

# **BMP in the Establishment of Fast Growing Plantations & the Promotion of Opportunities in Agro-Forestry**

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## **Key Points**

- Intercropping with hybrid poplar and hay
- Silvopasture opportunities
- Pest management challenges
- Project update
- Ecological Goods and Services

## **Body**

The goal of a tree improvement program is to develop fast growing aspen and poplar genotypes that would be suitable for use in agro-forestry. Companies would be able to obtain portions of their fiber requirements from these privately owned woodlots. Silvopasture refers to planting trees with an agricultural crop, usually forage and could provide a new opportunity for Alberta farmers. Similar agro-forestry projects have occurred in the United States, New Zealand, Brazil, Australia and Africa. These experiments have shown optimum livestock and fiber production can be achieved through integrated land management. While information is available on the effects of grazing in pine, coconut, and eucalyptus plantations, little is available on how grazing affects species such as fast growing hybrid poplar. This site hopes to answer many of these questions!

The “Murdoch Lake Agroforestry Demonstration” is located a south of Manning near the town of Deadwood. It borders the waterfowl rich Murdoch Lake and is approximately sixty acres in size. It showcases a mix of forages and 17, 352 recently planted hybrid poplar trees. Ducks Unlimited who owns the land has partnered with Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd. (DMI), the North Peace Applied Research Association (NPARA), Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESAs), the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), the Woodlot Extension Program (WEP) and Reduced Tillage Linkages on this project. This field demonstration was developed to show landowners the potential benefits of combining tree farming with traditional agricultural practices. The purpose is to show Alberta farmers that raising trees and livestock or hay on the same land can be an economically viable practice while providing wildlife, waterfowl and other ecological goods and services. Agriculture and AgriFood Canada’s Greencover program helped fund tours, workshops and the promotion of this agroforestry demonstration to producers in the region.

## **Conclusion**

This demonstration site has been well received in the Peace Region and has been toured and visited by numerous landowners and organizations. Overall this project is showing that intercropping can be done in Alberta. It is a real life example that demonstrates the agroforestry opportunities exist for Alberta farmers.