



Forage and Livestock eNews

Updates and information from across the industry

June 19, 2018 - Vol 10, Issue 6

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Greetings!

There is still time to register for the **SFC AGM and AAFC Swift Current Research and Development Centre Field Day** on June 28! This is an opportunity to learn about ongoing research at the Swift Current Research and Development Centre. Research project updates will include establishment of saline forages, re-introduction of sainfoin to alfalfa and grass pastures, perennial mixtures study, time of grazing native deferred pastures, annual forage polycultures and more! [Click here to view the full agenda and registration info.](#)

If you wish to become more involved with the SFC please contact the office for a nomination form or to discuss opportunities further. SFC is also accepting resolutions at this time, to be submitted to office@saskforage.ca. Resolutions can be accepted from the floor at the meeting, however advance posting allows members time to consider topic. **Deadline to register for AGM is June 23.**

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! Follow us on [Facebook](#) or Twitter [@saskforage](#) to keep up to date on news and events.

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*
Editor,
Laura Hoimyr

By: Michele Simili da Silva, PhD- Mitacs Post-Doctoral Fellow, FCC-LFCE, U of S/ SFC

All kinds of rangelands such as forests, parkland, native grasslands, tame pastures and riparian areas are susceptible to drought which can have a large adverse impact on forage production and animal performance reflecting also on the economy. Although unpredictable drought recurrence is a common phenomenon on the western Canadian prairies, it should be managed as a normal part of the range livestock environment and integrated into operational decisions. Adequate drought management can minimize damage on the soil-plant-animal complex and economic loss during and after drought periods. In order to prepare an operation for drought the method of management should be planned in the years preceding the event. Therefore, the best time is now.

Rainfall in April, May and June are critical for production by our predominately "cool-season" forage species mixtures. Summer rains allow for some regrowth and re-greening of droughted pastures but are less effective in producing forage growth than spring rain. Soil moisture reserves from fall and winter rain/snow can help with spring green up but rain is still needed.

Monitoring rainfall and forage growth potential of the current year is a very helpful way to estimate forage productivity and be prepared for the management changes required for the next growing season as the year following a drought period has an increased chance to be as bad or even worse for decreases in forage yield. Management practice such as delaying spring turnout by a few days at the start of the season after a drought can make a significant difference.

The long-term effects caused by drought vary depending on the range conditions. Rangeland in poor condition (low productivity, low litter and simple plant diversity) is more susceptible and affected by drought than rangeland in good to excellent condition (diverse mix of productive species, high litter) and will take more time to recover. Hence, the management strategy to be employed should be based on maintaining rangeland health before a drought. A basic understanding of the potential capabilities and limitations of each operation resources is fundamental to establish a successful drought management plan.

Stocking rate is a very important tool for grazing management, especially under drought conditions since overgrazing is responsible for severe reduction in plant cover, plant litter and amount and depth of plant roots. High levels of plant cover and litter helps with retention of precipitation and increases the water infiltration into the soil profile, thus adequate litter is critical for the persistence and rapid recovery from drought. In addition, plant litter and standing plants help reduce soil evaporation losses.

The recovery period of the pasture will be lengthened to 5 or more years when exposed to heavy grazing prior to and during drought even under sound management. In order to avoid rangeland becoming overgrazed and to help forage plants recover from drought stress and regrow faster, it is highly recommended that an assessment be made on plant vigor and the amount of remaining forage in advance of the grazing season, so the stocking rate can be properly adjusted according to the range conditions, balancing livestock requirements, available forage and feed resources.

It is very important to emphasize here that there is no special recommendation for drought management and the best insurance against drought is a healthy pasture. Here are some additional options that can be considered in order to ensure the health of your pasture or range when managing under drought conditions:

- Provide rest or defer grazing on lands in an unhealthy condition where hay is fed to minimize severe drought damage;
- Fertilization in good moisture years can improve productivity, increase the root volume of the stand, and make it more drought tolerant. However, keep in mind that any fertilizer application must be based on soil requirements and plants cannot use fertilizer efficiently

without adequate soil moisture;

- Increased diversity of species with different growth seasons and rooting habits can increase the water optimization by the plants under drought situation;
- Consider seeding annuals as an emergency source of forage;
- Control stubble height. It is desirable to leave six inches of stubble before entering winter;
- Hay fields can be used as emergency pasture if winter feed can be obtained elsewhere;
- Forage production insurance can help with costs of drought management.

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Forage Seed Research Plot Tour 2018

Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (SFSDC) Ray McVicar, Executive Director

The 2018 Forage Seed Research Plot Tour will be held on Thursday July 26, 2018 at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Research Farm, located 2.5 km south of Melfort SK on Highway #6. This will be an excellent opportunity to look at the forage crop research being done at the Melfort station and to visit with fellow forage seed producers.

The tour will be hosted by SFSDC, the Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation (NARF), and AAFC Melfort. There will be no charge. Refreshments will be available. Please register on-site at 1:15 PM and the tour of the research plots will take place from 1:30 to

NARF has been home to many forage seed research projects over the past five years.

Tour Highlights:

- Forage Crop Variety Trial
- Annual Ryegrass Herbicide Tolerance
- Annual Ryegrass Fertility
- Alternate Row / Companion Crop Planting
- Red and Alsike Clover in Rotations with Canola and Peas
- Herbicide Tolerance in Red and Alsike Clover
- Plant Growth Regulator Evaluation

This year's tour includes the site of the Saskatchewan Forage Variety Demonstration and Testing System including varieties of: hybrid, meadow and smooth brome grass; crested wheat grass; Festulolium; tall fescue; Timothy; alfalfa; cicer milkvetch and sainfoin.

For more information:

SFSDC: www.skforageseeddc.com or sfsdc05@gmail.com or (306) 789-1958



Forage Research Plot Tour July 2017

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Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP)

Growing Forward 2 (GF2) was a five-year (2013-2018) policy framework for Canada's agricultural and agri-food sector. GF2 included a \$3 billion dollar investment by federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) governments and formed the foundation for government agricultural programs and services. GF2 was replaced by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership in 2018.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership in Saskatchewan is a five-year, \$3 billion investment by the federal, and provincial governments to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector. Program delivery is provided in the areas of Science, Research and Innovation; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change; Risk Management; Value Added Agriculture and Agri-Food Processing; Public Trust and; Markets and Trade.

Producers will recognize some programming under CAP, such as the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program, while there have been updates and changes to other programs. The Farm Stewardship Program (FSP) still exists and now provides Saskatchewan producers funding to

implement beneficial management practices (BMPs) in three priority areas - water, climate change and biodiversity.

To learn more about CAP programming in Saskatchewan, visit: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/canadian-agricultural-partnership-cap/environmental-sustainability-and-climate-change>

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Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association Grazing Videos

The Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association (SCA) YouTube Channel features videos with topics of interest to livestock and forage producers in Saskatchewan.

A series of two videos highlight the Fox family, who have a cow-calf operation in Saskatchewan, and practice intensive grazing and careful grass management. Visit the SCA YouTube Channel or click the links below to watch:

Fox Use of Grass at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sRIZbrWlwU>

Fox Intensive Grazing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2WbDkUXMpc&t=19s>

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Maintenance Tip - DMC Conditioning System

As hay season 2018 continues, don't forget that simple, routine maintenance checks on your disc mower-conditioner can help you protect your equipment and keep you cutting cleanly. New Holland recommends checking the roll timing periodically to ensure the rolls are adjusted properly, and a visual inspection is sufficient to check that the lugs center in the opposed valley. Commonly an adjustable flange is provided on the drive to move one roll to center the lug and valley. On chain driven rollers, timing can be complicated by chain stretch and sprocket wear, so you should reference the operator's manual or contact your dealer.

To learn more about New Holland's disc mower-conditioner offering, visit www.NewHolland.com.



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Updates from Saskatchewan Agriculture

June 2018 Agriview publication, Government of Saskatchewan

The June 2018 Agriview publication is full of information from Saskatchewan's forage and livestock industry. Read on for excerpts from the publication or [view the publication online here](#).

Updated livestock and forage strategy unveiled

by: Shelley Jones, Manager, Agriculture Knowledge Centre, Regional Services Branch

Saskatchewan Agriculture recently 'refreshed' its Livestock Strategy and broadened its scope to include forage as an input integral to sector growth. With a vision to realized prosperous and sustainable sectors, the mission of the Livestock and Forage Strategy 2.0 is to support competitiveness under three broad pillars.

Under the Science, Research and Innovation pillar, the Ministry sees our role as a partner with industry in development and application of technologies and practices. Together, we do this by supporting research development and commercialization programs. As partners, industry and government build and invest in research capacity and infrastructure through projects like the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence at the University of Saskatchewan. We also team up to enhance technology transfer and adoption through learning events like Feedlot School and, on our own, through extension services delivered through the Ministry's modernized Regional Services Branch. The outcome we seek is to have the sector adopting innovative practices that improve production and, in turn, profitability.

[Read more on page 10.](#)

Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef

by: Grant Zalinko, PAg, Executive Director, Livestock Branch

On April 10 and 11, 2018, the Canadian livestock industry met in Regina for the semi-annual meeting of the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB).

The CRSB is a national, multi-stakeholder initiative established in 2014 to advance the sustainability efforts in the beef industry. The CRSB leads a national forum that connects local, regional and national leaders and stakeholders in the beef industry who are interested in and committed to beef sustainability. The CRSB is a collaborative effort. CRSB members are asked to remove their personal interests and focus on the goal of establishing sustainability initiatives as the pre-competitive advantage for the entire beef industry.

[Read more on page 10.](#)

Take steps to avoid blue-green algae in your dugouts

by: Leah Clark, MSc, PAg, Livestock and Feed Extension Specialist, Regional Services Branch

Contrary to what the name blue-green algae suggests, it is not actually algae, it is a bacterium whose scientific name is *Cyanobacteria*. The combination of summer heat, nutrients and sitting water is the perfect recipe for algae growth in dugouts. This may be a concern, as blue-green algae/*cyanobacteria* produce toxins that have the potential to cause sickness and, in some cases, death when consumed by livestock. Toxins are produced in small amounts throughout the lifespan of *cyanobacteria* but are released at high concentrations when they die. Therefore, it is recommended to limit livestock's access to a dugout when the *cyanobacteria* are dying off, either naturally or due to the addition of algaecides.

Cyanobacteria tend to grow in still water with nutrients present. Sources of nutrients include animal feces, and urine or decaying organic matter in the water. *Cyanobacteria* need sunlight and, therefore, they are found floating near or on the surface of water.

[Read more on page 11.](#)

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Wait! A Test to See if Your Grasses are Ready to Graze

Bethany Johnston of UNL Extension tells us what leaf stages look like and what that means for grazing. Take her picture test and see if you pass! Thanks for this article go to UNL Beefwatch and Bethany Johnston, Nebraska Extension Educator, Beef Systems, at University of Nebraska Lincoln. You can always find great grazing related information by checking out the UNL Beefwatch newsletter.

The last year has been difficult to manage for pasture health and production. First, some rangelands are recovering from poor precipitation received during last year's growing season. Now, cool weather this spring lowered the average soil temperature. While cool-season grasses break winter dormancy when the soil temperature is a few degrees above freezing, warm-season grasses prefer soil temperatures above 50 degrees F to break dormancy and begin growth. Both previous year drought and soil/air temperature affect how you should manage your pastures this growing season.

"We always turn out on May 15th." Have you heard that before? Does a calendar date decide when the plant is ready to be grazed? Maybe a producer should consider the "leaf stage" instead.

The leaf stage of a plant can help a producer decide when the plant has enough leaf area to best tolerate grazing.

What is "leaf stage"? A simple definition is the number of leaves on a plant's tiller or stem. If you pluck a stem at ground level, you can physically count the leaves. Count mature leaves, or leaves that are collared- the leaf blade goes all the way around the stem, like a collar on a shirt.

What Do You Do With This?

Now you can check to make sure your grasses are ready to graze.

Cool-season grasses can be grazed in the spring, but need to develop 3 leaves before you graze. After the third-leaf stage, the plant has captured enough energy reserves to regrow after the plant has been defoliated. The plant's stores are not quite built up at the two-leaf stage. Grazing at the two-leaf stage could weaken the plant.

Remember, cool-season grasses like warm days and cool nights. Cool-season grasses start growing in the fall and another surge of growth occurs in the spring. Examples of cool-season grasses are smooth brome, western wheatgrass, needleandthread, porcupine grass, and prairie junegrass. With the cooler than normal temperatures this spring, producers may need to delay turnout until their cool-season grasses reach the third-leaf stage.

[Read the full article and test yourself on plant leaf stage in the original article at onpasture.com.](#)

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Saskatchewan Forage Council Featured Project...

[Invasive Plant Species Identification Guide - Second edition](#)

"The plants that make up native prairie work together to store carbon, maintain water and nutrient cycling, and build soil. Invasive species can upset this balance. Invasive species have been identified as the second largest threat to biodiversity (after fragmentation). The invasion of non-native species in haylands, tame forage, gravel pits, riparian areas, roadsides and cropland affect the function of these habitats and can cause a downgrade in their usefulness. All of the species included in this guide are a threat to Saskatchewan."

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

Upcoming Events

NPAW and Tour 2018

June 21-22, 2018

Beechy, SK

PCAP continues to plan the 20th Annual Native Prairie Appreciation Week 2018 (June 17th - 23rd). We plan to have the youth poster contest and a native prairie photo contest again, in addition to other activities. The 17th Society for Range Management - Prairie Parkland Chapter - Annual Tour will be held in conjunction with Saskatchewan's 20th Annual Native Prairie Appreciation Week (NPAW) on June 21 and 22. This year's topic is Range Management with Limited Time and Resources.

[View the poster and registration form here.](#) For more information contact srm.prairieparkland@gmail.com.

Working Together - The Benefits and Challenges of Intercropping

June 22, 2018

Regina, SK

An information workshop from SaskOrganics about intercropping, will take place at the Queensbury Convention Centre, EVRAZ Place.

For more info or to register, [visit the website](#).

Forages in the Field Workshop

June 26, 2018

Saskatchewan Landing, SK

This specialized course is designed specifically for reclamation and environmental assessment practitioners! This Workshop will be led by some of Saskatchewan's most experienced Ecologists and Botanists. Topics include native grass ID, upland forb ID using vegetative characteristics, invasive weed ID, building understanding of ecological sites, and more. Space is limited to 30 participants, so register early!

To view the event poster and registration form, [click here](#). For more information contact the Saskatchewan Forage Council at office@saskforage.ca.

SFC AGM and Swift Current Research and Development Centre Tour

June 28, 2018

Swift Current, SK

The 2018 Saskatchewan Forage Council AGM will be held June 28 in conjunction with the Swift Current Research and Development Centre Tour! This event will feature projects from researchers at the Research and Development Centre, including successful establishment of saline-tolerant forages, re-introduction of sainfoin into alfalfa and grass pastures, perennial mixtures study, native species breeding program, annual forage polycultures and more.

The tour begins at 1PM, with the SFC AGM to follow. For agenda and registration info, [click here](#).

CSIDC Irrigation Field Day and Trade Show

July 12, 2018

Outlook, SK

The Canada-Saskatchewan Irrigation Diversification Centre (CSIDC) field day and trade show will take place in Outlook and includes field tours in the morning and afternoon as well as lunch. More information coming soon.

[Learn more here](#).

Bus Tour - Brown's Ranch and Menoken Farm

July 17-19, 2018

Bismarck, North Dakota

The SSCA (Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association) is offering another bus trip to Bismarck, North Dakota and, as a bonus, we have organized a tour of Menoken Conservation Farm (www.menokenfarm.com) in addition to the tour of Brown's Ranch in one full SOIL HEALTH EDUCATION DAY! Price includes chartered bus travel from Saskatoon (or points along the highway south by request, such as Regina and Weyburn), bus transportation from the hotel to Menoken Farm and Brown's Ranch, private tour with activities at both locations, lunch and dinner on tour day, and accommodation for two nights in Bismarck (single or double occupancy as requested) including two breakfasts at the hotel.

Learn more [here](#). To register or for more information, contact Gerry Burgess at info@ssca.ca.

2018 Grasslands Sheep Exhibition

July 21-22, 2018

Humboldt, SK

This Sheep Show and Sale, includes junior show, breed displays and demonstrations. Grasslands is an important annual event of the Saskatchewan sheep industry. Producers from across our province as well as neighboring provinces will be present to show and sell their purebred sheep.

Learn more at <http://www.sksheep.com/> or contact Linda at lindasheepdb@sasktel.net

Soil Health Field Day

July 26, 2018

Wood Mountain, SK

Join Upland Organics for a soil health field day featuring speakers Jay Fuhrer, Soil Health Specialist with NRCS and Kevin Elmy of Friendly Acres Seed Farm. Event runs from 9AM-4PM and tickets are \$25.

To register, [click here](#).

Saskatchewan Pasture Tour

August 8, 2018

Macklin, SK

Save the date for the 2018 Saskatchewan Pasture Tour! This year's topics include cattle handling facilities, corn and swath grazing, native and tame pasture management, labour sourcing and more. View the [announcement poster here](#). For more information, watch the SFC website or contact us at 306.329.3116 or office@saskforage.ca.

Canadian Beef Industry Conference

August 14-16, 2018

London, ON

The third annual Canadian Beef Industry Conference will take place in London, Ontario in August. Keynote speaker is Social Commentator, Rex Murphy and the conference theme is Driving Demand.

Stay tuned for more details coming soon at:

<http://canadianbeefindustryconference.com/wordpress/>.

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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

Phone: 306.329.3116



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