

The Saskatchewan Hay and Pasture Report

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Saskatchewan Forage Council

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the Saskatchewan Forage Council's August issue of the *Saskatchewan Hay and Pasture Report*. Hay yield reports are starting to come in from around the province and as most had predicted, are below average. It will likely be another couple of weeks until all hay crops are in and pastures are evaluated giving producers an idea of their demand for winter feed. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce a new regular column which will place the spotlight on producers and their hay and pasture operations from across the province. The first instalment presented in this issue includes an interview with hay grower, Murray Dopko of Makwa, SK.

We welcome your feedback and encourage anyone interested in being placed on our email distribution list to contact the SFC at office@saskforage.ca. You may also want to visit our website www.saskforage.ca for regular news and information related to the forage industry.

Leanne Thompson
Saskatchewan Hay and Pasture Report Editor

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Number 18 (week ending August 10, 2008) and Number 19 (week ending August 17, 2008)

South Eastern Saskatchewan: *August 10, 2008*

Topsoil moisture conditions declined on hay and pasture land, with 55% of land rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared to 71% last week. Rain is badly needed in the Moose Jaw area. An average yield of 1.03 tons per acre was reported for brome/alfalfa hay on dry land in the south eastern region of the province. Farmers are desiccating and cutting greenfeed. Almost one per cent of the annual crop has either been made into livestock feed or will not be harvested because of damage.

August 17, 2008

Seventy-two per cent of the hay and pasture land is rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared with 55% last week. Greenfeed crops are being cut and baled. Some hay was being cut a second time in the Montmartre area. Grasshoppers are being reported in the following areas: Carnduff, Oxbow, Kisbey, Stoughton, Weyburn, Odessa, Zehner, Radville and Ceylon.

South Western Saskatchewan:**August 10, 2008**

Moisture conditions declined on hay and pasture land, with 24% of land rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared to 34% last week. Rain is needed in the Limerick, Cadillac, Gravelbourg, Moose Jaw and Lucky Lake areas. Farmers are hauling water in the Orkney area. An average yield of 1.14 tons per acre was reported for brome/alfalfa hay in the south western region of the province. Almost one per cent of the annual crop has either been made into livestock feed or will not be harvested because of damage.

August 17, 2008

Moisture conditions improved on hay and pasture land with 33% of the land rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared to 24% last week. Grasshoppers have been reported across the region and gophers continue to cause damage across the region. Pastures in the Cadillac and Maple Creek areas are turning brown and are in need of rain. In the Consul area, dugouts and sloughs are drying up and farmers are hauling water to their stock.

East Central Saskatchewan:**August 10, 2008**

Topsoil has dried, with 77% of the hay and pasture land rated as having adequate topsoil moisture this week. Rain is needed in the Bethune and Leroy area. An average yield of 1.34 tons per acre was reported for brome/alfalfa hay across the east central region of the province. Just over one half of one per cent of the annual crop has either been made into livestock feed or will not be harvested because of damage.

August 17, 2008

Moisture conditions improved on hay and pasture land, with 81% of the land rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared to 77% last week. Grasshopper damage was reported in the following areas: Ituna, Lumsden, Imperial and Craik. Some farmers were cutting wild hay and trying to wrap up haying operations. Slough and dugout levels are dropping fast in the Leroy area.

West Central Saskatchewan:**August 10, 2008**

Moisture conditions declined on hay and pasture land, with 43% of the land rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared to 54% last week. Pastures are becoming quite dry. An average yield of 0.86 tons per acre was reported for brome/alfalfa hay across the west central region of the province, the lowest regional average. Farmers are also making silage, cutting greenfeed, hauling bales, and preparing equipment for harvest. About one half of one per cent of the annual crop has either been made into livestock feed or will not be harvested because of damage.

August 17, 2008

Sixty-seven per cent of the hay and pasture land were rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared with 43% the week before. Grasshoppers were reported in the Harris area. Farmers were also hauling bales. Pastures and hay land have greened up after the rain in the

Hanley area. The rain in the Outlook area will definitely help the pastures. Pastures in the Battleford area are getting short and need rain to get them growing again.

North Eastern Saskatchewan:

August 10, 2008

Hay and pasture land is rated as 68% with adequate topsoil moisture, compared with 90% last week. Alfalfa has been sprayed for bugs in the Nipawin area. An average yield of 1.39 tons per acre was reported for brome/alfalfa hay across the north eastern region of the province. This is the highest regional average reported in the province. Less than one half of one per cent of the crop has either been made into livestock feed or will not be harvested because of damage.

August 17, 2008

Eighty-five percent of the hay and pasture land was rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared with 68% the previous week.

North Western Saskatchewan:

August 10, 2008

Seventy-five per cent of hay and pasture land is reported as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared with 72% last week. An average yield of 1.06 tons per acre was reported for brome/alfalfa hay across the north western region of the province.

August 17, 2008

Sixty-four percent of the hay and pasture land was rated as having adequate topsoil moisture, compared with 75% the week earlier. Grasshoppers have caused damage in the North Battleford area. Haying operations are continuing with a return to drier weather and farmers are cutting greenfeed as well. Pastures are very poor in the Duck Lake area and rain is needed.

Portrait of a Saskatchewan Hay Grower – Interview with M&D Farms

Editor's Note: The following is the first instalment of the regular producer column which includes an interview conducted by Leanne Thompson on August 14, 2008.



Murray Dopko is a hay and grain producer from Makwa, located in the parkland of north western Saskatchewan. Together with his two sons and wife, Murray manages M&D Farms which produces approximately 800-1000 acres of hay each year. As the Dopkos do not own any livestock, all their hay is sold off farm. Murray says they made the switch from a purely grain farming operation, to one including forages in the rotation about ten years ago. They had concerns about the uncertainty of the grain business, the ever growing need for capital investment and were having trouble keeping up with the demand

for labour that a grain farm requires at certain times of the year. Murray says the change has allowed them to spread the workload more evenly over the growing season, allowing him and his family to fulfill the labour requirements without hiring outside help. By including forages in

his rotation, the longevity of his grain farming equipment has increased, effectively reducing the capital investment required to maintain his grain farming operation.

Q. Could you describe your hay growing operation?

A. We grow approximately 800-1000 acres of hay per year depending on the number of acres coming out of rotation annually. It is primarily an alfalfa/grass mix with timothy and brome providing the grass component of the hay. We were also growing a meadow bromegrass hay, primarily for customers requiring excellent quality hay to feed to newly weaned calves. However, we are moving away from the meadow brome hay due to the weather related challenges involved with getting it put up in good condition.

Q. What sort of system do you use to harvest your hay?

A. I use a disc bine or hay bine to cut depending on the toughness of the crop. We use the disc bine on tougher to cut hay as it seems to do a superior job in these situations. To cut more quickly, we use the hay bine. Following cutting, I use a twin rake, mostly to speed drying, but also because it produces a nicer windrow that results in less wear and tear on my baler and produces ideally shaped bales that will stack and transport the best. We use a New Holland 780 round baler with net wrap. We started using net wrap almost ten years ago and would never go back to twine. The net wrap takes much less time to tie a bale which then cuts down on fuel cost and equipment wear and tear.

Q. How do you manage your forage/grain rotation?

A. We plan for a 9-10 year hay rotation followed by a 3-4 year rotation of grain/oilseed crops. The forage rotation may be longer than some because we pay attention to fertility and provide extra nutrients when needed. I feel that if you intend to grow forages in the long run, you have to pay attention to fertility. We have found the nitrogen and organic matter benefit produced by the forage crop is equivalent to about 40 lbs of N/acre over the subsequent three years of grain crops.

To take forages out of rotation, we take the first cut in early July, let it regrow until the end of August and then spray with glyphosate at a rate of 2L/acre. We normally get a very good kill and I rarely need to desiccate further the following spring using this method. In the spring, I rent or hire a no-till drill to seed the grain crop and following harvest, work the field with a cultivator to control grassy weeds and level the land. Having a level field is important for our forage crops as I can cut with the hay bine at 8-9 miles/hr as long as the field is nice and smooth.

Q. Who are your main customers and how do you source them?

A. Cow/calf producers are my main customers. In the 100 mile radius surrounding Lloydminster, there is one of the largest concentrations of cow/calf producers in Canada, so hay is in demand in the area. As we have been in the business for the last ten years, I have developed several regular customers and don't often have to do much marketing work. When we were starting out, I used a hay broker, but have moved away from that since. We have our own truck which has proved to be a marketing tool. Often people who have seen our name on the truck contact us to look for hay. I don't really chase the opportunistic markets (i.e. hay shortage in another area of the province) as my focus is on providing hay for the customers that I have built relationships with in the area. My mainstays are those consistent customers.

Q. What is most important to your customers?

A. As most of my customers are cow/calf producers, quantity is generally more important than quality. Most customers want nice looking, green hay, but often are not interested in a feed analysis report unless the hay is off color. In those cases, I do get an analysis to show protein content and TDN. I weigh bales once they are loaded on the truck for delivery. There are several scales in the area that I can access for this purpose. I have found that bales from the same field are usually rather consistent, so often don't weigh all loads, but rather a sampling of loads to provide an average weight. If there are some bales that were put up after a rain, or under unfavourable conditions, those always get weighed separately.

Q. What goes into price determination for your hay?

A. The biggest part of price determination is set by the local market. The customers I deal with are usually well informed as to the going rate for hay in our area. I also use the internet as a source to determine hay price – I use the Alberta government site to check hay prices in my area. There is rarely any bartering over price unless there are quality issues with the hay. We have a truck and can provide delivery for customers which I emphasize as a value added service. Trucking is getting harder to find as the oil patch has provided more stable work for trucks in our area than hay delivery can offer.

Q. Is there competition from other hay growers in your area?

A. There are four or five other hay growers in the area, some of which have cattle of their own. Hay growing is attractive in my area as the land seems suited to it. In a good year hay yields can average 5-6 bales/acre (about 3 – 4 metric tons/acre) whereas in the lighter land to the south of us, they might average 3 bales/acre (2 tons/acre). We can often get two cuts of hay, but timing can become a problem, as late summer drying times are extended in this area.

Thanks Murray for discussing your business!

Saskatchewan Forage Council Director Named Plant Breeder of the Year

Dr. Bruce Coulman, Head of the Plant Science Department at the University of Saskatchewan, has been awarded the 2008 Canadian Plant Breeding & Genetics Award for his outstanding work with forages, the second largest seeded crop in the country. Co-sponsored by the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA) and Germination magazine, this award recognizes the outstanding contribution of a Canadian researcher to the advancement of plant agriculture. Coulman received the award at the CSTA's Semi-Annual Meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland.

During his career, Coulman has developed and released varieties that have not only benefited producers, but have played an integral part in Canada's global reputation for high quality forage products. He has worked on a diversity of species, striving to make forages a more profitable choice for farmers all the while maintaining a keen understanding of the technical and commercial issues of the industry. Coulman has released 18 varieties, including a number of industry firsts and standards such as AC Grazeland, the world's first bloat-reduced alfalfa, which had a significant impact on the forage industry as it allowed producers to reduce pasture bloat by up to 60%. Coulman also developed various hybrids which led to the release of AC Knowles and AC Success – hybrid bromegrasses developed from crosses of smooth and meadow bromegrass to produce a dual purpose grass that is good for either hay or pasture.

His research on plant breeding has lead to the development of new and improved alfalfa varieties and forage grasses that are safer and provide greater nutritive value, improved disease resistance, and higher productivity for producers and the livestock sector in general.

Bruce Coulman has served on the Saskatchewan Forage Council Board of Directors since 1996. On behalf of the Saskatchewan Forage Council, congratulations Bruce and thank you for your dedication to the forage industry!

Utilizing Damaged Annual Crops as Feed

Christy Winquist, Beef & Forage Specialist

Agriculture Knowledge Centre, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture



Photo credit: L. Thompson

Annual crops that have been damaged by hail or frost can be salvaged for forage quite successfully. However, there are some precautions that need to be taken when putting up damaged crops to ensure the best quality possible is attained. Some variables that need to be considered include, stage of maturity, potential for accumulated nitrates, leaf matter loss and the crop variety.

Stage of maturity plays an important role in determining the quality as well as the palatability of the feed. Annuals should be cut at such a time as to maximize both quality and quantity. For barley this occurs at the soft dough stage, but for oats and triticale it occurs somewhat earlier at the late milk stage. Plants that are fully matured will have a value similar to straw and grain and should be treated as such when feeding.

Nitrates can potentially be a concern when salvaging crops that have been under stress. When a plant is stressed by hail, frost or drought, nitrates can accumulate in the plant. The amount of nitrates accumulated will depend on several things including nitrogen levels in the soil, growth stage of the crop when stress occurs, as well as the degree of stress the plants sustain. Young plants that are actively growing will accumulate more nitrates than plants that are more mature. The

majority of nitrates are accumulated in the leaves of plants with little in the stems and seed heads.

Nitrates are not toxic, but when a ruminant consumes nitrates, they are converted to nitrites in the rumen. Under normal conditions, nitrites are converted to ammonia which is absorbed into the blood, eventually being excreted as urea in the urine. When high levels of nitrates are consumed, rumen microbes are not able to convert all the nitrite to ammonia. As a result, nitrates and nitrites may be absorbed into the blood stream which lowers the oxygen carrying capability of the blood and can lead to death due to oxygen deprivation in severe cases.

There are some rules that can be applied to help minimize the concentration of nitrates in annual crops to be used as feed. The actions taken will depend on the degree of stress as well as what stage the plant is at when stress occurs. If the plant is young and actively growing and the leaves are not all damaged by the hail/frost, then waiting for the plant to recover may be an option. The amount of time required for a plant to recover and start utilizing accumulated nitrates will depend on the amount of leaves present. The more leaves - the faster nitrates will be utilized. As an example, an oat crop which received hail or light frost when it was flowering will have greatly reduced levels of nitrates by allowing plants at least 4 days to recover. If the plant is more mature or damage to leaves is significant, it is advisable to allow 7-10 days for recovery. If plants are damaged beyond recovery by the stress (i.e.: killing frost), the best option is to cut as soon as possible thus reducing the amount of time for nitrates to accumulate.

Stage of maturity must also be considered in the decision of when to cut following damage. As mentioned previously, each annual crop will have an optimum time to cut for green feed and choosing to cut as close as possible to this optimum may be the best course of action. For example, if leaving an annual crop to recover results in an over mature stand, nutritional losses can be significant. In this case it may be better to cut the crop immediately to maintain nutritional quality and deal with the nitrates by mixing out the affected feed with low nitrate feeds. It is always recommended to conduct a feed analysis on any feed you suspect contains nitrates.

Another consideration when salvaging damaged crops for green feed is leaf matter loss. A significant amount of nutrients are found in the leaves therefore leaf to stem ratio can be used as a good indicator of quality. Severe crop damage that significantly impacts leaves will produce a lower leaf to stem ratio, resulting in a higher fibre feed. This should be taken into account when valuing and incorporating the green feed into livestock rations.

The variety of annual crop is also important as some annuals make better feed than others. Barley and oats are preferred green feed, although others such as triticale, canola and peas can also be utilized effectively. Canola can be made into green feed, but attention must be paid to the sulphur levels in this crop. High sulphur levels in canola green feed can potentially cause health problems, especially if livestock are receiving sulphur from other sources, such as high sulphate water. Peas can also make good green feed. The ideal time to cut peas is at the podding stage, before pods are totally wrinkled, to maximize seed retention. It is possible to cut peas at a later maturity, but shattering of pods will likely become an issue during baling thus reducing the nutritional value of the feed significantly.

Damaged crops can be an excellent source of feed for cattle. Knowing when to cut and what concerns need to be addressed will help to successfully incorporate salvaged green feed into your feeding plans.

Identifying Weeds in Pastures and Hay Fields

Glenn Barclay, Forage Development Specialist
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

The Encyclopaedia of Saskatchewan states there are 1,625 species of flowering plants in Saskatchewan. Grasses also have flowers and are included in these numbers. It's no wonder the proper identification of some plants can be a daunting task!

A weed can be defined as a plant growing where it's not wanted. Weeds can be considered to have anywhere from low- to zero-economic value, or be a pest species that is non-edible or poisonous to livestock. There are numerous examples of weeds in this province that start out as a curiosity on a property owner's land then rapidly turn into a major headache. The proper identification of an unusual plant can indicate that trouble is coming.

Not all unusual plants would fit into the weed category. Some plants never proliferate at high numbers to make them an economic nuisance. It may even be possible that the plant could be rare or endangered.

The producer is usually aware of what species should be present in pastures and hay fields. So, if a broadleaf or grassy plant shows up and you are suspicious that it might be the start of a weed problem, how do you go about identifying it?

First, visit the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca. Type the word **weeds** into the Quick Search engine at the top of the page, and the results will give you the *Weed identification Guide*, among other related weed documents and links provided by Saskatchewan Agriculture.

There are also several good reference books priced under \$30 that can be used as resources to identify plants. Three recommended books are: *Weeds of the Prairies* published by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; *Plants of the Western Boreal Forest & Aspen Parkland*, by Johnson, Kershaw, MacKinnon and Pojar; and *Wildflowers across the Prairies* by Vance, Jowsey, McClean and Switzer. All three books have excellent colour photos and descriptions and, best of all, they never go out of date. They can be ordered from the University of Saskatchewan bookstore by phoning 306-966-4473 or, toll free, 1-888-214-8888, or they can be purchased at various bookstores across the province.

With the increasing availability of digital cameras, photos can be sent by e-mail to people who can help you: forage specialists with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture; agrologists with the Invasive Alien Plant Program; or agrologists at the Ministry's Agriculture Knowledge Centre. All can be reached initially by phoning the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, toll free, at 1-866-457-2377. Digital images are not as desirable as a live specimen, but good quality close-ups can make it easier for a specialist to identify the plant.

Another option is to send your mystery plant into the W.P. Fraser Herbarium at the University of Saskatchewan or drop the plant off at Room 3C77 of the College of Agriculture building. Phone 306-966-4968 to make an appointment. Samples of weeds can also be sent to Saskatchewan Agriculture's Crop Protection Laboratory in Regina for identification. The cost is \$10 per specimen. The lab's phone number is 306-787-8130.

There are many excellent websites on the internet with pictures of plants. These websites can help to narrow your search. If you think you have the plant identified correctly, enter the Latin name or common name into your search engine, and call up the image search to confirm it.

After the weed is identified, perhaps let your neighbors and the rural municipality (RM) know what the weed is and where it's located. Other landowners in the area may have the same weed, but may not have noticed it. RMs are important partners in weed control. *The Noxious Weed Act* names 41 plants that property owners are required to control and RMs are empowered with the authority to enforce this legislation through the appointment of a weed inspector.

If it's determined that you have noxious or poisonous weeds, they should be dealt with immediately. Ignoring them will cost you money through loss of productivity and increased control costs in the future.

For more information, phone Glenn Barclay, Forage Development Specialist, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, at 306-446-7650, or visit Saskatchewan Agriculture's website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca.

List of Noxious Weeds in Saskatchewan – source *The Noxious Weed Designation Regulations*, March 1999

Common Name	Latin Name
barberry, common	<i>Berberis vulgaris</i> L.
bindweed, field	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i> L.
bluebur	<i>Lappula echinata</i> Gilib.
buckwheat, wild	<i>Polygonum convolvulus</i> L.
buckwheat, tartary	<i>Fagopyrum tataricum</i> (L.) J. Gaertn.
brome, downy	<i>Bromus tectorum</i> L.
brome, Japanese	<i>Bromus japonicus</i> Thunb.
campion, bladder	<i>Silene vulgaris</i> (Moench) Garcke
catchfly, night-flowering	<i>Silene noctiflora</i> L.
chamomile, scentless	<i>Matricaria perforata</i> Mérat (= <i>Matricaria maritima</i> L.)
cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i> L.
cockle, cow	<i>Saponaria vaccaria</i> L. (= <i>Vaccaria pyramidata</i> Medick)
cockle, white	<i>Silene alba</i> (Mill.) E.H. L. Krause
cockle, purple	<i>Agrostemma githago</i> L.
dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> Weber
darnel, Persian	<i>Lolium persicum</i> Boiss. & Hohen.
false flax, small-seeded	<i>Camelina microcarpa</i> Andrz.
foxtail, green	<i>Setaria viridis</i> (L.) Beauv.
grass, quack	<i>Elytrigia repens</i> (L.) Neuski (= <i>Agropyron repens</i> L.)
hoary cress, heart-podded	<i>Cardaria draba</i> (L.) Desv.
knapweed, spotted	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i> Lam. (= <i>Centaurea biebersteinii</i> DC)
knapweed, diffuse	<i>Centaurea diffusa</i> Lam.
knapweed, Russian	<i>Centaurea repens</i> L.
loosestrife, purple	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i> L.
mallow, round-leaved	<i>Malva rotundifolia</i> L. (= <i>Malva pusilla</i> Sm.)
mustard, hare.s-ear	<i>Conringia orientalis</i> (L.) Dumort.
mustard, ball	<i>Neslia paniculata</i> (L.) Desv.
mustard, tumble	<i>Sisymbrium altissimum</i> L.
mustard, wild	<i>Sinapis arvensis</i> L. (= <i>Brassica kaber</i> DC)

oat, wild	<i>Avena fatua</i> L.
povertyweed	<i>Iva axillaris</i> Pursh
ragweed, common	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i> L.
rape, bird	<i>Brassica rapa</i> L. (= <i>Brassica campestris</i> L.)
sow-thistle, annual	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> L.
sow-thistle, perennia	<i>Sonchus arvensis</i> L.
spurge, leafy	<i>Euphorbia esula</i> L.
stinkweed	<i>Thlaspi arvense</i> L.
thistle, nodding	<i>Carduus nutans</i> L.
thistle, Russian	<i>Salsola kali</i> L. (= <i>Salsola pestifer</i> A. Nels.)
thistle, Canada	<i>Cirsium arvense</i> (L.) Scop.
toadflax, yellow	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i> Mill.

Forage Seed Harvesting Techniques

*Michel Tremblay, Provincial Forage Specialist
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture*

Forage seed is a perennial crop, but is harvested in a manner similar to annual crops. There are several factors that must be considered to successfully harvest forage grasses.

Swathing

The first step to a successful grass seed harvest is correct timing of swathing. Grass seed crops are particularly susceptible to shattering. Swathing too late can result in harvest losses of up to 50 per cent. In meadow brome grass, a popular grass seed crop in Saskatchewan, swathing should be done when the seed reaches the hard dough stage, when the seed panicle moisture content is about 50 to 55 per cent. At this stage, the seed heads are brown and the upper stems of the seed stalks are turning brown. Some of the seed in the upper seed head will shatter if the seed head is struck against the palm of the hand. Swaths are usually ready to be combined in approximately seven days, depending on the weather.



Combining Red Fescue
Photo credit: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Combining

Combine settings will vary, depending on the type of combine and the species of grass being combined. In meadow brome grass, combine cylinder speed should be 700 to 800 rpm, with a fan speed setting of 400 to 500 rpm. Combine ground speeds are slower with grass seed, compared to annual crops. Ground speeds over three kilometers per hour may result in excessive seed loss. Seed moisture content should be 10 per cent or less for combining.

Handling and Storage

Many grass seeds are quite chaffy and difficult to handle, especially at moisture levels higher than 10 per cent. Seed should be placed in a bin with aeration to cool the seed and prevent heating and the consequent loss of germination. Grass seed should be stored at low moisture levels to enhance seed viability.

A well-threshed sample should have all the seeds separated from the rachis, the lemma and palea remnants still attached to the seed, and should not contain any peeled seeds. Dockage levels in a well-combined sample of meadow bromegrass range from 10 to 15 per cent.

Timing field operations, setting equipment properly and handling the seed correctly following harvest will maximize the yield of clean, viable forage grass seed.

National Sustainable Grazing Mentorship Program Update

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Greencover Canada Program has recently approved another year of funding for the National Sustainable Grazing Mentorship Program (SGMP). With the Canadian Cattleman's Association administering this national project, the Saskatchewan Forage Council is pleased to continue as provincial partner for Program delivery.

The first year of this program (2007-2008) proved to be extremely successful with 12 mentors and nearly 50 mentees. Positive feedback was received from those involved last year and another successful year is anticipated with the list of interested producers growing. Leanne Thompson will be the Saskatchewan contact for the Grazing Mentorship Program and is looking forward to getting things going for the 2008-2009 season.

Read on for a brief description of this Program and details on how to get involved.



What is a Grazing Mentor?

A mentor is a respected producer peer with extensive grazing management experience and knowledge. He/she can suggest grazing management options to help you improve your profits, your forage productivity and your land and water resources.

How does the program work?

The mentor visits a ranch/farm to discuss grazing resources, opportunities and challenges. The mentor may make suggestions for grazing system design or modification and provide helpful tips for

implementation. Mentors will provide peer support and continued communication to aid in decision making and implementation of grazing management practices. Each mentor will be available for approximately 16 hours of mentoring with an individual farm/ranch operation.

Is there a cost?

As a farm/ranch operation, you pay \$100 to be connected with a mentor and the Program tops up the rest to cover the mentor's time and travel expenses (to a budget maximum).

How can I become involved?

Contact the Saskatchewan Forage Council's Grazing Mentorship Program Coordinator, Leanne Thompson at 306.454.2777 or visit www.saskforage.ca for more details.

Saskatchewan Hay Market Report

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

www.agr.gov.sk.ca/feedforage

Baled Forage Prices (dollars per ton) to August 19, 2008

	# of Listings	Listings Priced	Tons Listed	Tons Priced	Lowest \$/T	Highest \$/T	Weighted Average \$/T
Alfalfa	4	3	415	371	\$38	\$73	\$62
Brome	1	1	53	53	\$60	\$60	\$60
Alfalfa/brome	14	9	4277	1910	\$38	\$133	\$90

USDA Market News Service Hay Reports

USDA Market News Service

Wyoming, Western Nebraska, and Western South Dakota Weekly Hay Summary

Dennis Widga, Torrington, WY

www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/to_gr310.txt

Trade and movement moderate. Demand moderate to good. Second cutting hay production near completion and some third cutting started. Reports are that a lot of hay not testing dairy quality.

Weekly Montana Hay Report

Justin Lumpkin, Billings, MT

www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/bl_gr310.txt

Compared to last week: Sales remain firm. Very good demand remains in the western part of the state from out of state buyers, good demand in other areas from in state buyers.

	Eastern Wyoming	Central & Western Wyoming	Western South Dakota	Montana
Alfalfa				
Supreme	-	\$175.00-200.00	-	-
Premium	\$150.00	\$140.00-150.00	\$85.00-100.00	\$250.00-270.00*
Good	\$135.00	\$120.00-140.00	\$75.00-90.00	\$160.00-165.00*

Fair -Good	\$100.00-120.00	\$98.00	\$65.00	\$110.00-130.00*
Grass	-	-	\$85.00**	-
Alfalfa/Grass		\$105.00-175.00	\$100.00-110.00*	\$100.00-120.00*
Oat Hay	\$90.00		\$95.00	-

All prices in U.S. dollars per ton FOB stack in medium to large square bales and rounds unless other wise noted.

**Delivered

*Small squares

Hay Quality Designations - Physical Descriptions:

Supreme: Very early maturity, pre bloom, soft fine stemmed, extra leafy - factors indicative of very high nutritive content. Hay is excellent colour and free of damage. Relative Feed Value (RFV): >185

Premium: Early maturity, i.e., pre-bloom in legumes and pre head in grass hays; extra leafy and fine stemmed - factors indicative of a high nutritive content. Hay is green and free of damage. RFV: 170-185

Good: Early to average maturity, i.e., early to mid-bloom in legumes and early head in grass hays; leafy, fine to medium stemmed, free of damage other than slight discoloration. RFV: 150-170

Fair: Late maturity, i.e., mid to late-bloom in legumes and headed in grass hays; moderate or below leaf content, and generally coarse stemmed. Hay may show light damage. RFV: 130-150

Utility: Hay in very late maturity, such as mature seed pods in legumes or mature head in grass hays, coarse stemmed. This category could include hay discounted due to excessive damage and heavy weed content or mould. RFV: <130

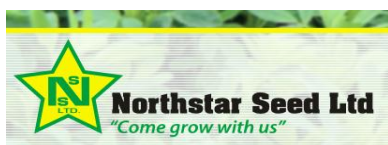
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Leanne Thompson, MSc, PAg

Project Coordinator, Saskatchewan Forage Council
 PO Box 263
 Ceylon, SK S0C 0T0
 Phone: 306.454.2777
 E-mail: office@saskforage.ca

Janice Bruynooghe, MSc, PAg

Executive Director, Saskatchewan Forage Council
 PO Box 1715
 Outlook, SK S0L 2N0
 Phone: 306.966.2148
 E-mail: jbruynooghe@saskforage.ca

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