



# Forage and Livestock eNews

*Updates and information from across the industry*

February 28, 2017 - Vol 9, Issue 2

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## Greetings!

As February comes to a close we hope you will enjoy this second edition of the SFC Forage and Livestock eNews for 2017. There is certainly a lot going on in the industry, as the long list of upcoming events for March at the ends of this newsletter attests to! Check out these workshops and webinars to network and gather new ideas for the upcoming growing season.

Read on in the eNews to learn about forage research, SFC completed projects, a forage seeding incentive program and more.



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.

## Grazing Response Index (GRI) on Saskatchewan Pastures SFC ADOPT Project Final Report now available

The Saskatchewan Forage Council (SFC) and partners have now posted the final report for the ADOPT Project *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.



A short video describing the project and the GRI method has been posted on the SFC's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwbKVTaW8eE>

To read the full report, visit the SFC website's [completed projects page](#) or open the [pdf final report document](#).

To learn more about other work being done on the GRI method in Canada, [visit the BCRC website](#).. To download the GRI Factsheet adapted for tame forages in Saskatchewan, [click here](#).

**The project was supported by the Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) initiative under the Canada-Saskatchewan Growing Forward 2 bi-lateral agreement.**

*Image: End of season growth measured at Site 1  
Image Credit: Jodie Horvath, Ducks Unlimited Canada*

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## Beef Research News

*Beef Cattle Research Council - Progress and Activities in 2016, posted January 3, 2017 by BCRC*

On average nationally, the BCRC receives approximately 18% of the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-off, and plays a key role in leveraging additional funding for beef cattle research. Recognizing this, the Council works to ensure the highest return on investment possible for industry contributions to research through ongoing consultation with other provincial and national funding organizations.

*Canada's Beef Cattle Industry Science Clusters*

The first Beef Cattle Industry Science Cluster directed \$10.5 million to 32 research projects between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2013. Joint industry and government commitments to the

second Cluster (April 1, 2013 - March 31, 2018) totaled \$20 million, including \$14 million in funding from AAFC, \$1 million in provincial government investments, and \$5 million in funding from the research allocation of the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-off and provincial beef industry groups. Funding was directed to 26 research projects. A summary of every Cluster-funded project can be found on [BeefResearch.ca](http://BeefResearch.ca).

To view the full report (pdf), [click here](#).

*Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) - Results of the Beef Research Priority Survey, posted November 10, 2016 by BCRC*

Earlier this year the BCRC developed an online Beef Research Priority Survey. The Survey asked participants to rate the importance of research issues listed in the 2012 National Beef Research Strategy. The BCRC was pleased to received responses from over 500 participants, including cow-calf producers, feedlot operators, seedstock breeders and many more in the beef industry.

In reviewing the survey responses, the BCRC paid special attention to issues that at least 75% of respondents felt were "important" or "very important". Some of these areas included beef quality issues, food safety issues, animal health issues, forage issues and more. Improved forage stand life, forage quality and yield were seen as a priority for many of those responding.

To read the blog posting by the BCRC highlighting the survey results, [click here](#).

To find out more about BCRC Forage & Grasslands research, [click here](#).

*excerpt from Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) Blog - Deciding what research and innovation to fund, posted February 13, 2017 by Dr Reynold Bergen, BCRC Science Director*

The BCRC is now deciding which new projects to fund through the next Beef Cluster (2018-2023), so this month I explain how the BCRC decides what research to fund.

The first step is to decide what questions the beef industry needs researchers to tackle. This started with our online beef research survey in Spring 2016, where we asked participants to rate various research topics as extremely, very, moderately, slightly or not important. Over half of the 500 survey responses came from producers across Canada. We also survey other funders on an ongoing basis to track the forage, cattle and beef research they are funding. We asked those funders whether recently-completed projects solved the target problem, or whether more work is needed.

The next step is to find project ideas to achieve these research targets. We start by asking researchers to submit a "letter of intent" (LOI), which is a brief summary of what they'd like to research, how their idea is aligned with our research targets, and a rough budget. Each LOI is sent to the BCRC producer members, and is also reviewed by BCRC staff and independent specialists. The BCRC members will meet in early February to discuss each LOI, consider the specialist and staff perspectives and recommendations, and decide which LOI's to pursue in more detail. At least half of the LOI's usually drop out of the running at this stage.

To read the full article, [click here](#).

A great way to keep up to date with beef and forage research in Canada is to attend the free BCRC webinars. Learn more on the BCRC website's [webinars page](#).

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## Native Rangelands: A Last Refuge of Grassland Songbirds

*Submitted by Phil Rose, MSc Candidate, University of Regina*

Many cattle producers and range managers go about their day-to-day activities without giving much thought to the benefits their work has on grassland songbird conservation. However, if it were not for the cattle and ranching industry, the persistence of these small and often-overlooked birds would look much bleaker than it does today. Native rangelands contain much of



*Native rangeland within the Dixon Community Pasture*

the remaining native prairie, and development for crop production has made them one of North America's most endangered ecosystems. In Saskatchewan less than 25% of native mixed-grass prairie now remains. As a result, grassland birds are one of the most at-risk bird assemblages in North America and nearly all species have exhibited steep, continent-wide declines over the past half century. In Saskatchewan, there are five grassland songbirds listed as species-at-risk: Sprague's pipit, Baird's sparrow, chestnut-collared longspur, McCown's longspur, and bobolink. It is very likely that more will continue to be added to

this list as other species are assessed in greater detail. To put into perspective how important these native rangelands are to species at risk, previous research has estimated that 70% of Sprague's pipits remaining in North America occur on privately-owned grasslands grazed by domestic livestock.

Protecting these species is difficult to manage because each grassland songbird has their own distinct grassland conditions they prefer and grasslands are highly variable throughout Saskatchewan. For example, bobolinks prefer tall, dense grassland types and often adapt more favorably to tame pastures than other grassland specialists. Chestnut-collared and McCown's longspurs are found in sparse grasslands with greater amounts of open bare ground and a lower build-up of litter and dead grasses. Lastly, Sprague's pipits and Baird's sparrow are typically found somewhere near the middle of these two extremes.

The reason such a wide range of grassland birds can exist within the same geographic region relates to the dynamic nature of the Great Plains before it was colonized by European settlers. This region was constantly exposed to periodic disturbances from wildfires and bison grazing and grasslands never remained idle for long periods of time. Therefore, patches of grasslands at different states of re-growth continuously occurred across the prairies. These forms of disturbance have for the most part been eliminated from the landscape, but similar effects can be created by domestic livestock grazing. Grazing is a beneficial and highly adaptable method of disturbance on grasslands that can be used to influence vegetation structure and composition, litter accumulation, and invasion of woody vegetation. The variability in grassland conditions created by livestock grazing has the potential to provide the necessary conditions for the entire spectrum of grassland birds.

My existing research at the University of Regina examines the habitat requirements of grassland songbirds (i.e., the grassland characteristics that influence whether a species can successfully occupy an area or not) for the purpose of establishing habitat conservation targets. During this project I will identify rangeland characteristics that promote the highest abundance of grassland songbirds in prairie Saskatchewan. I also plan to examine how these conservation targets could affect the ranching industry. My hope is to use this information to develop management targets that promote

both wildlife habitat and healthy rangeland systems. The project also links factors that are important to prairie songbirds with range characteristics relevant to the day-to-day management decisions made by livestock producers.

This is important because conservation programs are difficult to establish unless managers and landowners have some familiarity and are willing to lend their expertise in terms of range health and ecology to achieve these goals. The grassland characteristics measured during this project and used to predict songbird abundance, include variables such as vegetation height and density, percent cover, litter mass, and shrub density. These characteristics are also applicable to range management and could serve as indicators for certain components of range health. Range health is important to consider because grasslands that are grazed sustainably and provide habitat for these natural communities of plants and animals are more likely to replicate historic conditions that have allowed the prairies grasslands to persist through long periods of drought and shifts in climate.



**Sprague's Pipit**

To read the full article as a pdf, [click here](#).

### ***Opportunity: Grassland Songbird Research***

Looking for owners or lease holders of native rangelands willing to grant access to their properties for a study on grassland bird habitat requirements. The study will take place over 2-3 days at each property between mid-May and Mid-July and will involve observing bird species/numbers and taking measurements of grassland characteristics (e.g., grass height, percent cover, litter volume, shrub density). It WILL NOT involve any capture or handling of wildlife. Vehicles will not be used in pastures unless specific permission is given for designated trails. Native rangelands must have at greater than 50% cover of native grasses with minimal tree cover. The goal is to randomly select one native rangeland within 75 km of all of the following locations: Val Marie, Consul, Maple Creek/Tompkins, Kyle/Beechy, Kerrobert/Kindersley, and Swanson.

For more information or to indicate interest in granting access to a site, contact: Phil Rose (MSc Candidate, University of Regina) at [rose200p@uregina.ca](mailto:rose200p@uregina.ca) or 204-730-0855.

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## Forage producers have big role in reducing emissions

*by: Cedric McLeod*

*Winnipeg Free Press November 17, 2016*

Her hooves gently cut the fog that rests as a blanket across the rolling pastoral landscape. The calf grazing at her side has been nurtured and raised on the milk that grass made. And, now the pair adds value - both economically and environmentally - to Canada's vast grasslands.

Canada's cultivated forages for pasture, feed and seed production account for 33.8 million acres, or 39 per cent, of the country's land devoted to agricultural production. In comparison, the next-largest crop - wheat - accounts for 20.4 million acres or 23 per cent of cropland acres.

The above-ground value of Canada's vast forage land base is well-recognized. Forages have a direct economic value of \$5.1 billion - Canada's third-largest crop, just behind wheat with its value of \$5.2 billion and canola at \$7.3 billion. Forages are also the primary input for Canada's \$11-billion beef and dairy sectors.

However, it is the below-ground value that is most overlooked. The indirect ecological-goods-and-services-value contribution to Canadian society as a whole is estimated between \$895 million and \$1.9 billion annually.

On the heels of the United Nation's Paris Agreement now in effect, Canada's forage and grassland producers need to examine the positive impact their industry has on the environment.

The Paris Agreement brings the world's nations together to combat climate change and adapt to the effects of climate change - something farmers around the world are experiencing more regularly.

We acknowledge agriculture, like so many industries, plays a role in climate change. However,

forage and grassland producers - the backbone of the nation's agriculture industry - understand the work they do can help to dramatically reduce Canada's net greenhouse gas emissions output.

Blake Vince, an Ontario farmer and Nuffield scholar who studied farmland conservation and the importance of biodiversity, points out that extreme weather events, those once-in-100-year droughts, snowstorms or floods, are happening with increasing frequency. If Canadian farmers are going to continue to grow food and survive potential catastrophic events, they need to start from the ground up.

To read the full article, [click here](#).

Cedric MacLeod is a beef farmer, agrologist and executive director of the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association.

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## Lesser Clover Leaf Weevil Control in Red Clover Seed Production

*By Stephanie Ginter, Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation, and Ray McVicar, Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (SFSDC)*

Lesser clover leaf weevil is a problem pest of red clover in Saskatchewan and it has become more common to apply insecticide for control. SFSDC wanted to evaluate and demonstrate the importance of the timing of pesticide application to control this pest.

Red clover (variety Belle) was planted on June 9, 2015 at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Farm, Melfort, SK with a Conserva-Pak seeder. In 2016, 3M x 8M plots were measured in the established red clover and the treatments were replicated 4 times.

Starting May 16, 2016 and approximately every three days, the area was monitored for lesser clover leaf weevil. On each monitoring date, 20 red clover plant stems were analyzed and the number of weevil larvae was counted. On May 16, 2016, one lesser clover leaf weevil larva was noted in the 20 stems examined. On May 19 and 24, 2016, no larvae were detected, only one on May 27, 2016 and 3 on May 30, 2016. On June 1, 2016, 3 larvae were detected, with 2 on June 3, 2016 and 5 larvae in 20 stems on June 6, 2016.

On June 6, 2016 the first timing of Decis EC was applied using a hand-held sprayer. The following week, 5 stems were collected and analyzed from each plot. The late application of Decis EC was made on June 13, 2016. The red clover commenced flowering June 13, 2016. Weevil counts were repeated June 27, 2016.

On June 13, 2016, after the first insecticide applications, but before the late application, weevil larvae numbers were highest in the untreated check and lower where Decis EC had been applied. On June 20, 2016, weevil larvae numbers had increased compared to June 13 in the untreated check. In addition, larvae numbers were lower where Decis EC was applied. Weevil numbers did not vary from where the insecticide was applied early versus late. To detect differences in control between application timings would require more data collection on both insect numbers over time

as well as evaluation of the degree of leaf and stem damage caused by the weevils. For example, early or late applications may be equally effective at controlling the weevil larvae, but



Lesser Clover Weevil Larva feeding in stem. June 9, 2016. Melfort, SK. Source: SFSDC

late application may allow them to do considerably more damage before they are controlled.



Lesser clover weevil adults.  
Melfort, SK. July 20, 2016.  
Source: Saskatchewan  
Agriculture

On June 27, 2016, weevil larvae numbers were highest in the untreated check and lower in the Decis EC treated areas. Note: No statistical analysis of the weevil larvae numbers were carried out.

The trial was desiccated and harvest was completed on August 30, 2016 with a Wintersteiger plot combine. Grain samples were dried to 0 per cent moisture, cleaned and weighed to assess yield.

Red clover seed yield was not affected by any treatment. This is likely because lesser clover leaf weevil numbers were too low to cause significant crop damage. With very favorable moisture conditions during the summer of 2016, it is likely that the crop recovered from any damage caused by the insect pest. Under more stressful conditions or where weevil numbers are higher, yield responses could occur.

In conclusion, application of Decis EC reduced lesser clover leaf weevil numbers in the trial; however seed yields were not affected. It is advisable to conduct trials over more

locations or years to generate a good understanding of the efficacy of insecticide treatments in protecting red clover seed yield from damage by this pest. This project provided valuable experience in monitoring and identifying development and activity of lesser clover leaf weevil in red clover seed crops. This information will be put to use in future research projects.

The project was supported by the Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) initiative under the Canada-Saskatchewan Growing Forward bi-lateral agreement.

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## DUC/CPS Forage Program Offers Financial Break for Grasslands Conversions

Available to agricultural producers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the DUC/CPS forage program provides cash-back incentives on all Proven® Seed forage seed purchases paid at full-retail price when producers convert cultivated land to hay or pastureland. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, producers receive a rebate of \$100 per 50 lb. bag of forage seed; in Manitoba, producers receive a rebate of up to \$125 for every new forage acre seeded as part of the program.

The DUC/CPS forage program is best suited for producers in the parkland and prairie regions. Anyone interested in the program or who wants more information should contact their local CPS retailer or DUC conservation program specialist.

For more information, contact:  
Trevor Plews, Ducks Unlimited Canada - Saskatchewan  
1-306-782-2108 or [t\\_plews@ducks.ca](mailto:t_plews@ducks.ca)

To read the full media release, [click here](#).

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## Proper Operation of a Tractor Loader

*New Holland Agriculture*

Proper operation of a tractor loader is important for performance, as well as for safety reasons. To

avoid rollbacks, always watch the bucket, forks or other loader implement



carefully to keep them in the right position.



Familiarize yourself with the working area and terrain.

Pay attention to vertical clearance and limitations that arise due to increased reach. Tractor and loader operator's manuals contain detailed information and important tips, so be sure to read them!

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## Saskatchewan Forage Council Featured Project...

### [Control of Absinth and Common Tansy in Perennial Pastures Using Three Methods of Wiper Application](#)

Completed: December 1, 2016

*" In order to control the absinth or tansy plants, there must be a critical height separation (perhaps 6 inches) between the weeds and the desirable vegetation. It appears that a short-duration graze, which allows cattle to select the desirable plants and graze them lightly may create the space required between the absinth/tansy plants and other vegetation to make weed wiper application more effective at controlling these weeds."*

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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### **Producers: Need Some Questions Answered?**

**February 28 and March 1, 2017**

**Bradwell and Beechy, SK**

Join Saskatchewan Agriculture Regional Specialists and the South Sask River AEGP from 10-11:30 AM for coffee, doughnuts and conversation at the Blucher RM Office February 28 or the Beechy Community Hall March 1. This is a great opportunity to ask questions about: forages, root rot, invasive weeds, fusarium, mycotoxins, Farm Stewardship Program and more.

For more information contact Kerry at 306.460.4987 or Leah at 306.254.4463.

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### **Water Well Workshop**

**February 28, March 1, and March 2, 2017**

**various locations, SK**

Well drilling information workshops will be held at Harris on February 28, Plenty on March 1st and Landis on March 2. Learn more about well drilling, water testing, well decommissioning and grant money at each of these workshops. There is no charge to attend.

For more information, contact the Eagle Creek Watershed Group at 306.831.6009.

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### **Sheep Nutrition Webinar**

**March 1, 2017**

**via Webinar**

Join us for a Ministry hosted webinar on March 1, 2017 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. (Saskatchewan time) where Dr. Gregory Penner, Associate Professor and Centennial Enhancement Chair in Ruminant Nutritional Physiology, Department of Animal and Poultry Science, University of Saskatchewan will discuss ram nutrition. If you are unable to attend the live presentation, please pre-register and a recorded link will be sent to you to view the presentation at a more convenient time.

[Click here](#) to pre-register.

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**Celebrating Rural Ranching Women**

**March 2-3, 2017**

**Maple Creek, SK**

An annual event to celebrate rural women in association with Rural Women Month. Topics include entrepreneurship, marketing and management, livestock and forage management, health and wellness. Registration \$50. To register contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377. Registration deadline February 24, 2017.

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

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**Getting Started in Sheep Workshop**

**March 3-4, 2017**

**Saskatoon, SK**

This is a two day course covering the basics of the sheep industry. It is designed for those who are looking at getting into sheep and those who are already in the business on the beginner level. The cost is \$150 plus GST per person or \$240 plus GST for a couple. This includes coffee breaks and a binder filled with information on sheep production.

To view the workshop outline, [click here](#). A \$50 deposit is required and you may register by phoning the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board at (306) 933-5200 or email:

[sheepdb@sasktel.net](mailto:sheepdb@sasktel.net)

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**Saskatchewan Bison Association AGM**

**March 3, 2017**

**North Battleford, SK**

Come out and see what the SBA has been up to in 2016, hear some great presentations, eat some tasty food and purchase some magnificent bulls!

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

For SBA meetings and meals please register with the SBA office prior to February 22nd, 2017. PH: 1.306.585.6304 EM: [sba001@sasktel.net](mailto:sba001@sasktel.net)

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**Soils and Crops**

**March 6-7, 2017**

**Saskatoon, SK**

The annual Soils and Crops Workshop is a two-day event offering updates on current research being conducted in the areas of soils, crops and economics by researchers, faculty and graduate students from across western Canada. The second day offers a workshop based on invited presentations designed to provide in-depth training on a variety of topics emphasizing agronomy.

For information on pricing, agenda, poster submission and more, [click here](#). To register, visit:

<https://ccdeconference.usask.ca/index.aspx?cid=281>

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**Moose Mountain Ag Day**

**March 8, 2017**

**Arcola, SK**

Moose Mountain Ag Day takes place at Prairie Place Hall in Arcola beginning at 9AM. Registration is \$25 at the door and includes lunch. Topics include annuals, perennials and grazing: what they do for soil health and carbon sequestration, Upper Souris Watershed programming update, adding value to cash crops, increasing diversity to enhance soil health and more.

For more information contact Lorne Klein at 306.848.2382.

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**Family Farm Transition**  
**March 21, 22 or 23, 2017**  
**various locations, SK**

Plan to attend one of these workshops in your area: Kindersley March 21, Humboldt March 22 or Tisdale March 23. Learn more about leadership and communication on the multi-generational farm, structures and strategies for farm transition and more. Registration begins at 9:30 AM. Registration fee is \$25 and deadline to register is March 14. For more information or to register call 306.946.3230 or email [watrousregionalservices@gov.sk.ca](mailto:watrousregionalservices@gov.sk.ca)

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**Subsurface Drainage Design and Water Management Workshop**  
**March 21 & 22, 2017**  
**Outlook, SK**

This event takes place at the Outlook Heritage Centre. For more information call 306.867.5507 or email [admin.icdc@sasktel.net](mailto:admin.icdc@sasktel.net)

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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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has been provided in part by one of our partners,  
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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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Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association  
Saskatchewan Beef Industry Development Fund:



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