

UPCOMING EVENTS



Gabe Brown
Visits Alberta

HARVEST SUNLIGHT - FEED THE SOIL

**Tie Grazing &
Cropping Systems
Together with Cover
Crops and :**

- Reduce erosion
- Increase soil organic matter
- Manage excess nutrients
- Biological nitrogen fixation
- Increase biodiversity
- Suppress weeds & disease
- Manage soil moisture
- Improve infiltration

Where: Vermilion Regional Centre
5702 College Dr. Vermilion
Date: October 29th, 2014
Time: 1:30pm - 4:30pm
Cost: \$20 per person
Contact: Vicki at (780)582-7308
or email:
forage@battleriverresearch.com
to register or for more info
Event Sponsored by:



Cow-Calfenomics

Seizing Opportunities in the Alberta Cow-Calf Sector

Date	Location	Venue
November 25, 2014	Medicine Hat	Medicine Hat Exhibition & Stampede Company
November 26, 2014	Lethbridge	Lethbridge College D.A. Electric Barn
November 27, 2014	Olds	Pomeroy Inn & Suites
January 20, 2015	Grande Prairie	Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
January 21, 2015	Barrhead	Summerdale Community Hall
January 22, 2015	Vermilion	Vermilion Regional Centre

The agenda this year will cover:

- Meat and Cattle Fundamentals for Herd Planning- Opportunities and Threats to Expanding the Cow Herd
- Linking Pasture Systems to Optimize Beef Performance and Profit
- Transition Tactics
- The Cost of Bred Heifers
- Managing Prosperity in the Beef Industry
- A Helping Hand; HR Strategies for the Ranch and Farm
- A Producer's Perspective; Innovative Business Models

For more information go to agriculture.alberta.ca/cowcalfenomics



BUILDING SOIL - CREATING LAND



DR. CHRISTINE JONES

INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED GROUND COVER & SOILS ECOLOGIST

Jones works with landowners to implement regenerative land management practices that enhance biodiversity, maximize photosynthesis, increase soil biological activity, sequester carbon, activate soil nutrient cycles, improve water holding capacity and infiltration, increase productivity and create new topsoil.

"Organic carbon is the basic building block for all life on and in the earth. We cannot live without it. Neither can our soils. Rebuilding carbon-rich agricultural soils is the only real productive permanent solution to taking excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere."

OLDS COLLEGE
Lecture Theatre in Land Sciences Bldg. (Rm 1027)
TUESDAY, NOV 4
2:30 PM - 8:00 PM

To register contact the Foothills Forage & Grazing Association @ 403-652-4900 or email cassie@foothillsforage.com
COST includes supper:
\$25/ per person
\$40/ per farm unit
\$15/ student

AGENDA:
2:30 pm
Coffee & Registration
3:00 pm
Soil Carbon:
Getting the basics right
4:00 pm
Linking Carbon, Nitrogen & Water Cycles
5:00 pm - Supper
6:00 pm
Re-activating Soil Forming Processes
8:00 pm
Wrap up



Christine will also be presenting at:
RYCROFT AG CENTRE
MONDAY, NOV 3
9:30 AM - 4:00 PM
If this location is more convenient for you, please register by contacting NPARRA @ 780-836-3354/npara@npara.ca or PCBFA @ 780-523-4033/mbenoit@gprc.ab.ca

Battle River Research Group
Box 339 Forestburg, AB T0B 1N0
PH: (780) 582-7308 or 1-866-828-6774
Email: admin@battleriverresearch.com



Harvest time with BRRG

Battle River Research Group
FALL 2014

BREAK-EVEN REALITIES IN 2014

There is no doubt that the 2013 crop year was phenomenal both in terms of price and production. It seemed that prices, production and profitability were at an all-time high. These factors have come back down to earth in 2014. The optimism of last year carried forward well into the spring of 2014. When discussing production estimates with producers this spring many were basing their estimates on the yields they received last year. The production function is an important aspect in determining things such as cash rent, break-evens, and credit requirements. This fall, the combination of more normal yields and reduced prices, could result in a perfect storm of reduced profitability.

When planning ahead, it is important that a farm manager uses realistic numbers to determine break-even prices and yields. In a crop like canola, which typically has the highest cost of production, yield

estimates are especially critical. At current direct expenses of approximately \$290/ac in the black soil zone it will take 35 bushels at a market price of \$8.25/bushel just to break even. Fixed costs of an additional \$90/ac will bump up the breakeven yield to 46 bushels.

Forward planning based on bumper crop yields and peak prices can result in disappointment and possibly jeopardize the financial integrity of the farm business. A more reasonable approach is to use sensitivity analysis to give a more realistic picture of potential profitability. Sensitivity analysis uses a combination of worst case, best case and most likely case for both price and yield. Using a tool like Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's CropChoice\$ software will help you develop a sensitivity analysis. CropChoice\$ uses a Monte Carlo simulation to give you the odds of achieving a break-even gross margin. A trick to using CropChoice\$ to develop break-evens for an individ-

ual crop is to duplicate a single crop's attributes in Field 2 of the input screen. This will give you a break-even for that individual crop. By using the same method for other crops one can develop break-evens for up to 8 different crops to give you a way of finding which crop has the greatest profit potential. A little bit of realistic forward planning can go a long way in taking out some of the surprises in farming.

If you have any questions regarding farm management, give us a call at the Ag-Info Centre. Our phone number is:

310-FARM (3276)

Ted Nibourg, B.Sc.Ag, M.Ed.
Farm Business Management Specialist

Alberta
Agriculture and
Rural Development

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Government
of Alberta



MAKING HAY WHEN THE SUN DON'T SHINE

Battle River Research Group

www.battleriverresearch.com

“Producer Driven”

Cool and wet fall weather is great for pasture recovery and for easing forages into dormancy, but not so good for drying hay. It is not uncommon for fall conditions in the central and northern areas of the province to be too cool and wet to allow the swath to get down to the ideal 15%-18% moisture. So, what do you do when your second cut is on the ground and it is too dry to silage but too wet for hay? Well the short answer is to salvage what can be salvaged and feed it quick. The big advantage we have in Canada is the cool fall temperatures give us some grace to bale forage up tough and still come out okay. It's sort of like storing your salad in the fridge rather than on the counter. The cooler temperatures can slow down the rate of spoilage giving you a chance to get the forage fed while there is still value. Definitely not the ideal situation and it is highly dependent on the weather, but it is a useful strategy when snow is in the forecast.

Forage baled between 18-35% is highly variable and unpredictable so should be fed first and with caution. Wet warm bales provide an

ideal habitat for bacteria and mold growth, and it is the activity of the mold and bacteria that cause the bales to heat. Protein in bales that reach 50 degrees Celsius or higher lose their value as the protein is converted to a form that is unavailable to livestock. The cool fall temperatures reduce the amount of heat produced in the bale by slowing down the activity of the bacteria and mold, as well as cooling the bales faster and keeping them from reaching the critical 50 degrees Celsius.

So use the assets that living in a northern climate provide. Ken Ziegler suggests “only putting 900 lbs of feed into the space of a 1200 bale. When the bale is popped out of the baler, you will be able to slip your hand into the side of the bale quite far and quite easily compared to a tightly made bale. This allows the moisture to exit easier and the heat to dissipate.” Line bales up in north-south rows to minimize the exposure to the sun, and increase the surface area exposed to the westerly fall winds. Leave a 4-6 inch gap between bales within the row and space the rows far apart to increase circulation and enhance cooling. Keep wet bales out of doors for the best

circulation and at the front of the stack where they can be accessed and fed first.

Wrapping bales can also be an option. Ideally bales should be 35-50% range to ensure they ensile. Lower than 35% moisture and it is difficult to remove the oxygen and spoilage is common. Again the cool temperatures we have in the fall and winter slow down the rate of spoilage buying time to get the bales fed. Foragebeef.ca has several articles and fact sheets from across Canada that are excellent resources for learning the ins and outs of making quality bale silage. [http://www1.foragebeef.ca/\\$foragebeef/frgebeef.nsf/all/frg67](http://www1.foragebeef.ca/$foragebeef/frgebeef.nsf/all/frg67).

When dealing with forage put up under less than ideal moisture time is of the essence. Cool temperatures help to slow the rate of spoilage giving you the opportunity to feed it before it spoils. You cannot control the weather so concentrate on the things you can control and make the best of whatever situation Mother Nature sends your way.

Linda Hunt P.Ag
Forage Specialist
Alberta Ag-Info Centre

Soon to be released...

“COMMERCIAL VEGETABLE PRODUCTION ON THE PRAIRIES”

There is a significant demand for fresh vegetables in Alberta and across the Prairies. There are many market gardeners and commercial vegetable growers that work to meet that demand each year. Each year, there are new growers that enter the industry, with a range of vegetable production experience.

In the coming weeks, a new resource for vegetable producers will be available. Representing close to 5 years of work and the contributions of experts from across the Prairies, “Commercial Vegetable Production on the Prairies” is a comprehensive resource and reference tool for new and experienced



vegetable growers of all scales of production. This 300 page, full colour manual covers all aspects of vegetable production, from the initial planning of an operation, to planting, harvesting and storing a crop, managing fertility and irrigation or managing business risks and issues. Detailed production and pest management information for a wide range of specific vegetables makes up the bulk of the manual, including many pictures of diseases and insect pests.

This new manual will be available from Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Publications office at 1-800-292-5697 (toll-free in Canada) or visit: www.agriculture.alberta.ca/publications for more information.

The price for this book has not yet been determined but will be priced affordably.

Alberta
Agriculture and
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“SPEAK UP FOR SAFER EQUIPMENT” Tool Now Available

For Safer Equipment” tool is intended to provide a way for farmers, manufacturers and standards organizations to talk about safety concerns with agricultural equipment manufactured within the past five years.

The online form handles safety concerns where farm equipment is being used for primary agricultural production. It is not intended to handle cases where legal proceedings are taking place, where there are labour relations concerns or issues related to financial transactions.

Once a farmer has filled out the online form, CASA will review the safety concern and either will forward the issue directly to the appropriate manufacturer or, if the concern is a

universal issue, forward it to the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). As well as providing information to manufacturers and the CSA, the “Speak Up for Safer Equipment” tool will give CASA data on potential safety-related trends affecting farmers.

“The tool isn't designed to hurt the reputation of any manufacturer or individual,” Blahey says. “Speak Up for Safer Equipment” will foster better communication and education be-

tween farmers, manufacturers and standards organization and will ultimately reduce the potential for injuries.”

The “Speak Up for Safer Equipment” online tool will be available in August on CASA's website at: <http://casa-acsa.ca/speak-up-for-safer-equipment> Concerns can also be reported by phone at (877) 452-2272.

- August 25, 2014 -

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers, their families and agricultural workers. CASA is funded in part by Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial & territorial initiative and receives additional support from the agricultural and corporate sectors including: Farm Credit Canada, the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, CHS and TransCanada Corporation. For more information, visit: www.casa-acsa.ca, find us on Facebook or LinkedIn or follow us on Twitter @planfarmsafety



The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) has developed a new online tool that gives farmers an opportunity to express their concerns about possible hazards with farm equipment. The “Speak Up

“We decided to develop this online tool after routinely receiving calls from producers who were frustrated that their concerns weren't being heard,” says Glen Blahey, Agricultural Health and Safety Specialist for CASA.