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GRASSROOTS NEWS & VIEWS

December 2016

Director's Note

Another year is almost gone. It was a year of unusual weather. The end of the winter was very mild which made for a much easier calving season. The first part of spring was on the dry side making for a slow start on forage and crop growth. Then it started to rain and pastures started to come on good. A well-managed pasture really stood out in the crowd this year. On July 1 a wind and hail storm turned 2/3 of our knee high crop of barley down to 3 inches. A bit of a change of plans although it did come back well for a late crop of silage. The rest of the harvest finally came off in early November. It is a big challenge to respond to the changes of Mother Nature.

Looking forward into 2017 there is a First Aid Workshop in Airdrie on Jan 16 & 17. This is great opportunity to learn the skills that will give you compliance with Bill 6

and help you to protect yourself, your employees, family, and community. It may seem like a waste of time going to a workshop like this but if you help one person in an emergency then it is time well spent. That person may quite easily be a close family member or a total stranger.

Ladies Livestock Lessons are January 28 in Balzac and February 9 is Ranching Opportunities in Olds. This year's theme is "Smart Strategies for Your Ranching Business". Featuring Andrew Campbell of #farm365 on The Young & Farming and Cattleland Feedyards on Conventional vs. Natural Beef Finishing.

We hope to see you at our Christmas Party on Dec 16 in High River! Stay tuned for more workshops and field days as there are more in the plans.

Merry Christmas to you and yours from the board and staff at the Foothills Forage & Grazing Association!

Stan Wiebe

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CALVING CLINIC

FT. JIM BAUER

JANUARY 19
PINCHER CREEK, AB
HERITAGE INN
1:00P.M. - 4:30P.M.

Join Jim Bauer as he speaks to the pros and cons of calving at different times of the year, nutrition and energy requirements for different times of the year, and healthy environments for calving – grass versus in the corrals.

The afternoon will also feature a local veterinarian on common calving problems—what you can handle and what should be taken in to a vet.

Register by calling 403-700-7406 or
Online at calvingclinic.eventbrite.ca

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.

Thank you for your support!



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
Cultivating Communities

Are Stockpiled Forages Your Winter Grazing Insurance?

Finding ways to stretch fall and winter feed, reducing the need for harvested hay, can lower beef producers' costs. One method is to stockpile pastures, grazing them later in the season.

But depending on a variety of factors, Mother Nature chief among them, cows grazing stockpiled pastures may need a little nutritional boost as winter weather grips the landscape.

"Typically, the quality of stockpiled perennial forage in terms of protein and energy is more than adequate to meet requirements of a pregnant beef cow in her first and second trimester," says Bart Lardner, Western Beef Development Center, University of Saskatchewan.

"As days get colder, however, with winter wind the forage may not meet requirements, and you'll have to step in with some kind of supplement," he says.

The need for supplement, and the type needed, will depend on pasture quality and condition of the cows. "If they're in good body condition going into stockpiled pastures, they can maintain condition until weather gets cold. This can change from one week to the next, and cows may start to lose condition. Using a supplement adds cost, but you may still want to prolong the grazing period," Lardner says.

Grasses that don't retain quality and nutrients during winter can be used with a little protein supplement, which is usually cheaper than feeding hay. "Our killing frosts are generally in early October. By November or December, producers are starting to graze stockpiled winter pastures," says Jerry Volesky, range and forage specialist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

For the first month or two, the forage quality is still fairly good. But by January, it's usually wise to provide a protein supplement, he says.

According to Tim DelCurto, Nancy Cameron chair of the Department of Animal and Range Sciences at Montana State University, it can be hard to determine forage quality; it is not always consistent year to year in the same pastures. While at Oregon State University's Eastern Oregon Agricultural Center, DelCurto did research in the Great Basin and some work at the research station at Union, Ore., with fescue.

"Winter weather has a profound impact on the quality of stockpiled forage. A cold Arctic blast drives quality down," DelCurto says. "The plant might have had some green through fall, but extreme cold temperatures takes the green right out.

"On the flip side, in a mild winter with some precipitation, some plants will actually green up. The quality fluctuation is dynamic," he says. Producers must adjust their management to environmental variation.

"Be strategic in supplementation. Protein is usually the main focus. Alfalfa hay is usually a good supplement for beef cattle on stockpiled forages and can be fed every other day," says DelCurto. This works in locations where you can get hay out to the cattle. If terrain is too rough, you might haul blocks or tubs periodically and let cattle eat those free-choice.

"The important thing is to not feed too much. The goal is to just feed enough protein to meet cows' nutritional requirements and optimize intake of stockpiled forage. In studies we did in the Great

Basin, we found that 3 to 6 pounds of alfalfa per head [daily] was ideal," he says. "If we fed more, we were just replacing some of the forage they would otherwise eat, with minimal increase in cattle performance.

"On stockpiled tame pastures, we've gotten by fairly well with a barley-soybean meal supplement that's about 30% crude protein, feeding 3 pounds per head per day, or about 21 pounds a week. We compared feeding daily vs. three times weekly, and it came out about the same," DelCurto says.

How to stockpile forages?

The advantages of grazing stockpiled forages are many, the researchers say. But how best to plan your management approach?

Volesky says there are a couple ways to do this. One is to use annual forages planted in summer. Another option is to use perennial forages that were lightly grazed during summer, or not grazed at all until fall or winter.

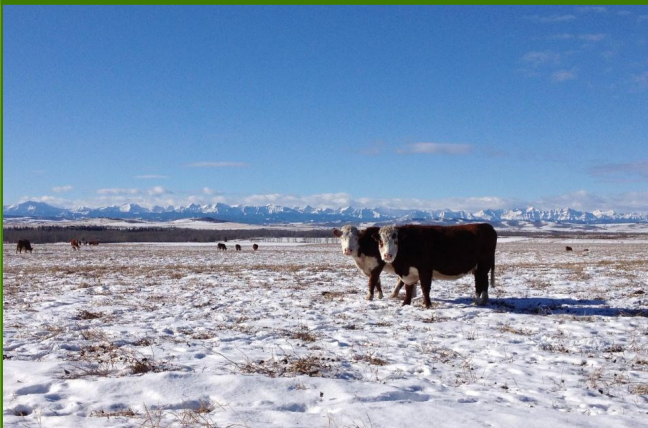
The limiting factor is buildup of ice and snow that hinders accessibility. "We conducted a three-year study here and each year was different. The first year we had an open fall and grazed into January. The second year we had deep snow by late October. You have to work with what Mother Nature gives you," says Lardner.

Forage species

Volesky mentions a producer who plants



Are Stockpiled Forages Your Winter Grazing Insurance?



will be slow deterioration of the plant; leaves fall off or blow away, so quality will eventually decline,” says Volesky.

Some grasses stockpile better than others. “A common practice where producers grow a lot of tall fescue is to graze it early, then let regrowth accumulate. Tall

fescue stockpiles fairly well for later use,” says Volesky.

Ryegrasses are often used for fall and winter grazing. Depending on the variety and climate, these may be annuals or perennials. “Also, the farther south you are, they keep growing longer into winter, providing high-quality green forage. In Oklahoma, for instance, they stay green all winter long,” he says.

Nearly any forage species can be stockpiled, but for perennials, Lardner suggests using cool-season grasses because they maintain quality better as the season progresses. Research evaluating cool-season grasses for this purpose has looked at brome grasses, fescues, wheat grasses and some of the legumes, he says.

“We see a lot of leaf loss with alfalfa, especially if it’s left standing. Cattle are grazing mostly stems. Even in a windrow you get some leaf loss. Alfalfa is better for a late-summer grazing system than stockpiled for fall and winter grazing,” says Lardner.

“Wheat grasses, such as crested wheat, are good, and some of the rye grasses like Russian wild rye also hold their protein well into fall. These are known as both spring- and/or fall-grazing species,” Lardner adds.

Some of the fescues work well, especially creeping red fescue or tall fescue.

Smooth brome grass and meadow brome grass can also work. “We mostly looked at tame forages,

but there is also potential to utilize some of the native meadow grasses someone might choose to pasture into the fall rather than put up as hay,” according to Lardner.

Tame grasses vs. native range

“When we stockpile tame pastures, we may graze early and take the cattle off to allow some regrowth. This holds the phenology back a little; grass will be shorter and less mature — higher in nutritional value in the fall than if it had been growing all summer and completely mature,” DelCurto says. Likewise, early-cut hay meadows that have adequate regrowth are good candidates for stockpiled forage.

“We sometimes try this on rangelands, but many regions are so arid that timing grazing to allow adequate regrowth is tricky,” he says. Most Western rangelands can only be grazed once. If you want to graze in the fall, you don’t graze then at all in the spring.

“Best management practices often encourage producers and/or range managers to not graze during growing season. For Great Basin ranges, some people say it should be grazed only once every three years during growing season. It’s better to graze it out of season, when it’s dormant. These ranges are often best deferred in use — for fall and winter grazing,” DelCurto explains.

This gives the grass every opportunity to recover, grow and go to seed. Grazing when it’s dormant has very little impact on root reserves of the plant; you are using aboveground material when it’s not trying to grow.

By Heather Smith Thomas

Reprinted from Beef Cow-Calf Weekly
www.beefmagazine.com

sorghum-sudan grass and cuts it once for hay, then leaves it growing until frost. “After frost, he grazes that standing stockpiled forage.”

Summer annuals work well for this, as do “cocktail” mixes that include warm- and cool-season species. “These contain cool-season forages like oats, turnips, oilseed radishes, and a warm-season forage like millet or sudangrass, planted in August. These mixes grow until frost and can accumulate a lot of growth, with 1.5 to 2 tons per acre by the time they are grazed,” Volesky says.

“With mixes, it’s best to wait until well after frost to graze, because with warm-season annuals you can run into prussic acid problems after frost. Let them freeze down all the way; then by November, they can usually be safely grazed,” Volesky says.

Some cool-season species like oats or turnips wouldn’t be completely frozen yet; a mix provides good nutrient quality, he explains. There is always something that does well even when growing conditions vary from year to year.

Perennial pastures can be grazed lightly in spring or not at all, saving them for fall grazing. “This can work with both cool- and warm-season perennial grasses. They are mature by the time they are grazed, but when they freeze down in the fall, whatever stage of growth and maturity they were at that time [in terms of quality] is captured at that stage — similar to what it would be if it were cut for hay at that point. Over winter there

Farmer's FIRST AID

Gain compliance with Bill 6 and learn how to react in an emergency situation



Standard First Aid (2 days)

Comprehensive training on CPR/AED usage and skills, cold and heat emergencies, strains, sprains, breaks, burns, respiratory, cardiac and circulatory emergencies. We discuss how to deal with situations until EMS arrives.

COST: (plus GST)

FFGA Members:

Adult \$70, Student \$50

Non Members:

Adult \$130, Student \$120

*\$30 for an annual FFGA membership

**8 person minimum to run the course*

AIRDRIE

Airdrie Ag Centre

97 East Lake

Ramp NE

January 16 & 17

Registration Deadline:

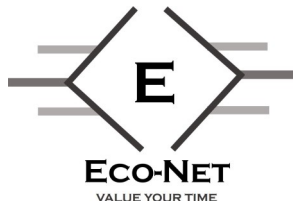
January 11

Call 403-995-9466 or email rachel@foothillsforage.com to register
Visit: www.phillipsolutions.ca for more information on the course

Biodegradable Net Wrap Trial

Hi all!

My name is Carly Shaw and I am in my second year of commerce studies at the University of Calgary and currently enrolled in an entrepreneurship class.



In this class we were tasked with developing a product for the RBC Fast Pitch Competition and my first thought was to develop a product that would be beneficial to producers. This is why I am working to create a net wrap that is biodegradable, digestible and durable. If we win this competition we will receive a large amount of money to develop our product however I need to prove to the judges that this is something that cattle producers want. We are still in the developmental stages of finding the right material to use but are making great progress in this area.

To make this product possible I need to hear what your opinions are as producers. I am looking for information like; are you interested in this product, what would

you like to see in this product, current struggles you have with your net wrap.

If this is something that interests you please contact m. The feedback I receive from you is extremely valuable in developing a product that will work for producers. I can be contacted at carly.shaw@ucalgary.ca or 1 (780) 835-9757 and I hope to hear from you soon!

Thank you,
Carly Shaw



Now Hiring: FFGA Interim Manager

The **Foothills Forage & Grazing Association (FFGA)** is looking for an interim manager to cover a maternity leave based on 32 hours a week from February 2017 to April 2018. The FFGA office is located in Okotoks, Alberta. FFGA is a non-profit producer organization that focuses on all aspects of forage and livestock production in south central Alberta through demonstration trials, newsletters, social media and extension events which include workshop, seminars and tours.

Successful applicants should have experience in agriculture extension, research and practical knowledge of agriculture in Western Canada. The successful applicant must be self-motivated, a team player, have excellent organizational skills and good computer skills.

This position offers the opportunity to train under our current manager of 7 years for several weeks before she leaves for her maternity leave in early April. The successful candidate will interact closely with FFGA's Environmental & Communications Coordinator, producers, researchers, extension specialist, industry and educational institutes. In addition to FFGA's program, this person will work with the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA), as well as the ARECA Manager and Forage & Livestock Teams.

Job Description:

- Assist the board in developing programs, demonstrations and events
- Deliver and report on demonstration projects and events within the FFGA Program
- Manage FFGA's fiscal health and annual operating budget under the direction of the Treasurer
- Actively pursue and report on grants and funding
- Work with and encourage county, corporate, government and NGO partners
- Office administration
- Work with and report to the FFGA Board of Directors
- Work closely with FFGA's Environmental & Communications Coordinator

Qualifications and Skills:

- Agriculture science degree or diploma will be considered along with experience
- Practical working knowledge of agriculture in western Canada
- Organized and reliable
- Ability to work within timelines and meet deadlines
- Ability to communicate effectively in written, oral and electronic formats
- Motivation to excel both in a team environment and independently
- Valid driver's license with a clean abstract

Salary is based upon qualifications and experience.

Please submit a cover letter and resume to:



Laura Gibney, Manager
Foothills Forage & Grazing Association
PO Box 458 Okotoks, Alberta T1S 1A7
Email: laura@foothillsforage.com

Application Deadline: December 15, 2016.

Start Date: February 2017 (*negotiable with the right candidate*)



This Publication is made possible by the Agriculture Opportunity Fund and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

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Transition Planning Workshops for Farm and Ranch Families

January 10 and February 7, 2017

Airdrie Agriculture Centre, 97 East Lake Ramp NE, Airdrie

Design Your Farm and Ranch Transition Plan

Creating a farm and ranch transition and succession plan takes time, effort, family communication and working with professionals. These 2 day workshops will get you started on the road to designing your own transition plan and provide creative solutions to implementing your plan.

You will be prepared to discuss, write, and plan the legacy of your farm and ranch. You will also have access to business, tax, financial and legal experts in farm transition.

Who Should Attend?

The workshops are for families who are interested in shaping the future ownership of their family farm or ranch. Families are encouraged to register together and the registration fee will cover both days.

Workshops will run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day (registration starts at 8:30 am).

How to Register

Cost: \$75 per person including GST for both days (includes lunch).

To register please call the **Ag-Info Centre at 1-800-387-6030**



Thank You to our Corporate Sponsors!



Silver Sponsors



Foothills Member Appreciation CHRISTMAS PARTY

The night will feature a banquet, refreshments, a recap on Australia Ag Tour, cowboy poetry, and time for fellowship and socializing.

Friday, December 16
Heritage Inn, High River, AB
Cocktails start at 5:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.



Robbie Robertson "The Mountie Cowboy Poet"

Robbie Robertson has been associated with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for more than 60 years. He has worked with cattle in three provinces and his performance style reflects both. He has performed in London England, Texas, Arizona, Montana, and has appeared on national television and radio. As a guest lecturer, he performs on Alaska Cruises with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines. FFGA is excited to host one of the "The Queen's Cowboys", High River's own: "The Mountie Cowboy Poet".

Call 403-995-9466 or email
laura@foothillsforage.com

Ladies Livestock Lessons

January 28th
Balzac, AB

Thanks to our Sponsors!



Register Today!

\$50 INCLUDES LUNCH, COFFEE, AND SNACKS
PRE-REGISTER ONLINE ON EVENTBRITE AT:
[HTTPS://2017LADIESLIVESTOCKLESSONS.
EVENTBRITE.CA](https://2017ladieslivestocklessons.eventbrite.ca)

REGISTRATION CLOSING: JANUARY 23RD, 2017

LLL online!

#LADIESLIVESTOCKLESSONS
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PAGES/GRAZING-SCHOOLS-FOR-WOMEN
LADIESLIVESTOCKLESSONS.BLOGSPOT.CA

LLL AGENDA

Saturday, January 28, 2017 8:30 AM - 4:15 PM
Balzac, AB - Canadian Angus Association Office
292140 Wagon Wheel Blvd

Bridging the Gap - Generations and Impacts in Agriculture

Kristin Cumming, Cantos Performance Management

Growing Forward 2 Update

Barb Archibald, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Wintering Site Assessment and Design

Karen Yakimishyn, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Antibiotic Resistance & Social Licence

Dr. Cody Creelman, Agri-Health Services & Social Media Sensation

Sustainable Pasture Management 2

Cameron Carlyle, University of Alberta

Livestock Pathology for Producers

Dr. Cody Creelman, Agri-Health Services

Hosts: Kneehill County, Mountain View County, Rocky View County, Wheatland County, M.D. of Bighorn, Cows & Fish, Foothills Forage & Grazing Association.