

FORAGE FIRST

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Cattle Industry Development Council Visits

This summer the Cattle Industry Development Council (CIDC) came north to the Peace Country for a meeting with their board. They also took the opportunity to visit some of the projects funded by the Beef Cattle Industry Development fund (BCID). They traveled with the PRFA of BC to Dale Fredrickson's to look at some winter corn grazing demos, as pictured above, and then went to Bill Wilson's to look at swath grazing demos and finally off to John Kendrew's to look at some fall cereal grazing.

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"

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		B.C. Forage Council - John Kendrew		Membership - Sarah Davies -		
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Grass & Forbes

By Jim Forbes

I thought for this issue I'd give our readers some thoughts to ponder about on some of the issues facing our forage dependent industries right now.

BSE - the situation continues to unfold long after that initial announcement. The shift to a new paradigm always has negatives and positives, and the Canadian cattle industry is on track to out-compete our southern neighbors in the Asian export markets if we have the fortitude to carry it through. While reading "Feedstuffs" (a north American feeding publication) I've noticed two themes emerging - the American cattle industry is flabbergasted that Japan is treating them like they treated us, and the rest of the industry is starting to realize that they were duped by R-CALF's fear mongering. Many are still wondering what happened to that great wall of Canadian cattle that was supposed to crash in on them. Canfax reports fed cattle exports to US well under pre-BSE averages while feeder cattle exports are initially higher but expected to throttle back to historic levels. It appears at least some individuals are willing to make the same mistake more than once.

Back in BC we still have some BSE ripples to work through, namely the Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy (MIES) and what to do with the waste tissue from slaughter and processing. The MIES is an attempt to help the various meat industries adjust to new meat inspection regulations resulting from the health scare aspects of BSE. The waste tissue from slaughter issue is taking quite a while to sort and is quite disruptive to the industry. The lack of solid answers on what the rules will be is likely holding up some of the proposed slaughter facilities as it will affect their design and economies.

The amount of Oil and Gas activity has expanded and many people who haven't dealt with these companies are faced with an unfamiliar task. There are a few documents at the Ministry of Agriculture available to help. One that's particularly helpful (I had a hand in it) is the "Landowners Information Guide for Oil and Gas Activities in BC". If the membership is interested an informational seminar could be arranged.

There are many other issues out there but only so much time and space to write about them. If you have a particular one you want to know more about let your PRFA executive know about it.



Environmental Farm Plans Update

By Julie Robinson

Environmental Farm Plans are receiving a great response from BC as a province, 2086 producers have participated in 304 workshops as of June 2006. As of the end of June, 277 producers have completed their Environmental Farm Plan with many more coming on board since then. Approval has been given to 163 applications for the incentive funding and a total of \$84,542.00 has been paid out to producers for 24 different projects. More money will be given out upon completion of their approved Best Management Practices plan.

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. **Contact Julie Robinson for more info 250-782-4501**

Field Day With Jim Gerrish

By Julie Robinson



In August Jim Gerrish, of Idaho, was in Spirit River with the Peace Country Beef & Forage Association, giving a pasture walk and sharing his knowledge about pasture management. Four hours hardly seemed like enough time to take it all in. When we got out to a pasture he asked everyone to state what condition we felt the pasture was in. As a group of 20 we were all over the place, Jim used this to illustrate the value of one person consistently doing the pasture ratings allowing a more accurate depiction of pasture health.

Jim used visual aids such as grabbing 5 "cow bites" from good pasture and 5 from poor and holding them up to show us the visual differences. The example he used was with urine spots in pasture vs. the non-urine spots. What a difference as you can see in this picture! Jim's book "Management-Intensive Grazing: Grassroots of Grass Farming" discusses many of his ideas in depth. His opening quote of the book says it all "Our production systems should enhance the land not just sustain it."

Brandon or Bust!

by Julie Robinson & Sandra Burton

Julie felt "This trip was an awesome opportunity to meet and network with key researchers and innovators from across Canada! It bridged some information gaps for me between demos we are doing with producers, the greenhouse gas research and the international policy."



Starting with the Zero Till Field Day on Tuesday, July 19 at Indian Head, 160 people were divided into 4 groups to board either busses or wagons. Our group was toured around some leading edge zero till and nutrient management research, such as the work with the Greenseeker. Julie discussed setting up some silage trials and possibly some future partnership with her wagon seat buddy, Harvey. Meanwhile, Sandra reconnected with Jocelyn who was touring western Canada with 25 zero till farmers from Quebec. Every summer this group of farmers makes a point of taking a trip outside of their province to get new ideas and keep their minds flexible.

The highlight of the afternoon for both of us was going out to Jim Halford's farm where he had been direct seeding with the Conservapak drill for 26 years. He was finding his fields that had been zero tilled longer had a lower requirement for both nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer than the fields that had been zero tilled for 13 years. This was truly exciting.

Wednesday morning, Judy McKell invited us to check out where Soil Conservation Council of Canada is coordinated from. We set up our "portable office" and worked on quarterly reports for SCCC, with an inspiring view of one of the 6 original agriculture research stations in Canada, dating back to 1885. Don and Carol Horseman invited us for lunch and a tour of their farm near Fort Que'Appelle. Don has been direct seeding his wheat, canola, peas, flax and lentils since the 80's. Currently he is using a farmer modified drill with Adam jet shank openers and an air delivery system.

At 4:30 pm we boarded the "Brandon or bust" van with Doug McKell and 4 other field coordinators from Alberta and Saskatchewan. This was a great chance to discuss common challenges with setting up BMP demos and new ideas or approaches to raising awareness. Eric from Saskatoon assured Julie there were in fact cows on the prairies and took every opportunity to point them out.

Thursday, it was stimulating to hear Dave Burton from University of Nova Scotia demystify the Kyoto agreement and agriculture's good news role in it. We also enjoyed his quote "why should any of us care about greenhouse gases? Whenever you have emissions, you have energy and input leaks that are costing you money." He and Dave Lobb (U of M) told us about their 4 year study with Ducks Unlimited on the interactions between agriculture, wetlands and greenhouse gas emissions. We got some hands on instruction and some invaluable tips on using the greenhouse gas field kits. Lisette from Winnipeg, kicked off the afternoon with Wetlands 101. She introduced us to wetland classification, indicator species and the affects of agriculture practices in and around seasonal wetlands.

After a long drive, we capped off the day discussing Kyoto again, this time an international policy viewpoint with colleagues Marie Boehm and Warren Eilers of Saskatoon. Sandra says, "It is inspiring to think of my friend, Marie representing agriculture and land use at the negotiation talks. She is truly an asset for us, with her sensitivity, astuteness, extensive soil research / teaching background and her Saskatchewan family farm upbringing."



Sarah Davies in her
stockpiled grazing field



Anhydrous applicator at Rolla Ag



Grande Prairie Kenver
BBQ Crew at summer tour



Hogberg cow at mineral box



Summer tour ladies



Greenfeed samples Hog
L to R: 2x fert; 1x fert; low v



Kendrew's cows swath grazing



Sandy on SCCC trip
flax field in Indian Head, SK



A little liquid fertilizer helps keep



SCCC Canada group



Lothar with bike sprayer
setting up plots



Potash plant in N



Darryl Kroecker of Ducks Unlimited talks to producers at Summer tour



caterpillar developed in SK to eat only thistle buds



Dale Fredrickson's cow corn field in October



rgs
t area



Glenn Hogberg & his truck sprayer



landelions at bay!



Summer Tour lunch stop- airplane hangar at Balisky's near Wanham



Rob Davidson with his homemade float system



h SK, SCCC tour



Rainey Ranch bale grazing field



Bill Hansen talks bale grazing at summer tour

Atlantic Open Farm Day 2005

by Sandra Burton

It all started at the corner grocery store. While shopping for groceries at the Scotia Trawlers in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, we were handed a pamphlet by the cashier. The map was titled "Atlantic Open Farm Day 2005, a Project of Atlantic Farmers, Sobeys, Foodland, Price Chopper and Agriculture & AgriFood Canada". The pamphlet was a colourful depiction of various commodities, facts and figures about agricultural industries in the Maritime Provinces. On the reverse side was a map showing the province of Nova Scotia with 50 farms marked, a description of each, hours open to the public and activities or educational components available (*examples below*). Wow! What a great way to find out about agriculture in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, on the date of the Open House, September 25, we had a ferry reservation to the Isles de la Madeleine. On our way to catch the ferry, we stopped at a tourist information office, and once again, front and center there were the colourful pamphlets. This time, the reverse side showed the province of Prince Edward Island and depicted the 23 farms involved. This whole coordinated agriculture awareness initiative involves all 4 Maritime Provinces, and must involve a huge amount of coordination!

Returning to PEI a week later, the maps were still in grocery stores. We learned from our hosts that many of these farms welcome the public year round. We decided to visit 2 farms, described on the map as:

Farm: Burlington Tender Beef

Host: Jim and Kathy Evans

Community: Burlington

Type: Beef cow calf – finish feedlot

Description: This farm has an on-farm processing facility where they trim, cut, grind, package and retail their own Farm Fresh Beef. This includes a 21 day dry cool air aging process.

Education Component: Beef is a specialty product and requires special management and handling.

Special Activities: Sampling of cooked beef. Fresh cut beef will be offered for sale.

Farm: Robinson's Farm Market

Host: Eric Robinson Inc.

Community: Albany

Type: Fresh vegetable market

Description: This fresh vegetable market has sunflowers, ice cream, coffee and baked goods. This unique "agri-training" stop has a corn maze, straw bale pyramid, climbing goats and picnic area.

Education Component: Potato farm tours "from seed to table".

Special Activities: Wagon rides and pull-a-plant and U-pick vegetables.

Jim Evans at Burlington Tender Beef was a wonderful host. As we purchased our beef roasts, he described his "closed" operation from 85 cow calf pairs (1/3 fall calving) and his feeding/grazing program through to finishing and the challenges of retailing and understanding the consumer. We learned that 90% of all beef in the Maritimes is finished on PEI since forages follow the potato crop. He had just finished silaging corn earlier than expected. A local hunting guide pays him \$3000 to leave 5 acres of corn near the river so they can dig in blinds for Canada geese. Imagine such a concept with the resident wildlife in the Peace Country!

The Robinson corn maze was great fun for the kids. They wanted to come back at Hallowe'en when the maze becomes a Haunted Maze. There was an admission charge and I couldn't help trying to calculate the value added \$ per acre for their corn crop on a busy weekend of visitors.

Our hosts are another wonderful example of linking to the consumer. We are staying in a cabin on a dairy farm near Cavendish. Guests are invited to the farm yard at any time to watch milking, feed the calves, play with the kittens and learn about their family dairy farm. Alvin's parents started a bed and breakfast 65 years ago, and his sons, Garth and Kevin, intend to carry on the tradition. The MacNeills milk 55 cows and produce most of their own feed on about 200 ac. Every 2 days, 2000 litres of milk (average butterfat 3.4%) are picked up by truck for ADL Dairies in Summerside. They host hundreds of guests over a four month tourist season.

In summary, Jim Evans says "consumers today want to know exactly where their food is coming from and how it is produced." Kevin MacNeill said it another way "why do we travel? To learn something, especially if it is linked to learning more about our food." Both were having fun connecting the consumer to the farm gate.





Peace River Forage Association of British Columbia

EVENTS

October

- * **Fall issue of Forage First** mailed out to members

December

- * **Peace River Forage Assoc of BC Annual General Meeting & Seminar**
Dec 1, 2005 at the Taylor Community Hall in Taylor, BC. Enjoy a full day of interesting topics. Lunch is free for paid up members. Renew your membership - still just \$30. To register call Julie 782 4501 or Kim 843 7018.

January

- * **PRFA of BC January 23, 2006 Seminar** - Northern Lights College, Dawson Creek. From 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. Featured speaker: Jim Gerrish. (see January Seminar agenda for more details on Mr. Gerrish.) To register call Julie 782 4501 or Kim 843 7018.

February

- * **Bi-annual PRFA of BC Auction - Feb 25, 2006** at Tower Lake Hall, Tower Lake, BC. Enjoy dinner and an evening of entertaining auctioneering all for \$20 per person or \$30 a couple. Call for tickets: Julie 782 4501 or Kim 843 7018. Anyone wishing to donate items to the auction please call Kim 843 7018.
- * **South Peace Cattlemen's Assoc. & PRFA of BC presents Dr. Briesenthal** at the Taylor Community Hall **Feb 11, 2006**. Dr. Briesenthal is a veterinarian and he and his wife were at the centre of the Walkerton tragedy when it was alleged that the e-coli infecting Walkerton residents originated from cattle on their farm. Dr Briesenthal discusses the value of having an environmental farm plan in place. For more info call Judy (250) 782-7875

Annual Forage Tour 2005 "Cows & Casinos"

Julie Robinson

What a tour! Over 40 people attended our 2-day road trip to Grande Prairie and surrounding area. About 30 of us piled onto the bus and headed out to the Heart Valley Processors in Wanham owned by Stan & Reita Sparks. There Stan walked us through the plant, showing us the killing station, then the chilling room then off to where custom cuts are now done, a very educating experience for those of us who had never seen a slaughter facility.

We then headed out to the Balisky's where Wade & Holly took us on a tour of the Buffalo and Cattle feedlot and then out to the pasture to look at some fencing systems and grazing management systems. Once arriving at Bill & Jeannie Hansen's of Valleyview, Bill took us out to pasture where we could look at his bale grazing and how it had improved pasture health. Bill is custom grazing and uses all sorts of management tools to look after his pastures health and production.

Sunday morning it was off to Bob Rossler's 1500 head feedlot in Sexsmith. Bob showed us his handling facilities and talked about his marketing strategies. Next, at Rob Davidson's ranch we looked at his pasture management systems, water systems and of course his electric fencing set up. After lunch we stopped in at The South Peace Museum in Beaverlodge and spread out for an hour of touring through old buildings and looking at steam engines, thrashers and old cars. Our final stop was at the Ducks Unlimited headquarters, where Darryl Kroeker and Murray Clarke showed us watering systems and fencing options, Bill Oakford was also able to share some of his experiences, as his cattle graze there.



Annual General Meeting and Luncheon

Taylor Community Hall, Taylor, British Columbia

11:30 a.m. Thursday, December 1, 2005

Peace River Forage Association of B.C. Agenda

1. 11:30 am – 12:30 pm Luncheon and Guest Speaker: Ernie Nimitz
2. 1:30 pm Call to order of AGM and approval of Agenda (*Chuck Sutherland*)
3. Minutes from December 2004 AGM (*Sarah Davies*)
4. Association Business
 - A. Correspondence
 - B. President's Report (*Chuck Sutherland*)
 - C. Treasurer's Financial Reports (*Bill Wilson*)
 1. General Association account
 2. Water Project account
 3. SCCC/GHGMP account
 - D. Nominations for Directors - Directors whose terms are expiring:
Bill Wilson, Aron Collins, John Kendrew
 - E. Other Business items, accepting reports, appointing auditor
5. 2:15 pm Winter Corn Grazing Trials in the Peace River Region
Panel Discussion: Dale Fredrickson, Aron Collins, Steve Aylward
 - A. Past and current experiences
 - B. Economics & production

3:00 pm Coffee

6. Pioneer's corn varieties and production – *Sylvan Raaen*

4:15 pm Adjournment



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Members, please note, this is your opportunity "to get a free lunch" and to hear our guest speakers. Director's Business Meeting and Supper to follow the AGM. Members Welcome
Before the AGM - Directors meet for business at 10:00 am