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AUGUST 2018

Director's Note - Sean LaBrie

Howdy from Difficulty Ranch,

2018 continues to be a challenge. For the first time in quite a few years, it is going to be more expensive to buy hay than to put it up yourself. With the price somewhere between \$120 and \$200 a bale you had better have a plan A, B and C as Rod Vergouwen so elegantly stated in his July note. A management plan that prepares you for the difficult times should start when the times are good.

Earlier in July, FFGA partnered with Livestock Gentec to showcase how soil health and more profitable cattle benefit from highly managed forage, riparian areas and cattle trait selection. At the Waldron Ranch, managed by Mike Roberts, 75 producers were treated to an awesome display of rotational grazing and water management on a very large scale and how to manage a noxious weed: Leafy Spurge, by grazing sheep followed by cattle.

At Morrie and Debbie Goetjen's we were introduced to a demonstration plot of many different types and mixes of forage. Morrie also talked about swath grazing and how he selects cattle that best fit with his management and resources.

Here at Difficulty Ranch, my wife, Holly, spoke about balancing our cow herd between economic

opportunities, desired genetics and family life. Having positive relationships with seed stock providers like Soderghen and Beefbooster have been important to our herd growth and manageability. I spoke about rotational grazing, swath grazing and riparian management (and our partnership with the ALUS program) all with the use of electric fencing.

These three operations, along with any of the other directors at FFGA, would be happy to discuss how these, and many other aspects of their management have given them plans A through Z. Consider joining our board of exceptional producers to learn, share and prepare plans that will help grow your skills too!

Cheers,
Sean LaBrie

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Sean presenting at Forage to Beef Demo Days—Photo Laura Gibney

Canadian Agricultural Partnership Grants

1) Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change – Producer

Program purpose

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.

Eligible activities include:

The objectives of the program will be on activities and practices that:

- reduce the risks to agricultural contaminants entering water
- enhance sustainable production while mitigating carbon emissions that impact air and soil quality
- help producers manage and adapt to climate change.

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

- watering systems
- riparian fencing
- livestock facility management
- improved manure storage facilities
- manure application
- sectional controls
- agricultural plastic bag rollers
- shelterbelts.

If you wish to proceed with your project prior to approval, please note the following:

Though you are not guaranteed funding until your application has been approved, you may proceed before receiving approval if you are confident that your project falls within the program

criteria. If your project is approved, eligible expenses incurred ***as of the date your application was received by the program*** will be considered for funding. All expenses incurred prior to the application received date are ineligible. If your application is NOT approved, you will not be reimbursed for any expenses associated with your project. Notification will be made to you once a decision has been made.

If you proceed with your project prior to approval, please note the following requirements:

- Invoices ***MUST BE*** under the name of the **Legal Name** stated on your application;
- Invoices ***MUST BE*** dated **AFTER the date your application is received by the program**; all expenses incurred prior to that date are ineligible. You will receive a letter from the program once your application has been received **and is complete**.
- You must be able to provide proof of payment (processed cheque, credit card statement) for **ALL** invoices, and proof of payment must be under the **Legal Name** on your application;
- Cash payments will not be eligible unless accompanied by an official company voucher and proof of payment;
- Barter/exchange transactions are not eligible; and
- Transactions between persons related by blood, marriage, adoption, common-law relationships, or close-business ties are not eligible.

How do I apply for this program?

Visit https://cap.alberta.ca/CAP/program/STEW_PROD

Application Intake Dates for 2018:

- June 28, 2018 - August 29, 2018
- August 30, 2018 - November 14, 2018

2) Farm Water Supply

Please note:

Application forms for this program can only be obtained from an Agriculture and Forestry (AF) Water Specialist after your Long-Term Water Management Plan (LTWMP) has been approved (see details below). Projects must be identified in a LTWMP that has been approved by an AF Water Specialist prior to starting any construction work or incurring any expenses.

Program purpose

This program will:

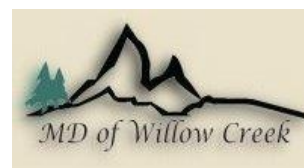
- support producers to improve their water supply security and more effectively and efficiently manage their on-farm water resources
- support producers to protect their water resources through beneficial management practices; and
- provide technical assistance to producers to complete an assessment for the management of their water resources (e.g., Long-Term Water Management Plan).

Program highlights

The Farm Water Supply Program shares costs relating to enhancements of a producer's on-farm water supply management, arising from a Long-Term Water Management Plan (LTWMP). These

(Continued on page 3)

Thank you for your support!



(Continued from page 2)

eligible costs are offered through Standard and Special Incentive projects described in detail in the Farm Water Supply Program Funding List.

Grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis for a variety of water sourcing, conservation and protection projects if they are previously identified in the producer's approved LTWMP and meet the program's Terms and Conditions.

Eligible activities include:

Standard Incentive projects

- Water supply development and conveyance projects, including construction of water sources such as wells, dugouts, spring developments, dams, pipelines, and connections to a multi-user water supply pipeline.
- Water protection projects, including aeration systems and off-source watering systems and monitors.
- Projects are eligible for reimbursement of up to one-third of expenses, to a maximum of \$5,000 per applicant.

Special Incentive projects

- Well pit conversions, water level measurement devices and wetland assessments for the purpose of properly planning and siting a water source are eligible for reimbursement of up to 50% of expenses, to a specified maximum per applicant or project.
- Well decommissioning and water use meters are eligible for reimbursement up to 50%, 60% or 75% of expenses depending on the number of each type of project completed, to a specified maximum per applicant or project.

Long-Term Water Management Plan (LTWMP) pre-requisite

Grant Application forms for this program can only be obtained from an AF Water Specialist after your Long-Term Water Management Plan (LTWMP) has been approved. Projects must be identified in a LTWMP that has been approved by an AF Water Specialist prior to starting any construction work or incurring any expenses. LTWMPs that were approved during GF1 and GF2 are still valid if they are accurate and identify the eligible water project you are interested in completing. There is no cost to producers for technical assistance

provided by AF Water Specialists toward the completion and required prior approval of a Long-Term Water Management Plan.

Am I eligible for this program?

Producers, corporations and not-for-profit organizations with an active agricultural business in Alberta and a minimum of \$10,000 of farm commodity production income are eligible. An eligible on-farm water project can be located on private land, rented land and certain types of Crown land subject to prior written approval from the landowner. The land on which a project is completed must be located in the Province of Alberta and must be actively farmed by the person applying for the grant at the time the project is completed.

How do I apply for this program?

Visit https://cap.alberta.ca/CAP/program/FARM_WATER

Submission of a completed Grant Application Form to AF does not guarantee that the applicant will receive payment under this Program. No advance payments will be made. Applicants can only receive a grant payment for eligible expenses incurred and documented with the application form.

3) Irrigation Efficiency

Program purpose

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.

Eligible activities include:

Applicants are only eligible to receive one payment per parcel of land under the program. For each parcel, applicants are eligible to receive either:

- 40% of the eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$5,000, for:
- equipment upgrades on the parcel; or
- an upgrade on the parcel from an existing irrigation system to a surface drip irrigation system;
- **or**

- \$15,000 of the eligible costs for an upgrade on the parcel from a gravity, side-wheel or high-pressure centre pivot irrigation system to a new LPCP system or a subsurface drip irrigation system.

Eligible equipment upgrades include:

- new low-pressure centre pivot to replace a gravity, side-wheel or high-pressure centre pivot,
- retrofit of a high-pressure centre pivot to a low-pressure centre pivot, including booster pumps, nozzle packages and pump modifications,
- high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles and related equipment to upgrade an existing low-pressure centre pivot,
- variable-rate irrigation equipment (controllers and software),
- control panel upgrades, including base stations for telemetry,
- surface or subsurface drip irrigation to replace gravity, side-wheel or high pressure centre pivot.

Am I eligible for this program?

To be eligible to apply to the program, an applicant must:

- operate as a producer in Alberta
- own an irrigated agricultural operation in Alberta
- have a Long-Term Irrigation Management Plan; and
- not have been previously been approved for payment from the program for the parcel described in the application.

How do I apply for this program?

Visit https://cap.alberta.ca/CAP/program/IRR_EFFICIENCY

For more information on any CAP programs please call 310-FARM (3276) or visit www.cap.alberta.ca

To complete or renew your EFP call (403)995.9466 and ask for Sonja.



Minimizing Heat Stress in Beef Cattle



Photo credit Carl Dahlen, NDSU

Soaring summer temperatures not only affect humans, but cattle as well. Heat stress is hard on livestock, especially in combination with high humidity.

Heat stress is defined as any combination of temperature, humidity, radiation and wind producing conditions higher than the animal's thermal neutral zone. The upper limit of which is the so called upper critical temperature. Beef cattle cool themselves primarily through a combination of respiratory tract (most important) and skin evaporative loss (sweating).

Heat stress occurs when the body temperature is elevated due to excessive heat production or high ambient temperatures, or reduced heat loss. High temperatures (above 28°C (82°F)) coupled with high humidity can cause heat stress in cattle, which can lead to a reduced breeding efficiency, milk production, feed intake, and weight gains. In the worst case, heat stress may increase the chance of illness and may even cause death.

Cattle are more sensitive to high temperatures than humans. Humidity is an additional key element in heat tolerance. The Livestock Temperature Humidity Index* (*THI Table 1 on page 5*) was introduced by American animal scientists to alert producers of potential heat stress periods for livestock. The THI combines the effects of temperature and humidity into one value. The Livestock Safety Index (LSI) contains three stress categories (temperature given in Celsius (°C)):

- Livestock Alert - LSI 24 -25.5: when the index reaches this range, heat stress will first appear. Precautionary measures should be taken to reduce heat stress conditions in confinement housing or livestock trailers.
- Livestock Danger - LSI of 26-28: an index in this category is dangerous for confined animals.

- Livestock Emergency - LSI of 29 or higher: These conditions are most likely to occur when air temperature exceeds 32°C (90°F). No cloud cover and little air movement are additional hazards found in such heat stress weather. Livestock should not be worked or shipped when the index reaches this level

The lower the humidity the greater the ambient air temperature that livestock can withstand. Factors other than temperature and relative humidity can impact heat stress. The addition of direct sunlight can add 3 or 4 degrees Celsius to the THI. Wind can lower the THI by a few degrees due to its bringing cooler air to the animal and carrying away excess heat. During a typical summer day, the LSI moves from one category to another, depending on time of day, temperature and humidity. Night cooling (temperatures dropping below 20°C) can reduce the Temperature Humidity Index. Certain animal factors can increase the like hood of heat stress, such as increased activity level and whether or not the cattle are acclimatized to hot weather conditions.

Use the following to evaluate the potential for an impending heat stress crisis for your cattle:

- 1) Predicted hot weather following precipitation. It is the combined temperature and humidity that determines the severity of heat stress. Days above 27°C following a heavy rainstorm (higher humidity level) can be a warning of a heat stress crisis for cattle, especially if the wind becomes calm or the cattle are held in confined housing situations or during transport.
- 2) The greatest probability of heat stress occurs between early July and mid-August when ambient air temperature is greater than 30°C and the relative humidity (RH) is above 30%. An emergency heat stress situation can occur if ambient air temperature is greater than 36°C (98°F) and RH is greater than 30%.
- 3) A potential heat stress crisis situation exists for cattle when there is little or no night cooling (evening temperatures stay above 20°C).
- 4) Observing the cattle will tell you when they are becoming uncomfortable from heat.

Cattle lose excess heat primarily

through breathing, rather than sweating. They sweat only about 10% of what humans do. Observing the cattle will tell you when they are becoming uncomfortable from heat.

The cattle will start to move or walk around the pen looking for an area of the pen, or confined housing that is more comfortable. Cattle that are showing mild signs of heat stress will have shallow, rapid breathing.

Animals that are experiencing advanced heat stress may exhibit increased open mouth panting (respiratory rate will increase above 100 breaths per minute) and will have increased salivation or slobbering. They may stumble while walking and may look for a cool place, including water to lie down in.

Cattle will position their body to minimize their exposure to the sun; generally this is facing the sun. Cattle that are overheated tend to group themselves together to seek shade provided by other animals. They may crowd the water trough, not only to drink, but in an attempt to cool themselves. If body temperature increases, respiration becomes shallow, weak, and animals may collapse, convulse and slip into a coma, with death occurring shortly after.

Have ample water available. The most important practice is to provide cattle with sufficient quantities of cool drinking water. Water will keep an animal's body temperature within normal limits, as well as help to improve feed consumption. Animals in confined feeding systems require water at a rate of 1.1% of body weight per hour. Increased water intake often increases production of urine and subsequent loss of certain minerals, such as sodium (salt), potassium and magnesium. Cattle should be provided with salt licks or loose salt in locations that animals frequent.

Provide shade. Provide shade for fatter animals and those with dark-colored coats. Trees, buildings or sunshades can provide shade but should not reduce airflow. If animals are housed spraying rooftops with water can further decrease the temperature within the building. Fans and breezes from open windows can provide a source of ventilation. In feedlot pens tall earth mounds or bedding mounds can allow cattle to move to the airflow and shade.

Change your feeding patterns.

(Continued on page 5)

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Feed cattle less in the morning and more in the evening to encourage greater feed intake. Cattle on pasture will adapt and increase the time spent grazing from 2 hours pre-dusk to 2 hours after dawn. For confined cattle deliver 70% of the days scheduled feed two to four hours after the peak ambient temperature of the day. This may help decrease the roller coaster intake patterns often observed during hot weather.

Avoid handling cattle if possible. Work feedlot cattle between midnight and 8 Am. Never handle, work or move susceptible cattle during heat stress conditions.

Not all cattle producing areas of Alberta experience yearly heat waves. Over a period of time, consecutive hot days are worse than intermittent hot days. Also when cattle can't cool off at night the effects of the daytime highs are exacerbated and cattle are more prone to heat stress. Confined animals are more prone to heat stress than animals on range or pasture. Watching for stress signs and using common sense to ease heat stress can result in reduced production losses and healthier cattle.

If you have questions or require further assistance on this topic, please call the Ag-Info Center at 310-FARM. More information can be found at [https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/beef5157](https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/beef5157)

Table 1. Livestock Temperature Humidity Index* (THI) at specific temperatures and relative humidity levels. (* The Livestock THI was adapted from the human Humidex Chart, which can be found at : http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/phys_agents/humidex.html.)

Ambient air		Relative Humidity (%)					
Temp. °F	Temp. °C	20	30	40	50	60	70
100	37.8	26	29	30	31	33	34
98	36.7	26	28	29	31	32	33
96	35.6	26	27	28	30	31	32
94	34.4	26	27	28	29	31	32
92	33.3	25	26	27	28	29	30
90	32.2	25	26	26	27	28	29
88	31.1	24	24	26	27	27	28
86	30	23	24	25	26	27	27
84	28.9	22	23	24	25	26	27
82	27.8	22	23	23	24	25	26
80	26.7	21	22	23	23	24	24
78	25.6	20	21	22	23	23	24
76	24.4	19	21	21	22	22	23
Livestock Safety Index (°C)		Normal <23		Alert 24-25.5		Danger 26-28	
						Emergency >29	

Table 2. Daily water intake for different classes of beef cattle*

Animal Description	Daily water intake for beef cattle in liters & gallons.			
	26°C	80°F	32°C	90°F
	Liter	Imp. Gallon	Liters	Imp. Gallon
Feeders & Replacements 2 - 6 Months	34	7.5	48	10.5
Feeders & Replacements 7 - 11 Months	40	9	57	12.5
Feeders & Replacements 12 Months and Older	55	12	78	17
Bred Heifers & Dry Cows	50	11	57	12.5
Lactating Cows	68	15	61	13
Herd Bulls	55	12	78	17

* Adapted from CowBytes Beef Ration Balancer version 4, 1999.

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- FFGA/AFAC Member Observer: \$175.00
- Non-member Observer: \$200.00
- FFGA/AFAC Member Hands-On: \$200.00
- Non-member Hands-On: \$225.00
- Student: \$100.00

Register online at <https://www.foothillsforage.com/stockmanship-clinic>



Producers Can Now Take Beef Sustainability to the Bank

Four years after McDonald's chose Canada to launch its landmark sustainable beef initiative, some producers and feedlots are happily cashing cheques for participating in that effort. And while the amounts so far have been fairly small, it's a big plus for producers, say participants.

"We started on that journey because we thought it was important for the industry and it was going to meet what the consumers were asking for," said Shannon Argent, a producer from Cremona who is participating in the Canadian Beef Sustainability Acceleration pilot.

"It just morphed into what the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef wanted and what some of the retailers are looking for, and we're just happy to be part of it."

The year-long pilot, launched in October, was created to show that meat from cattle raised and processed according to the sustainability standards

(called indicators) could successfully be tracked and segregated as it moved through the supply chain. But it also had a loftier goal: Encourage restaurant and grocery chains to market 'verified sustainable' Canadian beef while showing producers there's money to be made by supplying cattle for the program.

It's been successful on both fronts, said Karleen Clark, who operates KCL Cattle Company, a 23,000-head feedlot near Coaldale, with her husband, parents, sister, and brother-in-law.

"The beef sustainability acceleration pilot brings attention to people who might not see the need to verify, like these small operations that are not concerned about public perception," said Clark. "They're doing things right, but they don't take the time to get verified or audited."

"When you have a financial incentive, and when we go to make our purchase decisions, the source can advertise that they are verified beef production and we can source accordingly because we know

the payout is coming."

And it looks like that will continue.

Earlier this month, McDonald's Canada — the country's largest buyer of beef — announced it is going to promote its burgers as made from verified sustainable beef.

"This is a big step in our beef journey — not just for McDonald's Canada and the Canadian beef industry, but around the world," McDonald's Canada president and CEO John E. Betts said in a news release.

"This partnership, combined with McDonald's scale, is creating change and encouraging responsible beef production for years to come that will benefit all Canadians."

The company's initial goal is to have at least 30 per cent of the beef it buys produced under the 60-plus indicators set out by the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB).

But given McDonald's size, that 30 per cent adds up to a lot of beef.

"Over the next 12 months, more than 20 million Angus burgers will be sourced according to the CRSB standards," McDonald's said in the release.

"Sustainability is good business," added CRSB chair Cherie Copithorne-Barnes, who ranches at Jumping Pound.

"Consumers are increasingly inquisitive about the food they're eating and want to know it was produced in a socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sound manner."

Argent agrees. She ranches with her husband and parents, and their operation has been in the Verified Beef Production program for seven years. (That program has morphed into VBP+ to include the

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CRSB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Driving sustainability progress for Canadian beef

September 19 & 20, 2018 Sheraton Suites Eau Claire, Calgary AB



(Continued from page 6)

necessary certification element.)

"We're just happy to be part of it," said Argent, a former provincial co-ordinator for the program. "VBP+ is getting accepted as sustainable beef and that makes it a lot better for producers."

The payment has also gone up, she added.

"It's increased from \$10 a head from the first quarter of the pilot to \$20 a head in the second quarter," she said.

At Clark's feedlot, the first cheque was only \$50, although that rose to \$1,629 for the second quarter thanks to the higher premium and more verified sustainable cattle going through the feedlot.

But being in the VBP+ program has other rewards, she said.

"That's a really good program to get behind because it verifies the good things that we are doing in the industry, sets standards, and shows that we are part of those standards," said Clark. "We are meeting them and we can share with consumers in the world that we're doing things properly."

The pilot has gone extremely well and proven it is possible to source beef that is fully verified and tracked through the supply chain, said Virgil Lowe, business development manager with VBP+, which helps administer the pilot.

"There are plans to continue the project, but they're not realized or released yet," said Lowe. "What we're trying to do is work out the details of how to continue on with the program. We're not definitely going to go for just one year. It's just that how hasn't been determined."

The pilot has generated a lot of interest from buyers of beef, he said.

"We've learned a lot about how to implement verified sustainable beef value chains in the market and so we're able to take those markets into the future development of projects or programs to

be able to deliver that product to end-users," he said.

"It's shown that there is end-user demand with dollars for the product. This has driven uptake from producers and feedlot operators, which is excellent."

The ultimate goal is to show consumers that Canadian beef is being produced according to meaningful standards, he said.

"I think that it's really important that we're showing that commercial beef production is good and sustainable and we

are doing well at it, which is the most critical, in my opinion."

The indicators cover five areas, including animal welfare and health along with

environmental stewardship. A full list of those standards, as well as the certification and audit requirements, can be found at www.crsbcertifiedsustainablebeef.ca. Cattle must also be registered in the Beef InfoXchange System, which tracks their movement.

Written by: Alexis Kienlen <https://www.albertafarmexpress.ca/2018/07/31/raising-certified-sustainable-beef-to-now-earn-producers-a-premium/>



2nd Annual Pasture Field Day

August 28th 2018 at 9am start
Come and join us for lunch and learn more about:

- * Annual cover crop pasture stands
- * Soil Health
- * Legume and grass mix pasture stands
- * Pasture improvement methods
- * Rotational grazing management
- * Cell grazing
- * Electric fencing
- * Mobile winter silage feeding sites
- * Winter grazing management
- * Winter watering
- * Soft weaning methods



The day starts at 9 am at Cliff Drever and Ben Stuart's operation south of Hardisty AB. It will be a full day of interaction with other producers and learning about different grazing management practices.

Directions from Hardisty:

- > 6km West on highway 13.
- > 12km south on Hwy 872, located on the NW corner of the 872 and Hwy 608

From highway 36:

- > 28km West on Hwy 608.
- > Till the 872 intersection

Accommodation on the night of the 29th is at the RR INN at Hardisty,

- > 1 person \$141.46
- > 2 person \$152.45

Please let us know if you are coming so we can confirm lunch numbers by emailing to graeme@unionforage.com or 403.312-2240 or Ben Stuart 780.888-7303. ~ RSVP by August 21st ~

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Call Lawrence at (403) 764-2044 for more information.

Twin Rate: CA \$5364 per person, Single Rate: Add an extra CA \$1560.00

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.

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