



# Forage and Livestock eNews

*Updates and information from across the industry*

April 18, 2017 - Vol 9, Issue 4

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## Greetings!

Spring is here, which means farmers, ranchers and all those who work with forages are anxious to get to work for another growing season! The April Forage and Livestock eNews will get you up to date on the work the Saskatchewan Forage Council and other groups around the province are doing and help you get a start on your spring planning.

Don't forget to check out the spring and summer events coming up in our events section at the end of the newsletter. Getting out in the field and seeing what others are doing is both fun and motivating!



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.

*Your Forage and Livestock eNews*

## Saskatchewan Pastures Program

The Government of Saskatchewan recently announced the ending of the [Saskatchewan Pastures Program \(SPP\)](#).

The Ministry is seeking input into the future management of the land, with respect to the current SPP Patrons.

The [Survey](#) is available until May 8, 2017.

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## SFC completed ADOPT Projects

*By: Laura Hoimyr, Saskatchewan Forage Council*

The Saskatchewan Forage Council and our project partners have had a busy fall and winter finishing up a number of ADOPT projects and the final reports are now available on the [SFC website](#)! Read on to learn more about some of our recently completed projects.

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

This project demonstrated a simple, effective way for livestock producers to evaluate grazing impacts on their land by applying the principles of plant response to defoliation using the Grazing Response Index (GRI). GRI evaluates frequency and intensity of plant defoliation, and the opportunity for a plant to recover from use to determine whether a grazing system is providing long-term beneficial, neutral or harmful effects to the stand. The value of the GRI method lies in both its simplicity and the fact that feedback is received in the year the system is implemented. Producers choosing to adopt this method will be able to assess the three factors and make changes based on the GRI scores in the next growing season if necessary. The GRI method allows for a simple way to focus on one or more aspects of grazing management that may be negatively impacting pastures.

### [Demonstration of Scarification Methods for Cicer Milkvetch Seed](#)

This project assessed practical methods by which producers can scarify cicer milkvetch seed on-farm. Scarification is a technique used to improve the uniformity of germination in cicer milkvetch by abrading the impermeable seed coats to allow uptake of moisture from the soil. This project demonstrated different modes of action to scarify cicer milkvetch seeds and evaluate effectiveness by germination and vigor testing. In addition, small field plots were used to demonstrate emergence of cicer milkvetch seedlings using different scarification techniques.

### [Demonstration of AC Yellowhead Persistence and Performance in Saskatchewan Forage Stands](#)

The objective of this project was to provide a demonstration of AC Yellowhead alfalfa establishment, winter survival and persistence in forage stands in Saskatchewan. Yield and nutritional quality of this forage were also assessed in comparison to more commonly used purple-flowered varieties.

In this demonstration AC Yellowhead alfalfa and purple-flowered alfalfa varieties were compared for yield, establishment success and nutritional quality. When comparing feed quality, forage tests indicated that the Yellowhead alfalfa had lower protein, higher fiber (NDF and ADF), lower



total digestible nutrients (TDN), and lower digestible energy than the purple-flowered alfalfa on average. Based on the averages from all sites, AC Yellowhead did not provide any significant advantage over more conventional purple-flowered varieties in terms of yield, quality or ease of establishment.

[Demonstrating the Use of Yellowhead Alfalfa in a One-Cut and Two-Cut Harvest System](#)

The ADOPT program provided funding to the Saskatchewan Forage Council and project partners to demonstrate the effects of harvest timing on AC Yellowhead (yellow flowered creeping rooted) alfalfa as compared to purple flowered (tap and creeping rooted) alfalfa varieties in one-cut and two-cut harvest systems in Northeastern Saskatchewan. Yield and quality were measured for AC Yellowhead, Equinox (tap root) and Spredor 4 (creeping root) alfalfa for five treatments: 1) Early (July 5); 2) Late (July 29); 3) Early + during Critical Fall Period (Sept 10); 4) Early + after Critical Fall Period (Sept 30); 5) Late + after Critical Fall Period (Sept 30).

**These projects were supported by the Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) initiative under the Canada-Saskatchewan Growing Forward bi-lateral agreement.**

To read the summaries of these projects and others, visit the SFC's [Completed Projects page](#). Thank you to all project partners for overseeing project sites and providing valuable project assistance. All partners are listed in the individual project summaries.

*Image: Yellowhead alfalfa (left) and purple-flowered alfalfa (right) at site near Lestock, SK 2016  
Image Credit: Jodie Horvath, Ducks Unlimited Canada*



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## SCIC Spring Extensions

The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) is working diligently to ensure producers are receiving accurate information and timely customer service as they start their 2017 year. I would like to take this opportunity to address some of the frequently asked questions being asked by producers and highlight key information which may be valuable to your members during the upcoming months..

*Posted Apr. 11, 2017*

As you may already be aware, nearly 1.3 million acres remain of the 2016 crop to be harvested. Producers are anxious to finish harvest this spring and finalize their claims with SCIC. We understand the need to act quickly, assessing claims and putting money in producers hands before spring seeding begins. I want to ensure everyone involved with your organization we have proactive plans in place to assist customers. Our adjusting staff will be making appointments with customers, prior to them completing harvest, in an effort to finalize extensions in a timely manner.

If Crop Insurance customers have completed harvest, they need to call SCIC as soon as possible, unless an adjuster has already visited their farm. Please remember spring production must be kept separate from fall production for easy verification of the claim. The deadline to complete 2016 claims and finalize extensions is June 10.

[Read more](#) on the SCIC website.

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## Risk of Using Over-Wintered Crops as Livestock Feed

*By Murray Feist, M.Sc., P.Ag, Ruminant Nutritionist, Saskatchewan and Barry Yaremicio, M.Sc., P.Ag, Beef and Forage Specialist, Alberta.*

*Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, April 2017*

Using over-wintered cereal crops for swath grazing this spring or baling for use as greenfeed next fall and winter, are two options to utilize last year's crop for ruminants. Threshing the crop and

feeding the grain to monogastrics and ruminants is also possible. There are a number of concerns associated with feeding over wintered crops to both types of livestock.

### **Does the forage or grain meet nutritional requirements of the animals?**

Crops become weather damaged when left out over winter. Typically, protein and energy contents are lower in the spring compared to the fall. Digestibility of the feeds can be reduced, as well. In the case of greenfeed or swath grazing, digestibility could be 10 per cent lower. This further reduces the suitability of unthreshed crops or spring threshed grain if it is to be the major component or sole ingredient in a ration. They will need to be blended off with other feedstocks to make up for the loss in quality.

Animals in late pregnancy or in lactation have approximately 25 to 30 per cent higher nutrient requirements than animals in early or mid-pregnancy. While there are differences between species, this trend is true for all and therefore spring swath grazing or cereal greenfeed harvested from these crops need to be tested for quality and rations balanced to meet requirements.

### **Mycotoxins and overwintered crops**

Mycotoxins can be found in many cereal grains (wheat, barley, rye, etc.), and corn. Mycotoxins are much less common in crops such as canola and legumes (peas, soybeans, faba beans etc.). The fungi that have the potential to produce mycotoxins predominantly infect the seed head and not the stems or leaves of the plant.

Ergot is produced by the fungal species *Claviceps*. *Fusarium*, another fungus, also infects crops early in the growing season. Molds develop in the seed heads over the summer and mycotoxins are formed in the developing crop. If the weather is reasonably mild with high relative humidity, conditions are ideal for mycotoxin development. Ergot concentrations appear to reach maximum values by mid to late July. Levels remain stable for ergot, while levels of some of the *Fusarium* mycotoxins can increase when grain is in storage.

For crops that remain out in the field, such as for swath or corn grazing, microbial activity stops when temperatures drop below 5degrees Celsius, which locks existing mycotoxin levels into the crop over winter. These same microbial levels are present in the crop going into spring.

Nutritional quality of the greenfeed or grain is a big concern. If feed test results indicate that there is sufficient quality to feed to livestock, then testing for mycotoxins is required before any of the material is fed to livestock.

Read the full article on the [Saskatchewan Agriculture website](#).

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**Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association AGM & Convention**

Join us...

*Change, Challenge, Opportunity*

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**AGM & CONVENTION**

**June 11 - 13, 2017**

**Mosaic Place, Moose Jaw, SK**

 Click Here for more information

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[www.skstockgrowers.com](http://www.skstockgrowers.com)

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## Forage Seed 2016 Research Reports

by: Ray McVicar, Executive Director

Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (SFSDC)

The SFSDC forage seed research program was expanded in 2016 with two main locations; the Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation (NARF) near Melfort and the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) near Saskatoon.

Weed control continues to be of major importance for forage seed producers. The SFSDC minor use herbicide screening program at NARF included a number of treatments on established red, alsike and sweet clovers as well as a treatment on seedling sweet clover. Meanwhile, the U of S tested herbicides on established sweet clover, sainfoin, cicer milkvetch, slender wheatgrass, hybrid brome grass and timothy. Many of the treatments proved to have good crop tolerance and data will be used for possible future minor use registrations. However, some treatments showed significant crop injury and this knowledge helps to prevent disappointing crop losses.

SFSDC has also started to look at the use of plant growth regulators (PGRs) on established red, alsike and sweet clovers. PGRs are used quite extensively in forage seed production in Oregon, and Alberta and Manitoba have been testing them for a couple of years. In 2016, we saw mixed results with some noticeable treatment effects and some positive impact on seed yield. For these reasons, the work on PGRs in Saskatchewan will continue in 2017.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) program provided funding for 3 forage seed projects in 2016. The reports for the following projects are on the SFSDC website:

- Management Options to Control Lesser Clover Leaf Weevil in Red Clover;
- Evaluating the use of Direct Seeding and Pre-Seeding Cultivation in Forage Seed Crop Establishment; and

- Evaluating the Placement of Companion Crops in Forage Seed Production

In the continuation of the 2015 - 2016 project with meadow brome grass planted in alternate rows with wheat as a companion crop, the meadow brome grass plots were harvested for a second year in 2016. In 2015, meadow brome grass seed yields were significantly higher where no companion crop had been used in 2014. In 2016, there was no significant difference in meadow brome grass seed yields between treatments with or without a companion crop in 2014. Therefore, this project showed no yield penalty in the second year of meadow brome grass seed production where the seed yields had been much higher in the first year.



For more information about current and past research projects, please check out the SFSDC website at: [www.skforageseeddc.com](http://www.skforageseeddc.com) and look under Research / [Past Research](#) or [Current Research](#).

*Image: Minor use herbicide testing on sweet clover at NARF May 2016  
Image Source: Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation (NARF)*

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## Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) Native Prairie Stewardship Award and Ecological Goods and Services Week

### Updates from the April SK PCAP Newsletter

#### **The Manitou Cattle Breeders Co-op Pasture has pushed leafy spurge to the top of their priority list**

*by Tara Mulhern Davidson, originally appearing in the March, 2017 issue of the SSGA Beef Business Magazine*

Farming and ranching is more often than not a job that involves hard work, long hours, and not always a lot of recognition. For one Saskatchewan grazing cooperative however, their diligent work and efforts in managing their native prairie grasslands were rewarded at the recent Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop in February in Regina, SK.

The Manitou Cattle Breeders Co-op Pasture (MCB) were winners of the inaugural Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) Native Prairie Stewardship Award. The award provides recognition to a community leader or group who is having a positive impact on native prairie, wildlife, species at risk, or working to raise awareness to improve overall health of range and riparian resources. The MCB is one of thirteen grazing cooperatives operating on Crown Lease land located within the Manitou Sand Hills near Neilburg, Senlac and Unity in in west central Saskatchewan. MCB operates on more than 25,000 acres, providing grazing for approximately 720 pairs for 15-20 members.

Read the full newsletter [here](#).

## SK PCAP's First Ecological Goods and Services Week was a success!

We had great feedback, lots of engagement, and excellent sessions during #PrairiesGotTheGoods week March 12-18! With events hosted across the province as well as virtually, we achieved more than 200,000 impressions in-person and online!!!

[All of the presentations were recorded, check them out HERE.](#)

We have many ecoservice fact sheets and information on our [#PrairiesGotTheGoods site!](#)

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## Keep an eye on moisture

*New Holland Agriculture*



According to agricultural nutrition experts, the most important factor influencing quality of hay and silage is moisture. Experts agree that producers should test moisture content before, during and after the harvest season. A moisture tester is invaluable when it comes to preserving the value of your crop and ensuring that it sells for the right price. It takes the guesswork out of testing moisture and eliminates the possibility of wasted crops and missed profits due to human error.

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## Five steps for building the right forage mix for your farm

*By: Jennifer Blair*

*Alberta Farmer Express, published March 31, 2017*

*The right mix of forage grasses and legumes will make the most of our short growing season and produce maximum yields*

It's Canada - not New Zealand or Australia - so ranchers here have to squeeze out as much grass as possible to keep up with their competitors in balmy climates, says a federal researcher.

And there are a few ways to develop a forage mix to make the most of the shorter season.

"The first, most important thing we need to do is look at the forage species and see what part of the growing season they have the best productivity," Yousef Papadopoulos said during a recent Beef Cattle Research Council webinar.

"Some species do really well in early spring, but there's not as many as early and midsummer." The key is to understand which species do well at different parts of the growing season, said the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada scientist.

"You need different strategies to fill the gap to make sure you're sustaining carrying capacity and productivity in your pastures," he said. "When you select your species, you want to look at something that will grow and regrow. Regrowth is very critical, because that's where you need feed to sustain your carrying capacity and the production during that part of the season."

Also, match your forages to your livestock.

"If you're trying to finish cattle or lamb on those pastures, you need high quality, even if the mixture isn't as high on dry-matter yield. But for replacements or cow-calf heifers, you really want a lot of forage produced."

Next, consider durability.

"Perennial ryegrass grows very well for us, but we lose it in the first two years in many regions," said Papadopoulos. "Even if its quality and yield are tremendous, we don't really put it in our mixtures."

To read the full article in the Alberta Farmer Express, [click here](#).

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## Saskatchewan Forage Council Featured Project...

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

Completed: January 10, 2017

***"The GRI method does not replace long-term monitoring of pasture health, but is a user-friendly tool that is much more likely to be implemented due to its simplicity and because it does not require technical expertise. In this demonstration it was concluded that the estimates of time required to undertake this monitoring system were accurate and that it does not take any more than 1-2% of working time during a year. "***

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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## **Counting Birds Counts for Conservation**

**April 26, 2017**

**via Webinar**

Presentation: Counting Birds Counts for Conservation

Speaker: Brenda Dale, Retired from Canadian Wildlife Service

Wednesday April 26th, 2017 at 12:00pm. This presentation will be a FREE webinar.

To register: <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/799501465821682945>

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## **The Saskatchewan Master Naturalist Program**

**May 3, 2017**

**via Webinar**

Presentation: The Saskatchewan Master Naturalist Program: Creating Citizen Scientists

Speaker: Chet Neufeld, Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan

Wednesday May 3rd, 2017 at 12:00pm. This presentation will be a FREE webinar.

To register: <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/8687696950698753281>

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## **AIC 2017**

**April 24-26, 2017**

**Winnipeg, MB**

Join the Agricultural Institute of Canada for AIC 2017: Agricultural Innovation in a Changing Environment. Things will get underway with our Welcome Reception on April 24th from 5-7pm to get re-acquainted with colleagues and peers in the Delta Ballroom of the Delta Hotel, 350 St. Mary's Avenue, Winnipeg. The following two days will bring a fantastic lineup of expert speakers who will deliver Discovery Talks and Forum presentations in three thematic areas.

Explore the [Conference Themes](#) or [Register Now!](#)

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## **Back to the Field: Mud and Ticks in the Sticks**

**May 30-31, 2017**

**Fort Qu'Appelle Area, SK**

The Prairie Parkland Chapter of the Society For Range Management is offering a spring workshop to help you get Back To The Field. This workshop is an opportunity for professionals involved in land management to brush up on plant identification and ecological health assessment techniques. Space is limited and registration closed May 23, 2017.

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

For more information or to register contact Rachel Turnquist at 306.694.3721 or

[srm.prairieparkland@gmail.com](mailto:srm.prairieparkland@gmail.com)

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## **SSGA 104th AGM and Convention**

**June 11-13, 2017**

**Moose Jaw, SK**

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association AGM & Convention include a bus tour and reception on Sunday, followed by speakers on Monday and the AGM and industry presentations on Tuesday. Event will be held at Mosaic Place in Moose Jaw.

To find out more about the event including accommodations, sponsorship options, speakers and more, visit the [SSGA website](#). To register, [click here](#).

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## **Bus Trip and Private Tour of Brown's Ranch**

**Bismarck, North Dakota**

**July 18-20, 2017**

The SSCA has organized a bus trip to Brown's Ranch in Bismarck, North Dakota. We have booked a date with Gabe as early as possible to hopefully avoid interference with your fieldwork, yet late enough to see those things of particular interest on his ranch. The price includes chartered bus travel from Saskatoon (or points along the highway south by request), bus transportation from the hotel to Brown's Ranch, a private 8-hour tour by either Gabe or his son Paul with lunch, accommodation for two nights in Bismarck (single or double occupancy as requested), and two breakfasts at the hotel.

For more information, [click here](#). To register, contact Gerry Burgess (SSCA Office Manager) by

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## Saskatchewan Pasture Tour

August 3, 2017

Foam Lake area, SK

Save the date for the Saskatchewan Pasture Tour! Scheduled for August 3, 2017, this annual event is a great opportunity to get out and connect with forage and livestock producers and to see innovative ways to manage forages. Watch for more information coming soon!

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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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