



Agri-News

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Stored Feed – an Excellent Crop Fertilizer

Nutrients in stored feed are not only a good source of cattle nutrition, but also an excellent source of crop fertilizer. Research by the University of Saskatchewan has shown that in-field feeding promotes better recycling of feed nutrients from manure than do corral feeding systems.

“Stored feeds such as alfalfa hay, grass hay or cereal silage contain significant concentrations of nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium,” says Gordon Hutton, development officer, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Airdrie. “Cattle retain only a small portion of the nutrients found in stored feeds. The vast majority of the feed nutrients are excreted in the urine or the dung. Feed nutrients also accumulate on winter feeding sites through feed waste.”

In more traditional corral feeding systems nutrients accumulate in the bedding pack. With in-field feeding, excreted nutrients and feed waste accumulate in the field.

“Nitrogen especially benefits from in-field feeding,” says Hutton. “A winter feeding project at the University of Saskatchewan resulted in 30 to 40 per cent of the feed nitrogen being recovered after in-field feeding on a grass pasture versus only one per cent after corral manure was applied to the pasture. The higher nitrogen capture with in-field feeding is due in part to the reduction in nitrogen losses from off-gassing that occurs within corral feeding systems.”

Bale grazing, bale processing or portable bunk feeders are examples of commonly used in-field feeding systems. The distribution of nutrients from urine, dung or feed waste in the field will vary with the size of the feeding area, quantity of feed delivered, length of feeding period and feed type. Legume based feeds generally provide the highest nutrient concentrations.

Winter feeding on old grass pastures may be one of the most promising options. Most older pastures are low in soil fertility and, as result, low in forage productivity. With winter feeding, high amounts of plant available nutrients can be introduced to the pasture and recycled through new forage growth over the next few growing seasons.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

<i>Stored Feed – an Excellent Crop Fertilizer</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Best Practices Awards Recognize Innovative Agriculture Producers</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>New Manure Management Factsheet</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>4-H Hall of Fame Recognizes 2008 Inductee</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Deadline Approaching for Canadian Wheat Board Election</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Livestock Transport Conference</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Agri-News Briefs</i>	<i>4</i>

“However, there are limitations to in-field feeding,” says Hutton. “One of the challenges is managing nutrient placement. Regular rotation of feeding sites, bedding areas and water sources will improve urine, dung and feed waste distribution.”

“As we enter this years winter feeding period it may be worth while to reassess how we handle the nutrients in stored feed supplies,” adds Hutton. “With the rising costs of commercial fertilizers, stored feed nutrients may have an increasing value for use as not only a livestock nutrient but also as source of crop fertility.”

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Best Practices Awards Recognize Innovative Agriculture Producers

Agriculture producers across Alberta are invited to submit their innovative plans to diversify or grow their businesses to the Best Practices Awards for a chance to win one of three prize packages of business products and services, valued at \$10,000 each.

Many producers are thinking about how they will farm in the future, whether it's by growing new crops, changing how they raise livestock, adopting new systems, marketing directly to consumers, or creating new products. The Best Practices Awards encourage, recognize and reward producers who have developed innovative business plans and are ready to take the next steps to advance their business operations. These steps could include strategies that boost revenue, connect more securely with markets or take their farms in promising new directions.

Winners are determined based on their applications and business plans for outstanding ideas that will expand, add value or improve the sustainability of their existing farm businesses.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development encourages producers to submit their applications by 4 p.m. on January 8, 2009. A team of judges will review the applications and announce the winners by the end of January.

In addition to a chance to win a Best Practices Award, each applicant will receive a free registration to the AgChoices 2009 Conference, where the three Grand Prize winners will be profiled. The conference will be held Wednesday, February 11, 2009, at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

For more information on the Best Practices Awards and to download or receive an application form, visit www.agriculture.alberta.ca/renewal or call the Ag-Info Centre at 1-800-387-6030.

This program is funded through the Agricultural Policy Framework, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative that aims to make Canada the leader in food safety, innovation and environmentally responsible agriculture production.

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New Manure Management Factsheet

A new Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development factsheet looks at managing livestock manure.

“If proper manure management practices are followed, animal wastes can be utilized as a valuable nutrient resource rather than treated as a waste,” says Dr. Ross McKenzie, agronomy research scientist, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Lethbridge. “Manure is an excellent ‘organic’ fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and many other essential nutrients.”

The new factsheet, entitled *Managing Livestock Manure* (Agdex 400/28-1) looks at a number of facets of managing livestock manure, including:

- the amount of manure produced
- manure storage
- determining where and how much manure can be applied
- determine when and how to best apply manure
- value of manure

“Manure can physically benefit the soil. It adds organic matter to the soil, which improves soil tilth and structure.” adds McKenzie. “A proactive approach to manure management will ensure the sustainability of farms and the environment.”

The new factsheet has been posted to Alberta Agriculture's website at [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex12395](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex12395)

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4-H Hall of Fame Recognizes 2008 Inductee

Alberta's 4-H program is recognizing Sharon Uhrich for her outstanding community leadership and dedication to Alberta's youth by inducting her into the 4-H Hall of Fame.

"Our 4-H programs depend on many volunteers who tirelessly give of their time, energy and talents to clubs across Alberta," said George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Sharon is a shining example of the high quality of leadership that inspires our youth, and fosters the next generation of leaders in the province's agriculture industry and rural communities."

A long-standing supporter of Alberta's 4-H programs, Ms. Uhrich has made significant contributions throughout her more than 25 years of service at the club district and regional levels, including working directly with 4-H members on various activities.

Ms. Uhrich's history with 4-H in Alberta commenced with 17 years of leadership with the Golden Rod 4-H Multi-Club. She has served on the Rockyview 4-H District Council, holding a variety of executive positions since 1985, and is currently serving as a 4-H key leader for the district. In addition, Ms. Uhrich has sat on the Calgary Regional 4-H Council for 21 years, which includes the past 11 years as treasurer for the region.

Ms. Uhrich joins the ranks of 70 Alberta men and women inducted into the 4-H Hall of Fame since it began in 1971, and will be officially honoured with an induction ceremony at the annual 4-H Leaders' Conference in Red Deer, January 10, 2009.

For more information about Alberta's 4-H Hall of Fame, visit www.4h.ab.ca.

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Deadline Approaching for Canadian Wheat Board Election

Alberta grain producers are encouraged to help shape the future of Canada's agriculture industry by participating in the 2008 Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) election. All completed ballots must be received by November 28.

It is important that eligible producers exercise their right to vote," said George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. "The CWB marketing system affects many sectors of our agriculture industry, including the critical area of marketing choice. This is an opportunity to influence an issue that is important to Alberta producers."

By voting for the candidate that represents their point of view and marketing preference, producers can affect change to pursue a marketing system that allows producers to be more competitive and successful.

To ensure continuity on the board of directors, CWB elections are held every two years in five of the ten districts in western Canada. This year, elections in Alberta will be held in districts two and four.

Voter eligibility requires that farmers have reached the age of majority, are directly involved in the business of farming and have grown one of the major grains (wheat, barley, oats, canola, rapeseed or rye) in the 2007/2008 or 2008/2009 crop year.

For more information on the CWB election, contact the CWB election coordinator toll free at 877-500-0795 or visit www.cwbelection.com.

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Livestock Transport Conference

The Livestock Transport Conference is slated for January 29, 2009, at the Radisson Hotel in Calgary. It is hosted by Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) and the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC).

This conference aims to give the industry a one-stop forum to learn about the latest progress, trends and expectations related to animal care. The conference will take a North American focus on how to achieve humane, safe and effective livestock transport.

"The Livestock Transport Conference is an opportunity to learn and work together on a component of our business that is seeing more focus, progress and new expectations every year," says Dr. Bill Ballantyne, vice-chair of NFACC and director of technical services for Maple Leaf Foods.

"There are thousands of trucks on the road everyday transporting livestock," says Doug Sawyer, beef producer and chair of AFAC. "Providing the best in livestock care and handling at all stages is not only our responsibility, it's an integral part of delivering high quality products."

The conference targets all those involved in livestock transportation, including truckers,

producers, processors, as well as representatives from transport and food companies, enforcement and government.

The agenda covers global initiatives, training, audit systems, science and regulations. The aim is to address the well-being of animals, raise the profile of livestock transportation in the value chain, provide continuing education, and explore cross-border collaboration.

Cont'd on page 4

“We need to align our approaches and explore more ways for Canada and the U.S. to work together on everything from trucker training to audit systems,” says Dr. Ballantyne. “The conference agenda offers a big picture view of what is happening in both countries and globally, so we can see clearly those opportunities and how to capture them.”

The international Animal Transport Association and the National Cattle Feeders Association support this conference.

For the agenda and to register for the Livestock Transport Conference call AFAC at 403-932-8050 or visit www.livestocktransport.ca. For more information, contact Susan Church at 403-932-8050, email info@afac.ab.ca or Jackie Wepruk 403-783-4066, email nfacc@xplornet.com.

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Agri-News Briefs

Young Farmers' Summit of the Americas

The Young Farmers' Summit of the Americas goes December 7 - 11, 2008, at the Westin Calgary. This international summit will share information on best management practices in the agri-food sector, and is aimed primarily at young farmers, 18 to 40 years old. With the high importance of international trade and agriculture, this event provides the key learning opportunity for young farmers to meet, network and learn about best management practices. Registration for members is \$210 including GST. Other participants pay \$525. Day rate for everyone is \$210. For more information, go to www.cyff.ca. The summit registration form is available on-line at www.cyff.ca/young_farmers_summit.html.