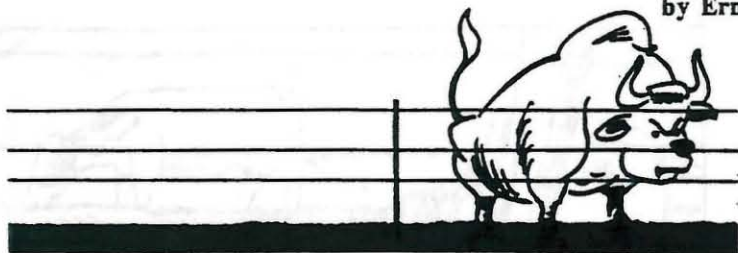


"The grass is always greener on the other side."

The BCMAFF is operating a Hay and Winter Feed Lising Service. Contact your local office either in Fort St. John or Dawson Creek if you have hay for sale or need to buy hay for your livestock this winter.***** Here is an interesting forage seeding technique which is slated to be used by AG Air (Don Lumsden) of Dawson Creek in joint ventures on reclamation at the Alberta Tarsands at Fort McMurray and in the Phillipines on the 1992 volcano of climatic note, Mt. Pinatubo. They plan to do a lot of aerial seeding, but this "special" seed can be put through your seed drill or forage seeder also. Since it only costs about 50 cents per pound and increases the size of the individual seed about 34% it likely will be of interest to local forage enthusiasts as they consider their new seeding program. One to 20 seeds can be treated thusly to make up the appropriate mix at the appropriate rate for your forage field: 1. First polymer seed coat, hydroscopic in nature so it draws water to the plant. 2. Especially designed for legumes. 3. Seaweed fertilizer 4. Micronutrient fertilizer 5. High germination forage seed 6. Second polymer seedcoat designed to repel insects, rodents and birds with its bitter taste. Don advised this publication that if this pelletized seed gets 1/2 inch of rain after it is seeded it will then establish itself and grow 4 to 6 inches in height. ***** Office space for your association complete with a modest capability to service our membership and tend to other important association matters is liable to be on stream by October or November. Anticipated location: Centre for Agricultural Diversification at the Northern Lights College Farm in Dawson Creek.

What we Have Learned in 5 1/2 Years of Electric Fencing

by Ernest Nimitz



On June 20th following the organization of the B.C. Peace River Forage Association, the folks who attended the meeting visited an intensive, short duration grazing program on 474 acres involving 100 head of yearling steers and 100 cows with calves. Located on the Kiskatinaw River Ranch in Sunrise Valley, this grazing unit is powered by a Gallagher 800 energizer and perimeter fences using two high tensile wires 24 and 36 inches high with line posts on 60 foot centres. Five pastures created from portable white Gallagher Treadin posts and white Gallagher Turbo Superwire on reels are used for interior cross fences. The power surges through this system between 5800 and 7200 volts and pastures are rotated every 5 - 10 days. Complete cost to construct this 6 1/2 miles of fence which provides excellent animal control every day, all day is \$5,500. Water is furnished by a 4,000 cubic yard PFRA engineered dugout.

People who attended this tour saw where 5 1/2 years of electric fencing have led us at the Kiskatinaw River Ranch.

In Spring 1987 we built our first High Tensile fence because we were getting tired of getting our clothes and skin ripped up fencing with barb wire and people were telling us high tensile wire made a good fence for less money than barbwire. At that same time we bought our first electric fencer and strung up some low tech electric fence to keep our bulls in the right pasture and our cows out of the hay fields.

Basically from 1987 and through 1990 we just dabbled with electric fence and fencing with 12 1/2 gauge high tensile wire, often obtaining the indifferent results you might expect from such an approach.

In 1991 we were operating with an increased land base and could no longer afford to dabble, so we made a commitment to fence our new lands in the most economic fashion possible and this has led us quickly to where we are today.

We believe the following tips on electric fencing will prove useful to our readers and hopefully help them get their fences in order quicker than we did.

When we started out we naturally looked around for as much information as we could find. Though there was

a nice pile of pamphlets to be obtained from the various government agencies we found most of the stuff they had of very little use as it was either too general or too far behind the times.

So where did we get our useful information? From the members of Foothills Forage Association, Pembina Forage Association and the South Peace Forage Association and the winter and summer activities of these groups.

We also discovered over the next few years that with the exception of the Gallagher people all the suppliers were busy selling with damn few (if any) knowledgeable people on staff to discuss what types of materials are necessary to make a proper system at an optimum price. "Buyer Beware" pretty well sums it up.

At this stage we are confirmed believers in the technology (as well as fencing supplies) presented by the Gallagher Company.

We now use what I call the "Gallagher technique" on other electric fencing systems involving our BEE Rancher and Shurshock (Hallman) energizers. This greatly improves the effectiveness of these electric fences.

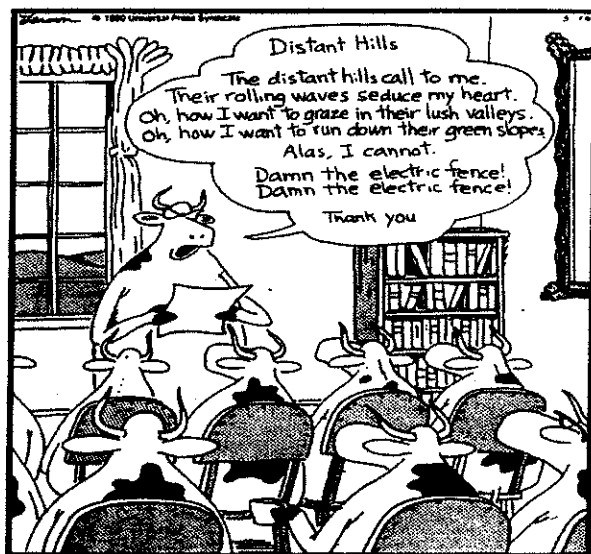
Key points to the Gallagher Technique:

1. Well grounded. 3 ground rods, galvanized 5 - 6 feet in the ground and 10 feet apart; or, 1 ground rod in the edge of a dugout or river.
2. Dead corners. At each corner use a two foot pig tail loop tied to corner posts and tie on a white insulator. Then attach this insulator to line fence wire (no nico press sleeves nor \$150 tool to mash them together required.) Join the hot fence at each corner using another 7 foot piece of high tensile wire and four galvanized joint clamps.
3. Two hot high tensile wires are enough for your complete fence. This is more effective than six or seven high tensile wires not electrified. With our first four wire high tensile fences we have gone back and electrified them by heating up the two middle wires. No ground wire required in line fences for cows.
4. Our corners have 3 posts and are 1/2 mile apart as terrain permits. One eight foot and two seven foot posts set about 6 - 8 feet apart. If we bend the fence we use an inside two post corner (Australian). One seven foot post and one six foot posts. All corner posts have five to six inch tops. No skinny

- posts. Use high tensile wire to complete the brace.
5. Line posts up to 70 foot centres on flat ground. Put a line post in all low spots and on all high spots also.
 6. Use insulators on all posts. None of this BS of "our fence doesn't need insulators and it works for miles". Gallagher insulators are top quality plastic material with a guaranteed long life under Northern conditions.
 7. Buy a volt meter, you won't regret it. We use ours everyday.
 8. Splice the high tensile wire using a figure eight knot for best results.
 9. Galvanized in line strainers where you cut the wire and ratchet up with an \$8 handle have given us very satisfactory results.
 10. Gates are one high tensile wire attached to one end with a joint clamp and a visible durable Gallagher handle on the other end.
 11. The only thing better than 2 high tensile wires for electric fencing looks like to us is this: several reels of White Gallagher Turbo Super Cord and white Gallagher Treadin portable posts, possibly with an energizer complete with solar panel and deep charge battery for fencing livestock anywhere under any conditions on your range and pasture. The white colour is the key: to us all the other manufacturers stuff is rubbish by comparison.
 12. The Gallagher Energizer has twice as much power as our BEE and ShurShock units. This means good animal control even if there are problems; not so under Bee and Shurshock.

For the future we hope to try and maintain an open minded approach to our ranch fencing program. Avoiding such dogma as "a good fence has four barb wires, posts on 16 foot centres and five post corners."

We predict for the long term our fences will be Straight Triple E : Economic, Electric and Effective.



MORE SHORT SNORTS

More suggested reading material: **The Stockman Grass Farmer** is published out of Jackson, Mississippi which is pretty well in the centre of a 12 state area which produces a majority of the beef cows and calves in the U.S. of A. Editor H. Allan Nation has a good monthly tabloid newspaper full of timely info from Mexico to Canada. Last winter he was on tour in Western Canada talking about "Getting \$Green\$ with Grass". During the seminars he suggests that in every part of the North American continent there are people getting rich on grass and he tells you how they did it. He also provides a cautious word about the company you keep. "You can never teach a pig to fly. It not only is a waste of your time, but it annoys the pig." For further information on address and subscription rates please write: Box 908 Dawson Creek, V1G 1L6. ***** Your Association has established a **Needs Analysis Committee**. President Glen Hogberg will be heading this committee and is looking for members to volunteer to help out on the important task of arriving at the proper methodology for funding access for the Association. Bruce Rutley of the Centre for Agricultural Diversification is going to assist this committee in its important work. ***** As a part of the constitution, your association is establishing an **Advisory Committee** to be headed up by the **Vice Chairman**. This committee will be appointed by the board of directors and will allow the association to remain fully informed of what the various government agencies are doing and are planning to do that may significantly affect the forage industry in the B.C. Peace. Persons representing Ag Canada, Beaverlodge; BCMAFF, BC Forest Service, Peace River Regional District, PFRA and the Agricultural Diversification Centre have already indicated they are prepared to serve on this committee. To complete the advisory group we need a couple of Agribusiness people from this area. If you have any ideas on knowledgeable forage enthusiasts in the agribusiness sector who could make a positive contribution to our advisory committee please **Contact Vice Chairman Steve Shipton** or one of the other directors. ***** For prospective new members of the Peace River Forage Association, you get a dual membership in both our local association and the BC Forage Council and the many benefits of both groups though October 31, 1993 for only \$30. Make your membership cheque out today and send it to The B.C. Peace River Forage Association Box 908 Dawson Creek, V1G 1L6. ***** Your Editorial Committee is Steve Shipton, Harvey Wiles, Bob Tubb and Ernest Nimitz. Contact anyone of us with what you think about the newsletter and what you want to see in the next one.

Ranchers Starter Kit



Our Roving Reporter, Eh Bine, advises us that over at the Pink Rope Ranch The Balertwine Bunch are getting some of their friends and neighbors to help them put together a rancher's starter kit which they plan to auction off next month at the Kiskatinaw Cow Palace to help raise funds for the association.

Herein, the contents of the Starter Kit which we believe will be in high demand because all folks wanting to truly learn the cow business at the grass roots level will figure that they just have to have one of these!

- * Cowboy boots with experience. Been foxed front and back several times and now using hockey tape wrap to cover big hole side of right foot. Ridden on wild horses and hay burners all over B.C.

- * 4WD PickMe Up also with lots of experience. Complete with bale stabber and winch, shimmey in front end, two cases of motor oil, crack in transfer case and spare tire with steel cords showing. As well as for moving bales, the bale stabber is especially useful for herding greedy bankers, irresponsible politicians and ornery cows.

- * Several cows named thusly: Favourite Fence Crawler, Nomad, Every Other Year, Freight Train, Frozen Ears, Curly Toes, Goat Bag, Notail, Spooky, One Eye, Rope Breaker and Crumple Horn. Guaranteed to limit your profits so you won't have to pay excessive tax, these are the bunch who truly help keep the price up of the steak sandwich for lunch. All are well travelled, being

properly identified at every prominence on their frame.

- * Seven year old proven herd bull with frozen scrotum, one short ear and only long horn, three good feet and plenty of experience with pinkeye and foot rot who is good at breeding the neighbours, cows cause ours don't come into heat very regular.

- * Five rolls of hand rolled barbwire, about 35 years old and a 1/4 mile more or less; better than any new wire that you can buy today.

- * Old Indian saddle in good shape for the shape that it is in, purchased from relative of Geronimo and used by previous owners amongst other thing to chase US Cavalry around Arizona desert.

- * A goodly supply of left footed moccasin rubbers, made in Canada, that have somehow always out survived their right handed counterparts.

- * One 26 year old saddle horse with mustache that used to be good at chasing bears, deer, buffalo and the occasional cow. Guaranteed an exhilarating experience now with every ride as his eyesight and hearing ain't what they used to be.

- * 13 big round bales in storage for four winters (outside of course) with a guaranteed nutritional content approaching a cornflakes box.

- * Thousands of holistic grasshoppers to eat up any surplus pasture you may have left in your rotation grazing system.

- * 46 bales of balertwine, used only once, waiting to be recycled as soon as you can figure out how to do it.

- * A hefty box full of guvament forms useful for approximately 19 handouts if you and your lawyer and accountant can figure out how to get them filled in correctly.

- * Lariat rope that has worked its way down from 45 feet over the years to 12 feet; still useful on short and slow cows if you have a fast horse.

- * Rain Gauge, just like new, used only once in last three summers and only for a couple of metric minutes.