



# Forage and Livestock eNews

*Updates and information from across the industry*

November 21, 2017 - Vol 9, Issue 11

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## Greetings!

I recently read that the coldest temperature recorded for a Canadian city was a tie between Saskatoon and Regina. Each city had a temperature of -50 degrees Celsius, in 1893 and 1895, respectively (Canadian Geographic, [10 surprising facts about Canadian weather](#))! Hopefully we don't see those temperatures this year, but Saskatchewan people are definitely tough, and willing to brave all sorts of challenging weather!

To help you get through this cold winter weather, this month's eNews brings you information on wintering site management, livestock nutrition, forage variety demo in our province, and more. If you have a few minutes to come in from the cold, check out the links to articles, videos, and events. There is always so much going on right here in Saskatchewan!

If you have topics you'd like to have us share in our monthly eNews or on our website, get in touch with us. We'd love to hear from you!



Please feel free to forward the eNews on to others you think may be interested in forage and livestock industry updates -signing up is as easy as clicking the 'Join Our Mailing List!' on the left.

## Saskatchewan Forage Variety Demonstration

**By: Terry Kowalchuk, MSc., PAg. Provincial Specialist, Forage Crops**

In 2014 the regulations for registering new varieties of forage crops was changed so that merit testing was no longer required. Concerns about the lack of performance information were raised through an annual advisory meeting on forage crops and a project was initiated to address this need.

In the spring of 2017, demonstrations to assess hay yield and plant persistence were established at Melfort, Saskatoon, Scott, and Swift Current. The Melfort site included an additional trial to assess seed yield. Three of the trials (Swift Current, Melfort - seed yield and Scott) were implemented through Agri-ARM partners, one through AAFC (Melfort -forage yield), and one through the U of S.

The forage yield trials will compare forty different varieties of grasses and legumes at the four locations. The seed yield demonstration will compare 30 different varieties. All trials will compare commercially available varieties against check varieties within each species. Yield sampling will begin in 2018 and run through to 2020 at which time a report will be published and placed the Saskatchewan Forage Council website.

The main goals of the forage variety demonstrations are to provide independent assessments of forage varieties for producers, breeders, and seed companies, and to give public breeders the ability to compare new germplasm to commercial varieties. Participating seed companies include: Ag Vision, SeCan, Brett Young and Performance seeds.

Several groups including the Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission, Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, SaskMilk, Ducks Unlimited contributed funds while Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the University of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan Leafcutter Association provided in-kind support. The significant industry support for the project helped the Saskatchewan Forage Council obtain additional funding from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) program.

The project is an excellent example of the tremendous degree of collaboration and partnerships that exist with in Saskatchewan's forage and livestock sector.

With a little luck from Mother Nature, producers will soon have some reliable information about which varieties perform well in their regions.

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## Western Canada Cow Calf Survey II

It has been three years since the 1st Western Canadian Cow-Calf Survey. Watch for the 2nd survey being handed out at producer association meetings and events starting this week. Producers from BC to Manitoba are encouraged to complete the survey (paper or online versions available). The survey is just under 50 questions long and producers are eligible to receive up to \$50 in gift cards for completing the survey (see survey for details). Interestingly, Atlantic Canada is currently conducting a similar survey while Ontario conducted theirs earlier this year. Questions are related to the production and management of the 2017 calf crop starting with breeding in 2016.



## 2nd Western Canadian Cow-Calf Survey

Visit: [www.wcccs.ca](http://www.wcccs.ca) for more on this survey.

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### New Video - Beef Producers and Environmental Footprint

More than most livestock, beef cattle production takes place in the natural environment. The Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) brings us a short video titled "What beef producers need to know about environmental footprint".

Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lz-DsLxipk0&feature=youtu.be>

Learn more about the environmental footprint of beef production from the BCRC [here](#).

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### 2018 Saskatchewan Agriculture Scholarship Announced

*Government of Saskatchewan News Release, October 12, 2017*

Today, Agriculture Minister Lyle Stewart announced the 2018 Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship program.

"This year's scholarship theme, 'Our Food has a Story', encourages young people to have a conversation about the relationship between agriculture and the food they eat," Stewart said. "The scholarship program identifies young agricultural leaders to help build public trust in our industry."

Interested students can apply for the scholarship by submitting a creative three minute video or a 1,000-word essay based on topics surrounding their food story.

One winning scholarship of \$4,000 and three runner-up scholarships of \$2,000 will be awarded to students in Grade 12 and/or recent graduates entering agriculture-related post-secondary studies in 2018.

The application deadline is March 1, 2018. For more information on the Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship visit: <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/thinkag/prepare-for-a-career-in-ag/scholarships>

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### SSGA Launches Wildfire Relief Fund to Assist Impacted Ranchers

**Saskatchewan Stock Growers Associations, Media Release  
October 23, 2017**

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association has launched a wildfire relief fund to help ranchers affected by devastating wildfires this fall.

"We're collecting donations of cash, hay, feed, trucking - whatever people can offer," said SSGA President Shane Jahnke. "The fires destroyed animals, buildings, fields, feed and everything else in their way. Miles of fencing were destroyed. With winter coming, there's a lot of people who need help."

The most recent fires near Burstall, Leader, and Tompkins on October 17 were propelled by strong winds, and advanced quickly across fields and grasslands. Another fire near Glentworth in early September also caused extensive damage.

Read the full news release and learn how you can help on the [SSGA website](#).

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## Sustainable Wintering Site Management

**By: Sarah Sommerfeld, PAg., Regional Forage Specialist, Saskatchewan Agriculture**

Many livestock producers have moved from wintering animals in a confined drylot system and adopted some type of in-field winter feeding. Extending the grazing season and in-field winter feeding can reduce an operation's cost of production. Bale grazing, swath grazing, feeding with a bale processor or any combination of options can be used resulting in animals that are out on the land, distributing nutrients and manure.

The importance of selecting a suitable wintering site and good site management cannot be overlooked. Good site management ensures that the benefits of extensive winter feeding are captured, while limiting the potential environmental risks. In particular, the risk of nutrient



accumulation at the site and the potential loss of nutrients into surface or groundwater sources should be mitigated.

Extensive feeding practices, such as bale grazing, may cause environmental risks because large amounts of nutrients are being added to the site. Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are added to the soil profile from both manure and feed waste. These nutrients may be harmful if washed away during spring snowmelt and rainfall or leached below the root zone and potentially into groundwater aquifers. Phosphorus can

contribute to blue-green algae blooms and nitrates can cause health risks in water used for human and livestock consumption. The goal is to maximize soil fertility to allow increased plant growth while minimizing nutrient losses.

To choose a sustainable wintering site, a producer should:

1. avoid areas that are over-utilized,
2. locate watering sites away from water sources to avoid runoff contamination,
3. select a site that has good ground cover, such as perennial forage which will aid in nutrient absorption,
4. try to choose a site with less than 2 per cent slope to minimize runoff,
5. avoid coarse-textured soils and
6. avoid areas with high water tables or likelihood of spring flooding.

[Read more here](#).

The Farm Stewardship Program has helped Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) to help maintain or improve the quality of soil, water, air or biodiversity resources.

Deadlines to complete all projects applied for under these programs are January 31, 2017 for all farm stewardship projects (both pre-approval and rebate) and February 15, 2018 for all farm and ranch water projects.

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## Forage Seed Information Session - Saskatoon - January 11, 2018

### **Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (SFSDC)**

**By: Ray McVicar, executive director**

The annual Forage Seed Information Session will be held in Saskatoon this year. By holding the session during the same week as Crop Production Show, we hope to make it convenient for growers and members to attend. The Information Session and SFSDC Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday January 11, 2018 from 1 PM to 4:30 PM at the Radisson Hotel Saskatoon in the Davinci Ballroom - 2nd Floor.

SFSDC is pleased to announce our speakers:

- Dave Grafstrom, Northland College, University of Minnesota, Roseau, MN will talk on Managing for Top Seed Yields in Forage Grasses including using growing degree days to pinpoint pest outbreaks, plant growth regulators and fertility, fungicides and using aerial drones in agriculture research;
- Eric Johnson, Weed Management Program, University of Saskatchewan, will discuss their herbicide tolerance and plant growth regulator research on forage seed crops at Saskatoon;
- Jessica Pratchler, Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation, Melfort, SK will review their research on weed and insect control and plant growth regulators;
- Stu Brandt, Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation, Melfort, SK will discuss their alternate row, rotational crop and companion crop research using forage seed crops;
- Mike Scheffel, Canadian Seed Growers Association, Ottawa, ON will provide an update on forage seed inspections, isolation borders, volunteer species and other topics on the growing pedigreed forage seed; and
- Terry Kowalchuk, Provincial Forage Crop Specialist, Saskatchewan Agriculture, will review and update the forage seed market.



Dave Grafstrom, University of Minnesota

SFSDC will hold our Annual General Meeting during the session to provide growers and industry members the opportunity for input into the Commission's future programs and to review the SFSDC activities and financial statements. Admission is free and refreshments will be available.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.skforageseeddc.com](http://www.skforageseeddc.com) or contact SFSDC at email [sfsdc05@gmail.com](mailto:sfsdc05@gmail.com) or phone (306) 789-1958.

The Saskatchewan Leafcutters Association will be holding their Alfalfa Seed and Leafcutter Bee Conference in the evening of Thursday January 11, 2018 and Friday January 12, 2018 at the Radisson Hotel Saskatoon.

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## Yo-Yo Diet Strategies

**By: Dr. Reynold Bergen, BCRC Science Director,**

**Originally published in the October 23, 2017 issue of Canadian Cattlemen magazine and reprinted with permission of the publisher and the BCRC**

Getting weaned calves on feed can be a challenge. This is often attributed to the change from a forage-based diet to unfamiliar feedlot rations and feed bunks, distress from recent weaning, illness, etc. To compensate for this, some feeders use a relatively high-energy receiving diet, the rationale being that if they're not going to eat much, each mouthful better pack a nutritional punch. But part of the challenge these calves face may be complications from feed deprivation during marketing and transportation. Recent research led by the University of Saskatchewan's Greg Penner suggests that the rations fed both before and after feed restriction affect how well cattle cope with and recover from these challenges (J. Anim. Sci. [91:4730-4738](#) and [91:4739-4749](#)).

**What they did:** This study used 20 spayed, ruminally cannulated, individually-penned heifers averaging 1,050 pounds. These obviously weren't freshly weaned calves, but using older animals allowed the researchers to avoid confusing the effects of feed restriction with the effects of weaning stress, disease challenge, new diets, etc. Ten heifers were fed a high-forage (92 per cent) diet and 10 were fed a moderate-forage (60 per cent) diet for two weeks. For the next five days their intake was restricted to 25 per cent of what they had been eating. Then they were allowed to resume eating as much as they wanted for three weeks. During this recovery period, half of the high-forage heifers were switched to the moderate-forage diet, and vice versa.

Rumen microbes digest the animal's feed and produce short-chain fatty acids. These short-chain fatty acids influence rumen pH, and are absorbed through the rumen wall into the bloodstream, where they provide up to 75 per cent of the animal's energy needs. Some short-chain fatty acids also stimulate cells in the rumen wall to grow, divide, and function properly. Because of their important roles in digestive health, the researchers collected very detailed rumen pH and fatty acid measurements throughout the study. They also measured non-esterified fatty acids in the bloodstream. These are fatty acids that have been released due to fat breakdown in the body in response to an energy shortage.

**What they learned:** Average rumen pH didn't differ between the two diets during the initial two-week prerestriction period. Rumen pH increased in both groups of heifers during the feed restriction period, partly because there was less feed for the rumen microbes to digest. The rate of short-chain fatty acid absorption also dropped by nearly 20 per cent in both groups during the feed restriction period, but specialized techniques were used to confirm that slower absorption wasn't just caused by less food fermenting in the rumen. Non-esterified fatty acid levels in the bloodstream rose in both groups of heifers during feed restriction, but more in the high-forage group than in the moderate-forage group. This suggests that the forage-fed heifers were burning more body fat to meet their own energy needs during the feed restriction.

The effects of the pre-restriction and post-restriction diets on intake and rumen function during the three week recovery period were compared.

[Read More.](#)

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Saskatchewan Forage Council Featured Project...

[Use of the Grazing Response Index \(GRI\) on Saskatchewan Pastures to Facilitate Forage](#)

Completed: January 10, 2017

***"Opportunity relates to how much time plants have for growth prior to grazing or for regrowth after grazing. Full growth or recovery enables plants to meet their nutrient and growth requirements during the growing season and allows them to mitigate the impacts of relatively high grazing intensity or frequency. The opportunity for plants to grow or regrow is dependent on soil moisture, air temperature and leaf area."***

This project was supported by the Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) initiative under the Canada-Saskatchewan Growing Forward bi-lateral agreement. Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Forage Specialists and Ducks Unlimited partnered on this project to oversee the demonstration sites.

To view the Saskatchewan Forage Council's completed projects, [click here](#).

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## Upcoming Events

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### **Sask Organics Transition and Production Workshops**

**November 23-24, 2017**

**Regina, SK**

SaskOrganics is pleased to be hosting a workshop about transitioning to Organic Agriculture at the Canadian Western Agribition on Thursday, November 23 2017. SaskOrganics will also be hosting a workshop about integrating livestock into your cover cropping and management plan at the Canadian Western Agribition on Friday, November 24 2017. Guest speakers will include Kevin Elmy and Joel Mowchenko.

For sponsorship and general inquiries, please contact [admin@saskorganic.com](mailto:admin@saskorganic.com). For more information, visit the [Sask Organics website](#).

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### **Native Prairie Speaker Series**

**November 23, 2017**

**Regina, SK**

Join the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) for breakfast and a presentation about burrowing owls from 8AM-9AM on November 23rd in the International Business Centre at Agribition. Speaker is Kaytlyn Burrows, Habitat Stewardship Coordinator of Nature Saskatchewan. To learn more, visit <http://www.pcap-sk.org/communications>

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### **Native Prairie Speaker Series**

**November 29, 2017**

**via Webinar**

The November 29th SK PCAP webinar is Sagebrush Grasslands Restoration for Greater Sage-Grouse Recovery. Speaker is Autumn Watkinson, Provisional PhD Candidate, Land Reclamation International Graduate School, University of Alberta. Webinar takes place at 12PM CST.

To view the poster, [click here](#). To register, visit

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4416298790572025346>

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### **Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing**

**December 5-7, 2017**

**Edmonton, AB**

Two great conferences in one! The Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing theme this December will be Profit Above, Wealth Below. Speakers includes soil health practitioner Gabe Brown, Richard Teague, Jim Gerrish, Dr. Allen Williams and more! THIS EVENT IS CURRENTLY SOLD OUT.

To learn more visit [www.absoilgrazing.com](http://www.absoilgrazing.com) or view the [agenda here](#).

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**Native Prairie Speaker Series - Dec 2017****December 6, 2017****via Webinar**

This presentation will focus on the value of sharing information on Saskatchewan's wild species and ways to do so painlessly. Jeff Keith, the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre Coordinator, will discuss some of the new tools for sharing information and how to use them. He will also cover why it is important to do so and how your information will be used. Webinar scheduled for December 6th at 12Pm CST.

Learn more and register at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1147809162073924867>

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**BCRC Webinar - Understanding and managing forage diseases****December 6, 2017****via Webinar**

Speaker: Linda Jewell, PhD, Research Scientist in Plant Pathology at Agriculture Agri-Food Canada  
There are a number of pathogens that can result in diseases in forages which impact yield, quality, and profitability. This webinar will provide an overview of those pathogens as well as some management strategies to help prevent disease.

[Click here to register.](#)

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**SSCA 30th Annual Conference****January 8, 2018****Saskatoon, SK**

Save the date for the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association's 30th Annual Conference. Keynote speaker will be Jill Clapperton (PhD), Principal Scientist and Co-founder of Rhizoterra Inc. Jill is a well-known researcher, international lecturer and advocate for practices that promote soil health. More conference details are posted at [www.ssca.ca](http://www.ssca.ca).

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**Forage Seed Information Session****January 11, 2018****Saskatoon, SK**

The annual Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission's Forage Seed Information Session will be held in Saskatoon this year. By holding the session during the same week as Crop Production Show, we hope to make it convenient for growers and members to attend. The Information Session and SFSDC Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday January 11, 2018 from 1 PM to 4:30 PM at the Radisson Hotel Saskatoon in the Davinci Ballroom - 2nd Floor.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.skforageseeddc.com](http://www.skforageseeddc.com) or contact SFSDC at email [sfsdc05@gmail.com](mailto:sfsdc05@gmail.com) or phone (306) 789-1958.

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**Western Canada Feedlot Management School****February 6-8, 2018****Regina, SK**

Registration is now open for the 20th edition of Western Canada Feedlot Management School. Register early to ensure your spot in this workshop that will improve your cattle feeding savvy! This year's agenda includes some high profile speakers who will help you focus on a winning business strategy, hone your animal handling skills, and get up to date on animal health and nutrition. As always you will have plenty of time to network with others in the industry and make valuable business connections.

To view the agenda and registration form, [click here](#) or visit the [Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association website.](#)

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**Native Prairie Restoration/Reclamation Workshop****February 7-8, 2018****Saskatoon, SK**

Look to the future, learn from the past at the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) native prairie restoration and reclamation workshop. Topics include native prairie, climate change, soil remediation, species at risk, partnerships and more.

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## Saskatchewan Forage Council Membership

### Be Sure Your Voice in the Forage Industry Counts!

- Incorporated under *The Co-operatives Act*, a membership fee for the SFC is a one-time cost of \$25.00;
- The SFC has worked in the province on behalf of **ALL** forage industry stakeholders (and that's a very extensive and diverse group) for more than 20 years;
- If you are involved with production, management, protection, harvesting, storage, utilization or marketing of forage products, the SFC wants your involvement and input;
- The SFC is committed to placing a focus and awareness on the importance of forages in our province.

*The SFC at a glance...*

With a mandate to enhance the province's forage and grassland industry, the Saskatchewan Forage Council (SFC) strives to partner with all sectors of the industry - producers, industry organizations and companies, government and university.

Formed in 1988, our objectives are focused on the development and dissemination of information related to the production and utilization of all forage resources, prioritization of forage research and collaboration with governments to develop and implement effective policies and programs as they relate to forage production and marketing.



To learn more about becoming a member [Click Here](#).

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We welcome questions about article submission or to find out more about sponsorship, please contact the Saskatchewan Forage Council at:

Email: [office@saskforage.ca](mailto:office@saskforage.ca)

Phone: 306.329.3116

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