



Agri-News

January 5, 2009

Information on Winter Animal Care is Readily Available

There are many management decisions that need to be made when feeding beef cattle and calves through an Alberta winter. Animal care in winter, especially during the times of extreme low temperatures, takes a little extra time and planning.

Colder weather and snow can cause many different problems when feeding and watering animals. Fortunately, there are many information sources that producers can turn to for help and advice in making the best choices possible when it comes to over-wintering livestock.

“The body score of individual animals is a factor that needs to be considered along with the temperatures and the snow cover that animals have to contend with,” says Barry Yaremci, beef and forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Stettler. “Thin animals have less fat cover than those in good condition. Fat is a good insulator, which in turn helps reduce energy requirements to keep the animal warm. For example, a thin cow in body condition score 2, approximately 100 pounds lighter than a cow in good condition, requires an additional 1200 pounds of hay to get through the winter. Thin animals cannot tolerate the cold as well as animals in good condition.”

Energy conservation is key for animals to keep warm and avoid unnecessary weight loss. Portable wind fences to keep animals out of the wind are a big help. With snow falling almost daily, it is necessary to spread straw onto the bedding pack frequently so that the animals stay dry and clean. Cows that lie on snow require 25 per cent more energy to keep warm compared to those that are on straw.

Producers are encouraged to take advantage of the readily available information on Alberta Agriculture’s website by visiting www.agriculture.alberta.ca and searching animal care in winter. As well as a number of available fact sheets, livestock

specialists have posted helpful information on several frequently asked questions.

Another information source is LivestockWelfare.com, a farm animal welfare resource centre, funded by the project Putting Animal Welfare on the Agenda.

While it’s beneficial to plan a winter feeding program well in advance, it’s never too late to seek information about providing good animal care.

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For further information, producers are also encouraged to call Alberta Agriculture's Ag-Info Centre and speak to one of the department's livestock specialists.

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Making Riding Lessons Safe, Effective and Fun

Each instructor has their own teaching style, techniques and areas of strength. One constant that all riding instructors will agree on is that clear communication is key to being effective.

Instructors are role models who play an essential part in helping riders achieve their goals. Experience, people skills and teaching and horsemanship abilities are some of the main factors that people will consider when choosing an instructor for themselves and for their children.

"At the 2009 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference, Tara Gamble will make a presentation on Teaching Techniques... Making Lessons Safe, Effective and Fun," says Teresa van Bryce, manager, Horse Industry Association of Alberta, Airdrie. "Gamble has over 17 years of industry teaching experiencing, instructing Western, English and jumping. She is a certified Master Clinic Instructor and was awarded Clinic Instructor of the Year in 2006."

The Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference (HBOC) annually invites a number of equine experts to speak on issues, current topics and subjects that are of specific interest to Albertans who breed or own horses, work in the equine industry in some capacity, or are simply horse enthusiasts.

In addition to the educational aspect of the conference, event sponsors will be on-hand for the weekend to exhibit and talk about their equine products and services. Saturday night features the awarding of the prestigious Alberta Horse Industry Distinguished Service Award.

"Gamble is one of the 16 international presenters on the agenda at the 27th annual HBOC," says Les Burwash, manager of horse programs, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Airdrie. "We are very pleased to have another distinguished group of presenters at this year's conference. The conference is a unique opportunity for Alberta's horse enthusiasts to listen to and learn from a full slate of world renowned horse men and horsewomen."

Conference pre-registration is \$95 per person and cost for additional individuals registered at the same time from the same farm is \$80. Registration at the door will be \$95 per person. Registration includes a copy of the conference proceedings.

For more information about the 2009 conference, contact van Bryce at 403-948-8521 or Burwash at 403-948-8541.

Conference information is also available on the association's website at www.albertahorseindustry.ca or by calling the association at 403-948-8521.

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Two New Acts in Effect as of January 1, 2009

The *Livestock Identification and Commerce Act* and the *Animal Health Act* come into effect on January 1, 2009.

Livestock Identification and Commerce Act – following extensive consultations with the agriculture industry, regulations under the Act (LICA), have been developed. The Act and regulations that will come into effect on January 1, 2009 will help the day-to-day commerce of the livestock industry operate in a more consistent and efficient manner.

The LICA consolidates, clarifies, streamlines and modernizes three existing acts – the *Brand Act*, the *Livestock Identification and Brand Inspection Act* and the *Livestock and Livestock Products Act*. LICA received Royal Assent on May 24, 2006. The livestock industry will see changes such as mandatory livestock security interest disclosures, greater protection for personal property in livestock, and standardized documentation.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and Livestock Identification Services (LIS) jointly developed the Act and the LICA general regulation.

Animal Health Act (AHA) – Alberta's primary animal disease control legislation, and three new regulations reflect the needs of today's livestock industry, Alberta's reliance on access to international markets and the need for animal disease control and surveillance.

It replaces the *Livestock Diseases Act*, which was established in 1946. The AHA provides for a rapid and effective response to an animal disease outbreak, and enhances market access, public health and food safety through rigorous disease control measures.

The three new AHA regulations being enacted on January 1, 2009, are:

- Traceability Livestock Identification regulation
- Traceability Premises Identification regulation
- Reportable and Notifiable Diseases regulation

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The Traceability Livestock Identification and Traceability Premises Identification regulations provide a method for tracking the current and historical location of an animal or group of animals from one point in the supply chain to another. The regulations also address mandatory age verification for cattle born on or after January 1, 2009, and are designed to ensure an appropriate response to an animal health emergency.

Reportable diseases are those that may pose a significant public or animal health risk and require immediate action to control or eradicate. Diseases designated as notifiable are monitored for trade purposes or to understand their cause and control.

For a list of reportable and notifiable animal diseases and additional information on the *Animal Health Act*, visit Ropin' the Web at www.agric.gov.ab.ca and click on Alberta's Reportable and Notifiable Diseases under Livestock and Meat Industry.

Further information on the *Livestock Identification and Commerce Act* and the *Animal Health Act* is available on Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's website at www.agriculture.alberta.ca, or by calling Dr. Gerald Ollis, chief provincial veterinarian, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development at 780-427-6406 or the Ag-Info Centre toll-free in Alberta at 310-FARM (3276).

Contact: Ag-Info Centre
310-FARM (3276)

Value Plus – A Quest For New Farm Value Workshop

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBM), in partnership with Community Futures and Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, is holding a workshop that is ideally suited to anyone wanting to start a new farm-related enterprise or to diversify an existing operation.

The two-day **Value Plus** workshop is being held at the Agriculture Centre in Airdrie on January 16 and 17, 2009. Gary Morton, co-author of *Building Added Value Through Farm Diversification*, will facilitate the workshop.

The interactive nature of this workshop will help participants evaluate their farm business in a new way and take a value-added idea from conception through the development process. Participants will leave the workshop and return to their farm business with the ability to:

- identify and evaluate new value-added ideas and opportunities
- understand the timelines and processes for value added development
- develop a simplified business plan

- search out financing for various stages of a new venture
- examine case studies of real farm businesses that are successfully adding value
- discover a niche for a product or service

A wine and cheese being held on Friday evening of the workshop is an additional, informal setting that will allow participants to network with other innovative producers and associations, bounce ideas around and discover new resources.

Value Plus workshop registration cost is \$85 for the first registrant, \$45 for additional registrants from the same family/farm and \$35 for student registrants. To register, call toll-free 1-866-492-1172. For more information, visit the Farm Centre website at www.farmcentre.com/workshops or phone the Ag-Info Center toll-free in Alberta at 310-FARM (3276) and ask for Tricia Simon or Jan Warren, or call Jodie Eckert of Community Futures at 403-932 0321.

Contact: Tricia Simon
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Food: Today, Tomorrow, Together

Food –Today, Tomorrow, Together: Ensuring healthy local food for all Albertans is a provincial conference that will seek to bridge the rural-urban divide regarding Alberta's food system. The conference is being held in Edmonton on January 29 to 31, 2009, and will bring together Alberta's food producers, consumers, and the people and organizations involved in each step of the food cycle to discuss the food system – from field to table. The conference will outline key concerns, conflicts, and promising practices within Alberta's food system, and engage all participants in planning and acting to make our provincial food system sustainable for everyone.

Some of the topics that will be covered include: food and agriculture policy; poverty and hunger; health and nutrition; environmental costs of our food system; the global food system; local food system capacity; cultural challenges in accessing food; and, the realities of farming. The conference features four keynote addresses by Carol Off, author of *Bitter Chocolate: Investigating the Dark Side of the World's Most Seductive Sweet*; author Thomas Pawlick; Herb Barbolet of Simon Fraser University; and, Elbert VanDonkersgoed of the Greater Toronto Authority Agricultural Action Plan.

Presentations by farmers, community organizers, policy-makers, and academics will round out the program.

Registration cost is \$160 for the full conference (\$75 for students/unwaged) and includes the four keynote addresses, breakout sessions, Taste of Alberta event and meals, and the

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Carol Off public keynote. Individual tickets are also available for Friday night's public keynote address by Carol Off. The \$30 keynote presentation ticket also includes a wine and cheese social and the resource fair.

Full conference details, registration and information are available at www.foodalberta.org.

*Contact: Erin Krekoski
Edmonton Social Planning Council
780-423-2031, ext. 354*

4-H Workshop Provides Opportunities for Learning

Alberta 4-H beef project members and leaders are going to see their opportunities in the marketplace expand, thanks to a night of collaboration featuring marketing experts and industry specialists.

4-H is holding the Northeast Regional Marketing Workshop at the Vegreville Elks Hall on January 19, 2009. Several presenters from Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development will be on hand at the workshop to provide information on marketing.

“Daylin Breen from Alberta Agriculture’s processing industry business development branch will give members some basic marketing information; Eileen Kotowich, with the local and domestic market expansion branch, will verse members in the

possibility of selling their product to farmers’ markets; and, Leona Reynolds-Zayak from the livestock industry branch will speak to the group about marketing of entire carcasses,” explains Leila Hickman, 4-H specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and workshop organizer, Vermilion.

This marketing workshop is a prime example of how 4-H programming sets its members and leaders up for success. The workshop is designed to fulfill a number of objectives, such as increasing members’ awareness of trends within the beef industry, educating them on alternative markets and market venues, fuelling their imaginations for different marketing and selling strategies, encouraging them to think outside of the auction stall and reigniting their enthusiasm for their 4-H project.

“We’re hoping that this workshop will challenge members to think beyond the traditional public sale as being their only means for marketing and selling their animals,” comments Hickman. “In addition, this workshop incorporates four of the eight branches within Alberta Agriculture’s rural extension and industry development division, which means that there will be ample opportunity for networking.”

For more information on this workshop, contact Hickman at 780-853-8115. For more information on the 4-H program, visit the 4-H website at www.4h.ab.ca.

*Contact: Leila Hickman
780-853-8115*

Agri-News Briefs

Berry (& Vegetable) School 2009

The annual provincial Berry School is being held on March 5 and 6, 2009, at the 67th Street Holiday Inn in Red Deer. The 2009 conference has an expanded agenda as the Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association (AFFPA) has decided to offer vegetable-related topics in addition to sessions about the production and marketing of fruits. More details on sessions and registration will be available early in the new year by visiting the AFFPA website at www.albertafarmfresh.com. Berry and vegetable producers are encouraged to pencil in (and attend) this excellent event.

FarmTech 2009

FarmTech 2009 is being held at Edmonton's Mayfield Inn on January 28 to 30, 2009. Billed as Alberta's premier crop production and farm management conference, the event promises numerous concurrent sessions and featured speakers, in addition to sessions with approved Certified Crop Advisor Credits and Pesticide Applicator Recertification Credits.

Banff Pork Seminar

The Banff Pork Seminar, held in Banff on January 20 to 23, 2009, features international speakers. The seminar is designed for participants who are interested in improving their knowledge and decision-making abilities in pork production. Commercial pork producers, researchers, agribusiness service and supply representatives, extension and education specialists, and anyone interested in the latest information in pork production and technology are invited to attend. Registration cost is \$350 per person and includes a copy of seminar proceedings, evening receptions, coffee breaks and three luncheons. For every five people registration from the same company/farm/organization, a sixth registration will be free. Student registration discount is available. For further information, contact Ruth Ball, conference coordinator, at 780-492-3651 or e-mail: info@banffpork.ca. Online registration and full conference details and agenda are available on the Banff Pork Seminar website at www.banffpork.ca.