

Coordinator's Update: The Summer of 24

By Nadia Mori, PAg



Summer has come and gone like a whirlwind. The months were filled with field work and extension events. The trio of summer students were a tremendous help with getting all the Peace Region Living Lab sites measured, monitored and sampled. As a team we took care of a total of 24 project sites: 12 Peace River Forage Association sites, 7 BC Grain Producer sites and 5 Peace Region Forage Seed Association sites.

The summer students also supported the ongoing monitoring of our prescribed fire sites at Ardill Ranch, near Hudson's Hope and Thiessen Ranch, near Buick. Once the summer staff went back to school at the end of August, it felt a little lonely but no less busy.

In early October I got to re-visit the prescribed fire sites in collaboration with a team of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff to take post-burn soil samples & complete a vegetation assessment update.



One of the grazing enclosures at the Ardill Ranch on the prescribed fire project site provides a comparison of burnt + grazed versus burnt + ungrazed areas.

Right: Ben and Noah, technicians with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, are taking soil samples to help determine carbon content and microbial activity following prescribed fire.



Photo credit: Heather Fossum

Left: Dr Sonja Leverkus, myself, and Jack Thiessen at the Fire Wagon 1 reveal and pasture walk on August 13. Jack commented that Sonja and I are "the long and short of it!"

The summer was also packed with events. From the June pasture tour to the Fire Wagon reveal, the August grazing series, & the 3-part Digging It soil workshop, there were many wonderful moments of coming together and sharing ideas and experiences.



Photo credit: Heather Fossum

A moment that made me feel accomplished and a touch emotional, when we were able to present the community of local farmers and ranchers with access to the first of two Wildfire Structural Protection Units, or Fire Wagons.



In mid-September I got to tour a team of AAFC scientists to some of our Peace Region living lab sites. Standing next to me is Dr Kirsten Hannam, one of three principal investigators for our living lab, as well as Dr Emma Stephens, a research scientist looking at the socio-economic aspects within the project.

Intense but very rewarding was the 3-part Digging It soil workshop series where I had the great pleasure of watching Sandra Burton and Rick Kabzems work their magic with soils.



Another treat was seeing our own Heather Fossum sharing her forage plant knowledge & how they might fit with various soil properties. While, Albert (dog) is stealing the show.



Finally, a big thank you to H Fossum, (communications) and Christy Thomson (bookkeeper), who surprised me with a lovely bouquet of flowers "just because" which really cheered me up in the middle of it all.