

FORAGE FIRST

54th Edition

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Reflections



Riders pause during the Memorial Trail Ride on July 31st at the Kiskatinaw River; Connor Dixon, John Gaudet, Andrea Bunnett, Kay Fredrickson, Joanne Nimitz, Brandy Desmet, Coleen Mathews, Karene Green. Photo Credits: Glenda Wagar

by Chris Thomson & Sandra Burton

Turn these pages and enjoy everything from new musical lyrics to information nuggets to event & trail ride coverage to assorted forms of humour. Inside this issue of Forage First, you will also see the results of our energetic summer student Talon Johnson's efforts with our summer tour and the 3D fencing project. Speaking of the tour, we really enjoyed collaborating with Nora Paulovich from Manning and Blair Burton from Olds. Together we organized a very entertaining 3 days... culminating in a Tail Gate Party where our 3 groups from the Peace shared laughter and information with 3 groups from central Alberta. Your directors, while busy with haying, grazing, silaging and harvesting, still found time to represent our forage interests at meetings or set up demos of fencing or watering systems. Please join us at the AGM on Nov 29 (see back page) to hear Bill's new friend, Doyle Wiebe, from Saskatchewan. And don't forget: It is time to renew your memberships for 2011.

Inside This Issue:

Laughter
President & Directors
Sundog Solar Systems
Summer Tour Highlights
Kiskatinaw News
Lighter Side of Forage
Events Page
Inserts:
Membership Form 2011
Forage Fact #52:
(for pd up members)

www.peaceforage.bc.ca

2010 Directors of the Peace River Forage Association of BC

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

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Equipment & PRAD Advisory - Walter Fritsche				BCMAL Advisor - Julie Robinson		
Newsletter & Composting - Sandra Burton			Events & Membership - Chris Thomson		Website - Kim Strasky	

Laughter for These Times

by Sandra Burton

What a summer! 3D fencing projects and the 3Ds of Forage: Dam Depressing Drought. I think we all need a little laughter. So here are some chuckles and glimpses of what some of our Forage members have been up to this summer.

Amazing Grass Sung to the tune of Amazing Grace Adapted by Ross Green

Amazing grass, how sweet the ground,
That saved a wretch like me....
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind, but now, I see.

T'was grass that taught....
the weeds to fear.
My grass is now weed free.
How precious does that grass appear....
when fuel's a buck fifty!

Through many dangers, toils & stars....
we let our cattle roam.
T'was grass that brought them safe thus far....
and grass will bring them home.

The Lord has promised good to me....
His word my hope secures.
He will my fields and harvest be....
as long as rain endures!

And when this flesh and heart shall fail,
and ranching life shall cease,
I shall pass on with every bale,
good land within the Peace.

If we're to stay ten thousand years....
then something must be done.
We must find ways to win God's praise....
and grazing is but one.

Amazing grass, how sweet the ground,
That saved a wretch like me....
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now, Site C.

Ross Green composed & performed this song for the BC Agrologists' AGM in Fort St. John in June 2010, accompanied by the talented Gaetane Carignan & Dale Gross.

First Nature Farm News by Jerry Kitt

Haying season is over and considering the drought, yields were low but the quality high. What's a typical haying day like? The best time to rake hay is early in the morning when the dew is still on. The hay rake fluffs up the hay swaths which helps drying and brings two swaths together, cutting baling time in half. 5 a.m. is a good time to head out to the field. Perched on the seat of our 45 year old tractor is a great way to watch the sunrise. By 9 a.m. the hay is starting to dry and further raking would break off the fine leaves and flowers which are so valuable for their protein content. After the morning chores of feeding the chickens, pigs and turkeys, it's time to start cutting more hay.

This year I did something I have dreamed of for the past 30 years. I bought a brand new hay cutter (mower/ conditioner). I couldn't resist the financing and the thought of a reliable machine with no breakdowns was too appealing. Unfortunately, "reliable" was not to be the case. There must have been a staff party the night before my NH499 was built. I had all kinds of mechanical issues. The folks at New Holland after hearing of my troubles brought me out a replacement machine which finished all my cutting trouble free and then they decided to give a new one for next year. Honourable!

Afternoons and evenings were spent baling. The big, round bales we wrapped were full of perfect hay, no rain (mixed blessing) and I know the bison, cattle and pigs will eat well this winter.

91st Annual Ranch BBQ held this month. The annual event started out as a rodeo in 1919. When we moved to the farm in 1980 we carried on the tradition (minus the rodeo).

Jerry Kitt and his family own First Nature Farms. They raise certified organic bison, pork and poultry for Farmers' Markets in Edmonton and Vancouver. He writes a delightful newsletter for his customers once a month with glimpses of life on the farm and the issues facing the industry.

President & Directors Roundup

Rick Kantz represented forage interests recently at a brainstorming session with folks from the BC Grain Producers Association and Peace Region Forage Seed Association. The goal was to compile a list of Beneficial Management Practices that we felt should be included with incentives with the Environmental Farm Planning process. A case was developed and compiled for each of these suggested BMPs: re-instating stack yard fencing, re-vegetating land with beetle kill, encouraging the use of on farm bio fuel, and increasing organic matter in soils. When asked about any of his other efforts over the last few months, Rick says "The other thing I did over the summer was to try and develop a spray on sauce that would make the grasshoppers more palatable to cows."

Bill Wilson represented us at the Soil Conservation Council of Canada's summer meeting in Montreal in early July. He felt that in comparison to other larger groups, we do very well in terms of fund raising and organizing events. There are many of the same issues right across the country and each group handles them similarly. The Holos project was discussed at this meeting, and all provinces reported similar problems working with it. Ag Canada has committed to revising and improving the program.

A tour of Quebec farms followed the summer meeting. Bill was impressed by the amount of subsurface drainage pipe set in 3 feet deep in rows because they get so much rain. Presently the drainage tiles are 42 feet apart but now they are going to 21 feet. The major crops are Corn followed by Soybeans with a small amount of wheat and forage. The Zero-tillers have moved away from the conventional 30 " seed row spacing to 2 rows about 7 " apart then a wide space. They are using a machine, probably best described as a miniature root rack, to move the corn residue out of the way to facilitate seeding the soybeans. The wheels are 8 to 10 inches in diameter. A pair of wheels, in the shape of a "V", moves the residue a few inches leaving enough space for the twin seed rows. We saw a planter with these attachments mounted in front of the seed runs but some producers do two separate operations.

The AGM for Soil Conservation Council of Canada (SCCC) is usually held in March in Ottawa, coordinating with meetings of the Canadian Cattlemen Association, and when Parliament is sitting, so that if there are political issues, there are MPs in Ottawa to contact. Bill feels that the Peace River Forage Assn. should continue to cooperate with SCCC because of the past and future long term benefits of working together on projects.

For Bill, the folks he meets are always the best part. In his words "Two people I have met at the SCCC meetings will have a connection to the PRFA this fall. First of all, **Doyle Wiebe** is a producer from the Saskatoon area. He has agreed to attend our annual meeting on Nov 29 to discuss Carbon Credits and Carbon Trading. He will be discussing these topics with a special emphasis on forage producers. Plan to attend the AGM to gather this information and have your questions answered. Secondly, **Jose VanLentStaden** is Vice President of SCCC. She is also Dean of Agriculture at Lakeland College in Vermillion and along with her family, operates a grain and livestock farm with elk, bison and cattle. Lakeland College will be hosting the Western Canada Grazing Conference. If anyone is interested in attending contact me for information."

Freddy and Liz Schneider took in the Central Alberta Tour and enjoyed the wide range of operations we visited. They especially enjoyed the grazing discussions and learning about the compressed timothy hay industry. Freddy would like the forage association to provide more information about grass finished carcasses; and he especially enjoys the discussions that happen during pasture walks and friendly forage field days.

Glenn Hogberg represents the Peace River Forage Assn. on the Board of the Kiskatinaw Ecological Society, and heads up a working group that was formed during the AGM on July 31st. The working group will develop a pilot program for the Kiskatinaw River Valley Watershed; and they will report in future newsletters or via the website: www.kiskatinawecologicalsociety.ca

Sarah Davies has been even busier as a Mom. On May 18, Sarah, Steve and Jake welcomed an 8 lb 3 oz baby girl, Brooke Lynn Rainey, to the family. Steve took a paternity leave for the summer to teach Jake all about rotational grazing, fencing and moving cattle. Brooke brought a special energy to our last directors' meetings.

Don and Eva Kruse have been developing new land, replacing buildings, upgrading fences, and rebuilding old stone retaining walls at their ranch in Wonowon. They would like to see our association foster ideas in coping with our drought situation and continue efforts to prevent wildlife damage.

Chuck and Pat Sutherland have protecting their fragile lighter soils with more minimum till. They both joined us in brainstorming at the last directors' meeting, and suggested friendly forage field days to share more information about using pulp mill affluent on farm fields.

The directors invite you to join them at the AGM on Nov. 29 and bring your ideas for future projects and events.

Sundog Solar Water Pumping

by John & Patt Kendrew & Sandra Burton

John and Patt Kendrew hauled a lot of water this summer to their cattle. So understandably, they were thrilled when they were approached by Garth Mottershead in August, to partner in setting up a demo of a Sundog Solar watering system.

Sundog Solar is a company owned by Marvin Jackson, based out of the Sundre, Alberta area just off Highway 22. The name comes from the weather elements around the sun called "sundogs", that signal changes in weather. The company specializes in designing, installing and stocking renewable energy products in Canada. They brought a portable watering system to the Peace Region as part of an alternate energy trade show. Ag Canada purchased a unit to demonstrate its potential under a variety of situations and applications.



The Kendrews, like many others in our region, are trying to cope with yet another year of drought. John mentioned "We are now thinking in terms of Plan D and E for summer and winter grazing planning. The portability of this system helps us adapt. It is sturdy, balanced and very quick to set up." This system can be folded down for transport and easily moved with an ATV or truck. No jack alls are required and it is very safe to operate.

This system has a capacity of 600 + gallons, will water up to 250 cow/calf pairs and has 27 lineal feet of drinking area. But this is just one of a variety of sizes and options of water systems on offer from Sundog Solar.

John says "The trough is low enough for the calves to drink, and they grow and gain much more quickly with a good source of water. I sure notice less limping and foot disease by getting our cows and calves away from the dugout."

Currently, this portable watering system is part of the Kendrews' rotational summer grazing. However there are inserts that can be added to convert this unit into a winter watering system. There would also be other considerations such as locating the unit on higher ground so that the pipes could drain back into dugout when not in use.



There can be glitches in setting up any new system, but John says "The setup went very smoothly. The people at Sundog Solar always return our calls to answer our questions very quickly."

John and Patt have offered to host a Friendly Forage Field Day this fall, so that members can check out the potential of this system. There is also more information about the systems Marvin has available by calling (403) 638 3013 or at this website:

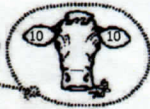
<http://sundogsolarwind.com/index.asp?q=water-pumping-portable-units>

Producers can also contact Garth Mottershead at Ag Canada to get more information on their demo unit.

Phone: 250-719-1412

E-mail: garth.mottershead@agr.gc.ca





by Talon Johnson



*Bob Noble, Iain Aitken and Freddy Schneider
bending down for a closer look at regrowth*

Extended grazing programs, compressed timothy, a hay bale dryer, composting facilities, Lacombe research station.....These are just a few of the places visited on the Central Alberta Summer tour on June 28-30.

Medicine River Luings

Natural Farming, Natural Food

Iain Aitken
Blacketlees Farm
Rural Route 4 Rimbey, Alberta
Email: ieaitken@hotmail.com

Day 1 - June 28

Our wide eyed farmers boarded the bus in Rycroft at 8:30am Monday June 28 and traveled for 7 hours to our first stop near Rimbey, AB. Here we met the owner of **Blacketlees Farm and Medicine River Luings**, **Iain Aitken**, a charismatic Scottish farmer, who is an eighth generation grazer. Iain uses an extended grazing season to market grass fattened LuingsXAngus cattle to his customers. He accomplishes this by renting most of his land, dividing it into smaller sections and rotating seven groups of cattle for approximately 10 months. He is able to graze during the cold winter months by either banking grass in bush pastures or swath grazing. The pastures Iain banks are ones that have not been grazed past the middle of July. The longest Iain had to manually feed his cattle was 75 days. Iain moved to the Rimbey area in 2000 to acquire more land and raise more livestock than he was able to in the southwest of Scotland. He appreciates the heavy rainfall of this area (we were all very envious) and the ability to grow well established grasses.

He reseeds his pastures by mixing grass seed into the cattle's salt and mineral, which is then deposited randomly by the cattle later on. One quote from Iain that we all found very suiting was he "likes to work with the grass in its natural form".



Nancy Peterson and Judy Bowcott

Sadly, our adventure had to continue on from the fascinating Scottish man but we soon discovered we would not want to leave any of our intriguing hosts.

Next, the tour proceeded to **Darrell and Nancy Peterson's** (former Peace River farmers), where we were greeted with a variety of pizza and "cold refreshments". After supper **Blair Burton** took us on an evening crop tour through timothy, canola and oat rotated crops that were providing hay for a timothy compression plant. Blair helps **Barry Schmitt** organize the crop rotations for a large dry land and irrigated timothy farm. These crops were direct seeded with the Great Plains seed drill. Interestingly, Blair has seeded a few crops with oats north to south and then gone in when the oats was a few inches high and angle seeded timothy from southwest to northeast. He is hoping this will allow the timothy to cure faster since the wind comes from this direction.



Blair Burton shows oats direct seeded into timothy

Day 2 – June 29

We were back on the bus at 8 am the next morning and headed to **Barr Ag**, a timothy compression plant. **Barry Schmitt**, the owner, has been in the timothy compression business for 17 years and started his own plant approximately five years ago. They compress timothy bales and ship the best quality to the UK and Ireland for horse hay, a large amount to Japan and a small amount to Taiwan. The crops that we looked at the previous evening with Blair are the timothy used in this plant. These compressed bales are put into a compression chamber to create flakes and the bales can't have more than 12% moisture. They also have strict regulations on the amount of weeds or other crops in the bales and the containers can be sent back if they don't pass inspection.

Barry Schmitt

5837 Imperial Dr
Olds, Alberta T4H 1G6

Phone: 403-507-8660 Fax: 403-507-8667



Our next stop was at **Jorsvick Farms Inc** to look at their Veda Hay Dryer. This piece of equipment uses fans to push warm air into the top and bottom of large bales, picks up moisture and then exits out the sides of the bales. The concept originated from Italy, when fermenting forage disrupted the cheese making process and hay bale dryers were invented to resolve this problem. The Jorsvicks' dryer holds 24 bales weighing 1400-1500 lbs wet. Three bales can be loaded onto the dryer at a time and it takes approximately an hour to get loaded up and running. The hay is dried until it reaches 8-10% moisture, which can take anywhere from 6-10 hours. This is their 4th season with the dryer and they put approximately three quarters of their own hay through it. Since a majority of their hay is sold to the export market and goes through **Barr Ag's** compression plant, they produce strictly timothy bales that measure 3x4 feet. So far they have only used their own hay because everything needs to be very consistent. In 2009, the Jorsvicks converted the dryer from electric to individual natural gas powered fans which allows for reusable energy and does not leave residue in the bales. Since converting, the costs of running the dryer has decreased from \$30-\$35 a metric tonne to \$20 a metric tonne, including time spent loading, unloading and stacking. Our tour group then settled into the Jorsvicks' welcoming front yard and garage to eat lunch. We could have spent the entire day there as the Jorsvicks were an extremely enthusiastic, knowledgeable family with three generations involved.


For More Info, Contact:

Veda Farming Solutions
1518 Moffett St., Suite F
Salinas, CA 93905

www.haydryer.com
(831) 783-1123

Jorsvick Farms Inc.
Box 7, Site 5, RR 3
Olds, AB T4H 1P4


jfi@airenet.com
(403) 556-8079



Veda Hay Dryer

Our Goal:
Reduce Harvest Risk and Improve Quality

Jorsvick Farms Inc.
Olds, Alberta



After prying everyone away from their generous hospitality, we left for the **Thorlaksons' Feedyards** and **Nature's Call** composting facility. **Barry Cretin** was our tour guide for the composting facility. In 1997, Barry created Nature's Call and was given 3 years to prove that they could make money by composting the manure from the feedlot and selling it. He not only proved it but now the compost pays to have the feedlot! They produce 30-35,000 tonnes of finished compost and sell to stores such as Superstore, Home Depot, Walmart and many more. The manure is gathered from the feedlot in March and August, which allows it to be finished material in July and November. They place the manure into long windrows on a concrete pad, for easier contamination control, and add straw and peat moss. This gives the manure added oxygen which allows the soil microbes to heat up and compost better, as well as keeps the manure from becoming anaerobic. The windrows are turned weekly to add more oxygen and to release carbon dioxide and are checked daily with temperature probes to make sure they are heating up consistently. The pad is built on a 2% slope to prevent water pooling, as sometimes moisture is added to the windrows to keep them composting in the summer months. Once the compost is done it is segregated into different grades of quality (A, B, C and D). Clay contamination gives lower quality grades. The composting facility has turned into a great success and is continuously expanding into new markets such as cat litter, fertilizer and much more.



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Next we toured the Thorlaksons' 20,000 head capacity feed yards, which proved very interesting and insightful.



Dan McKinnon showing us some of his favourite tools

Our next tour stop was at **Dan and Todd McKinnon's** farm. Dan has many ties with the Peace River Region including connections with True North Beef. The McKinnon's have been involved with Beef Booster cattle for many years, but have recently cut back dramatically. They use to have a feedlot that held approximately 4000 head and were actually the only test station for the first 23 years of Beef Booster cattle. At the moment, he has 250 beef booster cows that he keeps with Bill Wilson and Fred Burres in the Peace River area. He travels here to bring replacements and take calves back with him. The McKinnon's have set up many wells and interesting water systems on their land for their extended grazing season, using many smaller paddocks. They also have one dam that holds 13 acres of water. In the winter, they place six fences around swaths of barley and move the cattle every 2-3 days. Looking back 15 years, Dan figures "we have been able to get 30-76 grazing days per acre, with an average herd of 300 head". The McKinnon's also shared some of the tools they have found handy over the many years of farming, such as large portable shelter panels and a wire roller.



Our group then headed to Crossfield, where we met **Graeme Finn** who is head of **Agrowplow Canada**. Graeme and Agrowplow, both originally from Australia, had some amazing products and demos in store for us. All of Agrowplow's products work towards soil improvement and performance, so instead of turning soil, they work to just break it open. They import all the machinery from

Australia and try to get parts here in Canada. Graeme took us to look at some of the land that he had used Agrowplow's equipment on. The first field we looked at was direct seeded with sanfoin, alfalfa, fescue, and smooth and meadow brome grass.

The unique aspect to this field was they had subsoiled one half of the field and not the other. There was a definite difference in the height and amount of plants. We were even able to look at the difference in root systems and which direction they were growing. Graeme is grazing four-40 acre paddocks with approximately 400 head of cattle. Each paddock had been reseeded in a different year and is a mixture of legumes and grasses. **Dave Lehman from Gallagher** brought a variety of electric fencing supplies to show our group, as well as discuss troubleshooting problems in fencing systems.



Dave Lehman

Northern Prairies (780) 305-1015

The energetic Graeme then hosted us for the Beef BBQ and Tailgate Party. The staff from Agrowplow cooked us a wonderful steak supper which was enjoyed by all, in spite of the downpour! All day we had been joined by the Foothills Forage Association and the Grey Wooded Forage Association, so now everyone could share their experiences and knowledge with each other.



Tailgate party in Graeme's pasture



810 McCool St Tel: 403-946-5300
Crossfield, AB Fax: 403-946-5361
T0M0S0 Email: canda@agrowplow.com

Day 3 – June 30

Wednesday morning we boarded the bus to tour **Olds College grounds** and the **Wood Seed Farm** where we met Marshall Wood and Brent Burton. Marshall's father started growing seed in 1978 and Marshall came back to the farm in 1998 to take over managing the operation.

They grow, process and sell their own pedigreed seed. Brent helps manage the seed plant.

There are five processes to their seed cleaning:

1. Indent – separates by length
2. Debearder
3. Wind and Screen – separates by width
4. Grader – separates by height
5. Gravity Table – separates by weight

This process allows them to clean 1.5-2 times more than other seed cleaning companies. They work to have all their seed cleaned by the beginning to middle of March. To prevent contamination every truck is equipped with an air compressor and bins are cleaned continuously. While seed is in being cleaned, someone is out cleaning the bin with a dental pick so the clean seed can go right back in. When growing the seed, they think ahead 7 or 8 years in terms of crop rotation for each field. For example, if they are introducing a new variety they grow 3 years barley, 1 year canola, 1 year pedigree oats and then 3 years new variety oats. The canola is grown for commercial use only. When seeding, they try to plant 25 plants per square foot and they base their seed rate on 1000 kernel weight, germination and vigour.



Brent Burton, Sandra's youngest sibling, works at the seed farm for a majority of the year. When he is not at the seed farm, he manages a cow/calf operation with his wife, Connie. Then Brent told us he also did some custom farming - seeding, spraying, and harvesting. Well "some" turned out to be nearly 4000 acres this year!

Upon completing our tour of the seed farm we made our way to the **Lacombe Research Station** to tour the meat research lab. We began the tour on the kill floor. Here it was explained that no commercial animals go through this plant, only research animals. They work mainly with beef and pork but also sheep and bison. Everything is treated like SRM (specified risk material) and every carcass is inspected at the end. They pasteurize at 85°C to kill bacteria and then use electric shocks to break down muscle and increase tenderness. All in all, it takes 15 minutes to slaughter one beef. Next is the cutting floor. All the meat must go through a metal detector to check for metal. Lastly is the grinding room where they package and test some of the meat. There are also meat quality tests done that require people to come in everyday and sample meat.

After the meat research lab tour we were joined by **John Basarab** to look at **Beef Research Center**. They are using the Grow Safe system to measure individual animal's residual feed intake. The system can identify which animal by tags and then constantly weighs the amount of feed in the trough. There is research going on that is looking for genetic variation and markers in the genome. These markers can be for feed efficiency, fertility and meat tenderness, which may lead to a decrease in the amount of days to slaughter.



Lacombe Research Center
6000 C and E Trail Lacombe, Alberta T4L 1W1
Tel.: 403-782-8101 Fax: 403-782-4308

Thanks to **Jennifer Aalhus** for arranging these tours at the Lacombe Research Center. Jennifer is a Baldonnel raised gal who studied agriculture at the University of Alberta with Nora Paulovich, our NPARA partner.

 **Stoller Enterprises**

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Our tour group then made its way back to the Peace River area. Both Forage members and NPARA members were scheming the whole way on our next partnership adventure.

Thank you to our other partners in crime:



Blair Burton
And farmers of Olds, AB

And our sponsors:

Peace River Agriculture Development Fund

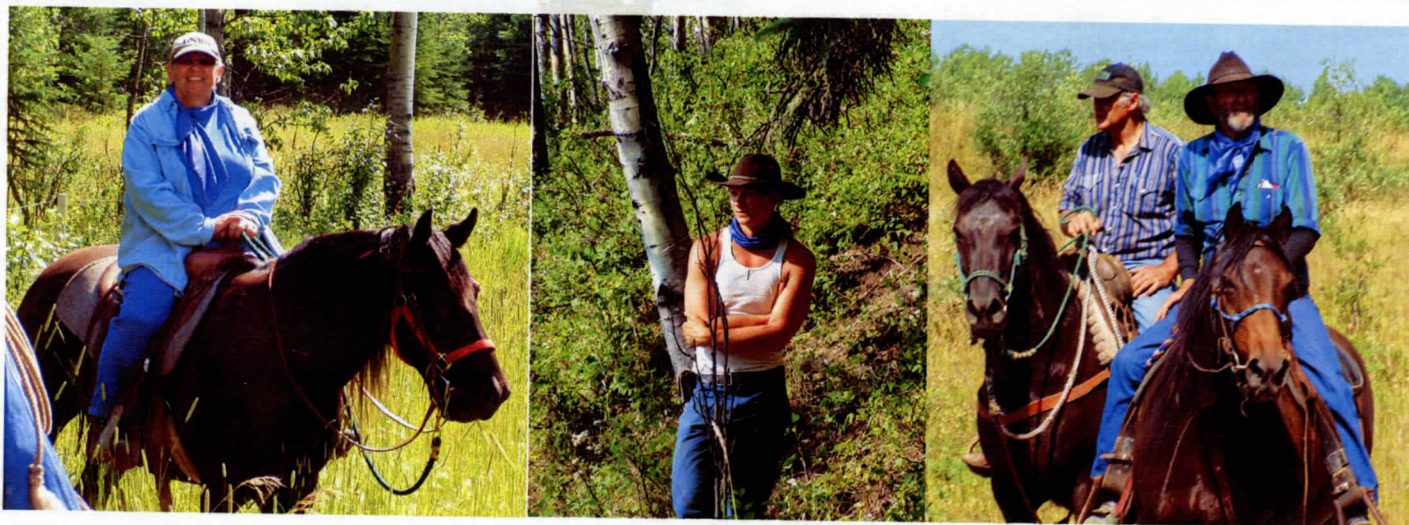




Kiskatinaw Ecological Society



Box 908, Dawson Creek, British Columbia, V1G 4H9



Working Group Formed by Kiskatinaw Ecological Society

At their Annual General Meeting on July 31st in the Sunrise Valley District, the Kiskatinaw Ecological Society decided to form a working group to discuss the question posed in their Summer 2010 Newsletter "The Kiskatinaw Eye Opener" (see next page).

Do we need a pilot program for the Kiskatinaw River Valley Watershed that possibly encompasses the best aspects of both the Government of Australia's Land Care and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service?

Committee members are: Sandra Burton, Farmington; Fred Burres, Farmington; Connor Dixon, Calgary; Shallan Hauber, Arras; Glenn Hogberg, Progress; Michael Nimitz, Sunrise Valley;



Captions for photos:

Joanne Nimitz enjoying the mixture of people during the Memorial Trail Ride for Mark.
(photo on upper left)

Michael Nimitz looking out over the Kiskatinaw River Valley near the hoodoos.
(upper middle photo)

Pat Gerlinsky and Ernie Nimitz wondering what is going to happen next with 24 riders
(photo on upper right)

Bob Dilworth and Coleen Matthews won the door prizes after the AGM on July 31st.
(photo on lower left)

Kiskatinaw Ecological Society



Kiskatinaw Eye Opener Summer 2010

"The Independent Voice Officially Representing Millions of Willows and Poplars and the Kiskatinaw Ecological Society."

A discussion paper for the KES AGM on July 31, 2010

Do We Need?

A pilot program for the Kiskatinaw River Valley Watershed. [Please click here for a Kiskatinaw News release - August 11, 2010.](#)

Featuring

- A balanced natural resources management and development program that features: "Holistic Thinking, Holistic Planning, Holistic Processes and Holistic Management."
- Involving both renewable resources and non-renewable resources
- Offering conservation and ecologically sound programs for Agricultural producers and other bonafide users of natural resources within "the Watershed."
- Offering a combination of all project options as provided for in LANDCARE (Government of Australia) and Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S.D.A (Cheney Lake, Kansas is an example of USDA efforts) to pilot program participants.
- Promoting better natural resource management and net profit movements upwards for private land owners involved in agriculture & forestry.
- An initial stage of pilot project that will require a minimum of 12 land owners and will be a voluntary process.
- Funding both privately and publicly.

[Click here to view a pdf of the Fall 2009 Edition.](#)



Looking across the Valley from Sunrise Valley towards Chetwynd.

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[Activities](#)

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Lighter Side of Forage

by Shannon McKinnon

Crazed Sheep and Cracked Cocks



I'm a sucker for antiques. Especially the kind I think I might actually use. Back when we had milk goats I bought an old cream separator with visions of making our own butter and ice cream prancing in my head. After a copious amount of cranking and sloshing, we managed to produce exactly two thimbles of what may or may not have been cream. After going through the ordeal of sterilizing all those bits and pieces of metal I decided that butter and ice cream had no place in a healthy diet anyway.

I still have the cream separator, but instead of filling the big silver bowl with milk, we fill it with old newspapers for starting fires in our wood stove. I pretend that one day we're going to get a milk cow and it will be put back into action with more productive results, but deep down I know that will never happen. For one thing, where would we keep the newspapers?



However, we did recently get a small flock of Icelandic sheep which are known as "the poor man's cow" in their native country. They are said to produce a yogurt that is so sweet it can be served as a dessert without any sugar or honey added. That may well be, but first I need to cure the sheep of their charming habit of sailing over my head every time I walk amongst them. To say they're a tad on the wild side is like saying Canada gets a wee bit of weather. Exactly how I am going to get close enough to milk them twice a day boggles the brain at this point, but I am ever the optimist. Yesterday I swear Rowdy had a friendly look in her eye as she rocketed past me. And Hairy Eyeball actually paused long enough to grab a mouthful of oats before vaulting for the fence line, so you never know. I may be pulling up a stool beside them yet . . . a little three legged antique one would be nice.

In the meantime, the newspaper sits in the cream separator and our kindling rests in a crock. The same crock I swooned over at an auction and made Darcy promise to bid on if it came up while I was off getting a coffee. I returned in time to spot Darcy on the opposite side of the ring dutifully bidding on the crock. A woman beside me snorted in disgust.

"Look at that man over there bidding up that crock. The thing's got a crack down the inside of it, don't you know. It's useless for kraut. And one of the handles is broken. Some people are idiots. They'll bid on anything just because it's old."



I politely smiled and nodded, while discreetly making violent cut off hand motions which Darcy mistook as a signal to keep bidding or he was a dead man.

Later, as we were lifting the cracked crock into the back seat of the truck, I noticed the same lady standing stock still on the edge of the lawn gaping at us. I smiled and waved with my free hand, but she just shook her head and turned away. Oh, well. The cracked crock may not keep kraut, but it keeps our kindling just fine.

My most recent purchase was a set of delicate forest green water glasses circa 1950's that I picked up at an antique sale. It's the environmental thing to do, you know. Buying dishes that are already in circulation instead of encouraging factories to spew chemicals into the sky and deplete our resources to make more of what's already out there. Doesn't that make me sound noble? I'd be so special I could practically pop a shirt button clear across the room and hit you smack in the eye, if it weren't for the real reason I bought them – the glasses were beautiful, cheaper than new ones and I wanted them. Best of all, not one of them was cracked. We checked; twice.

Shannon McKinnon and her husband Darcy live on a small farm northwest of Dawson Creek, BC.

**Peace River Forage Association
Coming Event**
November 29, 2010

Annual General Meeting
3:00 – 9:00 pm
Taylor Community Hall

3:30 pm Doyle Wiebe, Langham, SK.
Forage producers &
their carbon credits

5:00 – 6:30 Supper
6:30 AGM

For info or to register call Chris at
250-789-6885 or 250-793-8916



**Western Canadian
Grazing
Conference
& Trade Show**

'NEW' LOCATION
Hands on Sessions

**FORAGING ON CHANGE:
Eating Up the Opportunities**
December 1 & 2, 2010
Vermilion, AB

Keynotes

David Sauchyn - Climate Cycles

Wendy Holm - Tied to the Tracks:
How we got here and
why everything is
(finally!) about to change

Don Campbell - Doubling your Grass Production

For Complete Information, Contact:
www.areca.ab.ca 1-780-416-6046

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and

Peace Region Forage Seed Assn.

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in organizing the

Central Alberta Collaborative Tour

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