

# FORAGE FIRST

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Forty Third Edition

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## Fantastic Forage Tour

This summer's PRFA Forage Tour drew over 75 producers. We had a great day exploring the Peace without traveling so far for a change.

The first stop at Nielson Brothers, had Monty Donally showing us that persistence does pay in pasture rejuvenation. He showed us a field, where they had minimum tilled alfalfa into existing pasture; and after a couple years have begun to see an increase in the desired plant stand. He also showed us some of their large acre rejuvenation, with annuals underseeded to ryegrass and perennial grass mixes.

At our next stop at the Peterson's, Darrell described the beginning of the South Peace Stock Farms and its evolution. Then he told us about their decision to stay, which reminded us of many of our own settling stories, where a change that was to be "only temporary" turns out to be permanent.

After lunch we stopped at the Peace View Hutterite Colony, where Dave, Jesse, Joel, Dan and others toured us around their poultry kill plant and cow ranch. We also looked at some areas that had just been cleared and chipped. Finally, we visited the South Peace Hutterite Colony, where Kenver Equipment and the Colony provided us with a delicious supper. Thank you to all those involved. Everyone enjoyed the evening!



Ben, touring producers around South Peace Colony

## 2006 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"*

Rick Kantz	Chuck Sutherland	Bill Wilson	Pat Gerlinsky	Sarah Davies	Deryle Griffith	John Kendrew
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B.C. Forage Council - John Kendrew			Membership - Sarah Davies - 788 1970			
Contractors: Julie Robinson-789 3674			Kim Strasky- 843 7018			



# Wildlife Damage Assessments in the Peace

By Julie Robinson

How much wildlife damage is there in the Peace? Starting this year, several groups have joined together to determine the extent of the wildlife damage in the Peace. This initiative is being led by two producer groups, the Peace River Forage Association of BC and the BC Grain Producers. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Ministry of Environment and Ducks Unlimited Canada are also key partners in this initiative.

Here is just a bit of history on these programs. These are producer group projects, administered through producer groups to address producers' concerns. That being said, the Ministries and Ducks Unlimited play a crucial role in making these projects a success. A member from each association, each Ministry and Ducks Unlimited make up a group we call PRAT (Peace River Assessment Team). This team collaboratively determines how to collect data on wildlife damages in the Peace.

If we can present data on the extent of wildlife damage on the crops in the Peace, we can point out exactly what the wildlife is costing producers.

This summer, I collected wildlife damage data from 5 different grain and oil seed crops trying to ascertain the level of damage to the crops caused by wildlife. After spending a day in the field with an Alberta Crop Insurance Wildlife adjuster, I learned just how simple these assessments could be. One of the keys, is to go to the field with the producer, so you are both seeing the same thing and can agree on the level of damage. The other interesting thing I learned/confirmed this summer is the edge effect.

This means that wildlife damage is greater near cover and on the edge of fields next to trees and/or travel corridors; the size of the field does not dictate the level of damage.

This fall, the Assessment Team (PRAT) has been trying to put together a methodology to collect wildlife damage information on forage crops. This has proven to be a bit trickier, especially on pastures. We have decided to focus on collecting the following information:

1. Damage to swath grazing;
2. Damage to bale grazing, where bales have been put out ahead of feeding; and
3. Fall, winter and early spring wildlife grazing damage, looking at plant damage and long term impacts of the grazing.

If you are experiencing these types of damage this winter and would like to participate in this study, call Julie Robinson 250-789-3674.



Wildlife damage to a crop of oats. These bundles are each clipped from 1m<sup>2</sup> area. The bundle on the left, represents the area adjacent to an enclosure, the center bundle is from within the enclosure and the bundle on the right is from within 75m of the bush.



Elk winter grazing in a pasture. The elk grazed the area on the left in the winter and this summer the producer saw negligible growth on those areas. The area on the right is what the undamaged portions of this producers pasture looks like. The big question is how long will it take the damaged areas to recover from the elk winter overgrazing?



# Western Forage Beef Group Update

*By Sarah Davies*

In August, I went to Lacombe, Alberta and attended the Western Forage Beef Group (WFBG) fall meeting. It seems that the WFBG is facing a challenge, which is not unfamiliar to most extension groups; trying to find funding for their projects! The WFBG's mission is as follows: "To improve the profitability and sustainability of the forage-based beef industry through the development, integration and transfer of knowledge and technology". It is hard to believe that with that objective, it is difficult to get funding but the main funders are looking for projects that are 'big picture' in scope. So, what does this mean going forward? We will hopefully still see some of the excellent studies previously done on things like Winter Feeding, Cow Nutrition, and Swath Grazing. However, we will probably also see more studies being done on things like Traceability, Feed Efficiency, Reducing Days to Slaughter, and Green House Gas Reduction. Here are excerpts from 3 articles in the November issue of the WFBG newsletter; the contact information for the researchers and the website links if you want to read or print the whole article.

## **Does Stockpiled Grazing Kill Alfalfa?**

Since the Western Forage/Beef group began researching stockpiled grazing, producers have asked: "What will it do to the alfalfa in my stand?" The answer is: "How you manage pastures and hay stands prior to fall influences alfalfa composition in the stand more than just grazing in September and October." Stockpiled grazing involves saving forage during the summer growth period for use later when pasture growth normally slows, usually in late summer, fall or early winter.

For more information contact Vern Baron, Western Forage/Beef Group at 403-782-8109;

Email: [baronv@agr.gc.ca](mailto:baronv@agr.gc.ca)

Complete article: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/wfbg10403](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/wfbg10403)

## **Things I've Learned About Feeding Straw**

When harvesting straw, it is important to bale it, as soon as possible after combining. By delaying the baling, the fibre levels in the straw can increase due to weathering, resulting in a lower nutritional value than baling behind the combine.

Next spring, if you have excess straw and you wish to carry it over until next winter, it is essential that you rearrange your straw piles so that there is an air space around each bale - especially at the butt ends. Studies at Lacombe, AB have shown a 25% spoilage loss from summer rains when the butt ends of the bales touched.

For more information contact Duane McCartney, Western Forage/Beef Group at 403-782-8104

Email: [mccartneyd@agr.gc.ca](mailto:mccartneyd@agr.gc.ca)

Complete article: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/wfbg10405](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/wfbg10405)

## **Cattle Reader Technology Enhances Traceability Initiative**

On September 18, nearly 60 industry participants, including Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Doug Horner, observed department researchers and industry partners demonstrating the use of a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) panel reader technology system for cattle at a commercial auction mart in Fort Macleod, AB.

Contact: Rick Frederickson, Lead, Age Verification, AAFRD at (780) 427-4589

Complete article: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/wfbg10406](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/wfbg10406)

Check out the WFBG website for more info on all their studies or give me a call!

**Sarah Davies at 250-788-1970**





Wildlife cannon in  
damaged fescue field



BC Problem Wildlife Committee  
at Critcher's Farm



Winter bale grazing at Rainey Ranch  
(patches are bale residue)



Summer Tour at Peterson's



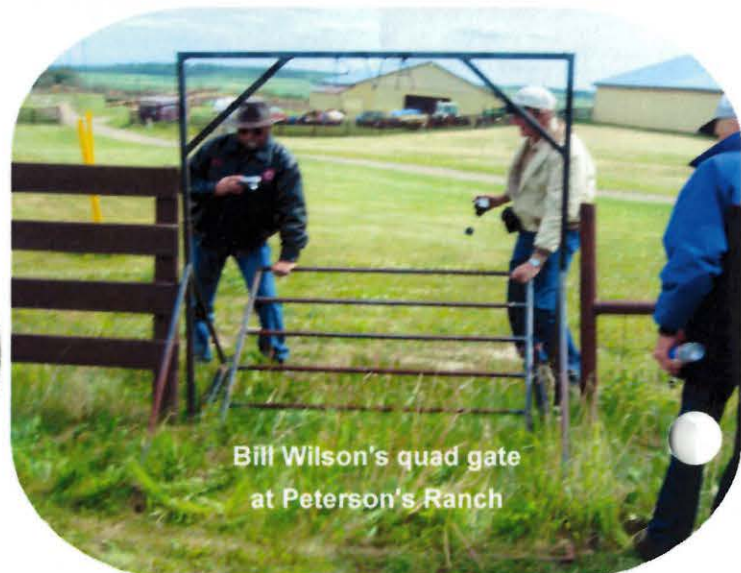
Gravity feed waterer at  
Peace View Colony



View from Peterson's Ranch  
Summer Tour



Ladies of the South Peace Colony



Bill Wilson's quad gate  
at Peterson's Ranch





Alfalfa grazed by wildlife



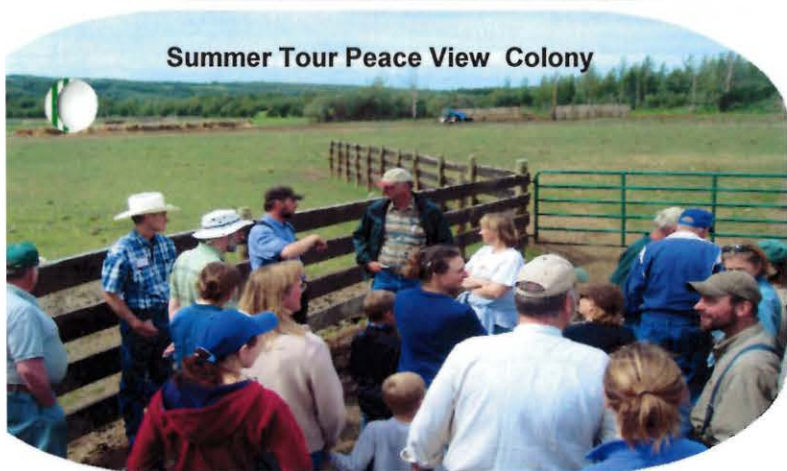
Fencing Field Day at Kendrew's Ranch



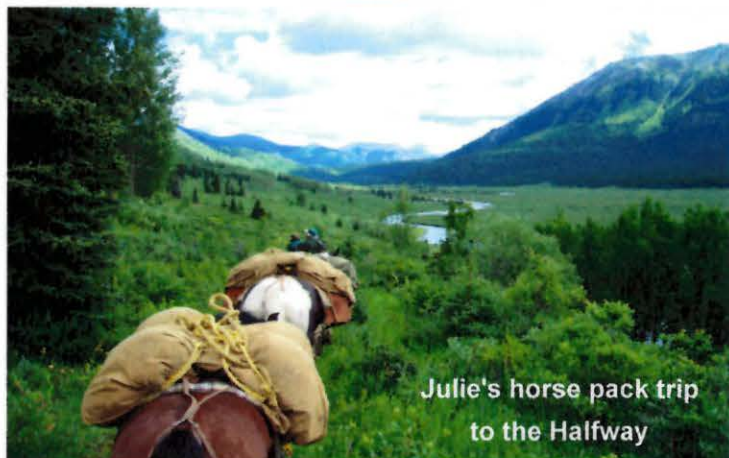
Bison at Gollata Creek



Checking out silage harvester  
at Summer Tour



Summer Tour Peace View Colony



Julie's horse pack trip  
to the Halfway



Silage barley regrowth



Great supper at South Peace Colony  
Summer tour 2006



# Sustainable Grazing Mentorship

*By Sarah Davies & Julie Robinson*

**"Grazing Mentorship"** what does that mean? Overwhelmed by the task of making changes to your grazing system? Want a second set of eyes or opinion on where to put in an offsite watering system, what kind works best in the area? Need some advice on how to get started with rotational grazing. These are all things that the Peace River Forage Association and a select group of members would like to help you with, through the grazing mentorship program.

This fall, Sarah Davis from Rainey Ranch and Julie Robinson participated in a pasture mentorship program provided by ARECA (Alberta Research & Extension Council of Alberta). Through this program, producers can receive grazing mentorship for a nominal fee of \$100. This fee covers approximately 16 hrs of one-on-one time creating grazing plans, developing grazing systems and performing economic analyses of the producers' grazing enterprise. This goal of this service is to provide producers with a second opinion where desired, to improve grazing management and to provide alternatives for grazing systems.



Duncan Barnett from Williams Lake, Mike Malmberg from Cranbrook, and Jim Stone from Olds at the Grazing Mentorship Program.

For more information about the Grazing Mentorship Program, contact Sarah Davies @ 250-788-1970 or Julie Robinson @ 250-789-3674.

## Feed for Sale

2005 Fescue Straw  
2006 Fescue Straw  
2005 Timothy Straw  
2006 Timothy Hay

(All Net Wrapped with John Deere 567)

## Seed for Sale

Certified Johnson Barley (99% germination)  
Certified Athabasca Oats (98% germination)

Call Arthur Hadland, Baldonnel, BC at **(250) 789 3566**



# Western Canadian Grazing Conference

FORAGING AHEAD...

...From the Soil to the Bank

Dec 6- 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Mayfield Inn Edmonton

Keynote speakers include:

**Kit Pharo** grew up on a ranch in eastern Colorado. In the early 1980's he and his wife, Deanna, had an opportunity to lease and manage a ranch of their own. Kit's initial goal was to show everyone how to wean bigger calves and succeed at ranching. Fortunately, that was a very short-lived goal. He soon discovered that bigger calves did not create bigger profits.

The past twenty years have been devoted to creating a very efficient and profitable cow/calf operation. The Pharo's have sought out and learned from some of the most profitable ranches in North America. Their goal now is to increase profits while improving the land and their lifestyle. It has nothing to do with weaning bigger calves.

Kit has some very unique and innovative management ideas and philosophies that differ substantially from traditional ways of thinking. Many of these philosophies are shared in a newsletter he mails out to over 22,000 cow/calf producers. To receive this free newsletter, call 1-800-311-0995 or send an email to [Kit@PharoCattle.com](mailto:Kit@PharoCattle.com). For more information about Pharo Cattle Company, visit their website at [www.PharoCattle.com](http://www.PharoCattle.com).

**Dr. Jill Clapperton** is the Rhizosphere Ecologist at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Lethbridge Research Centre in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. She is an internationally respected lecturer presenting research findings, and promoting an understanding of how soil management practices (including grazing), cropping systems, and specific crops interact with the organisms that live in the soil. More importantly, she demonstrates how those interactions are tied to soil health and quality driving soil productivity.

All the research in the Rhizosphere Ecology Research Group is aimed at understanding how soils function biologically so we can more effectively manage and exploit the long-term biological fertility of our soil. Jill has a keen interest in promoting science in schools and participates with other researchers and educators to develop soil ecology educational programs. The Worm Watch program ([www.wormwatch.ca](http://www.wormwatch.ca)) that she founded has been consistently recognized by the National Science Teachers Association for excellence in science education.

Much more will be presented at the seminar. For more information, contact Joy Vonk @ 780-416-6046. Registration is Wednesday night and conference starts on Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup>. The Forage association is sending some members as well, so contact us for more info:  
Julie Robinson at 250-789-3674.

## Upcoming Events

**Dec 1, 2006** - Peace River Forage Association AGM @ the Farmington Hall 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

**Nov 24, 2006** - South Peace Cattlemens AGM

**Nov 25, 2006** - BC Breeders & Feeders AGM

**Jan 30, 2007** – PRFA January Seminar with Drought Focus @ Rolla Community Hall

**June 9, 2007** – PRFA Annual Forage Tour

# Annual General Meeting and Luncheon

Farmington Hall, Farmington, British Columbia

11:00 a.m. Friday, December 1, 2006

## Peace River Forage Association of B.C. Agenda

1. 11:00am Guest Speaker: Julie Robinson – Wildlife Damages in the Peace: Pertaining to Forage
2. 12:00 pm Lunch (soup & sandwiches) provided by the Farmington Hall
3. 1:00 pm Call to Order of AGM and Approval of Agenda (Rick Kantz)
4. Minutes from December 2005 AGM (Sarah Davies)
5. Association Business
  - A. Correspondence
  - B. Presidents Report (Rick Kantz)
  - C. Treasurer's Financial Reports (Bill Wilson)
    1. General Association Account
    2. Water Project Account
    3. SCCC/GHGMP Account
  - D. Wildlife Committee (Julie Robinson)
  - E. R&D Report
    1. Soil Conservation Council of Canada Projects
    2. Environmental Farm Plans
    3. Upcoming Projects (See Insert)
  - F. Upcoming Events
    1. January Seminar – Tuesday, January 30, 2007 at Rolla Community Hall
    2. Annual Forage Livestock Tour – Saturday June 9, 2007
  - G. Nominations for Directors (Directors whose terms are expiring: Rick Kantz, Chuck Sutherland, Pat Gerlinsky, Sarah Davies)
  - H. Other Business items, accepting reports, appointing auditor
6. 2:00 pm Land Owners Experience Related to Oil & Gas Activities
  - A. Land owner's experience with oil & gas activities presented by Rick Kantz

Break-out Group Discussions

  - B. Rick Kantz, Jim Collins, Keith Weaver
7. 2:45 pm Coffee
8. 3:00 pm Summarize break-out groups and group discussion
9. 3:30 pm Adjournment

Thank You to our Sponsors:

Soil Conservation Council of Canada-Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program  
BC Ag Council

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**Members, please note:** this is your opportunity to get a free lunch and to hear our guest speakers.

Members are also welcome to join in Directors' Business Meeting following AGM.

**Directors, please note:** Business Meeting preceding AGM at 10 am.

and immediately following AGM.