

# FORAGE FIRST

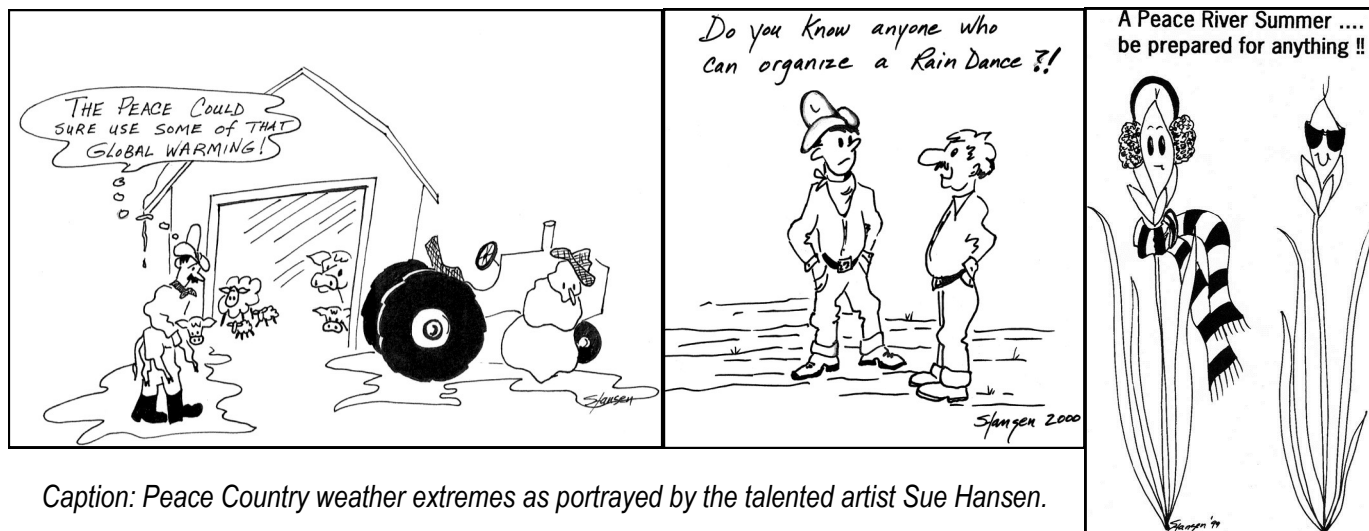
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70<sup>th</sup> Edition

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\$10

## Surprise ! It's Spring !



Caption: Peace Country weather extremes as portrayed by the talented artist Sue Hansen.

This spring issue of the newsletter may also come as a surprise because it is much thicker than usual. To bring you more diversity in perspectives, we welcome several new enthusiastic authors including Heather Fossum, Charissa Enns and Carolyn Derfler. There are 5 Forage Facts bringing key messages and closure from several large R & D projects that have now ended. There are also 3 Forage Facts from the Resiliency Project which will continue for one more year. There is an important insert from the BC Ministry of Agriculture letting you know about the new fire regulations and fines. A couple of Friends of Forage stepped forward with advertising inserts to help pay for our newsletter costs; and we trust you will support them with your business. We do hope that you enjoy this issue and it brings you good information and entertainment as you cope with the surprises of spring weather in the Peace.

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Visit our website at [www.peaceforage.bc.ca](http://www.peaceforage.bc.ca)

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*(for paid up members)*

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**Inserts: (for paid up members)**

Forage Fact # 95-99, 101-103  
Northline Equipment Ad  
South Peace Grain Ad  
New Fire Regs & Fines

**Inserts: (for renewing members)**

2016 Membership Renewal Notice  
Northline Equipment Ad  
South Peace Grain Ad  
New Fire Regs & Fines

**Pasture Walk & AGM**

*Celebrate Fall Equinox with the  
Peace River Forage Association*  
**Thurs Sept 22, 2016**

**Meet at 1:30 pm**  
**Community Hall Location TBA**

**Afternoon to include:**

Pasture walk  
Demos from Resiliency Project  
Setting up tips for winter feeding/  
bale grazing

**AGM at Bessborough Hall**  
**4:30 to 5:30 pm**

**Hot Supper & Directors Meeting  
to follow**

**Pre-registration is  
strongly advised!**

**For more info or  
to register please call:  
Chris or Sandra at 250 789 6885**

## **Forage Year End & AGM Change**

*by Ron Buchanan, Heather Fossum, Bill Wilson,  
Chris Thomson & Julie Robinson*

The Peace River Forage Association directors called an Extraordinary General Meeting March 23, 2016 at the Community Futures Office in Dawson Creek at 6:30 pm. As per proper procedure, an email was circulated 14 days prior to this meeting to 99 paid up 2016 members with notification of this meeting and the resolution that has been brought forward. The information was also posted on the website. As there was not quorum present, no business was carried out.

The Extraordinary General Meeting was reconvened for March 30, 2016 at the Community Futures Office in Dawson Creek at 6:30 pm. There were 13 members present. As per procedure in current bylaws, the members in attendance carried out the business as proposed.

The purpose of the meeting was to amend the bylaws, specifically 10.1, to enable year end date changes for accounting purposes. This had been recommended by our auditors to enable easier reporting to members. There was also some minor grammatical and spelling corrections presented for approval. There was an ordinary resolution to address membership term for 2016 to coincide with the year end date change.

**Special Resolution** regarding the amendment of bylaws to reflect changes to 10.1 read: "The fiscal year of the society shall be determined by the directors at a regular board meeting." This resolution was passed and the year end was changed to March 31 to align with the majority of funders year end, as recommended by the accountant.

**Ordinary Resolution** regarding amendment to membership read: "To extend 2016 membership to March 31, 2017". This was proposed to align membership with the new year end changes in accordance with bylaw 2.4. This ordinary resolution was also passed.

The Peace River Forage Association of BC must now hold their AGM within 6 months of our new year end. So please see the new date for our Annual General Meeting to the left.

If you have questions or concerns about these changes please call any of the following people on the Year End & Bylaws Revision Committee:

Ron Buchanan 250 827 3555 Heather Fossum 780 772 2222  
Bill Wilson 250 782 2866 Chris Thomson 250 789 6885  
Julie Robinson 250 787 3241

# Forage Workshop with Graeme Finn

by Heather Fossum

Photo Credit - Lori Vickers



New ideas and new faces were in abundance at the January 28<sup>th</sup> Seminar hosted by the Peace River Forage Association (PRFA). The main themes of the day were Pasture Rejuvenation, Managing Grazing and Cocktail Cover Crops.

**Graeme Finn**, with Southern Cross Livestock out of Crossfield, AB, was the keynote speaker, or the fellow who talked to us the longest. Graeme feels that productive/good pastures must be a mix of grasses & legumes. Legumes put pounds on animals and help make healthy soil. He emphasized that when considering a pasture for rejuvenation we do not want to focus on methods; **FIRST** we must focus on **WHY** we are considering it for rejuvenation. What exactly do we not like about the field or rather what is deficient? Is there no production during drought, because of too many shallow rooted plants, or is the field played out and unproductive under all situations?

If the field is played-out, he again emphasized, we must question why:

- ⇒ Is there a lack of multiple plant species &/or legumes?
- ⇒ Is there a lack of fertility?
- ⇒ Is there compaction?
- ⇒ Is there overgrazing?

Once we understand “the why” (or at least take our best guess), then we can move onto methods to address these deficiencies.



WHY Does This Field Need Rejuvenation?	Some Methods of Rejuvenation
Lack of Plant Diversity (i.e. too many shallow rooted plants, too many weeds, absence of legumes, etc.)	Sod Seeding
Lack of Fertility	Sod Seeding of Legumes Bale Grazing Cell Grazing (use cattle as fertilizer spreaders) Cultivation (reseeding with grass/legume mix) Cultivation (reseeding with annual forages or a cocktail cover crop to increase organic matter)
Compaction	Subsoil plowing Cultivation
Overgrazing	Cell Grazing (10+ cells/ paddocks which allows rest)

When seeding forage he recommends to seed heavy (15 lb /ac) because a dense stand of forage will be competitive with weeds and reduce the influx of weeds associated with cultivation. Another recommendation was to be **PATIENT** and allow your chosen method time to work – up to 8 years.

Graeme introduced the idea of using annual forages as a way to:

1. accelerate soil health improvements,
2. take advantage of any moisture at any time,
3. extend the grazing season, and
4. produce large amounts of forage so
5. the rest of the field can rest the first year while new forage is establishing.

Annual forages can be (a) annual legumes = forage peas, annual clovers & vetch, (b) cool season grasses = oats, Italian rye grass, (c) warm season grasses = millets, sorghum, and (d) brassicas = turnips, kale, lettuce, radishes, cabbage. A mixture of multiple annual forage species improves soil health by increasing the amount of crop residues, thus rapidly increasing soil organic matter and by building up soil fungi and bacteria. Cocktail cover crops use a mixture of multiple annual forage species.

## Forage Workshop with Graeme Finn *continued*

Breakout sessions were also held to help learn from local producers regarding the themes. **Josh** and **Jackie Thiessen** and **Talon Gauthier** (PRFA) discussed a cocktail cover cropping project. The main purpose was to break down the cereal crop thatch and to extend their grazing season. There was very little rain until late July but all was not lost and the crop took advantage of that late summer moisture to produce high protein & energy forage for the fall. Seeing the cows eat the entire turnip (roots and all) was surprising as well as witnessing the turnip/radish plants withstand up to -10 degrees C. In future years with normal rainfall the Thiessen's anticipate having the same high quality fall forage, which extends their grazing season, but also a further benefit of early summer grazing.



Talon Gauthier explaining cocktail cover crop concept.

**Ron Buchanan** and **Sandra Burton** (PRFA) highlighted a plot on one of his pastures that deals with best management practices for resiliency to climate change (Resiliency Project). He did not consider the plant composition as a weakness but the lack of fertility and soil thatch was a weakness for resiliency. He chose to address these deficiencies by switching from purely hay operation to integrating his livestock into the field management. He spring fed bales onto the hayfield during April calving and brought the herd back for a late summer grazing. Fall sampling revealed an improvement in forage production and soil thatch in the animal affected areas versus the control. A surprise development was the rapid increase in soil pH within the bale grazed area (increase of 0.5 to 1), which supports the theory that increasing the organic matter is the quickest way to improve soil pH.



Ron Buchanan, "I want to have my animals at the right place at the right time for the right reasons."



Bill Wilson describes controlling foxtail barley (above). Stephanie Peesker discusses weed control options for crown land (below).

**Bill Wilson** discussed three trials which centered on control of foxtail barley through mowing, broadcasting seed and spraying with the herbicide Kerb. It was found that Kerb significantly reduced the foxtail barley heads, improved legumes in the stand and had a negative effect on other grasses.

Range Agrologists, **Stephanie Peesker** and **Marika Cameron** from Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations, discussed weed management options on Crown Land. They requested that we report priority weeds to the Range office (draw on a map or use GPS coordinates) so that they can be sprayed – the contractors are organized out of Prince George. Grazing tenure holders, with a pesticide applicators licence, can now be reimbursed for spraying priority weeds through a Ranger Contract. Other weed management options on Crown Land include burning and livestock (teaching cows to graze weeds).



**Healthy and Vigorous Forage Stands Project Funded in 2015-16 by:** Peace River Agriculture Development Fund, Murphy Oil Corp, & Peace River Regional District.

**Resiliency Project Station Partial Funded by:**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture through programs delivered by Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.  
i.e. BC Farm Innovators Adaptation Fund, BC Business Knowledge Fund.

# Extending The Grazing Season Tour & Workshop

by Glenn Hogberg, Ron Buchanan, Sandra Burton & Carolyn Derfler

In February 2016, Glenn Hogberg and Ron Buchanan participated in a two day "Extending the Grazing Season Tour and Workshop" in Lacombe, Alberta.



## Stop #1 - Murray Abel's Farm

Murray Abel is a third generation farmer on the original homestead family farm of 1896. Today, he operates a mix farm operation with his wife and two young boys. The land on the farm provides enough feed for about 80 head of both a commercial

and seed stock cattle herd. From May to late November, the cattle are grazed rotationally on perennial pastures that are broken into smaller paddocks, each with access to fresh water.

For the remaining winter months, the mature cattle are grazed on standing corn and may be supplemented with some purchased in hay bales or silage for protein while the young stocks are fed silage.



Stored silage is also kept on the farm as a source of back up feed in case the winter is too harsh for corn grazing.



## Stop #2 - The Skeels' Farm

Doug and Deb Skeels have a small cow/calf operation combining 3 generations of cattle producers. The farm uses rotational, swath, and bale graze to feed their cattle. Their electric fencing and water systems are solar powered, relying on the sun and gravity to deliver water. Doug and Deb take great pride in producing quality cattle with cattle health and well-being as a priority. They believe in backgrounding their calves, in order to send a more resilient animal to market. They supply cattle wintering facilities for help on farm for family and friends. Each owner supplies their own feed and the Skeels provide the water, shelter and land. This helps to keep everyone's costs down. Their benefits include occasional days off, more reliable water system and fertilizer.

## Stop #3 -The Ziola's Farm

Kevin and Roxanne Ziola, and their young daughter, farm west of Red Deer owning a 200 head commercial herd of cow/calf pairs, of which, a select few annually are directed towards their successful hormone-free, grass-finished direct to consumer beef sales. They manage their herd over 1600 acres of productive forage based land, and calve from mid February to the end of March, additionally running a small number of fall calving cows (40 head) to complement their production cycle. They are trying to extend the grazing season with: cicer milkvetch/ grass mixture as stockpiled pasture; a new stand of sainfoin at 60-70% mixed with alfalfa/ cicer milkvetch/ grass mixture for additional stockpiled grass; as well as Brassica (kale x turnip) mixed with oats as winter swath grazing pasture.



## Stop #4 - Lacombe Research & Development Centre

Agronomic research on extending the growing and grazing season in central Alberta began in 1987.

The Lacombe Research Centre first began research in swath grazing in 1996. Swath grazing research has evolved from looking at



the feasibility of the practice to comparative investigation of barley, oats, stockpiled grass, corn, triticale, and winter triticale in winter grazing trials. Each year cow performance, pasture performance and economics and forage quality loss over winter (weathering) have been studied. Grazing stockpiled grass has been compared to swath grazing cows. Every year a traditional feedlot control has been compared to the grazing treatments. This helps out in comparing year to year differences, which can be substantial. Research led by Dr. John Basarab tracks the performance of feed efficient (RFI) and inefficient cows on our swath grazed paddocks to observe possible differences in winter performance which could be related to energy use efficiency.

# Extending The Grazing Season *Continued*

by Glenn Hogberg, Ron Buchanan, Sandra Burton & Carolyn Derfler

The tour was followed by a one day workshop at the Lacombe Research & Development Center. Ron Buchanan and Glenn Hogberg heard speakers from across Western Canada summarize their research.

**Kathy Larson**, Western Beef Development Centre in Humboldt, SK, told us **why extended grazing practices make economic sense for beef cow producers**. She summarized a number of research findings that discussed how winter feeding and bedding make up 50 to 60% of a producers costs of production. A study by McCartney et al (2004) showed that despite 18-21% higher energy requirements, over a 100 day period, swath grazing had a cost savings of \$70 /cow compared to traditional feeding of barley silage and free choice straw in a drylot setting. Extensive field feeding and extended grazing, with estimated savings in the range of 10-30%, make economic sense and have been promoted as the lower-cost alternative to drylot pen feeding.

**Dr. Don Flaten**, University of Manitoba, spoke of the **environmental risks and benefits from extended grazing practices**. Why all the concern about manure on snow? It's a concern because most runoff in the Prairies occurs during snowmelt, but the proportion may vary among regions and years. Snowmelt runoff occurs relatively slowly over frozen soils and often favours larger losses of dissolved than particulate forms of nutrients. Nitrogen and phosphorus are of concern. The typical BMPs that farmers should use for managing nutrients are usually split into two groups: source BMPs (e.g. managing nutrient loading rates and timing) and transport BMPs (e.g. managing transport of nutrients from field to stream with vegetated buffers, collection basins, and proper selection of wintering site location).

**Dr. Pat Juskiw**, Alberta Ag. addressed the question **can we breed and improve cereal crops for swath grazing and extended grazing?** The two annual small-grain cereal crops that are being researched at the Field Crop Development Centre are barley and triticale. Barley is an ancient crop and there are many types: two row or six-row; smooth awned, rough awned, or hooded; hulled or hullless; and many quality types. Triticale is a man made crop developed from crossing rye with wheat. Most of the triticale grown today has been made by crossing rye with durum wheat. As a recently developed crop it has a fairly narrow germplasm. If we prioritize our breeding goals for forages within the small grain breeding programs, the top three objectives would be biomass yield, standability and quality.



**Dr. Greg Penner**, University of Saskatchewan, spoke on **matching nutritional requirements of gestating cows from October to April with various extended grazing practices**. At the beginning of the winter. i.e. Oct to Dec, nutritional requirements for cows due to calve in April are relatively low and forage quality quite high. As the winter progresses, cows enter their third trimester with higher energy and protein requirements, while the forage yield and quality is declining. Cowbytes in combination with feed sampling can assist in creating appropriate rations for these 2 contrasting situations.

**Dr. Jeff Schoenau**, University of Saskatchewan, led us through **decision making for fertilizer applications before and after extended grazing sequences**. In field feeding and over wintering of cattle is an effective means of recycling nutrients contained in the feed back into the soil while meeting the nutritional requirements of the animal. Given the high variability that is created, a sampling strategy that takes and combines cores within the footprint of feeding, and another set of cores outside the footprint will give, based on analyses of the two samples submitted, an idea of the range of nutrients that exists in the field area. Benefits to soil fertility and plant growth from nutrients deposited by cattle in field in the winter are evident in the following spring and persist into subsequent years.

**Dr. Vern Baron**, Ag & Agri-food Canada in Lacombe, spoke on **agronomic considerations for extended grazing**. These included variety and species choice, input requirements, crop management (e.g. planting and harvest dates) and grazing time for a specific class of livestock of interest based on yield, quality and ease of access. Usually the class of livestock is gestating beef cows after weaning. The sum of all processes and activities required in growing the crop, harvest if required, grazing or feeding is called the winter grazing system. The crop physiological and agronomic approach to arriving at the best efficiencies in this system is useful.

# "This is the Way to Feed Cows"

by Carolyn Derfler



Gordon Lazinchuk and Talon Gauthier taking a hay sample, fall 2015.

Well, Gordon Lazinchuk certainly had some people in the community wondering what he was up to last fall in one of his fields just to the east of his house. He was lining up bales in loose rows almost like he was going to use them for a paintball course! On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 we had our answer as that was the day that he moved 170 cows into the field and they began feeding on the first row of bales.

Gordon had spent about 30 hours during the fall lining up 500 bales on 6-7 acres of a 20 acre field which also had some very healthy 8 foot willows and poplar saplings growing in it. The bales had been placed into 9 paired rows with 56 bales in each paired row. He then purchased a heavier fencer and some aircraft wire and about 5 hours later had an electric fence set up so the cows were only able to graze on the first paired row of bales.

Gordon would have liked to have started the cows on the field earlier in the winter but because of the lack of snow and no watering system in this field was unable to. As a result of some of the many warm days we have experienced this winter the cows have been able to get water from where the runoff has pooled. Gordon hopes that there will be enough snow in March to tie the cows over until they are moved home at the end of the month for calving.

Gordon has been checking on the cows regularly and is extremely pleased with how things are going. In an interview with him on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 he very enthusiastically said, "This is the way to feed cows!" Gordon remarked on how nice it has been not to have to start up the tractor every day to go out and feed. Therefore he has spent much less on fuel this winter. It takes Gordon about two hours to move the fence so the cows can get access to the next set of bales. Some paired rows have taken up to two weeks for the cows to eat through and on February 25<sup>th</sup> they had just finished eating the 6<sup>th</sup> paired row. This works out to 336 bales over a period of 76 days and about 1.9 bales per cow. Gordon is pleased with this feed consumption, which could be partially due to the mild winter we have experienced this year.



Gordon Lazinchuk describing his bale grazing to Carolyn Derfler (above) & showing us the damage to willows & aspen (below).



Unfortunately, the wind has played havoc with some of the bales, ruffling their tops, as they have sat out in the field all winter. Although this may be one disadvantage, Gordon definitely thinks that he has increased the

organic matter and soil fertility significantly over the winter with bale grazing. Additionally, the willow and aspen saplings should be well trampled. It will be interesting to see the results of this project later in the year after additional soil samples are taken and compared to samples from last year. Gordon plans to, not only put the cows back out into the field to graze in the late summer, but in the meantime put in a water source so that he can bale graze in another part of the field this coming winter.



Manure distribution in pasture after bale grazing for the winter.

*Carolyn has worked for many years at Parkland School and also helps her husband, Brian, grain farm in the Sunrise Valley area. They have two adult children.*

# Improving Forages By Winter Feeding & Annual Cropping

by Talon Gauthier



**Chuck & Pat Sutherland** are in the process of improving 60 acres of hay land and pasture on their property. They are deploying a multiyear strategy. This includes different feeding and swath grazing methods in the winter as well as establishing fast growing, competitive annual crops such as oats and peas in the summer. The following article describes their experiences over the last three years.

In **2013** the land was plowed and seeded to oats and peas for green feed. Due to a heavy crop and equipment difficulties not all of the field was able to be baled before snow hit on October 15th. In an attempt to clean up the swaths now laying under the snow, Sutherlands turned 55 cows out October 20<sup>th</sup>. This feed lasted the cows until the beginning of January. In **2014**, equipment problems ensued again and Sutherlands were unable to seed the field, leaving it to summer fallow for the 2014 growing season.

For the winter of **2014-15**, Sutherlands decided they wanted to feed their 2013 silage and 300-400 poorer quality hay bales out on the field. They agreed to be a cooperator in the Healthy and Vigorous Forage Stands Project and a plan was developed to meet their overall goal of improving their hayfield. The Sutherlands fed once a week and concentrated the bales on 10 acres of the field they felt was the poorest producing. They also planned on leaving a fair amount of residue on the field to help improve their organic matter. This method of winter feeding worked well for the 55 cows and the 12 yearling heifers they overwintered.



All photos from Oct 1, 2015. Fast growing annual forage oats & peas outcompete weeds & increase soil fibre.



Once the cows were turned out to their grazing tenure at the end of **May 2015**, Sutherlands worked the field up again and seeded it back to forage oats and peas. These species were chosen as they are fast growing annuals which out compete the weeds and produce much more biomass for feed. The peas fix nitrogen, making it available for current and subsequent crops. This field was left to grow until the end of September, when it was swathed down. Sutherlands' cows returned home mid-October and were turned onto the swaths. This lasted 70 cows and heifers until the beginning of January. Chuck and Pat really enjoy the swath grazing winter feeding method as it reduces the need for them to feed bales every day or two.



Growth of oat and pea crop with no winter feeding (*top*) versus with winter feeding (*bottom*).



The plan for the next two years with this field is to seed it to oats in **2016**, perhaps incorporating some forage brassicas as well. Then in **2017**, the field will be seeded back to perennial forages with no or a reduced cover crop.

Overall, the Sutherlands have really enjoyed swath grazing their cattle as it has greatly reduced their feeding costs (reduced equipment costs). Their multi strategy management approach is bringing them closer to seeding this field back into a high producing hayfield.

**Healthy and Vigorous Forage Stands Project Funded in 2015-16 by:** Peace River Agriculture Development Fund, Murphy Oil Corp, Peace River Regional District & PRFA of BC Project Cooperators

# Creek Bank Beef

by Charissa Enns

For the agricultural community, farming is not an occupation; it is a way of life. Very few lifestyles offer the challenges and risks as well as the rewards an agricultural lifestyle affords. Working with family, pride in a job well done and leaving a legacy of honesty and integrity are just a few of the values that those in the farming world hold dear. For many, the family farm is a dream, but to the Enns family, it is a reality they are truly thankful for.



For more information on Brittany and Bailey's operation, Creek Bank Beef, please visit their website: [www.creekbankbeef.com](http://www.creekbankbeef.com)

Creek Bank Farms began in 1986 when Walter and Dolores moved from Carrot River, Saskatchewan to begin grain farming in the Peace Country. Creek Bank Farms is now a diverse operation that includes grains, oilseeds, pulses, turf grass seed, forage seed, silage and hay in combination with a bison and cattle herd. This integrated approach does not come without its share of challenges, but it does allow each family member to find their own niche and to a large degree, work in their area of greatest interest. In 2009, Brittany graduated from Olds College with a diploma in Agricultural Business Management and moved home, ready to become more involved in the operation. Brittany and her younger sister Bailey now help manage daily operations, as well as the herd of 130 cattle they raise under the name, Creek Bank Beef. Charissa and her daughter Maddie also help out with the cattle and on the farm wherever it is needed, while Jeffrey focuses more on the farming aspects of the business.

Lately, Brittany and Bailey have begun focusing to a larger degree on marketing top quality breeding stock with their cattle herd. With a larger number of cows being bred using Artificial Insemination (AI), a skill Brittany learned in Olds College, the girls are looking forward to seeing the quality of calves produced this spring.



The girls say some of the things they look for when selecting AI bulls is calving ease and bulls whose EPD's score high in maternal traits, because spring is such a busy time of year. "When the buffalo and beef cows are calving at the same time that seeding needs to be happening, it is really important to select genetics that don't create many problems during calving." Earlier this year, the girls purchased two purebred Black Angus heifers and four purebred Black Simmental heifers that they plan to AI, in hopes of raising high quality, breeding stock and building a small herd of purebreds. Brittany says, "AI is a more economical way of improving the quality of a cowherd."

Brittany and Bailey were also involved in the 2016 Peace Country Beef Congress, showing two of their purebred Black Angus Heifers. The girls plan to continue showing livestock in the upcoming years because, as Brittany says, "Beef Congress is such a great way to let other producers know



what is out there and showcase the type of cattle we are raising."

Recently, Brittany and Bailey have been raising a handful of bulls each year that they have sold to local producers. Bulls are fed a low grain ration to ensure longevity and are usually sold as long yearlings or two-year-olds after they have been monitored for performance, maturity, conformation and disposition. Heifers and several purebred Black Angus cows are bred to Black Angus bulls, which helps to keep their commercial cow herd smaller in stature while the main cowherd is bred to Black Simmental bulls to ensure higher performance. The girls raise purebred Black Angus, Black Simmental bulls as well as a few Beef Maker bulls for sale each year. Brittany and Bailey are planning to expand the number of purebred livestock and plan to focus on this aspect of the business as well as marketing as their vision for the future.

# Forage Browsings & News

by Sandra Burton

The Peace River Forage Association has a reduced mix of projects and part time contractors for the next 6 months. **Talon Gauthier** is focussed on their new beautiful baby girl for a wee bit but promises to come back and work with us later on. **Carolyn Derfler** is helping Sandra and Chris one day a week working for both First Resource and Forage. **Cali Seater** is taking a 2 week leave from EcoWeb to assist Sandra and Bill McGill with a soil quality sampling blitz in May.



April 6, 2016 Marty and Talon started their own herd with a very healthy baby girl! Brooke Elise Gauthier was born at 5:27am weighing 7 lbs 11oz.



Discussing integrated strategies using livestock for weed control for the 2016 season. *Left to right:* Denise Boogey, Jodi Kendrew, Lori Vickers, Kari Bondaroff, Sarah Davies, Steve Rainey, Charlie Laser. *Missing cooperators:* Tess Davidson, Michael Nimitz.

The **Integrated Weed Management with Livestock Project** is applying to PRAD for bridge funding, while we regroup. This year's funding attempts have resulted in a very disappointing outcome and as such, we are going to be moving forward on a very small budget with lots of heart. However, we are re-inspired by the commitment of our cooperators to do whatever it takes to make this a success.

The **Innovative Management Practices for Resiliency Project** continues for one more year. This project is cost sharing on several activities described in this newsletter:

- ◇ Field day this Sept (as advertised on page 2)
- ◇ Hosting a station that shared project results at the workshop (described on page 4)

- ◇ Sending 2 producers to the Winter Feeding Tour & Workshop in Lacombe (page 5 & 6)
- ◇ Hosting Lively Legume discussions on the summer tour (as advertised on page 12)

Please note a more complete acknowledgement of our funding partners below, as space limits this mention on each of these pages.

## Funding Partners of the Innovative Management Practices for Resiliency Project:

Peace River Forage Association of BC, Peace Region Forage Seed Association, BC Grain Producers Association, Blackbird Environmental, South Peace Grain, University of Northern BC, Ducks Unlimited.



Climate Action Initiative  
BC AGRICULTURE & FOOD



## Funding for this project has been provided in part by:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture through programs delivered by Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. i.e. BC Farm Innovators Adaptation Fund, BC Business Knowledge Fund

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, are pleased to participate in the production of this publication. We are committed to working with our industry partners to address issues of importance to the agriculture and agri-food industry in British Columbia. Opinions expressed in this report are those of the Peace River Forage Association of BC and not necessarily those of the Investment Agriculture Foundation, the BC Ministry of Agriculture or Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.



Dr. Stan Houston

# Q Fever Awareness

by Sandra Burton & Lori Vickers

**Dr. Stan Houston** is a specialist in infectious diseases and a Professor of Medicine and Public Health from the University of Alberta Hospital. He will be addressing the issue of **Q Fever** and how it can affect humans. Two veterinarians will talk about the effects on livestock. Stan's daughter, **Dr. Ilona Houston**, from Edmonton will talk on biosecurity and prevention of infection. **Dr. Christa Harder** from Dawson Creek Vet Clinic will provide comments specific to the BC Peace Region.



Dr. Ilona Houston

## What is Q Fever?

Q Fever is an infection caused by the bacterium (*Coxiella burnetii*) which is passed on to humans from animals, most commonly sheep, goats and cows. This makes it a zoonotic disease.

## How is Q Fever transmitted from animals to humans?

Unlike the better known disease brucellosis, which is transmitted to humans through milk or meat products, Q Fever is contracted through airborne transmission from animal to human. Dried urine, feces, milk, placenta and amniotic fluid from an animal turns into dust particles in the air and then is easily inhaled by humans. Producers of these animals who breathe in barn yard dust from infected animals are the people who are at risk to contract this infection rather than the consumer.

## Why are we interested in Q Fever?

Q Fever is a zoonotic disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans. Dr. Houston was involved with treating a man in the Alberta Peace who presented with an unexpected fever. He was later diagnosed with Q Fever that was traced back to time he spent working in a lambing barn. Specialists in Edmonton have encountered a number of other cases in recent years. Q Fever is very likely underdiagnosed to a great degree because many of the infections have few or non specific symptoms and doctors are not very familiar with it so therefore would not test for it. Information about the frequency of Q Fever infection in animals or humans is very limited in Western Canada.

## What are the symptoms of Q Fever in humans?

Q Fever generally tends to be a mild, self limited disease with flu-like symptoms. However, it can cause pneumonia, hepatitis and rarely, life threatening heart valve infections and it can provoke miscarriage in pregnant women. A blood test is needed in order to verify the infection. Antimicrobial treatment is often effective for symptomatic and serious infections.

## How does Q Fever affect animals?

Q Fever affects animals mostly by an increase in abortions. Producers who notice a significant amount of abortions in their livestock should consider having placentas or blood samples sent to a vet lab for investigation. Aside from sheep and goats, Q fever can also impact cattle, swine, dogs and cats.

## What happens to animals that are infected with Q Fever?

There is no policy in place that requires testing of herds and flocks or culling of infected herds because the infection does not pose a significant risk to consumers. It only poses a risk to people in close contact with livestock.

## How can we reduce the spread of Q Fever?

Q Fever can be reduced by improving biosecurity on farms. This can include burning/ incinerating placenta, composting manure appropriately, spreading manure on still days, disinfecting birthing areas, and ensuring everyone on the farm is following bio-security protocols. Good ventilation in barns also helps. Antibiotics have little effect on bacteria shedding and there is no vaccination licenced in Canada.

## Q Fever Awareness Event

featuring **Dr. Stan Houston**

**Dr. Ilona Houston**

**Dr. Christa Harder**

**Friday, June 10, 2016**

**Tower Lake Community Hall, BC**  
**10 am - 2 pm**

**Lunch provided**

**Please call Chris or Sandra**  
**at 250 789 6885**

**Thank you to our partners:**

**Dawson Creek Vet Clinic**  
**North Peace Vet Clinic**

# Forage Events in Our Region

Peace River Forage Association  
of British Columbia



*The Peace River Forage Association invites you to join us for a*  
**Low Stress Livestock Handling Seminar**  
**& Lively Legumes, Grazing & Value Adding Tour**  
**June 16 & 17, 2016 in South Peace** *Choose 1 day or choose both!*



## **June 16 Seminar Highlights** **Dr. Lynn Locatelli of Cattle Expressions**

9 a.m. until 5 p.m.  
George Dawson Inn, Dawson Creek  
11705 8th Street, Dawson Creek, BC

Dr. Lynn Locatelli studied stockmanship under Bud Williams. She will speak on low stress & safe handling of livestock from birth through shipping for cow/ calf & feedlot operations.

**Please pre-register by  
calling Dawson Creek Vet Clinic  
at 250 782 1080  
& ask for large animals**



## **June 17 Tour Highlights**

8 a.m. until 5 p.m.  
Meet at South Peace Grain Co-op,  
Road 213, Spirit River Hwy, East Dawson Creek

### **Morning includes:**

Coffee & stations with our featured special guests: **Diane Knight** & **Lynn Locatelli**

Teaching livestock to eat weeds  
with Jodi Kendrew

Lively legumes & nodulation  
with Diane Knight at Fred & Lise Schneiders'

### **Afternoon includes:**

Birdsfoot trefoil & bale grazing  
at Gordon & Brenda Lazinchuks'

Nimitz Beef & Just Jerky with Michael Nimitz  
Value Adding at South Peace Grain Co-op in  
Dawson Creek with Shaun Grant

## **Thank You to Our Funding Partners & Tour Sponsors**

Dawson Creek Vet Clinic  
BC Ministry of Ag  
GF2 Strategic Outreach Initiative Fund

South Peace Grain  
Nimitz Beef  
NPARA

Sask Min of Ag / University of Sask  
BC Farm Innovators Adaptation Fund delivered  
by Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC

### **Event registration cost:**

\$20 Low Stress Livestock Seminar (*incl. lunch*)  
\$50 Lively Legumes & Value Adding Tour  
(*includes lunch, bus, refreshments + more*)  
\$40 Lively Legumes Tour Price for Members

### **Limited space!**

**Pre-register by Fri June 10!**  
For more info or to register please call:  
Lori Vickers at 250 784 2559  
Chris or Sandra at 250 789 6885