

FORAGE FIRST

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Thanks to the Nimitz Family!

This spring we took the opportunity to pop in on Ernie, Joanne & Michael unannounced and thank them for their hard work and dedication towards the Peace River Forage Association of BC. Those in attendance described how Ernie had touched their lives and the impact his dynamic personality had on the Peace River Forage Association. He created it from the "grass roots" to focus on one of the most important resources in the Peace River Area. He was presented with a driveway sign and picture plaque in appreciation.

Thank you, Ernie for your vision. We hope you continue to be involved and hope to hear your advice now and again. Thanks to Joanne for her efforts in setting up and printing out 38 editions of this newsletter. Thanks as well to Michael and Mark for their work in distributing the newsletter. The Forage Association would not be where it is today without the work of this energetic family.

2005 Directors of the Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia

"Dedicated to putting forage first in the hearts, minds and pocketbooks of livestock producers and other forage enthusiasts"

Chuck Sutherland	Rick Kantz	Bill Wilson	Pat Gerlinsky	Sarah Davies	Aron Collins	John Kendrew
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Management - John Kendrew			Membership - Sarah Davies - 788 1970			
Contractors :		Sandra Burton- 789 6885	Julie Robinson-782 4501		Kim Strasky- 843 7018	

Grass and Forbes

By Jim Forbes

Someone once said, "Nothing is constant, except change." This observation of the natural order of things is one of those truisms that can be seen almost everywhere you look. The Agricultural sector has certainly seen its share of changes lately with the BSE Crisis, poor grain prices, high fuel prices, as well as the political wrangling on the global, national and provincial scenes. There are also changes afoot on a more local level and within our Association, with the introduction of Environmental Farm Planning, Sandra taking a sabbatical and me helping with this Newsletter.

Someone else said, "Fortune favours the prepared mind." I believe that our members are taking that step of preparing their minds and that our Association will grow and evolve to help keep our members prepared to deal with those inevitable changes. That preparation is taking place in the form of research and demonstration projects, as well as numerous opportunities to learn about topics and discuss ideas. If you have any ideas for topics that you would like to see researched or discussed by the Association make sure you let one of the directors or Julie know about it.

Environmental Farm Plans Update

By Julie Robinson

Environmental Farm Plans are receiving a great response from Peace River and area producers. Over 10 workshops (more than 60 producers) were delivered this winter and spring by the various EFP Planning advisors in the area including: Colleen Giesbrecht – BC Grain Producers; Judy Madden and Karrilyn Vince – BC Cattlemen's and myself, Julie Robinson – Peace River Forage Association of BC. I held 4 workshops this spring and I plan to hold 1 or 2 more before the summer works gets too intense. This fall, when the busy season is over, I'll be doing them more frequently.

If you are planning to make some improvements on the farm or ranch this year, you may be eligible for funding through the Environmental Farm Planning program. I expect to see many applications from producers for improvements including; offsite watering systems, riparian area management (including fencing), winter site improvements, adding alleyways and watering systems, improving cropping systems (such as moving to zero till) and many others.

There is a long list of beneficial management practices eligible for funding through this program. The maximum any one farm can get is \$50,000. This is further broken down by which projects you are applying for. For example; this program will pay up to \$20,000 for watering systems on a 50% cost share and your 50% can be in-kind contributions such as labour.

Contact Julie Robinson for more info 250-782-4501

What's New with Western Forage Beef Group

By Sarah Davies

In January I attended the spring Western Forage Beef Group meeting in Lacombe, AB. The WFBG continues to do some very interesting research. The main projects that were reported on were the 'Annual Crops for Grazing' and the 'Greenhouse Gas Balance in Cow-Calf Production Systems'. With the annual crops research they are looking at the production costs and yields of different annuals (corn, barley, oats) and the effects of different seeding dates on total yield. Corn was comparable to oats and barley for grazing/swath grazing in years where they received at least 2100 heat units. In the years where they did not have the heat units the cobs didn't finish growing and the tonnage was significantly lower than both oats and barley.

The WFBG researchers are coming up with a Greenhouse Gas Assessment Tool that will help producers figure out exactly how much methane their cow herds are producing based on type of animal and feeding practices! The newest project that they are trying to get funding for is assessing the value of having a Tracking System that would track an animal from your ranch right through to the plate and be able to provide the producer with carcass quality data.

Contact Sarah Davies for more info 250-788-1970.

Sandra's Sabbatical Aug 2005 - Aug 2006

This summer in August, Sandra and her family will be setting out to explore Canada from coast to coast. This means there will be a few changes in projects, contacts and project coordinators. Julie Robinson will become the Soil Conservation Council Canada's BC Field Co-coordinator for the rest of the year and Kim Strasky will continue to update our website and help organize some events.

However, due to Sandra's impending departure the Forage Association has a few gaps that need filling. We are looking for any individuals who may be interested in being paid to organize events like our Annual Tours, Annual General Meetings, January Seminars, and Auctions. An individual or a group of people could take on each event. **If you are interested in being involved in the above, please contact Julie Robinson at 250-782-4501 and we will discuss the details.**

We will miss our traveling Sandy, but look forward to hearing updates from her and maybe she'll send a few articles about her adventures across Canada. **For the following year, if you have any forage requests or questions involving R&D projects, contact Julie Robinson at (250) 782 4501 or prfa@pris.ca or visit our website: www.peaceforage.bc.ca**

Soil & Nutrient Management Project Update (SCCC GHGMP)

By Sandra Burton

Julie, Sandra and Jayna Houston have just compiled BC's work plan for the 2005 season, after consultation with the Forage Management Committee, the Abbotsford Soil Conservation Association and Soil Conservation Council of Canada. There will again be demonstrations of BMPs: 5 types in the Peace Region, totalling 12 sites; and 5 types of demos in the Fraser Valley, totalling 15 sites. The type of demos in our region include direct seeding annual forages into perennial forage fields, direct seeding perennial forages into stubble, nutrient applications of manure, dry fertilizer or anhydrous ammonia.

We are also investigating collaboration with researchers in Nova Scotia. They can supply us with a field kit that measures greenhouse gas emissions of nitrous oxide, carbon dioxide and methane as well as soil temperature and moisture at the field demonstration plots. They have offered to do all the analysis at the Agriculture College in Truro, NS. The kit will be a tool to illustrate the good things forage based agriculture is doing for the environment.

SCCC is urging us to put more effort into extension activities about reducing greenhouse gases in the 3rd and last year of this program. Therefore, the BC Team will be promoting BMPs and sharing GHG mitigation information at 18 events across the province over the next year. There will also be updates in newsletters and 8 factsheets produced, 4 in the north and 4 in the south. "Double Js" will be taking charge of the SCCC GHGMP in BC for 2005:

Julie Robinson at (250) 782 4501 & Jayna Houston at (604) 556 3732.

Improved Grazing and Feeding Project Update (CCA GHGMP)

By Julie Robinson

Another busy summer approaches with 7 CCA GHGMP demonstrations to be set up and monitored throughout the season. The types of projects we will be looking at are: extending the grazing season through managed rotational grazing, stockpiling forages for winter grazing and grazing alternates sources of forage such as forage seed aftermath/regrowth as well as grazing silage cereals regrowth in the fall. We will also be looking at the benefits of managed grazing to control poplar regrowth in logged areas. This summer we will try seeding oats for swath grazing earlier in the season and then graze them for a couple of weeks before allowing them to grow to early milk stages to be cut for swath grazing. This fall we will continue our look at the benefits of swath grazing as well as investigating the deterioration of quality in the swaths over the winter. Due to popular demand our Winter Feeding Strategies course will be offered again in the fall.

The managed grazing projects demonstrate that increasing pasture quality means improved feed efficiency and reduced methane gas production per pound of beef produced. By improving pasture management and production, we also increased the amount of carbon sequestered in the soil. All of this is very positive for the environment and the producer. For more information or if you would like to be part of a demonstration **please contact Julie Robinson (250) 782 4501.**



Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia

Services & Upcoming Events

EVENTS

May

- * **77th BC Cattlemen's Association AGM and Convention** – May 26 – 28, 2005 at the Sunbowl Arena, 9301 Hummingbird Lane, Osoyoos, BC. For more info: www.cattlemen.bc.ca/meeting

June

- * **PRFA of BC 14th Annual Summer Forage and Livestock Tour - Cows & Casinos** - will be rolling along to Grande Prairie and Area - Saturday and Sunday - June 11 & 12, 2005. Lots of great ranches to tour. Don't forget to put it on your calendar! Watch our website for tour details coming soon – www.peaceforage.bc.ca
Call Julie for more info or to register 250 782 4501.
- * **BC Farm Women's Network Directors Meeting & Strategic Planning Session.** All members are invited. June 11, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Lodge Conference & Retreat Centre, 100 Mile House, BC. For more info contact Lorraine Jerema at 250-593-2384 or by email at hawthorn@telus.net

July

- * **2005 Peace Region Forage Seed Association Annual Summer Tour takes place on July 5.** This year Baldonnel, Cecil Lake and Flatrock are our areas of interest. Meet at the Baldonnel School at 9:00 am BC time or meet at PW Farms in Flatrock at 2 pm. Registration is \$25 for members this includes lunch, refreshments, BBQ supper and a seat on the bus. Please pre-register if possible by June 30. For more info call Sandra or Kim 250 789 6885 or Calvin at 780 864 3879. Check our website for details: www.peaceforageseed.ca

August

- * **Canadian Cattlemen's Association National Convention Aug 16 to 18** at the Best Western in Kamloops, BC. Theme "Listening to our Consumer". For more information call the BCCA office at 250-573-3611.

October

- * Fall issue of Forage First mailed out to members

December

- * **Peace River Forage Association of BC Annual General Meeting – Dec 1, 2005**

SERVICES

Nose Pumps:

Contact: Glenn Hogberg (250) 843 7653

There are 3 nose pumps (Eider, Lister and Aquamat) available from PRFA of BC.

AerWay:

Contact Chuck Sutherland (250) 780 2221

The 12' AerWay aerator with chain harrows and cement weights is available for rent. The current rates are \$2.50/ac for members and \$3.00/ac new members. Renters are responsible for transport from last location unless otherwise negotiated with Chuck (for example crossing the Peace River).

Wire spooler:

Contact Pat Gerlinsky (250) 759 4038

This 12 volt wire spooler is great for rolling up or unrolling high tensile wire. Rate: \$25 /day

Pipe Line Plough:

Contact PFRA - Brett Henschel (250) 782 3116

This enables placement of water pipe up to 18" deep for 1 mile or more from water source. It is currently available for demonstrations rent free. Contact or Julie Robinson at (250) 782 4501 for information on setting up demo.

20' Flexicoil 8000 Air Drill

Contact John Kendrew (250) 786 5652

This drill has double shoot Barton openers and is being used to direct seed forage crops and/or place fertilizer into forage stands. It will be available for rent by members, once demonstration plot commitments are met. Rates are subject to change dependent on tractor lease and operator costs. Travel costs are also paid by each renter.

Please call for current arrangements and rates.

43' Dutch Anhydrous Applicator

Contact Rolla Agricultural Services - Art Funk (250) 759 4769

This unit enables placement of anhydrous ammonium into stubble or grass stands with less nitrogen losses to the air.

Please call for current arrangements and rates.

Water Pumping Service: Contact PFRA Brett Henschel or Brian Haddow (250) 782 3116.