

forage VIEWS



April 2018



In This Issue

Meet Our Newest Board Members!.....	1
EFP Help Sessions	2
Diet Formulation for a Research Trial – What did the Cattle Say?.....	3
Funding Opportunities	5
News from the Office	7
Got Thistle?.....	8

Important Dates

- Apr 24: EFP Help Session
- May 8: EFP Help Session
- May 24: EFP Help Session
- May 30: Weevil Order Deadline

MEET OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBERS!

As always, with March came WCFA's Annual General Meeting, and as it usually does it brought some new faces to our Board of Directors.

This year we had three directors finish their time on our board. We would like to extend a sincere thank-you to Grant Taillieu, Stacey Meunier, and Eric Vanderwell for their contributions to our board and our organization over the last number of years. We had three wonderful individuals step up to fill the vacant spots left by Grant, Stacey and Eric, and we would like to take a moment now to introduce you all to the three new faces on our board.

BRUCE CHURCHILL

Bruce lives in Rich valley Alberta with his wife and three children

where they run an Angus base cow/calf operation (ranch).

Bruce describes his career as Drilling Consultant & Rancher. His favourite pass time is riding through his cattle on horse back, his favourite movie is Lonesome Dove and his favourite food is roast beef .

ROD NIKKEL

Rod, together with his wife Bernadette, own and operate Dry Lake Ranch. They have five children who are actively involved in the family farm. Running 250 cow-calf pairs and 250 registered Canadian Arcott ewes on 1500 acres of owned and rented land southeast of Barrhead in the Highridge area keeps the whole family busy. They bought three-quarters of good grazing land in



WCFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Grant Chittick
Vice President: Brian Dickson
Treasurer: Greg Malyk
Secretary: Dale Engstrom

Larry Kidd Bruce Churchill
Therese Tompkins Frank Maddock
Rod Nikkel Brett Byers
Shayne Horn

STAFF

General Manager
Melissa Freeman

Forage & Livestock Program Manager
Fito Zamudio Baca

Conservation Ag & Extension Program Manager
Jessica Watson

CONTACT

ph: 780-727-4447
5009 45 Ave
Entwistle AB
Box 360, Evansburg ABT0E 0T0



AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITY FUND

This publication is made possible by funding from our major sponsor, the Agriculture Opportunities Fund (AOF), Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

1995 and have never looked back since. Their success is due to Rod’s creativity and willingness to try new things, and Bernadette’s attention to details and superhuman organizational skills.

TERESE TOMPKINS

Therese grew up and worked on a large dry-land grain farm near Wrentham Alberta. After completing a degree in Plant Science at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, she worked with Alberta Agriculture on many environmentally based extension programs. The most recent program was the

Alberta Environmental Farm Plan. Therese now works with Agri-Trend/Trimble to provide independent agrology to local farmers. She has guided the amalgamation of several independent community groups into one, coordinates community events like curling and Peers Gold Dust Daze, and gets involved in 4-H whenever she can. Therese looks forward to working with West Central Forage Association to learn about regional agricultural issues and how various forage systems and governance systems can be a solution.

← ← CHECK OUT THE NEW BOARD!

EFP HELP SESSIONS

Need assistance with your Environmental Farm Plan? Not sure how to start or renew your EFP? Consider attending one of our upcoming help sessions!

DATES

April 24, 10AM-2PM Lac Ste. Anne County Office
May 8, 10AM-2PM West-Central Forage Association Office
May 24, 4PM-8PM Lac Ste. Anne County Office

Pre-Registration is required for all sessions. To register for a session, or for more information on the EFP process, please contact Jessica at 780.727.4424 or conservationag@westcentralforage.com

Stay tuned for more help sessions to be made available in the future!

**Note: to qualify for CAP funding under the Stewardship program you will need to have a current (less than 10yrs old) EFP.*



DIET FORMULATION FOR A RESEARCH TRIAL – WHAT DID THE CATTLE SAY?

(FOLLOW-UP TO THE ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY'S ISSUE)

Hushton Block, Ph.D., AAFC (hushton.block@agr.gc.ca @hushtonblock) | Jeff Colyn, M.Sc., AAFC

I previously described how I went about selecting supplements for silages being used in a research trial. I had a disclaimer indicating that all the information presented was based on the feed tests and nutritional modelling process I had gone through in planning that trial. I commented that the predictions derived from the models have accuracy issues, and that the actual results would follow. This is a preliminary presentation on what the cattle said.

TRIAL METHODS

The weight of feed ingredients placed into the feed truck and the amount of feed delivered to each pen of cattle were recorded daily for each of the 112-day feeding trials. The steer calves were fed in the morning

and feeding management was targeted to allow ad libitum intake while achieving slick bunks. Weekly samples of feed ingredients were collected for dry matter (DM) determination and composited monthly for further analyses. Feed ingredient DM was combined with feeding records to determine pen average DM intake on a per steer basis.

The steer calves were weighed in the morning before feeding. Weights were collected on two consecutive days at the start and end of the trials, and every 28 days during the trials.

Backfat thickness of steers was measured every 28 days by ultrasound scanning between the 12th and 13th ribs in correspondence with the carcass grade site.

DRY MATTER INTAKE

The DM intake of the steers on this trial was lower than the nutritional evaluation model predictions. Averaged across both years and both silage types used for the study, the observed DM intake of the steers was about 2 lb per steer per day (15% lower than predicted). The feed intake prediction was generated assuming no effect of weather. However, the winter feeding conditions should have increased feed intake. Housing the steers in pens with sheds for shelter and generously bedding with barley straw would have minimized the effect of cold temperatures. Steers likely consumed some of barley straw used for bedding, but likely not in amounts that substantially altered feed intake. Feed intake was greater for the Bunker triticale silage diet than the Canmore barley silage diet in 2016-2017, but did not differ between treatments in 2017-2018.

RATE OF WEIGHT GAIN AND BACKFAT

The observed rate of gain for the steers was about 2 lb per steer per day. This is much better than the ~0.5 lb per steer per day that was predicted for an unsupplemented silage diet. Adding corn dried distillers' grains (DDGs) as a source of bypass protein to bring the

TRIAL RESULTS

Table 1. Observed intake and animal performance*.

	CANMORE BARLEY SILAGE		BUNKER TRITICALE SILAGE	
	2016-17	2017-18	2016-17	2017-18
DM	12.4	14.0	14.3	14.1
INITIAL WEIGHT	633	621	632	617
FINAL WEIGHT	852	878	845	841
ADG	2.0	2.3	1.9	2.0
USBF GAIN	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.2
FEED CONVERSION	6.37	6.07	7.53	7.10

* DM - lb of dry matter intake per steer per day; Initial weight - weight of steers in lb at the start of the feeding trial; Final weight - weight of steers in lb at the end of the feeding trial; ADG - average daily gain of steers during the trial in lb; USBF gain - ultrasound backfat gain in mm; feed conversion - lb of feed dry matter per lb of steer gain. Data for 2017-2018 is preliminary and has not been fully edited.



metabolizable protein supply into balance with the energy available from the diet appears to have improved steer gains.

Averaged across both years and both silage types used for the study, the observed gain of the steers was just under 0.3 lb per steer per day (12%) lower than predicted for the supplemented diets. The lower than predicted gain for the supplemented diets was not large or surprising. The impact of winter feeding conditions, not included in the predictions, would have been to increase maintenance requirements, reducing the energy available for gain.

There was no effect of diet on rate of gain in 2016-2017, but the Canmore barley silage diet resulted in a greater rate of gain than the Bunker triticale silage diet in 2017-2018. Similar effects were observed for backfat gain with no effect of diet on in 2016-2017, and greater backfat gain for the Canmore barley silage diet in 2017-2018. Although the increase in backfat indicates an improvement in steer condition that is not always

desired with backgrounding, the gain was <3 mm over 112 days on feed. Backfat levels of ~9-10 mm are generally needed for most cattle to grade AA or AAA, making this a relatively small gain in condition. Without supplementation to balance out protein and energy supply to the steer calves, we would have expected lower rates of gain with greater fat content, which is not desirable.

FEED CONVERSION

Although the effect of diet on intake, rate, and composition of gain varied across years, the impact on feed conversion was more consistent. In both 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 the Canmore barley silage diet treatment resulted in more efficient gains than the Bunker triticale silage treatment. Although the feed conversion was better for the Canmore barley silage diet, it is worth considering that Bunker triticale has some agronomic advantages in regard to yield and harvest window that may result in it being the more economical choice.

When compared to the Alberta Beef, Forage, and Grazing Centre baseline feed conversion of 11:1 for heifers on forage-based diets, there were improvements in feed conversion of >30-40%. For the Canmore barley silage, the average feed conversion of 6.2:1 compares more closely with our baseline of 5.85:1 for steers on a high-grain finishing diet. The diets we fed were forage based with ~75% silage and 25% corn DDGs supplement on a DM basis. Careful nutrient balancing and a focus on performance allowed for feed efficiencies approaching those expected for high grain finishing diets.

DISCUSSION

With feed costs being the largest single cost in beef production, these improvements in feed conversion have to contribute substantially to our goal of reducing the cost of backgrounding by 50%. This result was achieved not by attempting to minimize cost of feed through use of the lowest cost feeds, but by using feed analyses and diet evaluation models to predict intake and gain, and combining those results with feed and supplement pricing data to select options that minimize the cost of gain.

This study was funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and conducted with the assistance of the Lacombe Research and Development Centre staff.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP (CAP)

As of April 3, 2018 CAP has officially replaced the Growing Forward 2 program (which ended on March 30, 2018). CAP is a five-year, \$3 billion federal-provincial-territorial investment in the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. In Alberta, CAP represents a federal - provincial investment of \$406 million in strategic programs and initiatives for the agricultural sector.

The CAP program will consist of a phased roll out of its 15 programs over the spring, summer, and fall of 2018.

Four of the programs opened at the beginning of April. They are outlined below.

FARM WATER

This program will support producers to improve their water supply security and more efficiently manage their on-farm water resources, and support producers to protect their water resources through beneficial management practices. Projects that may be eligible under this program include things like new wells, dugouts, pipelines, etc. as well as off-source watering systems for any man-made water sources (dugouts, wells,

etc.). Projects are eligible for up to one-third of expenses, to a maximum of \$5000 per applicant.

IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

The purpose of this program is to increase water savings and reduce energy use in irrigated agriculture by assisting producers with the purchase of more efficient irrigation equipment and systems. This program assists producers with eligible costs incurred for the purchase and installation of a new low-pressure centre (LPCP) pivot irrigation system, a drip irrigation system or an upgrade of an existing irrigation system.

STEWARDSHIP-GROUP

The purpose of the Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change - Group program is to support extension delivery, carry out applied research, and strategically manage data (through producer groups and agricultural organizations) that improve producer understanding of key environmental practices that, when implemented, can increase market access for the producer.

STEWARDSHIP-PRODUCER

The purpose of the Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change - Producer

program is to support producers in reducing negative impacts on the environment while enhancing sustainable production, managing climate change and increasing profitability in the agriculture sector.

Activities include (but are not limited to) Beneficial Management Practices, such as:

- Watering systems
- Watercourse crossings
- Riparian fencing
- Manure application
- Grazing Management Strategies
- Agricultural plastic bag rollers
- Shelterbelts
- Wetland Assessments

You do require a valid Alberta Environmental Farm Plan to be eligible under this program. A valid EFP is one that has been completed within ten years of your application/completion date. You may still apply to the program if you haven't yet completed or renewed your EFP, but you will not be issued a cheque until your EFP is complete.

An important note for anyone that had accessed funding under GF2 is that the program caps are reset under CAP, meaning if you

Yellowhead County

Woodlands County

West-Central Forage
Association



were maxed out on a program under GF2, you are no longer maxed out and are eligible to apply under CAP.

The programs still remain first come, first served, but many of the programs have now moved to a merit-based system to determine the cost-share amounts. Generally the higher risk the project addresses the higher the cost share. Cost share will be determined the approval officer, or it may be

sent to a review committee depending on the complexity of the project.

If you would like more information on the CAP programs be sure to check out their website www.cap.alberta.ca and subscribe to program alerts for any programs you may be interested in (including ones that are not open yet, it will alert you when they open).

If you have questions about

any of the programs or need assistance with any of the applications please contact Jessica at 780.727.4424 or conservationag@westcentralforage.com

FARM ENERGY AND AGRI-PROCESSING PROGRAM (FEAP)

The energy efficiency program from Growing Forward 2 is now a stand alone program under the Government of Alberta. The FEAP program shares costs with the agriculture and agri-processing sector on energy efficiency investments. The program is designed to encourage energy managements which will result in cost savings, energy conservation and ultimately, in reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Examples of items eligible under this program include: energy audits and assessments; electricity, natural gas, and liquid submeters; new construction insulation; lighting (LED lighting for greenhouses, luminaires, etc.); heating (boilers, furnaces, etc.); ventilation; energy-free and low energy livestock waters, etc.

For more information and for the complete funding list please visit: www.agriculture.alberta.ca/feap or contact Jessica at 780.727.4424 or conservationag@westcentralforage.com for information or assistance in completing your application.

Kala Ranch

Black Angus Yearling Bulls
For Sale
by Private Treaty

Virgin, Vet Checked, Semen Tested

Call Geza (780) 515-0616

Nojack, AB

For more info look for us on Facebook

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

The first few months of 2018 have come and gone, and hopefully Spring will fully arrive soon! The beginning of 2018 has certainly kept everyone, including our staff, quite busy!

January saw us start off the year hosting Joel Salatin and Steve Kenyon for "Take this Farm and Love it, A Stockman Grass Farmer Business School" in Stony Plain. We partnered with Gateway Research Organization to bring this business school to producers.

We began February with our Ladies Ranching Retreat held in Spruce Grove in partnership with Parkland County. We had a ton of fun at our sold out event with all the lovely ladies that braved the blizzard weather to join us! It was a great day of learning, networking and inspiring

speakers.

In partnership with Yellowhead County, we hosted another information session on the upcoming changes to the regulations on livestock antibiotics in Peers. The event was well attended and the group was extremely engaged.

February 10th saw us partner with Leduc County to bring Curt Pate to Thorsby for a cattle handling demonstration. Curt is a true professional and everyone in attendance was sure to have taken something home with them from this workshop. We would like to extend a thank-you to Thorsby Stockyards and FCC for sponsorship of this event.

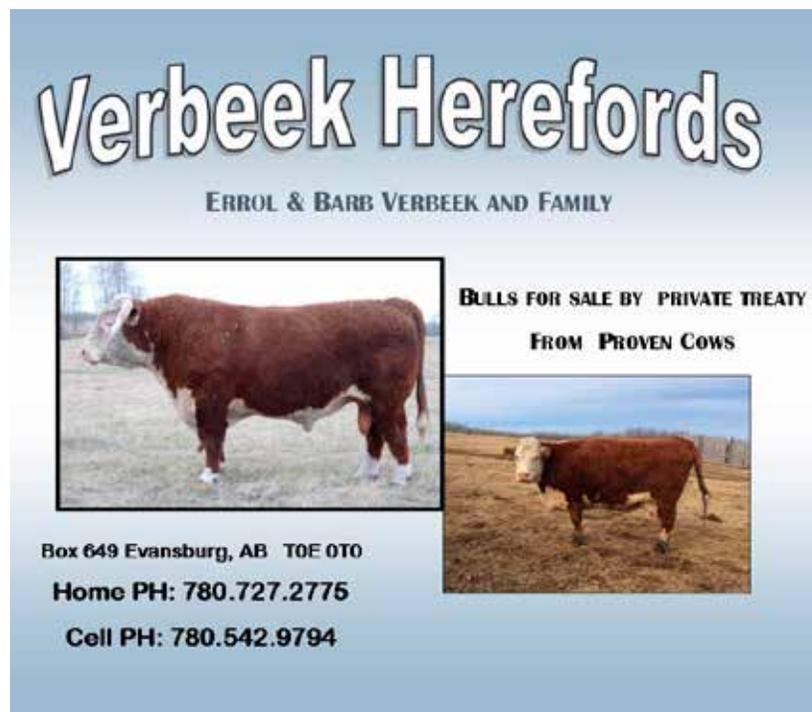
In early March we partnered with Alberta Ag and Gateway Research Organization to host a

High Legume Pasture Seminar in Fort Assiniboine.

Jess was given the opportunity to attend a lecture given by Dr. Temple Grandin on animal behavior and handling. It was an incredibly interesting session, and she gained a different perspective on handling systems and animal behaviours.

The arrival of March once again meant it was time for WCFA to hold their Annual General Meeting. We gathered at the Evansburg Legion on March 15 for an evening of updates from the previous year, the General Meeting and our guest speaker John Knapp who talked about the future of agriculture. This year saw three of our wonderful board members finish their terms, and thus we welcomed three new board members to our team. We would like to thank Grant Taillieu, Stacey Meunier and Eric Vanderwell for their hard work and dedication to our board over the last number of years, we know they will be missed. Stepping in to fill the vacant spots were Bruce Churchill, Rod Nikkel and Therese Tompkins returned to us after a year off. We are very excited to begin working with these individuals.

The end of March kept Jess busy with EFP workshops, as there has been a lot of interest in EFPs with the new Canadian Agricultural Partnership funding set to open soon. We held one at the county office in Fort Assiniboine and a number of



Verbeek Herefords
ERROL & BARB VERBEEK AND FAMILY

**BULLS FOR SALE BY PRIVATE TREATY
FROM PROVEN COWS**

Box 649 Evansburg, AB T0E 0T0
Home PH: 780.727.2775
Cell PH: 780.542.9794

people were able to complete their EFPs that day. Another was held at the Lac Ste. Anne County office near Sangudo that same week, and again, a number of producers were able to complete their EFPs that day. If you missed these workshops, keep your eyes open for more coming in the future. If you are interested in the Alberta EFP program, or need assistance with starting, completing or renewing your EFP please contact Jessica at 780.727.4424 or conservationag@westcentralforage.com. You can also visit www.albertaefp.com

for more information.

Melissa was out and about throughout the month of March, attending the Alberta Forage Industry Network AGM and ARECA Strategic Planning. Melissa & Jess were also able to make it out to the Chittick Family Bull Sale on March 2 to network with producers and support our board member, Grant Chittick.

At the beginning of March we also opened up weevil orders for the year. There are very limited quantities being offered this year, and orders have been filling up quite fast. We were

also able to access some more releases of the stem-gall flies to be delivered around mid-June. For more information or to order your Canada thistle biocontrol agents please contact Jessica at 780.727.4424 (o) 780.518.2086 (c) or conservationag@westcentralforage.com

We're currently busy at the office gearing up for our summer season, and anxiously awaiting the arrival of some nicer weather. Stay tuned for updates on what we have going on for projects this summer in future newsletters.



GOT THISTLE? ORDER YOUR WEEVILS TODAY!

WCFA is now accepting orders for 2018 delivery of Canada thistle stem-mining weevils.

**LIMITED QUANTITIES AVAILABLE!
LESS THAN 100 TRAYS REMAINING!**

Orders will be accepted on a first come, first served basis, and payment is required to complete your order.

**Price: \$200 +GST per tray
(100 individual insects per tray)**

For more information or to order please contact Jessica at 780.727.4424 or conservationag@westcentralforage.com

Note: there are a few trays of stem-gall flies remaining as well if you would like to get in on the 2018 order!