

# FORAGE FIRST

Forty-sixth Edition

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## Wildlife Update - Hunting Season Changes

by Julie Robinson

This spring a diverse group of interested individuals including producers, Ministry of Agriculture staff, Ducks Unlimited, local Rod & Gun Clubs, Guide and Outfitters and other stakeholders participated in a Structured Decision Making process for the mule deer harvest season. This led to several changes to the mule deer season which show up "to be announced" in the hunting regulations. These changes include:

- Antler-less mule deer - Sept 1- Oct 31
- Archery season for mule deer - Sept 1
- Archery season any deer - Sept 30
- Buck season - 3 point or greater Nov. 1- 30 (both mule & white tail)
- Limit for antler-less deer - two
- Limit for buck deer - one
- Remove the 1 buck every 2 year rule
- Change within one km of private land to within two km of private land
- Cow elk LEH season this year will be from Dec 1 to Feb 28.



Ray Jackson, Dave Harris & Verne Goodings at a "Structured Decision Making" meeting in May 2007

We are starting to work on doing the same process with the elk seasons and looking at meeting with all interest groups to resolve the challenges that elk are posing in the Peace.

### 2007 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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## Musings From My Quarter

by Deryle Griffith

### Mitigate Greenhouse Gases, Sure But What's In It For Me?

I was reading an article in Acres Magazine recently by a Texas composter and experimenter, Malcolm Beck. In this article he had an interesting fact; if the soil organic matter was raised only 0.1% (one tenth of one %) all the CO<sub>2</sub> produced in one year would be absorbed into the soil. So, small changes in our farming practices could change the world, or should I say change the world back. The increase in CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere matches the loss of organic matter in the soil. Coincidence? Maybe.

So that brings us to the question that is posed by the title. What's in it for me?

I believe there is a lot in it for the producer to have higher organic matter in their soil. The stable organic matter is produced when fungi and aerobic (with oxygen) bacteria consume raw organic matter and produce humus. This is the process that happens with proper composting. These bacteria and fungi then become food for the next level of critters, whose waste is a rich and balanced food for plants. Once this cycle is established and not abused, soil litter and manure are quickly recycled. The plants feed the process with sugar from their roots to attract the critters so they have food by their roots. The soil runs on carbon the same as our tractors, but they recycle and use the carbon from plants, which is from sunshine. If we maintain this cycle, it will feed into other cycles, ones we can eat or sell. If the soil cycle is broken, and because it is so important to life on earth, it very quickly becomes a crisis.

Sorry I'm still ranting and I haven't answered the question. What will humus do for my soil and me?

1. humus increases the water holding capacity of the soil, reducing run-off and recharging the ground water. The water isn't locked up like with clay or gone like with sand. It improves both sand and clay.
2. humus feeds the biology, which creates an increase of CO<sub>2</sub> near the ground. This means the plant doesn't need to have the stomata in the leaves open as long to get enough carbon. This greatly reduces the amount of water that is transpired, meaning less water used.
3. humus holds nutrients in such a way that they are available but don't leach away.
4. humus supports the soil biology. If it is from good compost, it also introduces biology that begins the cycling in the soil again, dealing with thatch and trash on the soil, and affecting the soil structure. The improved structure allows air and water into the soil, keeping it healthy. The biology is very good at protecting the plants from pests and diseases.

So by stepping back into the cycle we could get all these benefits and more and we could help to save the world. People like Allan Savory and Allen Nation layout a blueprint on how this can be done. Elaine Ingham shows the importance of the soil biology and how it can be maintained. Food for thought.

#### Deryle's Reading List:

<http://www.holisticmanagement.org/>

Allan Savory site and plan to save the world.

<http://www.stockmangrassfarmer.com/sgf/>

Allan Nation's Magazine with lots of insights.

<http://www.soilfoodweb.com/>

Dr. Elaine Ingham's insight on soil biology with a focus on compost and compost tea.

<http://www.acresusa.com/magazines/magazine.htm>

Charles Walters's magazine from the edges of what is agribusiness, interesting if you're not into mainstream views.

<http://managingwholes.com/index.php>

A collection of articles on land, stock handling and community.

# Feathered Grazers

by Sarah Davies



As we get through another busy summer it is time to reflect on the trials and tribulations of the grazing season. Rainey Ranch tried it's hand at a new grazing enterprise this summer; feathered grazers.

Yes, chickens, Pasture Chickens.



What is a Pasture Chicken you ask? Pasture Chickens are raised outside with access to as much pasture as they want to consume. As I had never seen a chicken actually consume an entire blade of grass before, this was quite a neat thing to see. A chicken in this environment will eat an incredible amount of grass, bugs and whatever else they can peck at. They especially seem to like clover flowers and earthworms! Our chickens had access to fresh grass and a free choice grain mix, and seemed to regulate themselves as needed. The exact length of time that they need to be on pasture to finish, I think depends a lot on what size you would like them to be. We butchered most of ours at about 12 to 13 weeks and they dressed out at about 7.5 lbs (which is big in some people's eyes, but I think it's perfect for a ranch meal).

In order to have chickens on fresh grass for the entire time, you need to have a grazing system in place. The 'Joel Salatin' style uses small movable chicken houses that are completely covered to protect from predators.

These cages are moved ahead as the chickens need fresh grass. The cages can be dragged or rolled, and moving them will depend on their size and how many birds are in them. ([www.polyfacefarms.com](http://www.polyfacefarms.com)) Rick Kantz (Bickford Farms) built a portable chicken pen for their chickens (pictured left) and moved it every couple of days. He said it worked really well but required a tractor to move it.

At our place I did not have a portable pen, so I used a chicken house and built a few pens in the field in front of it. I moved the chickens through the pens and they always had access to the house. The first move was a challenge as the chickens had no idea what rotational grazing was all about. But like cows, after the first new pen of grass, they figured out what moving meant!



All in all, the 2007 chicken experience will definitely lead to more chickens on Rainey Ranch in future years.

## Chicken Musings:

- \* Chickens do die easily...Coyotes, Bears, Prey Birds, Dogs, Rain, Heat, Snow...
- \* Dogs really do find the chicken pen entertaining... (Ask Rick)
- \* Chickens can't swim... (Ask Rick)
- \* Pasture raised chicken is 100X better than store bought...or more!

## Grazing Workshop

Tower Lake Community Hall  
Thursday, November 3  
3 pm to 9 pm

You will hear from:  
Bruce Chern, Successful Grazer  
from Stockholm, Sask  
Jim Stone, National Grazing Mentorship Program  
Innovative Grazers from the Peace  
like Sarah Davies &  
Grazing Club Enthusiasts

Cost: \$20 includes supper,  
speakers & workshop  
Please pre register if possible,  
by calling Sandra at 1 877 630 2198

Jointly hosted by BCCA &  
Agriculture Agrifood Canada-Green  
Cover Program, PRFA of BC & BCMAL

## People, Pasture & Profits

by Sandra Burton

After being one of the lucky participants in the Lacombe Pasture School this summer, I returned re-enthused by what some of the innovative graziers in Western Canada are doing with custom grazing, grass backgrounding beef, improving pasture management and extending grazing periods. But I really got inspired when I started discussing these topics with our Peace Region innovators and found out what they are trying.

For the next 6 months, I will be working on a contract with BCCA to expand our grazing knowledge, whether it be through grazing workshops, grazing club meetings or the grazing mentorship program. Please call me if you want to discuss this. The potential is really quite exciting.

## Seasons of Change

by Julie Robinson

Where is Julie now? As a sequel to Sandy's spring edition of updates on the PRFA Forage Technician, I am bringing you another update. Starting September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 I will be working in Fort St John at the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands office at 10043-100<sup>th</sup> St (right across the road from the Old Fort Hotel, between CIBC and TD banks). Todd Bondaroff has moved into the Dawson Creek office and I will be stationed at his old desk.

My official title is Regional Agrologist and I will be doing much the same type of work as I was for the Forage Association. I will continue to be involved in extension and planning agriculture events across the Peace. I will still be involved in assessing wildlife damages in both forage and grain crops. I am looking forward to my new job and the opportunities it has to offer.

You will be able to reach me at (250) 787 3241 or [julie.p.robinson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:julie.p.robinson@gov.bc.ca). Looking forward to hearing from you or stop by if you're in town. Enjoy your fall season!

## Upcoming Events

**Oct 2:** Optimize Cow/Calf Nutrition Supper & Seminar. Fort St John at Quality Inn hosted by Champion Feeds & Elanco Animal Health. Call 1 800 243 0415.

**Nov 3:** Grazing Workshop at Tower Lake Community Hall, 3 to 9 pm. Contact Sandra at 1 877 630 2198.

**Nov. 17:** Cattlemen's Ball at Cutbank Community Hall, starts at 7 pm. Contact Bill Bentley at 843 7575.

**Nov. 23:** South Peace Stockmen's Association AGM & Dinner at George Dawson Inn, Dawson Creek - starts at 5:30 pm. Contact Judy Madden at 782 7875.

**Nov. 23 or 24 -** North Peace Cattlemen's Association AGM, Location TBA.  
Contact Ron or Noreen Kramer at 827 3245.

**Dec. 1:** Peace River Forage Assoc. AGM, Taylor Hall, 11 am. Contact Rick Kantz 785 1135 or Julie 787 3240

**Dec. 4 - 5:** Manitoba Grazing School 2007, Keystone Center, Brandon. Contact MFC at (204) 482 6315.

**Dec. 11- 12:** Farming for Feed, Forage & Fuel, Forage Conference 2007, Capri Center, Red Deer. Contact Joy at (780) 416 6046.

**Feb. 16:** Forage Goods & Services Auction, Tower Lake Community Hall, 5 pm. Contact Nelda Bennett at 789 3350

Watch our website for updates: [www.peaceforage.bc.ca](http://www.peaceforage.bc.ca)

# Pasture School 2007

by Arnold Mattson - AAFC-PFRA

This year's Pasture School focused on yearling/custom grazing. The timing was perfect! The custom grazing industry is evolving at a rapid rate due to rising grain prices, which have driven feedlot costs of gain up. Feedlot operators are looking to cut costs by backgrounding yearlings on grass before entering the feedlot.

The class was full with people doing more custom grazing, grazing yearlings, and wanting to get as much up-to-date information and insight as possible. Their needs were met by a good balance between speakers with a scientific background and producers providing input about practices they are currently using. There was value in all presentations with lots of good information to take back and put into practice.

Some of the topics covered included grazing legumes, practical grazing topics, pasture production, animal management, contracts, financial records, and the business side of grazing yearlings.



Weed demo at Pasture School

**Additional comments by Sandra:** Each participant was given a CD full of resource information; and I brought back a copy to share with our members. It's like having a small library on grazing, pasture management, animal handling, business and economics. There are over 100 publications in all! Here is an appetizer of the information available on this CD:

Legumes are important for the health of the soil and pasture, and necessary to get respectable gains, but there is still that fear of losses due to bloat. However, operators with practical knowledge and experience demonstrated that the industry has lost more by not grazing legumes, than has been lost from bloat caused by legumes.

The real value of the school came from the opportunity to meet, visit and share ideas with like-minded producers. This was definitely the school to attend if you were looking for new ideas, new inventions, ways to improve and sustain old pastures, and the business side of managing a grazing operation.

You won't want to miss the next school in June 2008. The organizers, the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta and the Western Forage/Beef Group, with the help of the Green Cover Technical Assistance Program and AESA did a great job. They collected ideas from this year's participants to help make the next one more advanced and even better yet.



## Pasture Management

- Cattle Gains on Pasture Finishing
- Grazing Systems Planning Guide
- Pastures for Profit: A Guide to Rotational Grazing

## Economics & Business

- Pasture & Forage Improvement Investment – Payback Tool
- Breakeven Templates on Stocker Steers for Various Time Periods & Rations
- Pasture Rental Arrangements, Grazing Agreements & Grazing Contracts, Various Pasture Lease Options
- Feeder Cattle Cost of Gain Calculator
- Grass Stocker Worksheet

## Animal Husbandry

- Low Stress Cattle Handling
- Stocker Cattle Management & Nutrition
- Predicting Amount of Compensatory Gain

If you are interested in borrowing it or in getting more information about the next Lacombe Pasture School in mid June of 2008 contact one of the PRFA of BC Directors, Julie Robinson (250) 787 3241 or Sandra Burton at (877) 630 2198.

# 16th Annual Forage & Livestock Tour

by Darrell Peterson



As I reserved a seat on the bus a few days before the tour, I thought to myself that maybe it would rain that day and I wouldn't feel quite as guilty about leaving the work at home for a "day for myself". A simple question to Julie on whether I could get on the bus at the highway on the way to Fort St. John was answered cheerfully with, "Sure we can do that. Just be there about 8:15." As usual, getting on the bus on June 9, I saw many friends as well as some new faces, both from the local area and from Alberta.

A stop at the Agricore United Forage Demonstration site just north of Fort St. John, confirmed advice given to me about 30 years ago by Bob Elliot of the experiment station in Beaverlodge. He said that the best alfalfa variety at that time was "Peace" as it had been developed locally, specifically for the area. Looking at the many varieties growing in the plots, this advice from many years back was still probably valid. This is in spite of the many, newly developed varieties that are continually flogged as being "just what we need". Plots of other species also indicated that different varieties we have tried over the years were in line with the success and failures on my own ranch.

The visit to Verne and Karen Gooding's cover crop field was interesting. The difference between the cover crop forage and the non-cover crop forage was very evident; however most of the tour group remarked about the detrimental affect the drought last summer may have had on the field. I agree, as most of us have successfully established forage with the use of a cover crop, but we all know what an important factor the weather can be on most of the things we do on the ranch.



Good company & good food

The dairy of Fred and Madeleine Lehmann was a worthwhile stop. It renewed the knowledge of the complexities and hard work involved in modern day dairying. Fred and Madeleine did an excellent job of walking us through and explaining their operation as well as how dairy supports and quota affect their industry.

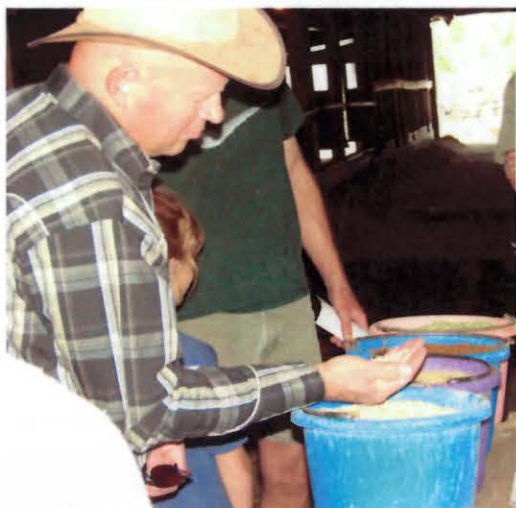
Lunch was hauled out of the bus, and we enjoyed the Lehmann beautiful yard setting, as we sat around tables and reminisced with friends about many different topics, both old and new. The lunch was good. Thanks to Julie and her crew.

Stopping at the timothy and fescue fields on the farm of Dave and Karen Wuthrich was interesting. Many of us are acquainted with Dave's parents, Paul and Susan. It was good to see the farm in the capable hands of a younger generation.

The operation of Duane and Bonnie Friesen and their solar water pump installation was well received. The fact that they are part of the Dunvegan Gardens horticulture and retail operations added interest to the stop. They deserve a lot of credit for many improvements on a fairly recent agricultural development. We all know it doesn't "just happen".

Supper was in the Friesens' yard, with steaks served by the Douglas Lake Equipment barbecue crew from Dawson Creek. Julie's crew provided the rest of the supper—nothing was missing!! After a comfortable supper and visiting with friends, we loaded ourselves on the bus for the trip home. In conclusion, even though the day was a nice one weather wise, I don't think there was anyone on the tour that was sorry they had set aside work at home for a fun, educational, interesting day touring another area of the Peace.

Thanks to Julie, Lorraine White and all of their helpers for organizing a good tour that we will all remember.



**2007 Forage Summer  
Tour Highlights**  
(from top left & clockwise)

Feed Supplements at  
Lehmans' farm

Lehman Family

Lehmans' manure agitator

Rotational grazing at  
Schneiders'

Douglas Lake BBQ Crew

Solar pumping system

Liz & Freddy Schneider

Duane & Adelle Friesen





### SCCC Summer Tour

Farmers from across Canada  
& New Zealand (top)

Soil pit at Doug Summers  
ranch & Doug at tour  
(above left & centre)

Tour of Bennett Dam with  
Julie, Lills & Hadlands  
(above right)

4-H Helpers at  
Bio-Diesel Demo Day



Pasture School in Lacombe, AB  
Arvid Aasen in forage plots



Jill Copes discusses weeds at field day.



John Kendrew  
laying water pipe  
(←)

Installing an elk  
pasture fence at  
Rainey Ranch  
(→)



# Annual General Meeting and Luncheon

**Taylor Fire Hall, Taylor, British Columbia**

**11:00 a.m. Saturday, December 1, 2007**

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

1. **11:00am Topic: Specified Risk Materials and their impact on producer's 'Farm Gate' sales**
2. **12:00 Lunch (soup & sandwiches)**
3. **1:00 pm Call to order of AGM and approval of Agenda (Rick Kantz)**
4. **Minutes from December 2006 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. Manure and Composting Trials Update
    2. Environmental Farm Plans
    3. Upcoming Projects (See Insert)
  - F. Upcoming Events
    1. **January Seminar** – January 23, 2008
    2. **Annual Forage Livestock Tour** – Saturday June 7, 2008
  - G. Nominations for Directors Directors whose terms are expiring:  
(John Kendrew, Bill Wilson, Deryle Griffith)
  - H. Other business items, accepting reports, appointing auditor
6. **Canadian Livestock Advance Program (Julie Robinson)**
7. **2:30 Coffee**
8. **2:45 Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Update (Julie Robinson)**
9. **3:00 p.m. Adjournment**

**Thank You to our Sponsors: District of Taylor, PRAD, MAL**

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Members, please note:

This is your opportunity to renew your membership, get a free lunch  
and to hear our guest speakers.

Director's Business Meeting to follow the AGM - Members welcome  
Before the AGM - Directors meet for business at 10:00 am

## Soil Conservation Canada/PFRA Tour

by Keith Carroll, BCMFR



A highlight of the day for me was Arthur Hadland's commentary on history of the Peace Valley. Those who know Arthur will not be surprised that he also had a bit to say about the Site "C" dam possibility, pointing out how some of the high capability land in the valley is currently being farmed at below its potential because of its uncertain tenure.

We met Doug Summer and his daughter at one of Ridge View Ranch's hay fields - lots of soil enthusiasts on the tour, so it wasn't long before there was a hole in the ground. Doug and Sandy led a discussion about "mountain" soil and "water" soil. The soil at this location doesn't have the acidity concerns that many Peace region soils do but like so many Peace soils, it does have a hardpan not very far down. PFRA's Alan Stewart pointed out how this limits the soil's ability to capture water except in very slow rainfall or snowmelt events.

Next stop was Ridge View Ranch's grazing license area within the Farrell Creek grazing reserve. I gave my version of how community pastures operate in BC. They have no particular status under the Range Act. The grazing license is held by an association. The Farrell Creek Association membership fell below the minimum required under the Societies Act so there are now 3 individual license areas within the grazing reserve.

We walked to an area where, in 1982, Ross Green, Kathy Sandy, Cindy Haddow, and I had seeded a forage "nursery" containing plots of many perennial forage species and varieties and a few mixtures. As of 2000, birdsfoot trefoil, cicer milkvetch, Anik alfalfa, and reed canary grass were still hanging in (as well, of course, as alsike, smooth brome, and creeping red fescue.) By 2006, it seemed to be down to these last 3 plus birdsfoot trefoil (which was still there in spite of the extreme drought in the Farrell Creek area) and brush. There was some good discussion about managing brush on pasture. I didn't want to throw a wrench into the excellent job Brian Haddow was doing keeping the tour on schedule, so I preached a little rant against alsike clover, then we got back on the bus. Somebody brought a trefoil plant they had found (another highlight of the day for me).

We toured Ridge View Ranch and stopped at a site where relatively short term intensive grazing has occurred for 3 years following aspen logging. From a range perspective I thought it looked good. I was reminded of a comment Fred Burres made one time about being able to achieve almost any form of vegetation management you want by how you manage livestock grazing. I'm hoping I can get someone with some silviculture expertise to compare this site with a nearby ungrazed site from a deciduous regeneration perspective.

On the way to the dam I eavesdropped on a discussion between Doug and a rancher from Saskatchewan about the impact the recent state of the farm economy is having on rural communities. A day or two later I was reading an article called "Private Ranchlands and Public Land Grazing in the Southern Rocky Mountains" in the June issue of Rangelands magazine. It suggests that "No one is exactly sure of how much the public values ranching. The value might be higher if they knew that by promoting policy that maintains large tracts of natural ecosystems on private ranches, they are helping keep the West open and out of development, now the second-leading cause for the decline of federally threatened and endangered species..." As with many things of great import, Wendell Barry captured the tension - and the answer - between our rural and urban public and private and public lands when he wrote:

*"The most tragic conflict in the history of conservation is between environmentalists and the farmers and ranchers. It is tragic because it is unnecessary. There is no irresolvable conflict here, but the conflict that exists can be resolved only on the basis of a common understanding of good practice. Here again, we need to study and foster working models: farms and ranches that are knowledgeably striving to bring economic practice into line with ecological reality, and local food economies in which consumers conscientiously support the best land stewardship."*

Clearly, there is good work to be done by all.

# Biodiesel Workshop

by Todd Bondaroff - BCMAFF



First developed in the 1930's, biodiesel has since made exciting advances in the age of increasing energy consumption and the demand for cleaner burning energy alternatives.

Due to the heightened interest in the production of biodiesel, the BC Institute of Agrologists, Peace River Region, played host to a biodiesel workshop July 7<sup>th</sup>. The workshop was part of a professional development series called Discovering Energy in the Peace.

The workshop was lead by Rex Newkirk, a member of the Canadian International Grains Institute. The objective of the workshop was to provide information on the use and production of biodiesel.

Beginning with a brief introduction in regards to biodiesel production, Mr. Newkirk plainly described the chemical process of production. Following the introduction, participants were given the opportunity to watch biodiesel being produced in the mobile biodiesel plant.

The group was also given the opportunity to create their own batches of biodiesel in mini-labs. During this section of the seminar, groups preformed all the necessary steps required to create biodiesel on a much smaller scale. This gave an up-close perspective to production.

Overall the seminar was a success, as participants were very involved with the process, while Rex Newkirk fielded any questions they had. The seminar ended with participants adding the day's batch of biodiesel to Rex's diesel pick-up.



Mobile biodiesel unit



Canola oil press



Unrefined  
canola oil

Canola  
meal left  
after  
pressing



Biodiesel tanks



Final filtration



Using the final product

# Students Promote Agrotourism

by Kaylea Mason

Two summer students assisted in creating the festivities of the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Dawson Creek Fall Fair Exhibition, which took place August 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>.

The student of the Fort St John Agriculture & Lands office, Randelle Lusk, and I, the Dawson Creek BCMAL student, lent a hand to create the Showcase of Agrotourism display room, located in the rear of the 4-H pavilion. Found inside the building was a large display showcasing Agrotourism in the Peace Region. There were four themed tables representing local examples of agriculture, which attract tourists to the Peace Region, including organic farms, apiaries, markets gardens and hunting/fishing. Wildwood, an organic farm located in Pouce Coupe, set up a display to illustrate the practices in place and products produced on an organic farm. Organic pork and vegetables are a few examples of the products sold by Wildwood Farm at the local farmer's market. The Peace Region is also home to several bee farms, or apiaries, many of which sell beeswax and of course, honey.

John Curtis Market Gardens of Taylor donated fresh produce including pumpkins, lettuce, carrots, cucumbers and corn to display on the market garden table. A display dedicated to hunting and fishing was also created with the help of Corlane's Sporting Goods.

Located in the cow barn, a Ministry of Agriculture & Lands display was set up with information on invasive plants and insects present in the Peace Region. A few of the weeds illustrated on the display were ox-eyed daisy, hawkweeds, knapweeds and scentless chamomile. Flea beetles, lygus bugs, bertha armyworms and Swede midge are all crop pests, which have been monitored for in the Peace Region this year. In addition, there was information about the InfoBasket website, which is geared towards providing producers with agri-food information. <http://infobasket.gov.bc.ca/>

The fair was a fun weekend and great learning experience for all involved, including the two summer students.





# Composting Project Update

by Rick Kantz

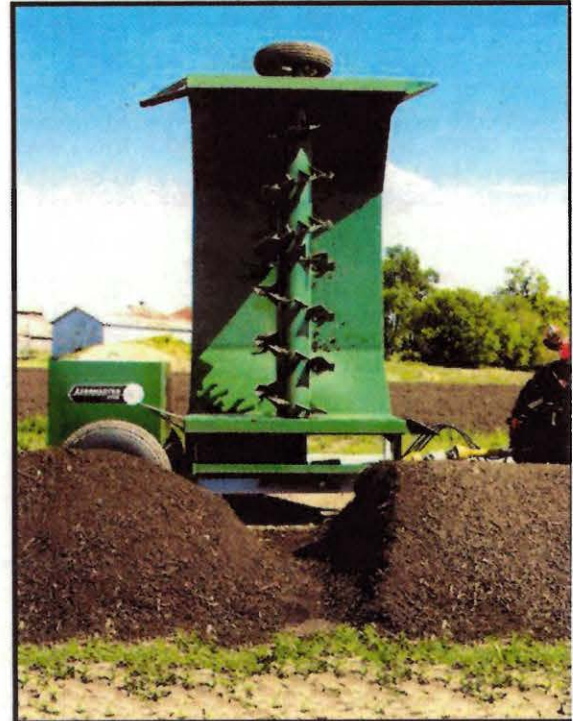
"From the desk of" now how confusing does this sound? Well, Sandra emailed to make this request of me for this newsletter. Sounds pretty simple so why not? So I had a look at my desk and sent her a pile of papers that were 2 months old and still not read. Apparently this was not what she had in mind. She started going on about "Times New Roman" and Font 10". I finally slowed her down enough to figure out it was like TDN and protein. It all has to be in balance to make it work.

Now about that update that Sandra wanted in the newsletter. We were looking at a couple of different windrow turners for composting in the last newsletter. After sending Pat Gerlinsky to a compost school in July, we have decided on an Aeromaster PT-120 from Illinois.



This machine can turn a windrow 12 ft wide by 4 ft high. It requires 80 to 120 horse power and a creeper gear or hydrostatic drive. With a tow behind tank, you can add water to the windrow as it is being turned. (as in photo above)

**Editor's note:** The Forage First is delighted to have members send us articles and ideas, no matter what length, font, format or pickup location. Since Rick is having so much fun poking fun at me, I will have to cut my order for "Pasture Poultry" in half. After all, it is only fair that my family sample quality chicken from both Bickford Farms and Rainey Ranch.



*The drum assembly can be lifted completely out of the windrow.*

There is more flexibility in this turner than the Brown Bear model that was talked about in the last newsletter. The drum assembly can be lifted completely out of the windrow (see photo above). You can speed up simple reduction in mass of material or make the highest quality of humus around.

We should be seeing this machine sometime this fall. With any kind of luck, we will maybe have time to try it out before winter sets in. By next summer we hope to have some demos set up, and turning out some great product. Until then hope all goes well this fall and look forward to seeing you at the AGMs and winter seminar.

# Aurora Award Nomination

by Karen McKean



The Peace River Regional Cattlemen's Association is nominating **Karen Goodings of Cecil Lake, BC** for an Aurora Award of Distinction in the Agricultural category at the 2007 Northern Women's Symposium.

Below is a list of her accomplishments:

- Karen and her husband, Verne, have owned and operated their family ranch since 1970. The 800 acre holding produces grain, forage crops and cattle. They have raised 5 children and have 8 grandchildren. Karen is a working partner on the ranch and thus brings a direct perspective born of true experience to current agricultural issues.
- Karen and Verne have been active members of the Cecil Lake Community Club, involved in countless local community functions and events.
- Karen plays an active role in the North Peace Fall Fair Society. She has held both Chairperson and Executive positions with the society.
- Karen has been a 4-H Assistant Leader with the Silver Valley 4-H Club in past years, helping with the Beef program. She also initiated a Public Speaking component with the club.
- Karen was first elected as a Director for the Peace River Regional District for Electoral Area "B" in 1988. She was elected Vice Chair in 1994 and held that position until 1998 when she was elected Chairperson. Since 2002, she also holds the position of North Central Municipal Association Regional Representative.
- Karen has a passionate interest in improving the quality of life for rural residents. She believes that improvements to local infrastructure must be made including access to and improvement of power, telephone, natural gas and the rural road system. Karen initiated the Rural Roads Task Force (through the North Peace Economic Development Commission).
- Karen is Chairperson of the Peace River Regional District Wildlife Committee. She is a tireless lobbyist on behalf of the Peace River area producers, representing the local livestock, forage and grain industries. She was instrumental in establishing the initial Stack Yard Fencing Program in the District to help protect winter feed stores.
- Land base issues and their impact on rural citizens remain close to the heart for Karen. She is concerned about the abolition of the Railway Act and the rollover of the BC Railway issues to CN and the apparent silence of the Provincial Government in regard to landowners' rights.
- Karen is a passionate and eloquent supporter of not only the Peace River Regional Cattlemen's Association but of rural residents throughout the Northern part of our province. She clearly demonstrates leadership in her field, initiative to create new solutions, is successful in her own family agricultural business and unflagging in her support and creates heightened awareness of many agricultural issues in our area.
- Editor's note: Karen has also been a committed member and tireless supporter of the Peace River Forage Association and we are happy to see her nominated and recognized in this way.



# The Lighter Side of Forage

by Shannon McKinnon

## Oh Deer What Can The Matter Be?

I am desperate for sympathy. Deer sympathy to be precise. I want someone who will say things like, "Tsk, tsk." and "There, there, now", someone who hasn't gone weary from listening to me. Who better than a forage producer - a person who watches helplessly as thousands of dollars disappear down a deer's gullet in the form of hay every winter - to give it to me?

Don't get me wrong, there was a time when the sight of a deer daintily picking its way through our yard brought a song to my heart. I suppose the sight of a deer simply stepping through the yard still would; it's when they stop stepping and start eating that the song gets warped. It's no fun to go out to your garden to find that your roses have been nipped off in the bud. Or your peas, or your cabbage, or your corn, or your lilies, or your kale, or your tomatoes, or your lettuce, or your raspberries or your . . . well, you get the idea.

Dogs are said to be fabulous deer deterrents. Don't you believe it. Oh, I admit that Cheyenne and Crayola have had their moments, but unfortunately that's all in the past. One day deer chasing ceased to be a novelty for them and that was the end of it. It was as if a light bulb suddenly lit up inside their shaggy little heads and they realized that it was broccoli the deer were after, not their precious kibble. What self-respecting canine wastes energy protecting a row of broccoli? After that it was left to me to tear madly off the sun deck, waving my arms wildly about my head, like a goose trying to get airborne after spending the afternoon drinking coolers by the pond.

My drunken goose impersonation quite impressed the dogs. So much, in fact, that occasionally they were inspired enough to stand up and add a few yips of encouragement before flopping back down in front of their kibble dish. The deer, however, were not impressed at all.

They merely trotted off a few meters into the bush, exchanged bemused glances and then returned to their broccoli munching as soon as I left.

I tried other things, like planting a scarecrow that appears to be permanently frozen in one of my drunken goose stances. I tried tying foil pie plates to garden stakes so they would rattle together in the breeze, sending the hinds flying for cover. I even tried tying hair and soap to the plants, as well as spraying all kinds of best forgotten, unpleasant concoctions, in, on and around the garden. Judging by the results, the deer merely decided I was decorating their salad bar for them and happily settled into the new ambiance I had so thoughtfully created for their dining pleasure.

That's when the garden fence came into being. A real fence. Not one of those little sissy white picket numbers. No, siree. As I pounded in the eight foot posts and then thoroughly festooned the whole thing with rolls of page wire, I told myself I was creating a deer's worst nightmare. I felt like Clint Eastwood, and not when he was in Bridges of Madison County neither. As I nailed in the last staple, I even went so far as to sneer my lip at the forest and say to the deer, whom I knew were patiently lurking inside, "Go ahead, make my day."

What I had sadly overlooked was that a fence built with such angry determination, with such tight focus on keeping deer out, coupled with questionable gate building skills, would result in a tangled mess of wire through which I had no hope of gaining entry myself.

Still, it might all have been worth it, just knowing that the deer could no longer feast on the fruits of my labour, if morning hadn't dawned on the incredible scene of two deer calmly munching on turnip tops, while I was left to race around and around the outside of my garden fence, vainly trying to get *in* to scare the deer *out*.