

FORAGE FIRST

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Forage For the Young at Heart



Jennifer Bowes finds creative ways to do winter chores with her toddler! Photo credit: Jennifer Bowes (new member)

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Inside This Issue: (for paid up members)

New Director Profiles	pg 2
Highlights of AGM & Field Days	pg 3
National Beef Technology Transfer	pg 5
Canadian Forage & Grassland Updates	pg 7
Soil Health & Grazing Conference	pg 9
Browsings & Twitter	pg 11
A Day in the Life...	pg 13
Mentorship & Upcoming Events	pg 14
Thank You's for Events	pg 15
Upcoming Forage Events	pg 16

Inserts: (for paid up members)
R & D Project Update,
BC Peace Pest & Weather Monitoring,
Towards Livestock Watering Regulations

Inserts: (for renewing members)
2018/2019 Membership Renewal Notice

Visit us at www.peaceforage.bc.ca

New Director Profiles

By Dale Frederickson & Carolyn Derfler

My name is **Dale Frederickson** and I am a third generation farmer on a farm approximately 8 miles NW of Dawson Creek. Along with my wife Sharon we have two sons, Bruce and Grant and a daughter, Maria, who have all contributed to the maintenance of this family farm, but at the moment, are all pursuing other careers.

I have worked at many jobs over the years, along with my wife, to help fund our farming habit. We have 80 commercial beef cattle and we always have something to thrash out come fall. My first crop was in 1984 and I have not missed one since then. It has always been a mixed farm of forages, forage seeds and grains.

My family homesteaded here in 1917 and either liked it and never left, or were too broke to leave. This past summer we celebrated

100 years of being a family farm. My grandfather settled here from Roosville BC and over the years built a home and many barns and sheds. Sharon and I bought the farm from my uncle Ernie in 1996 and have since built a new house and more sheds. The old house and sheds still remain along with many of the original household items and farm tools.

The soil on our farm was described by my elders as moose pasture that should never have been broke. But even poor land can be tamed for use and that is what has drawn us to the Peace River Forage Association. I see folks excited about soils and what it will or won't produce and that interests me. The group always intrigues me when someone new or old comes along with an idea and away we go to prove if it is true or false.



I have no big aspirations as a director with this group but feel I have a duty to take a turn with a cause I think is worthy. Either that or I was in the wrong place at the right time. Whatever, I am pleased to participate in this worthwhile movement.

For more information on the Frederickson 100 year anniversary please refer to the Fall 2017 Forage First Newsletter.



Dave Armstrong grew up on a dairy farm in Chilliwack and came to settle in the Dawson Creek area in 1980. He, along with his wife Linda, have a hay operation, Drumtochty Farms, in Rolla BC where they produce approximately 22,000 high quality square bales to sell locally, as well as in large quantities, to the Yukon, Vancouver Island and at times even Alaska.

A mixture of bales is produced, straight timothy, brome/ orchard grass/ timothy mix and some alfalfa/ timothy mix. Dave had been combining any excess timothy for seed, but with the decrease in grass seed prices he is now putting more grain into his crop rotation. This is giving him the ability to produce more straw bales for selling. For many years they have been providing a niche market with small square bales for their customers. Now they are leaning towards large square bales and hoping to eventually produce about 50% small and 50% large. Dave makes several trips to Whitehorse each year hauling bales and both sizes fit nicely into an enclosed trailer.

As with so many farms, both Dave and Linda have had to assist the hay operation with off farm income over the years. Now that their daughter has recently graduated from university and is working as a pharmacist in the Edmonton area their need for extra income is not so crucial. Dave recently retired from his off farm job and has been able to focus his attention solely on the farm. Retirement has also given him the chance to take on a director position for the PRFA.

Dave initially joined the PRFA to keep in touch with what was happening in the area and to see what he could learn. During his time as a director he would like to see more research done on nutrient use on hay crops, along with testing of liquid fertilizers and micro nutrients.

For more information on Dave and Linda's farm please refer to the Fall 2016 Forage First Newsletter.

Fall Equinox Field Day & AGM on Sept 22, 2017

by Sandra Burton



An enthusiastic crowd of over 45 people gathered at our first field day stop, hosted by Gordon & Brenda Lazinchuk.

We had a successful field day on September 22 with a wide range of people and interests attending. **Gordon and Brenda Lazinchuk** hosted the first stop where we looked at some seeding along a pipeline through their pasture, where Gordon had requested birdsfoot trefoil. Our second stop was at a field owned by **Charlie and Else Walker**. There we revisited some revegetation plots of different grass and legume species that had been seeded in the fall of 2012 and the spring of 2013.



Julie Robinson shared a quick method for estimating the amount of forage that could be done with a hoop & scale. If you want to try this yourself, watch our website for updates on this method or call Julie at 250 262 7576 or Sandra at 250 789 6885.



Our forage events are a chance to connect with old friends or make new forage friends, no matter what your age. Unforgettable quote: "I'm five years old too ! Do you like bugs?"

We returned to the Bessborough Hall for a hot supper. **Darryl Kroeker** gathered us for the AGM and thanked our parents of babies and younger children for bringing them to energize our meeting. Thanks also to **Carolyn Derfler** for creating a kid friendly space to facilitate young families feeling welcome. Thank you to the out going directors **Heather Fossum** and **Bill Wilson**. Please welcome our incoming directors **Dave Armstrong** and **Dale Fredrickson**.



Our field day was followed by a delicious hot meal catered by Classic Cuisine & the AGM at the Bessborough Community Hall.

Pasture Walk on Nov 21, 2017

by Jackie Thiessen & Sandra Burton



Jerry and Richard Tschetter hosted us for a pasture walk at Peace View Colony on Nov. 21, 2017. We looked at corn grazing, swath grazing and a solar powered water system. They also showed us their new calving barn that is being constructed.

A new format was tried for our Board of Directors meeting in November to entice some of our new and younger members to join us. I interviewed **Jackie Thiessen** to get her thoughts on the day.

Was this day worth your time and travel?

Jackie: Yes, I would definitely think so. It was great to get out, meet with other producers and see some things you wouldn't normally be exposed to.

What were the highlights of the pasture walk/ tour in the afternoon?

Jackie: For me, I really enjoyed the tour at the Peace View Colony, looking through their barn and seeing their winter watering system. There is potential to modify and apply the concepts to our place. I would really like to see the portable water system they mentioned, as we could really make use of that in our summer grazing.

PRFA invited several guests to their Board of Director's meeting. What did your Dad think of that?

Jackie: He really enjoyed the topics and projects that are being worked on. Papa says he thinks "the PRFA is very beneficial in providing initiatives and

resourceful projects to enhance the forage and land management in the Peace region". He was encouraged to see that fire was on the list for possibly managing invasive woody plants. And he felt that the report back from Darryl and Bill very educational & interesting. (See their report on page 7 & 8.)

What were your key take home messages?

Jackie: It was really good to see that corn grazing could be done in our area and learn about it. The afternoon provided a great opportunity to discuss the cost effectiveness and the differences with other producers who were doing some corn grazing. Right now on our operation, after thinking through the costs, it doesn't seem financially feasible. But it's certainly something worth learning and exploring options! Another take home message was the importance of mineral supplements. The Tschetters shared how corn grazing did not work as well for them until they added minerals to silage and fed it on the side to compliment the feed quality in the corn. This makes sure the cows have all their nutrient requirements close to calving.



The Thiessen family hosted a tour & the directors' meeting in October, 2017.



Bill Wilson & Julie Robinson were given a quilt (made by many hands) & wooden bench (crafted by Rick & Chris Thomson) to celebrate their recent nuptials.



The National Beef Technology Transfer Strategy

by Ron Buchanan

Why does so much beneficial research sit on the shelves collecting dust instead of being implemented on our ranches? Numerous research results are available, that if adopted could put more \$ in producers pockets and add to the sustainability of our industry. Improving effective technology transfer is a big key to maintaining profits and developing a social license for both individual beef producers and the Canadian Beef Industry.

The Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) and the National Beef Value Chain Roundtable facilitated a National Beef Technology Transfer Workshop in September 2016 in Saskatoon to address the challenges of technology and innovation transfer. The workshop brought together a small yet diverse cross-commodity group of individuals representing British Columbia to Nova Scotia who are actively involved in beef or forage extension to discuss extension capacity in each province, best practices in extension, priority extension outcomes, and opportunities for collaboration. Sandra Burton capably represented the PFRA of BC after we received an invitation to participate. The document "The National Beef Technology Transfer Strategy" was developed. The priority outcomes related to extension were incorporated into the 2018-2023 Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy¹, which is informing the BCRC's next Science Cluster and other program development through Agriculture and AgriFood Canada, as well as influencing the funding strategies of other key beef and forage funding agencies.

One section of the document I found very interesting dealt with what the decision making process involves when adopting an innovation. According to Everett Rogers' Theory of Diffusion², the adoption of innovation is usually a social process. Only about 2.5% of people (the innovators) will readily adopt an innovation based on scientific research. The remaining 97.5% of people rely heavily on endorsements by their peers. Quoting this document directly:

When adopting an innovation, individuals go through five stages of a decision making process. First is awareness, in which they seek and process information to reduce their uncertainty about the potential advantages and disadvantages of the innovation. Next they develop a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward it, then make a choice to adopt or not, and implement their decision. Finally they will seek out information to reinforce their decision.

People's previous practice, felt needs, innovativeness and the norms of their social system will impact adoption and to what extent they will become knowledgeable about the innovation. It is important that information first be validated through sound scientific procedures (peer-review process) and that individuals considering adoption understand both how and why innovation works so they can make appropriate decisions about whether and how to implement it for greatest benefit. People's perception of the innovation's characteristics, including relative advantage (economic or otherwise), compatibility, complexity, observability and trialability, will determine whether they are persuaded to adopt.

It is believed that once adoption reaches 15-18% of the market share, diffusion becomes more self-sustaining and adoption will continue to spread with less effort. In order to increase and accelerate adoption rates, Malcolm Gladwell's "law of the few"³ states that three types of key individuals must contribute: connectors (are people who have incredibly widespread networks and can spread a message rapidly to a receptive audience), mavens (experts in a subject) and salesmen (people who specialize in the art of persuasion).

While there is much more in the document I would like to focus the remainder of this summary on the Best Practices To Achieve Innovation. This information is important for our PRFA members who have a sincere desire to continue to help each other be successful, so I have quoted it directly.

Identify & thoughtfully target key individuals first:

Key individuals include producers that are more likely to be early adopters, and producers who can benefit most by adopting the innovation. Key individuals also include industry stakeholders that are the "connectors", "mavens" and "salesmen", such as regional extension specialists, Verified Beef Production Plus coordinators, veterinarians and nutritionists. "Salesmen" in the beef industry are generally respected, trusted individuals with direct contact and established relationships with producers and therefore are more likely to effectively persuade. Information should be delivered thoughtfully to the key individuals, recognizing which types and sources of information are most meaningful and influential to the individuals. Relationship building, two-way communication and peer to peer learning are recommended. Ensure communications of potential benefits are not exaggerated nor have low predictability or repeatability, and ensure potential adopters understand associated risks, indirect impacts and the variables that influence success.

Enable and encourage the developers of the innovation to participate in technology transfer

Developers can be extremely valuable members of technology transfer teams, but many lack the time, resources, skills, networks or incentives to make meaningful contributions to technology transfer.

The National Beef Technology Transfer Strategy *continued*

by Ron Buchanan

Providing assistance, such as recommendations, templates, and opportunities to collaborate and learn from successful extension teams, is recommended.

Include end-users in R&D

Including producers and extension agents in research and development leads to more rapid and effective adoption because more key individuals can provide input and perspective on the innovations' relative advantages, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability.

Communicate with potential adopters through all five stages of the decision making process

Educating potential adopters on how and why an innovation was developed and functions does not necessarily lead to adoption. Communication is needed at each of the five stages (knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, confirmation) in order for innovations to be utilized correctly by those who will benefit. By collecting feedback during the confirmation stage, technology transfer agents can also refine their strategies.

In an age of constant and abundant information, delivery of valuable information needs to be done in a way that is memorable. Using interaction, influencing emotion, and incorporating respected peers is recommended. For example, have audience members participate in webinars by answering poll questions, include genuine testimonies from producers on videos, provide opportunities to test or practice using technologies at field days, and create interactive decision making tools that are customizable and enjoyable to use.

By following up on whether and how the innovation was adopted by producers, as well as how and whether it was beneficial, extension agents encourage the adopter to confirm their decision, are better able to help producers modify their adopted innovation for greater benefits if possible, make more informed decisions when encouraging other producers to adopt, and enable a feedback loop to the developer about future needs.

Be persistent

Recognize that behavior change is typically a slow process that requires continual delivery of information, timely engagement and favorable circumstances before adoption will occur, unless the benefits of adoption clearly exceed the costs.

References

¹ BCRC. 2017. Canadian Beef Research & Technology Transfer Strategy 2018-2023

² Rogers E.M., 1995, Diffusions of Innovations, New York Free Press of Glencoe

³ Gladwell, Malcolm, 2000, The Tipping Point, How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference, Little Brown

Sandra's note: Ron Buchanan represents our region on the Industry Advisory Committee with the Alberta Beef, Forage and Grazing Centre. They meet several times a year usually in Central Alberta. Ron and Sandra have also been invited to participate in a National Beef Technology Transfer meeting in mid Feb, 2018.



Canadian Forage and Grassland Updates

High-Performance Forage and Grassland Management Systems in Canada

By Bill Wilson

Prior to the Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association Annual Conference in Guelph, Ontario, November 15 & 16, a 2 day Technical Workshop was held. A major project of the CFGA is the Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program. The aim of the project is to develop a Forage Management Carbon Offset Protocol and the development of a Beneficial Management Practices Manual to support forage and grassland manager efforts to enhance soil carbon sequestration. Darryl Kroeker and I represented the PRFA at the workshop.

The first morning of the workshop was a general managers meeting. During the meeting general managers from across Canada reported on the activities from the provincial associations. The PRFA has a unique situation with CFGA. The BC Forage Council represents the province except for the Peace. The PRFA does not have a full membership with CFGA but are considered equals at the table. The range of forage related activities varied widely across the country. PRFA should be proud of our projects, communication, and member engagement. I don't think there is a group anywhere in Canada that has more projects on the go. Congratulations to our contractors, board, co-operators and members.

Session 2 was a review of BMP practices available to forage and grassland managers. The project contractor provided an interesting outline of challenges in developing Canada wide BMPs when each province uses a different carbon pricing system. For example; Quebec and Ontario have a Cap and Trade system, BC and Alberta are using a Carbon Tax, and some provinces have a combination of systems and of course some have nothing at all. Sorry but I can't explain how each system works.

Day 2 was an interesting day of several speakers presenting science reviews concerning GHG reductions for improved forage management. There was discussion on the selection of a baseline for improved carbon storage. For example, option 1: we start the increasing of carbon storage at a fixed time; or option 2: graziers that have been improving soil for a long time should be rewarded for the work they have already done. Option 2 was favoured by the group. Other papers discussed the options for possible reversal of carbon sequestration. An example of a reversal would be cultivation of the forage stand. A report from a Norway researcher showed higher than expected GHG emissions from winter feeding programs. This will be an area that needs more research.

How does all this technical information affect a producer in the Peace? During this winter the contractor and the CFGA will continue to review the carbon reduction protocols. During the summer months the project will work to develop BMPs (i.e. best management practices) and forage and soil sequestration potential. These protocols will be approved at the next CFGA conference in Calgary, November 2018. This is where the fun starts. The next phase of the project will be field testing the approved protocols with forage producers across Canada. Because of the PRFA history I'm certain we can be a part of these pilots.

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association Conference

By Darryl Kroeker

This fall, the PRFA board of directors requested that Bill Wilson and I represent our association at the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association Conference held in mid-November in Guelph, Ontario. Forage associations from across Canada were represented along with presenters from throughout North America. I would like to share a few highlights of presentations (in no particular order) that I found particularly interesting and which I thought had relevance to forage production in the Peace. For those interested in perusing all the presentations, I suggest going to www.canadianfga.ca/conference/ and under the "speakers" button, click on "2017 Annual Conference Speaker Presentations" to view the power point presentations submitted to the conference.

I admit that I get a little Peace River-centric at times in my perspective on forage production. However, Cassandra Cotton from Fertilizer Canada helped put the forage industry into a Canadian perspective for me during her presentation on 4R Nutrient Stewardship. The 34 million acres in cultivated forages comprise 40% of cultivated land in crop production, making it Canada's largest cultivated crop. Together with 36 million acres of native pasture and rangelands, they contribute over \$5 billion of economic value annually, third behind wheat (\$7.3 billion) and canola (\$5.2 billion). When you consider its direct contribution to an \$11 billion dairy and beef industry, the importance of forage production takes on a whole new significance for me! Yet these numbers will likely have to increase to feed a global population expected to top 9 billion people by 2050! The take home message I got from her presentation was that science-based nutrient management in crop production is an important factor in meeting increased global food requirements while achieving greenhouse gas emission targets. The resulting improvements in forage quality and quantity are key contributors to meeting these goals.

Continued on page 8

Canadian Forage & Grassland Updates *continued*

I have a keen interest in grazing management so the plenary session presentation by Richard Teague from Texas A&M University was right up my alley. His talk was entitled "Restoring Soil Health and Farm Livelihoods" and he promoted the benefits of regenerative grazing practices in general and the adaptive multi-paddock (AMP) grazing in particular. His recommendation of short grazing periods with long subsequent recovery periods requires a minimum of 10 paddocks and preferably 50 or more to maximize benefits. Other principles include; adjust stocking rate to match forage availability, graze moderately during the growing period, increase plant diversity to maximize stability, and distribute cattle to graze the entire ranch. Through his own research as well as published literature he documented increases of soil organic matter, increased micronutrients, increased biological activity, improved water infiltration, enhanced plant productivity, and increased livestock production resulting from improved grazing management. Our own PRFA work has demonstrated similar benefits and I'm sure there is more to come.

Two presentations shared the experience of respective ranchers in transitioning from cultivated agriculture to livestock production. Arlette Seib from the Dog Tale Ranch in Saskatchewan told the story about the decision to convert their 1600 acre mixed farm relying on renters and custom operators to a sheep ranch running 500 ewes. Her partner works off the ranch and the goal was to provide the equivalent of an annual income for Arlette. Their equipment is minimal: an older tractor with a loader, a seed drill, a side by side ATV, plus the help of several working dogs. Stockpiling forages extends the grazing season and hay is cut and baled on a crop share arrangement with a neighbour. Lambs are marketed directly off the ranch to the buyer. The lifestyle and economics seem to be working and Arlette maintains a blog for those interested in following her progress.

Tim Lehrbass of Lehrbass Farms in Ontario called his presentation "Backwards Thinking". Their 200 acre farm wasn't generating a profit and to reach its full potential required a large investment in equipment that wasn't economical for a small farm. Expanding the farm was out of the question with land selling at \$10-12 thousand/acre. He decided to seed 90 acres to pasture and use the remainder for hay, haylage, grazing corn, and corn silage. His conversion certainly caught the attention of a lot of neighbours! Tim keeps a pretty sharp pencil and the economics are working for Lehrbass Farms.

Tom Kilcer of Advanced Ag Systems LLC (www.advancedagsys.com) talked about the advantages of double cropping. His presentation is filled with graphs and charts that are a little overwhelming.

He has several projects across the northern United States and one in Lacombe, AB. He recommends using winter forages such as winter triticale to extend crop yields. For example, seeding triticale into the residue of a corn crop harvested early for silage would produce a harvestable forage crop early the following year. An alfalfa/grass mix could be seeded into the stubble remaining from the triticale and, with a long enough growing season, an early alfalfa crop could be harvested the same season without the yield losses associated with underseeding. While Lacombe is still a long ways south of the Peace, the concept is interesting and could be worth following up. Tom has a newsletter that can be subscribed to through his website for those interested in following his research.

Next year's CFGA conference will be hosted in Calgary, making it a little easier to attend for anyone who is interested.

Pre Conference Tour *By Darryl Kroeker*

I participated in the pre-conference tour the day before the conference began and one of our stops was at Marhaven Agri, a farm belonging to Chris Martin and his family. Chris and his partners have built a hay dryer they call the Chinook. The dryer will handle 2 large square bales at a time. The bales are conveyed into a chamber where perforated spikes are pressed into the bales from top and bottom sides. A 175 hp, 6.8 litre John Deere diesel engine drives the hydraulics, the blower, and supplies the heated 175°F air which is driven into the bales. After 12 to 15 minutes, bale moisture is taken from 20-25% down to 12-15%. Chris figures that he gains about 1% protein content by being able to bale at higher moisture. His bales are sold into markets in New York and Pennsylvania for 10-12¢/lb. If anyone is interested in additional information, call Chinook Hay Systems in Alma, Ontario at 519-580-6710.

The hay dryer presses perforated spikes into the bales from above and below, driving hot air throughout the bale to reduce moisture content by about 12% in 10-15 minutes.



Canadian Soil Health & Grazing Conference

by Julie Robinson

Bill Wilson and I attended the 2017 Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing in Edmonton in early December. This was 3 day joint conference collaboratively hosted between Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and the Western Canadian Grazing Conference. There was great line up of speakers over the 3 days. The chair, Nora Paulovich, and her team put a lot of effort into a great program.

The highlights for Bill and I included:

1. JC Cahill – What Plants Talk About. JC is a professor at the University of Alberta and he has a unique way of getting the producer to think about how plants communicate. He has a great video you can check out if you have 45 minutes “What Plants Talk About” <https://youtu.be/CrrSAC-vjG4>.

He started out asking, “How to control pests and weeds?” and “What fertilizers should I be adding to increase yield?” This led to follow up questions like, “How does a plant deal with competitors and enemies?” and “How does a plant find food? Can a plant assimilate and respond to information? **Can they make decisions based on risk and reward?**”

The first point is that dicots (broadleaf plants) make more decisions about where to put their roots than monocots (ie grasses). Then he went on to say that we often try to provide a homogenous (all the same) environment for the plants, but they work harder and perform better in a heterogeneous (varied) environment.

In the lab they stressed plants with a clipping and saw that for the first 120 hours (5 days) the plants responded by making random decisions. This makes a producer think about how continuous grazing affects the plants ability to hunt for water and food in the soil. If research indicates that a plant needs 5 days to start making good choices, then the plant that is being grazed in less than a 5 day rotation is acting like a sleep deprived decision maker. This is not great from a production stand point.

He then went on to talk about many other aspects of plant behaviour, ending with *“Not all roots are equal, smooth brome for example is killing itself.”* It feeds its own pathogens, making it harder for new recruits to establish, not a common trait in the plant community. Cahill indicated that more work will be done on the topic in the future as our ability to understand plants increases.



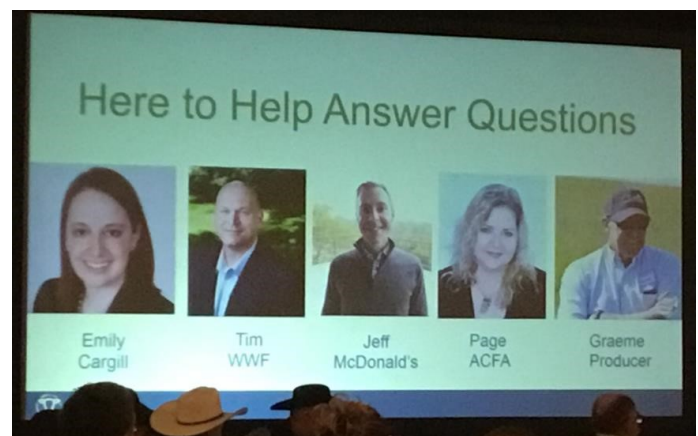
JC Cahill at the conference in Edmonton, AB.
Photo credit: Jeremy Simes.

These were just some of the tidbits JC shared with us, and he ended with a quote:

“For me it is far better to grasp the universe as it really is than to persist in a delusion; however satisfying and reassuring it is.” Carl Sagan

2. Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef. During lunch on the third day we heard from this group, which provided an update from what Graeme Finn had shared in PRFA’s past winter seminar.

What is the “The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB)” you might ask? It is a multi-stakeholder community devoted to advancing sustainability in the Canadian beef industry. It is comprised of organizations across the beef value chain and beyond including; farmer/rancher associations, academic institutions, processor and processor associations, food and agriculture businesses, non-governmental associations (animal care and environmental organizations), retail and foodservice companies as well as governments and observers.



Panel at conference to speak to Canadian Sustainable Beef production. Photo credit: Julie Robinson.

Canadian Soil Health & Grazing Conference *continued*

by Julie Robinson

It was great to hear non-producers speaking about **Canadian beef producers and their sustainable practices**. Jeff Fitzpatrick-Stilwell, from McDonald's did a great job of encouraging producers to participate in this program so that companies like McDonald's can share producers' sustainable stories abroad. Check out the webpage for The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef <https://crsb.ca/> to see more including:

Sustainability Benchmarking

The National Beef Sustainability Assessment **benchmarks the environmental, social and economic performance** of the Canadian beef industry. It highlights the areas where industry is doing well, and identifies opportunities for improvement.

The first assessment, completed in 2016, informed the development of the CRSB's Sustainability Strategy to help target future work, particularly under the CRSB's Sustainability Projects pillar.

Certified Sustainable Beef Framework

The Certified Sustainable Beef Framework, developed by the CRSB, provides the tool to certify farms, ranches and processing facilities against sustainability standards, enabling consumers to purchase beef from certified operations.

The multi-stakeholder membership of the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef developed the Certified Sustainable Beef Framework with the mission of driving the advancement and recognition of beef sustainability in Canada through a world class operation-level certification program.

3. Jim Gerrish - Building Pasture From the Soil Up

Jim Gerrish from May, Idaho, with American Grazing Lands and Services LLC, was another great speaker on day three. Jim has been to the BC Peace in years past, and gave a refreshing presentation at this conference. Jim made all 500 people in the room repeat:

I will have no fear of wasting grass!
Grass feeds grass!
Grass feeds the soil!
Grass feeds livestock!

He reminded me about the value of long recovery periods, using the number of leaves as an indicator of the plant's recovery. In general, below is a guideline assuming your plant produces 4 - 5 leaves (i.e. orchardgrass, timothy).

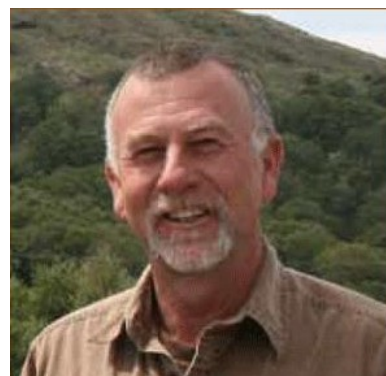
- ◇ Two leaves the plant is net extracting carbon from the soil
- ◇ Three leaves there is neutral to positive storage
- ◇ Greater than three leaves results in positive carbon storage in the soil

As you become familiar with your plant (i.e. brome with 4 - 10 leaves) you can modify this guideline.

Gerrish talked about how in most cases forages do not have a solar conversion issue (ie. they already get lots of sunlight, instead it is usually a water access issue that producers on dryland pasture (especially in the Peace) experience. Dry plants allocate more energy to roots in droughts. So its time to start thinking **"what is my plant doing"**. Jim suggested that in areas that get less than ten inches of precipitation during the growing season that we may have to accept one grazing pass per ten inches of moisture. He did say that he had seen some tighter turn arounds up in the Peace with alternate daylight, soil types and organic matter levels but that was a starting rule of thumb.

This echoed what we have seen on our pastures, in that sometimes they need more rest and respond better to a year off from grazing. We know for sure on our ranch, we will be spending more time thinking about rest and the number of paddocks to help achieve better restorations this coming summer. I think a great Jim quote is captured below:

"More than ever, you need to be in control of your operation. Cows are lousy business managers. Don't leave the critical management decisions up to cows. They don't care whether you make a dime or not.



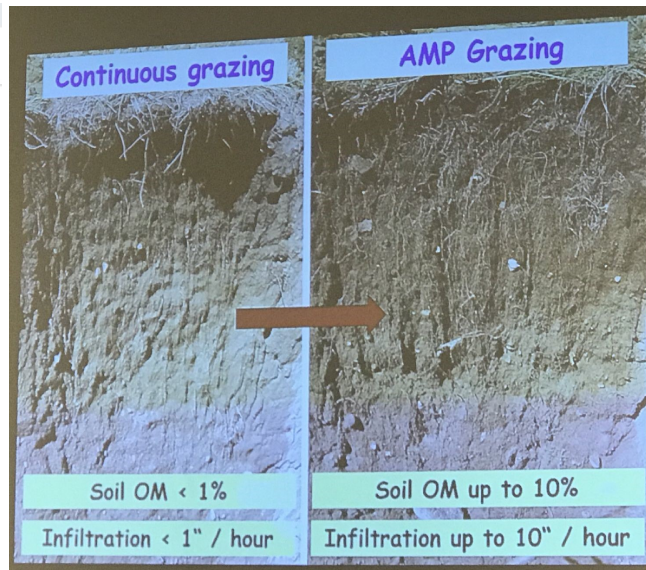
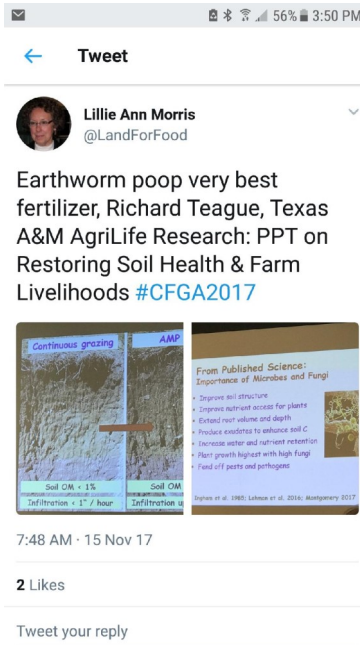
Your job is to create a ranch environment where the cow can be the best cow she can be. You need to manage the business side of the ranch and try not to do the cow's job for her. If you don't understand what that means, then you really need to attend a workshop." Jim Gerrish

Participation in these important conferences was supported by the PRFA of BC through their R & D project called, Improving Productivity & Profitability of Forages. See funding credits on page 15.

Browsings & Twitter

from various authors

Twitter about Richard Teague's Talk at CFGA Conference in Guelph in November



Sandra's note: Imagine increasing filtration of our awaited rainfall to 10" per hour by raising our soil organic matter. Photo credit: Richard Teague



Peace Region Speakers Well Received at International Conference in Edmonton



One item humble Julie forgot to mention in her article about the conference in early December is that she and Bill were asked to speak at this prestigious gathering of over 500 people.

Sometimes when we know people for a long time, we forget to truly appreciate them. I thought readers might enjoy the writeup about this duo in the conference program and feel proud:

"Bill was born and raised in Southeast Saskatchewan. Formal schooling received at U of S and formal education received in various pastures in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and BC. Presently operating a cow/calf operation which includes owned and custom animals mainly on rented land. In July of 2017 the operation came under new management.

"Julie Robinson & Bill Wilson participated in the last producer panel on the third day: 'What My Ideal Pasture Looks Like & How I Manage It.' With an aerial visual they described their various pastures and how they manage them, doing a great tag team presentation. Thanks!!"

*Nora Paulovich, NPARA
& Chair of Western Canadian Soil Health
& Grazing Conference Organizing Committee*

Julie was born and raised in the BC Peace and went to University in Prince George at UNBC. She has been working in agriculture and with many diverse operations for over 15 years. She has been fortunate enough to be raised on an hobby farm and live/work with several ranches in the Peace region over the years.

Because of their passion for short daylight hours, deep snow and cold weather, Julie and Bill live near Dawson Creek, BC."

Browsings & Twitter *continued*

from various authors

District of Taylor's New Year's Baby!

Matt Edgar & Lori Vickers

introducing their new baby son, Connor Graham Dale Edgar, born on Jan. 10, 2018 at 10:50 pm. weighing 8 lbs. 1 oz. & measuring 18.5 inches.



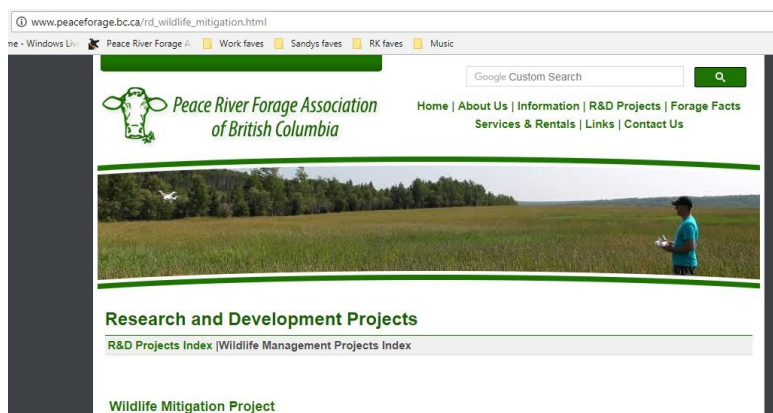
Women in Agriculture

"The growth of women farm managers is at 30% now with predictions of women owning 75% of farm land in the next 2 decades...Underserved by extension...In Alberta Women in Agriculture are highly visible leaders as we see all the women managers and staff in Forage and Applied Research Associations, ARECA as well as the County and MD. Environmental and Ag. Fieldmen, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, etc."

Grant Lastiwka, P. Ag., Forage/Livestock Business Specialist, AB Ag.

Wildlife Mitigation Website Pages Update

Thank you to **Talon Gauthier** for updating the links to the 4 pages of comprehensive lists of information on wildlife mitigation. Talon was hired on a small contract basis through PRFA Communications. See www.peaceforage.bc.ca



Project Information Sharing:

Below are links to pages that are filled with literature reviews, newsletters, factsheets and more related to wildlife mitigation. This is meant to act as a starting point for producers who are looking for information. In each case click on the highlighted green subtitle to get to the link.

Fencing Information: Information pertaining to both ungulate and predator fencing.

Ungulate Mitigation Strategies: contains information on hunting options and conflicts between wildlife and agriculture.

Predator Mitigation Strategies: information surrounding problem wildlife and control options.

General Wildlife Mitigation Strategies: these are a few publications that have information regarding both ungulate and predator mitigation.

The Challenge of Maintaining Legume Percentage in Cattle Forages



Trefoil advantage

The researchers also found better animal performance when mixtures contained trefoil instead of alfalfa. This is attributed to the fact that studies of trefoil have shown it has condensed tannins which improve animal performance.

"Trefoil has better animal performance but is harder to maintain in forages because it has a different growth strategy and animals will graze it to the ground so it can't recover and regrow," Duynisveld says. "red clover and alfalfa have a big crown, so they grow back quickly once grazed off."

Conducting the research while feeding cows on pasture gives the researchers a unique perspective. "Most research being done is with mechanical harvesting," Duynisveld says. "But cows are selective about what they want to eat. Their hooves impact the fields and when cows eat, they wrap their tongue around and tear and pull on the grass. This all has a different impact than mechanical harvesting does."

<https://www.canadiancattlemen.ca/2018/01/08/the-challenge-of-maintaining-legume-percentage-in-cattle-forages/>

A Day in the Life of a Peace Country Shepherd

by Andy Tschetter



Andy Tschetter, Scholarly Shepherd, Peace View.

November 7: A mild winter day here in the Peace starts out overcast and cool -6 C. A tepid sun appears at noon: rising winds clear the sky, revealing stark azure blue. Golden sunlight floods the landscape, it's rays invade every nook and cranny of the hilly northeast BC terrain...

Over the hill the ewes are grazing on an alfalfa field adjacent to the sheep pasture...the animals are content to browse the fall foliage as long as the snow keeps away. Most of the snow we had in October is gone thanks to plus temperatures at the beginning of this month...

Talked with Doug at Beaver Hill Auction in Tofield, Alberta today inquiring about lamb prices for the days sale...although slightly lower than last year at this time, all classes of lambs sold for \$1.80 a pound...cull ewes going for \$.75 to \$.80.

At 5 o'clock I put down my book and head out for the evening chores. (Please consider reading Joel Salatin's, "Folks this ain't Normal"! It's a hilarious read.)

First the Rams, they come sauntering out from under the trees to meet me knowing they are getting oats. (The human equivalent of a sour cream glazed donut.) A hefty Bramblewood Dorset stomps his foot as if to say, "C'mon now, the sooner you hand them over the better!" The others stand by watching, ready for a strategic dive when the grain hits the trough. My Higginson Southdown perks his ears, ever the diplomat he's saying, "Okay guys, share and share alike." I shake the oats... Forage First readers will know the rest of the story!

A few bruises, a little shaken I continue on with chores and head for the paddock where the replacement ewe lambs currently enjoy the top nutritional status of all the animals here at Peace ewe Farm. They hear me rattle the gate latch as I walk through the barn and come running to meet me. They are a versatile bunch; a culmination of genetics consisting of breeding stock from all over BC ... a delicious mix of cross lambs there is Suffolk, Dorset, Rambouillet, Romney, Border Leicester and Southdown!

The very best from the years lamb crop: I have watched them all summer as they ran with their mothers at pasture. As lambs they endure many a rainy Peace Country night, showing potential and adaptability early on, persevering, gaining and aspiring. By early fall they simply stood out, catching the eye of this shepherd. Deep bodied, thick chested and medium framed they are the Dexter cattle of the Ovine world making the selection decision easy for this Shepherd. I fork alfalfa hay into their feeders and pour them oats amounting to about half a pound each...the sound of the animals crunching away as the grain crackles the winter air.

Finally I climb the fence to give the market lambs their evening ration. Lounging lazily in the straw they rise and stretch as they see me coming. My pet Romney comes up...looks at me, "Hey, you forgot to fill my mineral tray!!" Ranging in weight from 95 to 110 pounds these lambs are on alfalfa hay and a barley and oat ration. Next week there will be some lambs ready for shipping. Everything over 110 pounds will likely be tagged; bound for Sungold. Although here on our little sheep farm we like to ship the lambs off grass Australian style, marketability depends largely on the availability of grass after September. Lamb prices are also a head scratcher for this weary Shepherd as are predators! This year we weaned the lambs end of September thanks to a rather devious coyote who persisted in making lambkills despite the best efforts by this shepherd to prevent it from doing so. We resolved the predator issue thanks to the deft and steady Mark Grafton and the good folks who make the Livestock Protection Program work. The coyote was promptly apprehended by a mitigator who was equally devious in catching the critter!!!

Another day in for this shepherd, the Lord willing. Before I go a big thank you to the BC Sheep Federation staff for their selfless work in promoting the advancement of the BC Sheep sector; which I think is a unique endeavor in this great province. There are challenges along the way, a dose of antagonism here and there but your work is appreciated.

To all you brave shepherds and shepherdesses out there; "Happy New Year!!".

Mentorship & Upcoming Events

by Bill Wilson

NEWS FLASH

More exciting information days are happening for PRFA members. The Peace River Forage Association has just signed an agreement with the BC Ministry of Agriculture to provide a series of three mentorship information meetings and workshops. Session 1 dates and speakers have been set, but Sessions 2 and 3 are still in the planning stages. This means that your input is still welcome. Session 2 will be part of the February Seminar and Session 3 will be in early to mid-March.

Forage Day/Mentorship – Session 1

Topic – Traceability and Livestock Marketing

Speakers:

Deborah Wilson, Sr. Vice President of BIXSco Inc. For those not familiar with BIXS it is a producer drive traceback system. When fully developed it will be able to provide all kinds of information about your animals based on your CCIA information. Producers, Auction Market, Feedlots and Killing Plants are all becoming involved. It will become a valuable tool at the cow/calf level used to select females and bulls used in the operation.

Monica Hadaritis, Programs and Certification Director, CRSB. The Certified Sustainable Beef Framework provides the tool to certify farms, ranches and processing facilities against sustainability standards, enabling consumers to purchase beef from certified operations.

Emily Murray, General Manager, McDonald's Beef North America. Emily will be providing producers the view from the consumer side of traceback and sustainability. McDonald's has been a very big part of the development of Certified Sustainable Beef Framework because consumers eating their burgers are demanding it.

Melissa Downing, Alberta Provincial Coordinator for the VBP+ Program. The BC VBP+ program is slightly different than AB with the fee structure but the information is the same.

There are two choices to hear these speakers on February 8, 2018. Either 9am in Fairview or 6pm in Dawson Creek. See more information below.

PEACE COUNTRY BEEF

★ CATTLE DAY ★

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8
@ DUNVEGAN MOTOR INN, FAIRVIEW

REGISTRATION & COFFEE @ 9 AM

HYBRID VIGOR: The Commercial Cattleman's Forgotten Advantage

- Dr. Susan Markus, Beef Research Scientist, Alberta Ag

NEW GENERATION BEEF INFOXCHANGE SYSTEM (BIXS)

- Deborah Wilson Sr. Vice President, BIXSco Inc.

LAUNCH OF CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE BEEF FRAMEWORK

- Monica Hadaritis, Programs and Certification Director, CRSB

CREATING VALUE TOGETHER THROUGH BEEF SUSTAINABILITY

- Emily Murray, General Manager, McDonald's Beef North America

VERIFIED BEEF PRODUCTION PLUS PROGRAM

- Melissa Downing, Alberta Provincial Coordinator for the VBP+ Program

For more info and to register contact NPARA @ 780-836-3354 or email nora@npara.ca
OR PCBFA @ 780-835-8799 or email monika@pcbfa.ca



Peace River Forage Association
of British Columbia



Traceability and Livestock Marketing

Join us for a pizza supper with speakers

Thursday, February 8

At 6:00 pm

Super 8 Hotel Meeting Room
Dawson Creek, BC

Deborah Wilson,
Sr. Vice President of BIXSco Inc.

Monica Hadaritis,
Programs and Certification Director, CRSB

Emily Murray,
Manager, McDonald's Beef North America

Melissa Downing,
Alberta Provincial Coordinator, VBP+ Program

Cost for members: \$10 per person
Pre-registration would be appreciated
Call or text: Bill Wilson 250 782-2866
Email: prfaevent@gmail.com

**Thank You to Our Industry Sponsors & Government Funding Partners for the
Fall Field Day on Sept 22, 2017
& Winter Pasture Walk on Nov 21, 2017**

Thank you to our hosts:

Brenda & Gordon Lazinchuk
Charlie & Else Walker

Jerry & Richard Tschetter &
Peace View Colony

Peace River Forage Association
of British Columbia



**Peace River
Regional
Cattlemen's
Association**



PRAD
Peace River
Agriculture
Development Fund

BC AGRI
Strategic
Outreach
Initiative



These events are part of two new projects: Improving Productivity & Profitability of Forages & Forage Staring Over Do's & Don'ts. These projects are partially supported through:
Peace River Agriculture Development Fund (PRAD) &
federal & provincial government programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF).
This event was also partially supported through: BC AGRI Strategic Outreach Initiative.

Upcoming Forage Events

Traceability and Livestock Marketing

*Join us for a pizza supper with speakers
Hosted by Peace River Forage Association*

Peace River Forage Association
of British Columbia



Thursday, February 8, 2018 @ 6:00 pm
Super 8 Hotel Meeting Room, Dawson Creek, BC

Deborah Wilson,
Sr. Vice President of BIXSco Inc.

Monica Hadaritis,
Programs and Certification Director, CRSB

Emily Murray,
Manager, McDonald's Beef North America

Melissa Downing,
Alberta Provincial Coordinator, VBP+ Program

Cost for member: \$10 per person
Pre-registration would be appreciated
Call or text: Bill Wilson 250 782-2866 or email: prfaevent@gmail.com

For more information on speakers and topics see page 14

Forage Winter Workshop

*Hosted by
Peace River Forage Association*

Wed. Feb 21, 2018

12 - 5:30 pm, Tower Lake Community Hall, BC

Peace River Forage Association
of British Columbia



How to Deal with Weather Extremes in Relation to your Forage Management

Climate: Change is constant how do we be adaptive,
Dr. Paul Bullock, University of Manitoba

How plants behave,
Dr. JC Cahill, University of Alberta

Local producer panel - what works well locally

Fencing as a tool - tips of what is being done locally,
where to start and other innovative ideas,
Garth Hein Gallagher

Speakers to be confirmed

Cost for member: \$30 per person including lunch
Pre-registration is strongly advised!

For more info or to register please call 250 262 7576 or email prfaevent@gmail.com