

Agri-News

January 28, 2008

Winter grazing can lower feed costs

Swath grazing is a winter feeding practice that many beef producers in Alberta have implemented. Swaths from annual cereal crops left in the field to be grazed during the winter months eliminates the costs associated with baling or ensiling, feed hauling and storage, and reduces labour and winter feeding costs.

"This winter, with the light snow cover and the moderate temperatures being experienced throughout most of Alberta, swath grazing has been particularly successful," says Russel Horvey, beef and forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Food, Stettler. "Establishing a successful swath grazing program does take some planning for field selection, water sources, electric fence design and swath grazing management. It is also essential to correctly position wind shelters and have a plan for supplemental feeding programs, should they be necessary."

Research suggests that swath grazing can lower winter feeding costs by 40 to 50 per cent when compared to traditional bale or silage feeding systems. The impact on individual beef operations will vary depending on the effectiveness of the swath grazing program and the costs associated with the current winter feeding system.

"In a year like this, where snow is limited or non-existent in some areas of the province, alternate water sources to snow certainly need to be a part of the planning process," says Horvey.

A fact sheet developed by Alberta Agriculture and Food, *Swath Grazing in Western Canada: An Introduction* (Agdex 420/56-2), provides a comprehensive package of information on topics from field selection and seeding to the management of swaths during winter grazing. Producers can download a copy of this fact sheet from Alberta Agriculture and Food's

website at www.agric.gov.ab.ca/publications, or call the Publications Office toll-free at 1-800-292-5697.

When online, be sure to also check out the swath grazing calculator. The calculator provides a cost comparison between conventional wintering feeding systems and swath grazing. The calculator can be found on Alberta Agriculture's web site (www.agric.gov.ab.ca) by clicking on *Calculators* and then selecting the livestock category.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Winter grazing can lower feed costs	1
26th annual Alberta horse conference attracts 660	2
Horseman Doug Milligan named the 9th Distinguished Service recipient	2
Alberta berry growers to learn from peers	3
Seeking nominations for the 2008 Emerald Awards for environmental excellence	3
AgChoices 2008	4
Travelling 'Back to the Future' at 4-H Leaders' Conference 2008	5
Penn West – support for Alberta 4-H	5
Agri-News Briefs	6

Also, the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) recently revised their fact sheet **Year Round Grazing 365 Days**. This fact sheet is available by contacting the Ag-Info Centre in Stettler, 310-FARM (3276).

Contact: Russel Horvey
403-742-7958

26th annual Alberta horse conference attracts 660

“Another stimulating and educational overdose? I soaked up every word and every minute of the conference,” is a statement made by one Alberta horse enthusiast and a sentiment mirrored by the other 660 in attendance at the 2008 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference (HBOC). As a premier equine event, the conference has received critical acclaim each year from attendees, invited speakers and presenters.

Alberta has a reputation for producing excellent performance horses, and having well established education and research in the province is a great help to breeders and owners. One of the best places to gather information on breeding, raising, training, caring for and marketing horses is at the annual HBOC, and this year was no exception.

Over the years, the conference has continually presented the newest information in research, training, breeding, marketing and information on issues and trends facing the horse industry. It is a learning opportunity and a great social event where Albertans involved in the horse industry can meet, learn and network.

For the second time, a Stable Seminar was held in conjunction with the conference. Approximately 150 stable industry professionals attended the seminar and listened as four speakers addressed the issues specific to the stable industry.

The conference is coordinated and organized by Horse Industry Association of Alberta (HIAA) and the horse industry section of Alberta Agriculture and Food. Sponsorship of the event has grown continually over the years and at this year’s event, 63 sponsors and a total of 65 booths supported the conference at the tradeshow in the trade centre at the Capri Centre, Red Deer.

“The conference organizing committee extends its thanks to all of the sponsors, they are instrumental in making the conference a success,” says Teresa van Bryce, manager, HIAA, Airdrie. “Thanks also to the staff from Alberta Agriculture and Food and the volunteers who provided a tremendous amount of assistance with the organization, coordination and registration for the conference.”

The HBOC, one of the premier horse conferences in North America, is held each year in January. The next HBOC is

scheduled for January 9 to 11, 2009. Information on the HBOC and other events being held in Alberta are posted to the HIAA website at www.albertahorseindustry.ca.

Contact: Teresa van Bryce Les Burwash
403-948-8521 403-948-8541

Note: Photos can be viewed on the HIAA web site at www.albertahorseindustry.ca/photos/

Horseman Doug Milligan named the 9th Distinguished Service recipient

“There are very few individuals in this province who have contributed in so many different ways to the development of the horse industry – Doug Milligan is recognized as one of those individuals,” says Marg Southern, Spruce Meadows, and a previous Distinguished Service Award recipient.

Those sentiments are wholeheartedly shared by all Alberta horse industry members who know him. Doug Milligan became the first head of Alberta’s Horse Industry Branch in 1974. During his 33-year career, his passion, vision and skills helped build Alberta’s solid standing and dominant place in the equine world.

Between 1974 and his retirement in 2007, Milligan was involved in and, in many cases, directly responsible for the development of many key industry building programs and projects, world-wide partnerships, marketing initiatives and door-opening opportunities for Alberta horses and their breeders and owners.

“Whether it was the Alberta Horse Improvement Program, the Alberta Horse Evaluation System, the annual evaluation days, extension programs geared to adults and producers or evening courses, Doug brought enthusiasm for the industry and a respect for the welfare of horses to the table,” says Les Burwash, head of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture and Food, Airdrie. “He was the first person to write equine extension bulletins for the province and in Canada, and under his leadership the horse industry division produced numerous extension materials for Albertans, including fact sheets, videos and movies.”

The research programs that Milligan led and encouraged were practical and useful for the horse industry and contributed to the knowledge used in publishing the new National Research Council nutrient requirements for horses. He was also very involved in establishing and promoting the Western College of Veterinary Medicine’s Equine Health Research Fund.

“From its inception, Doug has been an integral part of the Horse Breeders and Owners Conference,” says Teresa van Bryce, manager, Horse Industry Association of Alberta and one

of the conference organizers. “Over the years, the conference has developed into what is now the premier equine conference in North America, an event that has helped put Alberta on the map in the horse world.”

A mentor, a leader, a horseman, Milligan has been involved in some of the most significant events in Alberta’s horse industry: Spruce Meadows, Equifair, Alberta Breeds for the World, Battle of Breeds, Equitana, incoming trade missions, exporting horses to Europe and the Horse Racing Alberta Development Plan, to mention a few.

On January 12, 2008, at the annual Horse Breeders and Owners Conference, the Horse Industry Association of Alberta proudly presented the Distinguished Service Award to Doug Milligan in recognition of his lasting influence and contributions to the equine industry in the province.

Contact: *Teresa van Bryce* *Les Burwash*
 403-948-8521 403-948-8541

HIAA website – www.albertahorseindustry.ca

Note: Photo available online at www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agrinews

Alberta berry growers to learn from peers

The 2008 Provincial Berry School features a full slate of topics and speakers on all aspects of commercial strawberry, raspberry, and saskatoon production and marketing. The school, being held in Leduc on February 22 and 23, 2008, is an event that Alberta berry producers and those wanting to find out more about becoming a berry producer, will want to attend.

“One of the highlights at every school are the presentations by local, established, Alberta producers,” says Lloyd Hausher, provincial fruit industry development specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Food, Brooks.

This year’s event will feature six producer presentations:

- **Tam Andersen, Prairie Gardens and Greenhouses** – has more recently been recognized for her agri-tourism activities including a number of farm festivals. Andersen started out as a strawberry grower and strawberries continue to be an important aspect of her operation. She will discuss her strawberry production and marketing challenges and successes.
- **Margo Staniforth, Staniforth Summerberry Farm** – has been a raspberry producer for a number of years marketing primarily pick-your-own or at the farm gate. Staniforth has also been growing greenhouse strawberries the last few years and is involved in agri-tourism.

- **Keith, Karen and Travis Poirier, Saskatoon Valley Orchards** – have been producing and marketing saskatoons from their 20-acre orchard. Although they are open for U-Pick, most of their crop is machine harvested and marketed to saskatoon processors.
- **Duane, Debbie and Evan Mertin** – have been owners of Pearson’s Berry farm for approximately a half dozen years. They continue to market U-Pick saskatoons from a five acre orchard, but the bulk of their business comes from on-farm processing. Their primary product line includes: pies, juices, muffins, tarts, BBQ sauces, and more. They market their product at a number of locations.
- **Evert and Jennifer Dunham, Celestine Farms** – have a three-to-four acre saskatoon orchard that has started to produce in the last few years. Their primary focus will be commercial fruit marketing.
- **Paul Hamer, Saskatoon Farm** – are owners and operators of this operation south of Calgary, and have vast knowledge in saskatoon (and nursery) production and marketing. In addition to producing saskatoons, they are a major supplier of plant stock. They value-add to their U-Pick saskatoon operation by baking (and selling) pies and other goods on site. Their operation continues to expand each year and includes a restaurant and gift store. The Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association just recently named the Hamers Farm Direct Marketers of the Year.

This school provides Albertans a chance to meet and network with others in the industry and to hear about the industry and how it is done in Alberta first-hand by producers who are doing it. For more information or to register, contact Don or Joan Gregorwich at 780-373-2503.

Contact: *Lloyd Hausher* *Don or Joan Gregorwich*
 403-362-1309 780-373-2503

Seeking nominations for the 2008 Emerald Awards for environmental excellence

What do the Little Red Deer River Watershed Initiative, Beaver Creek Watershed Group and Lakeland College have in common? And what about the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program (AESAP), Alberta Reduced Tillage LINKAGES, Southern Alberta Land Trust Society, Cows and Fish and Dennis McKerracher? These are just some of agricultural groups, programs, organizations and individuals recognized for their environmental excellence at past Emerald Award events.

There are many deserving individuals and organizations working in Alberta’s agriculture industry. Leadership and

Cont’d on page 4

excellence in environmental work or innovations are some of the points of recognition celebrated at the Emerald Awards. Albertans are asked to share success stories and nominate a group, individual, business or organization that has demonstrated environmental excellence.

If you know of an individual, group, business or organization that has gone “above and beyond” what is expected to protect, preserve, enhance and sustain the environment, submit a nomination for the 2008 Emerald Awards to the Alberta Emerald Foundation for Environmental Excellence.

The Alberta Emerald Foundation is currently accepting nominations for the 2008 Emerald Awards. The deadline for nominations is 4:00 p.m. on **February 29, 2008**.

Organizations and individuals can nominate themselves or someone they know. All nominations are posted on the Emerald Foundation website, complete with contact information, in an effort to increase recognition and the sharing of great environmental stories to a broader audience.

The 2008 Emerald Awards will be presented on June 3, 2008, on the Shoctor Stage at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton. The Awards recognize excellence in preserving, protecting, enhancing and sustaining our environment in 12 different categories. Judges look at the positive, tangible and long-term impact of projects as well as, where appropriate, efforts that reflect collaborative approaches.

For more nomination details, to download forms or to submit a nomination online, visit www.emerald.foundation.ca/emerald_awards/nominations.

Contact: Roger Bryan
780-427-3616
E-mail: roger.bryan@gov.ab.ca

AgChoices 2008

Have you ever wanted to take your farm business in an exciting new direction? Have you ever wanted to capture more economic value for what you produce, or move from commoditized product to high-value brand? The **AgChoices 2008** conference in Red Deer is the ideal place to start or move forward on this journey to a better business.

“This conference will feature key speakers on global market trends in agriculture, the people dynamics of succession planning, leadership in a family business and the countless opportunities available to Alberta farmers and ranchers,” says Wendy McCormick, Renewal Program communications lead, Alberta Agriculture and Food, Red Deer. “One of the features at the conference is the Ag Info Market. Attendees can choose to attend five high-impact, interactive presentations on a wide variety of topics.”

The Ag Info Market features concurrent 20-minute presentations that touch on leading edge information. Presentation topics:

- FIR\$T – the feedlot investment risk simulation tool
- beef branding strategies that sell
- increase your competitiveness through unique business structures
- cash in on direct marketing opportunities
- taking advantage of livestock traceability and beef age verification
- changes and future direction of the BSE program in Alberta
- CropChoice\$ – reach your targets by evaluating the effects of difference risk management strategies
- opportunities growing shochu barley
- opportunities with winter and spring triticales
- reap the benefits of flax – a whole crop opportunity
- innovation and growth in the pulse industry
- investing in greenhouses – what you should know
- growing *Rhodiola rosea* in Alberta
- fenugreek – premium crop for a premium life
- organic opportunities
- new venture: nothing ventured, nothing gained
- defining your category, understanding the market and getting your products to retail
- farm direct marketing – an opportunity for producers to consider
- agri-food CEO clubs – how they work and how to get involved
- Farm Business Assessment – gaining a better understanding of the financial side of your farm business
- agri-business networks – bringing producers together
- agriculture education and training initiatives in Alberta
- agripreneur scholarship – educational opportunities for farmers
- Alberta’s carbon credit offset market: opportunities in Alberta’s compliance base market and making it work on the ground
- how to make the most of an Environmental Farm Plan.
- Surface Lease Agreement pricing – how to gauge and measure an offer from an energy company

AgChoices 2008 is about information, marketing, leadership, consumer thinking, succession planning and more. The conference is **being held in Red Deer on February 13, 2008**. Early bird registration by February 1, 2008, is \$75 per person or \$55 per person if more than one person from a farm

Cont'd on page 5

business attends. After February 1, 2008, registration is an additional \$20 per person. To register, call toll free 1-800-387-6030 or visit the conference website for more information, at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/agchoices.

Contact: Wendy McCormick
403-340-5306
wendy.mccormick@gov.ab.ca

Travelling 'Back to the Future' at 4-H Leaders' Conference 2008

With their 'Deloreans' packed, 279 Alberta volunteer 4-H leaders, along with guests from across Canada and Montana, made their way to Red Deer on January 11 to 13, 2008, for the 65th annual 4-H Leaders' Conference. Appropriately themed Back to the Future, leaders at this year's conference joined together to learn from the past as they prepare to take 4-H into the future.

The conference spans three days, has over 30 sessions and includes the Premier's Award luncheon and the 4-H Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Terri Potter, conference director, member of the organizing committee and 4-H specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Food, was very pleased with the weekend's rousing success, "Everything went really well," she says. "The smooth running of the conference is due to the participation of all of the great people who always lend a helping hand.

"The vast selection of sessions, presentations and forums, gave leaders a choice to customize the conference to their own needs. Topics ranged from consumer decision making to team building to bullying to laughter in life, and there was ample time between sessions for mingling, networking and exercising. On Sunday, keynote speaker Donna Tona received rave reviews from conference attendees for her topic *Re-UP-Holster Your Emotional Couch!* – a presentation that concentrated on sorting the wheat from the chaff in life."

An annual conference highlight is the official Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame induction ceremony. This year's inductees included long-time 4-H volunteer Marion Van Sluys of Fort MacLeod and four former Alberta 4-H employees, R.T. (Ted) Youck, Mahlon Weir, Doug Norman and Milo Barfuss.

The Alberta 4-H Council's Golden Clover Award, which recognizes organizations that have greatly contributed to 4-H, was presented this year to the County of 40 Mile District & Cactus Country 4-H District for their involvement in the Elkwater 4-H Summer Camp.

Major conference sponsors include AMA, Alberta Agriculture & Food, ATB Financial, Encana, Netkaster, Olds College, UFA and Viterra. The partnership of government, industry, and 4-H

members and leaders enables Alberta 4-H to flourish, and facilitates training functions such as this conference.

For more information on the Leaders' conference, contact Potter at 780-427-4466 or visit the 4-H website at www.4h.ab.ca.

Contact: Terri Potter
780-427-4466

Penn West – support for Alberta 4-H

Penn West Energy Trust ("Penn West") has partnered with Alberta 4-H to provide rural youth with the opportunities of a lifetime. The enhanced partnership will support 4-H councils and the development of 4-H Clubs, and the 7000 members and 2400 volunteers in 1,500 rural Alberta families. The partnership annually includes support at the regional and provincial levels for the next five years totaling \$360,000 from Penn West.

"This partnership is great for Alberta 4-H," says Bruce Banks, chief executive officer, 4-H Foundation of Alberta. "Penn West's contributions will enhance 4-H member and leader programs that build leadership and communication skills of today's rural youth. 4-H members will be able to embark on new opportunities and enhance personal development through the outstanding support of Penn West. This partnership will take rural communities to new heights with the skills their youth possess."

"Penn West has operated throughout Alberta for many years and recognizes the capabilities and qualities of the youth in our communities. We appreciate the tremendous success of the 4-H program in developing our leaders of tomorrow. Penn West believes that community investment succeeds when it is built in partnership with strong grassroots organizations such as Alberta 4-H," says Keith Luft, senior vice president, stakeholder relations, Penn West Energy Trust.

Through this partnership, Penn West becomes the second highest support level for the Alberta 4-H Program.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
Director, Fund Development
4-H Program – sponsor liaison
4-H Foundation of Alberta
780-718-4337
henry.wiegman@4hab.com
Nicole Collard
Supervisor, Community Investment
Penn West Energy Trust
403-777-2500
nicole.collard@pennwest.com

Note: Photo available online.

Agri-News Briefs

Bedding plant business workshop

Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association (AGGA) and Alberta Agriculture and Food have organized a workshop on ***Moving Your Bedding Plants Business Forward***. The industry is expanding both at a commercial wholesale level and direct marketing level. The workshop topics include:

- basics of bedding plant business – from seed selection to sales
- production costs and profit margins
- selecting growing media and fertilizers
- bedding plants insects – understanding and managing them
- diagnosing problems and making decisions

This workshop provides a forum for networking with other growers, and is being held at Crop Diversification Centre North, 17507-Fort Road, Edmonton, on February 6, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Registrations is \$63 for AGGA members and \$84 for non-members. Lunch and course material are included. To register or for more information, go to www.agga.ca or call Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza at 780-415-2303.

Alberta Beef Industry conference

Albertans involved in any aspect of the beef industry will want to attend the 5th annual Alberta Beef Industry conference and tradeshow being held in Red Deer on February 21 and 22, 2008. The conference is an opportunity to talk business and mix n' mingle with the top leaders in the beef industry. For more information on the Alberta Beef Industry conference, contact the Alberta Cattle Feeders' office at 403-250-2509 or visit the conference website at www.abiconference.ca.

Remote pasture water systems for livestock

Providing a safe, reliable supply of good quality water for livestock is important to livestock producers, as is increasing management for better use of pastures. Many producers use remote water systems and apply the latest technology available for extended livestock grazing and winter feeding of livestock away from the farmyard. A new fact sheet from Alberta Agriculture and Food outlines water system options and provides information and graphics to help producers choose the right watering system for their operation. The fact sheet, ***Remote Pasture Water Systems for Livestock*** includes information on:

- problems with direct watering
 - environmental problems
 - herd health problems
- poor pasture use and nutrient transfer problems
- pasture water system trials
- remote pasture water systems benefits
- pasture water systems
- livestock watering alternatives
- water hauling
- water storage
- gravity-fed systems
- options for winter watering livestock at remote locations
- frost-free nose pump

The fact sheet is available online at www.agric.gov.ab.ca/publications or by calling Alberta Agriculture and Food's Publications Office toll-free in Alberta at 1-800-292-5697.