



GRASSROOTS NEWS & VIEWS

Photo Credit—Lee Gunderson



Unit 4A, 710 Centre St. SE, High River, AB T1V 0H3
Phone: (403) 995-9466 ~ www.foothillsforage.com

March 2018

Director's Note - Tamara Garstin

Greetings Foothills Members!

The last director's note I wrote was in October and winter was just starting so hopefully this one will bring on winter's end as it seems to be dragging on for far to long!

Have you had a chance to take a break from winter chores and the daily routine of winter woolly underwear? Taking a break from the winter can be a good way to hit the refresh button before calving and seeding starts. It's also a great way to reward yourself, your family and your farm employees.

I was lucky enough to be able to take the first Foothills Spain trip and what an experience it was! We had 33 people with us, and all from varying backgrounds.

Our first stop was Barcelona and wow do they have traffic! There was some trouble with the bus getting lost but to be honest, I don't blame the driver. There was one

spot that was three roundabouts deep and each had six lanes wide!! Trying driving a large bus in that plus motorcycles that cut through traffic whenever and wherever they like. We quickly learnt to just not watch the traffic!

However at Barcelona, we were able to see two very interesting stops. We visited with a beef producer that raises a specific breed for the area (Bruna Pyrenean breed). This breed is known for its nice temperament and quick gain weight. His operation was really interesting as most of it was done on grazing similar to what we grow here. He was currently calving so we were able to see the cows maternal instincts and calving vigour. Overall, it was a informative and pleasant visit.



Spain Tour Group #1



Bruna Pyrenean Breed

The second visit was to a massive food distribution center. The center itself is actually a full city. It covered 95 acres and had thousands of people in it. They had their own day care, restaurants, banks, hotels and even schools! They have done a lot to keep their employees happy and working there.

This "market" was a place for farmers to bring their crops and livestock to. Then they would be given a price for that day and had the choice to sell or not. They took everything from carrots to cows. Then they had sellers that would

IN THIS ISSUE

Annual General Meeting—March 20 th	4
FFGA JOB OPPORTUNITY Environmental & Communication Coordinator	5
Calving Book Technology: There's an App for That!	7

store owners, chefs and small market buyers. It was incredibly interesting and one of the highlights of the trip. One thing we couldn't get over was the organization of it all (they fed 10 million people a day) and the freshness and high quality of the produce. We were all craving fruit and veggies when we left!

Another really amazing stop was a farm that raised the bulls for the bull fights (Toro Bravo). The manager lead us through the tour and he was an excellent entertaining speaker. Let me tell you though, those bulls mean business! These bulls are so aggressive that they lose 20% to them fighting amongst themselves!

None of us were brave enough to get off the little trolley and walk amongst the bulls. We have a really mean cow at home that will chase you even when your feeding and this cow is nothing compared to these bulls! Having said that though, I am still considering the idea of exporting her to Spain. (These are the black bulls with the horns in the picture.)

Spain was full of amazing visits, wine and wonderful people. Portugal was next up and didn't disappoint.

We saw some incredible churches and history there. We also saw a beef association specific to the area (Association of Breeders of the Alentejano Beef Race). These cattle where massive. (These are the red cattle in the pictures.) They are descendants from oxen so they were very friendly and tall. All of them have horns and they don't castrate anything either as they don't get discounted for that. They calve around 60 pounds and wean around 500 lbs. It was really interesting to see how they are trying to persevere the bred and how they are also trying to make it yield more while maintaining feed efficiency.



Toro Bravo Bull



Alentejano Breed

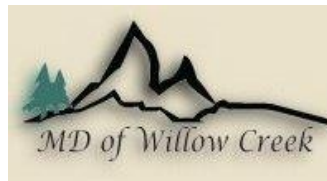
Also at the Alentejano Beef Race Association, they showed us cork trees. These grow in the pastures and every nine years they cut the bark off by hand. Each tree has a revenue of about \$500 so not bad for something that is just standing around!

It was a really good trip and everyone was really great to travel with! The company truly makes the trips with Foothills and I highly recommend going on one. We always find cool stuff and have a great time !

I also recommend coming to our AGM on March 20th at the Travelodge in Strathmore (see ad in newsletter). Calving is coming up quickly and we will be talking about the future of the cattle market and price projections for producers. I like knowing ahead of time how I will market my calves and I am looking forward to hearing what is to come. I hope to see you there and feel free to come by and ask me more about the trip!

Tamara

Thank you for your support!



IT'S TIME TO RENEW!!

2018 Foothills Forage Membership!

For just **\$30.00/year** you can become a part of the innovative network of Foothills Forage! FFGA members receive our monthly newsletter, attend our events at discounted rates, have first access to FFGA events and much more! FFGA currently provides workshops within our region in Southern Alberta.

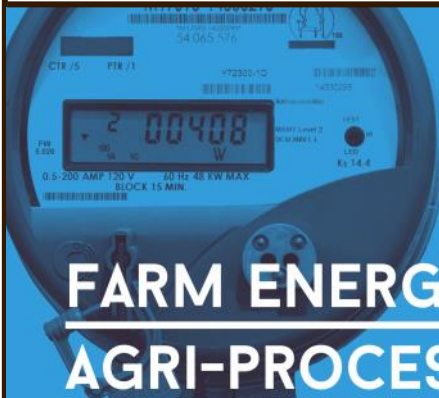
Payment & Renewal Forms Available ONLINE at:

www.foothillsforage.com/membership

We hope you join us!

*Memberships are valid from January 1 to December 31 of the respective year

** FFGA Membership covers one farm business unit or family and 1 vote at the Annual General Meeting



FARM ENERGY AND AGRI-PROCESSING (FEAP) PROGRAM

FEAP is a combination of two discontinued GF2 programs:
On-Farm Energy Management Program
Accelerating Agricultural Innovation Program (Stream C)

**FARMS
RANCHES
AGRI-PROCESSORS
ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES**

Ag-Info Centre: **310-FARM (3276)**
agriculture.alberta.ca/feap

Canada

Alberta
Government

We've MOVED!



The new FFGA Office
is located at
**Unit 4A, 710 Centre Street SE,
High River, AB
T1V 0H3**

*Just south of Walkers Western Wear
across from Fly Fishing shop.*

*Stop in easily, coffee is always on and
plenty of information resources to use!*



Brian Perillat, BSc. MSc. P.Ag
Manager/Senior Analyst – Canfax

Brian Perillat has been the Manager at Canfax since April 2010. Brian grew up on a mixed farming operation near Duck Lake, Saskatchewan and continues to be involved with the family farm. Prior to working at Canfax, Brian worked as a livestock production economist with Alberta Agriculture and also spent over 4 years working with MNP as a farm management consultant. Brian has had the privilege of travelling and working on farms and stations in Australia and New Zealand, as well as visiting farms in north and west Africa.

Annual General Meeting

**Featuring a Market Update
with Canfax's Brian Perillat**

"More Cattle, More Meat, Now What?"

10:00am Registration
(start at 10:20am)

\$30/person
\$30 annual membership
Lunch Included

Also Featuring:

- Barb Archibald, Growing Forward Extension Specialist, Agriculture & Forestry
 - CAP Program Update
- AgSafe Program Information Update

Register online at:
<https://ffga2018agm.eventbrite.ca>

March 20, 2018
Travelodge Strathmore, AB

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Elections for five seats on the FFGA Board of Directors will be held at the AGM on March 20th. (2 vacant & 3 Directors up for re-election of 2nd term). Elected Directors are eligible to serve up to two consecutive three-year terms and must be an FFGA Member in good standing.

If interested, email nomination to manager@foothillsforage.com

****Please include a short description of candidate, which will be read prior to election****



NOW HIRING

Foothills Forage & Grazing Association: Environmental & Communication Coordinator

The **Foothills Forage & Grazing Association (FFGA)** is looking for a full-time Environmental & Communication Coordinator. FFGA is a non-profit producer organization based out of High River. FFGA focuses on all aspects of forage and livestock production in south central Alberta through demonstration trials, newsletters, social media and extension events which includes workshops, seminars and tours.

This position offers the opportunity to grow and develop FFGA's environmental and communication programs under the direction of the manager and board of directors. The successful candidate will interact closely with producers, researchers, extension specialists, industry and educational institutes.

Job Description:

- Lead FFGA's Communication Program including the monthly newsletter, website, social media, membership and promotions
- Manage, deliver and promote FFGA's Environmental Program including extension, Environmental Farm Plans and providing information on the Canadian Agriculture Partnership to primary producers
- Plan, advertise, execute and report on environmental demonstrations and events
- Actively pursue additional funding as applicable to environmental demonstrations and events
- Report to and work with the manager

Qualifications and Skills:

- Practical working knowledge of agriculture in western Canada
- Ability to use computers and related technology efficiently
- Ability to communicate effectively in written, verbal and electronic formats
- Ability to work within timelines and meet deadlines
- Organized and reliable
- Motivated to excel both in a team environment and independently
- Valid driver's license with a clean abstract
- Environmental or agriculture science degree or diploma combined with experience will be given preference

Salary is based upon qualifications and experience. Personal health benefit package provided.

Please submit a cover letter and resume to:



Manager
Foothills Forage & Grazing Association
Email: FoothillsForage@shaw.ca

Application Deadline: March 23, 2018

Start Date: May 2018

We thank all applicants for their interest; however only those selected for interviews will be contacted.



WATER

& Agriculture Conference

SAVE
the
DATE

NOVEMBER 22, 2018

Learn about: Managing environmental risks, How agriculture and wetlands can coexist, Understanding what the Alberta Wetland Policy means to you, Projects for grazing sensitive areas, Repairing riparian areas to increase profit, Identifying and rehabilitating buffer zones, Making the most of marginal land, Agriculture water footprint & social license

SAVE the DATE!

JULY 24th-25th, 2018

15th Annual!

Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women

Staveland, AB

TOPICS INCLUDE:

Verified Sustainable Beef Program
Grazing Research
Utilizing Electric Fencing
Range Health
Plant ID
Grazing Principles and Practices
Riparian Health

For more info contact:

Kristi Stebanuk @
403-382-4345

kstebanuk@cowssandfish.org



Follow us on Facebook!
"Grazing School for Women"



Connect with the FFGA on social media!



ON-FARM SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAICS (OFSPV) PROGRAM

To be eligible for funding, a Photovoltaic system must be:

- Grid-tied, not off-grid
- Approved under Alberta's Micro-Generation Legislation
- Positioned to optimize sunshine and minimize shading
- Have manufacturer-warranties on: Solar modules, Racking, Inverters and/or Micro-inverters, and
- Installed on a Site ID that has a Distribution Rate Class of Farm, Irrigation, Grain Drying, or equivalent

Retroactive projects that have been completed AFTER APRIL 15, 2017 are eligible. See website for more details!

Ag-Info Centre: 310-FARM (3276)
agriculture.alberta.ca/solar

Calving Book Technology: There's an App for That!

Taylor Grussing, South Dakota State University Extension

February 8, 2018

In today's day and age, we rarely go anywhere without some kind of technology in our pocket or vehicle. Even in the livestock industry, there is an app for many of the tasks we conduct each day that can make our lives easier if we take the time to learn how to use them. From keeping track of markets, banking, and now even calving records, there's an app for that too.

Choosing the Right App

Calving season is a busy time for beef producers and it seems every year a calving book gets washed with valuable information never to be read again. The development of several calving book apps in the last few years has left producers asking which one is best and what specifications to look for before purchasing. Here we will discuss some tips to consider before purchasing just any calving book app.

- **Inputs** Apps should have inputs for cow inventory, sire inventory, along with calving data. If the app is to be used year to year, check to see if new data can be added each year without removing old data. Some example calving inputs to look for include: Calf identification number, birth day/year, birth weight, sire/dam ID, color, calving ease score, single/twin, udder score, teat score, and location (pasture). In addition to calving data, other herd information that may be valuable in the same app including breeding season and pregnancy check to easily determine who the sire is and expected due date.



Photo credit: www.Drovers.com

- **Accessibility and Compatibility** Does the app need to be accessible at all times? Identify apps that can be accessed even when data or wifi services are not available. The app will likely synch to an online storage system when cellular service becomes available, but may need to be set for this to occur and keep everyone using the app updated. Also, if multiple people will be entering information into the app, make sure all phones are compatible with the same app (android vs. iPhone). Lastly, if the calving app is being accessed by two users at the same time, be sure data can be entered simultaneously without complications.

- **Storage** What type of storage or data program does the app synch too? Options may include online cloud storage, computer or record keeping programs. In addition, file type is important and should be in a format that data is easy to use and capable to generate reports as needed. Example file types may include text, excel, pdf or even breed

Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors

Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



specific database programs. Also, is the app compatible with a computer or ipad? If apps are only accessible on the phone, it may be difficult to see mass quantities of data at one time, sort data or even print reports. Bottom-line, making sure data is backed up and accessible once entered into the app is critical in case a phone goes missing on the 4-wheeler or lost while bedding the barn.

- **Fees** Most apps will offer a free-trial for 10 – 30 days before charging a monthly or yearly fee for services. Also, apps may vary in the amount of storage or number of animals that can be entered into the system. Seek out how much data can be stored and if extra animals can be added for a fee if that storage limit is met.

Additional Features In addition to calving records, look for additional features such as breeding information, gestation calculator, semen tank inventory, grazing plan, and weaning and pregnancy data.

The Bottom Line

If apps aren't for you, at the very least keep your calving data in at least two places: two calving books (one in the pickup and one in the house), or a calving book plus an app to keep it safe. Record keeping is necessary for beef producers to make benchmarks and progress from year to year. The famous saying you can't manage what you don't measure is true, and adaptation to new calving book apps can have a place in making recordkeeping easier and keep producers on track this calving season.

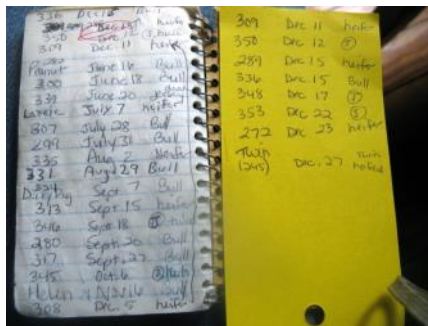


Photo credit:
www.happilymarriedtothecows.com

IMPORTANT SURVEY as Growing Forward 2 Expires

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has developed a short online survey for input on the program concepts for the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) set to begin in April 2018 after Growing Forward 2 (GF2) expires in March 2018. This can be completed by anyone so it can be passed along to producers as well.

This survey offers agriculture stakeholders the opportunity to make suggestions on the proposed CAP program concepts. Input provided will equip Alberta Agriculture and Forestry to provide programming that meets the needs and priorities of Alberta's industry.

The five priority areas identified by Alberta are:

- Science and Research
- Risk Management
- Environmental Sustainability
- Products, Market Growth and Diversification
- Public Trust

Survey Link open until March 18, 2018.

If the links above do not work please connect through:

http://www.growingforward.alberta.ca/NextPolicy/index.htm?contentId=CD_F_NEXT_POLICY&useSecondary=true



*Technology can help you,
unless you are this guy...
Then you're just in trouble.*



FFGA MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

Mission: Assisting producers in profitably improving their forages and regenerating their soils through innovation and education.

Vision: We envision a global community that respects and values profitable forage production and healthy soils as our legacy for future generations.

This Publication is made possible by our two major funders - the Agriculture Opportunity Fund and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.



ALBERTA FORAGE INDUSTRY NETWORK



Board of Directors

President:

Sean LaBrie
(403) 999-3089

Vice President:

Andy Hart
(403) 625-2060

Treasurer:

Ben Campbell
(403) 803-9190

Directors:

Graeme Finn
(403) 312-2240

Rod Vergouwen
(403) 934-6228

Morrie Goetjen
(403) 863-7484

Tamara Garstin
(403) 333-0376

Alex Robertson
(403) 558-3799

Steve Yule
(403) 734-2517

Stan Wiebe
(403) 888-7797

Staff

Interim Manager:
Jennifer Duckering
manager@foothillsforage.com
Cell: (403) 560-0927