



Agri-News

November 9, 2009

AgriProfit\$ Business Analysis and Research Program

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development is looking for Alberta crop and livestock producers willing to participate in the **AgriProfit\$** program. **AgriProfit\$** is a business analysis and research program that provides economic analysis and farm business management information to Alberta producers to help them manage their businesses.

“Producers who participate in **AgriProfit\$** receive a detailed analysis of their own farming operation, which drills right down to their own unit costs of production, such as the cost per bushel of wheat or cost per cow,” says Karla Bergstrom, production crops economist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. “Producers also receive financial benchmarks (comparable averages) that are based on real farms. These benchmarks are valuable to managers because they can be used to assess the competitiveness of their farm and help capitalize on operational strengths and minimize their weaknesses.”

Producers can use their own **AgriProfit\$** analysis to assess their farm’s year-over-year business and financial performance. They can also compare their farm’s performance to regional benchmarks. We group economic benchmark information by region, size and type or management practice. In this way, producers can compare themselves to similar operations.

“Take caution when making decisions based on applying benchmarks to individual situations,” says Bergstrom. “Not all producers in a region have the same average costs – in fact significant variation between farms is normal. An **AgriProfits\$** analysis is so powerful for managing your farm business because it measures your current business position and allows you evaluate operational changes. You can’t manage what you don’t measure!”

Producers on the **AgriProfit\$** program say that they have taken back control of their business and that they are far more effective at analyzing, planning, budgeting and decision making. Participating in **AgriProfit\$** gave them an understanding of their long-term average costs. They can now identify targets for what their long-term costs should be. By

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managing costs towards the targets they've set, they have lowered their cost per unit produced and become more profitable.

“Good management information is the first and most important step in managing for profitability,” says Bergstrom. “I encourage producers to join **AgriProfit\$** for the 2009 production year and take control over their business' destiny.”

To join the **AgriProfit\$** Business Analysis and Research Program, contact the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM.

Contact: *Karla Bergstrom*
780-422-3122

Alberta Research Greenhouse Update

Since the ground breaking ceremony in the summer of 2008 for the re-construction of a new research greenhouse at the Crop Diversification Centre South in Brooks, building has progressed on all three of the new buildings in the complex. The buildings in the facility design include a 10,000 square foot research greenhouse, a larger 40,000 square foot production greenhouse and an 8,000 square foot header-house.

The compartmentalized research greenhouse is where scientists will access bench space for small research projects. The larger greenhouse, on the scale of a commercial greenhouse, is where research projects will be tested for production capability and secondary, larger scale testing will be completed. The third building houses all of the mechanical systems, training rooms, offices, storage areas, and other support requirements for the greenhouses.

“Some glass still has to be installed, but installation of many of the mechanical systems is complete or nearly complete,” says Dr. Ron Howard, research scientist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. “Construction on the facility is about 75 per cent finished and should be finalized in December 2009. After that, the commissioning begins on all of the systems and equipment that need to be up and running and thoroughly checked before work can begin in the greenhouses on or about March 1, 2010.

“2010 is a very momentous year for this area as the City of Brooks will be celebrating its 100th anniversary and the Crop Diversification Centre South and the Eastern Irrigation District will be celebrating their 75th anniversaries. It will be a great to include the grand opening and ribbon cutting for this new facility that same summer.”

The facility is on the scale of a commercial operation, giving staff and Alberta scientists the space to test crops and the newest technology on a commercial scale. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development staff members are anxious to get back into greenhouse space that will enable them to carry out their

research projects throughout the winter. Members of the greenhouse industry in Alberta and across Canada view this facility as an asset for the entire Canadian greenhouse industry.

“This facility will make it possible to collaborate with scientists doing greenhouse research in Canada and internationally,” says Howard. “We also hope to see graduate students and post-doctorate fellows coming here to advance their training. This facility will open up another avenue for Alberta scientists to supplement their regular field programs with some added greenhouse projects.”

The new research greenhouse complex will also be used for demonstration and technology transfer. Plans are to bring students, industry representatives and producers to the facility for training and show-and-tell sessions. Using this facility in this way means that the work being done will get communicated to and benefit producers in the greenhouse industry and in the crop industry in general.

Contact: *Dr. Ron Howard*
403-362-1328

New Market Realities in the Livestock Industry

The organizing committee of the **2009 Capturing Feed Grain and Forage Opportunities Conference** has designed a program that aims to help those in the livestock industry cope with these issues. The conference is being held in Red Deer on December 9 and 10, 2009.

“This past year has been like a rollercoaster ride for the livestock industry,” says Stephanie Kosinski, with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. “With the economic recession, Country-of-Origin Labelling (COOL) affecting livestock exports to the U.S., and dry conditions on forage production, Alberta producers and other industry stakeholders have experienced quite a year.”

The conference will include a wide range of presentations focusing on livestock markets and marketing options available to producers:

- **Anne Dunford**, Gateway Livestock Exchange – a look at the current situation in the beef industry and where the market may be heading in 2010
- **Diane McCann-Hiltz**, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development – a snapshot of consumer meat purchasing trends
- **Brent McEwan**, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development – the current status of livestock traceability in Alberta and where it is going
- **Gordon Cove**, CEO of the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) – ALMA update

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- Growing Forward – programs available to producers and other industry stakeholders
- **Christoph Weder**, Prairie Heritage Beef – branded beef and how Prairie Heritage Beef got its start
- Northwest Consolidate Beef Producers Ltd. – the ins-and-outs of consolidated marketing
- **Brenda Schoepp**, Beeflink – management practices used by three ranches in Alberta and what they do to stay viable
- **Sean McGrath**, Creo Episteme Ltd. – managing for carcass quality
- **Kerrienne Koehler-Munro**, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development – opportunities in the carbon offset market for Alberta producers
- **Dr. John Basarab**, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development – impacts of reducing the number of days on feed and the marketing of younger animals
- **Morris Seiferling**, Land Use Secretariat – an overview of the newly implemented Land-use Framework and the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*

For further information and to register, contact the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM (3276), the Chinook Applied Research Association at 403-664-3777, or go to the *Coming Events* section on Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's website at www.agriculture.alberta.ca

Contact: *Stephanie Kosinski*
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2010 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference

Alberta's horse industry gathers in Red Deer each January to take in the *Horse Breeders and Owners Conference*. This year, the 28th annual "mid-winter horseman's escape" will be held at the Capri Centre on January 15 to 17, 2010, and will feature world class speakers, a wide range of topics, an equine trade show with over 50 sponsoring businesses and organizations, and numerous opportunities for socializing and networking.

The pre-conference Stable Owners Seminar, now in its fourth year, provides a complimentary afternoon of education directed at the stable industry. This year will feature Lanier Cordell - Effective Marketing Tools; Bob Coleman - Alternative Feeds for Stables; Business Infusions - Stable Organization Using Software; and Scott Holmes on Arena Footing. The seminar will run from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on January 15, 2009. All are welcome to attend and advance registration is not required.

The conference officially opens Friday evening with the very popular *Open Barn* reception (7:00 to 10:00 p.m.). Delegates

have the opportunity to catch up with old friends, make some new friends, and explore the exhibits of what's new and exciting in the horse industry.

The heart of the conference is its strong educational program and 2010 is no exception. The first session begins Saturday morning and the last wraps up on Sunday afternoon. This year's line up has something for everyone, no matter what your level or type of participation in the world of horses.

- **Lindsay Grice** (Ontario) – From the Round Pen to the Show Ring
– Stepping Up to the Next Level
- **Terry Swanson** (Colorado) – Understanding Lameness
- **Janice Baxter** (Florida) – Yoga for Equestrians
– Morning Pre-Session Yoga Class
- **Bob Coleman** (Kentucky) – Why We Feed How We Feed
– Making the Most of Your Feed Inventory
- **Karen Scholl** (Arizona) – Horsemanship for Women
- **Scott Holmes** (Indiana) – Effects of Footing on Horse, Rider and Sport
- **Dennis Sigler** (Texas) – Bringing Your Horse Back from Layoff or Inactivity
- **Wendy Pearson** (Ontario) – Natural Supplements for the Performance Horse
- **Lanier Cordell** (Georgia) – Equinomics: The Secrets to Making Money in Your Horse Business
- **Derek Haley** (Ontario) – Animal Welfare and Horses
- **Bonnie Buntain** (Alberta) – One Health: Promoting & Protecting Horse and Human Health
- **Dee Butterfield** (Alberta) – Successful Clinics: The Give and the Take
- **Katie Tim** (Mississippi) – The New Industry Reality
- **Stephanie Valberg** (Minnesota) – Responsible Breeding
- **Ron Anderson and Muffy Knox** (Alberta) – Getting the Most Enjoyment from Your Horse
- News Hour Topics to be announced

Cost for the weekend, is \$95 for an individual and \$80 for additional registrants from the same farm if registering in advance. Registration is also available at the door and is \$95 per person. Registration for students of post-secondary equine programs is \$65.

The *Horse Breeders and Owners Conference* is an annual event hosted by the Horse Industry Association of Alberta and sponsored by a generous group of equine organizations and businesses. For more information call 403-420-5949 or to register visit www.albertahorseindustry.ca

Contact: *Teresa van Bryce*
403-420-5949

Marketing Caravan Rolls Across Canada

Farmers and rural entrepreneurs across Canada will be given the chance to participate in what is being called the industry's best one-day workshop on how to understand customers, reach them through the media and build a business to be proud of.

The Marketing Caravan is an affordable one-day workshop that will 'roll' across Canada from Ontario to B.C. between November 2009 and March 2010.

Creating strong personal connections with customers and potential customers is often a key ingredient that can make or break a business, especially a business as customer-oriented as rural markets, farm direct markets and agri-tourism operations. The Marketing Caravan, in its fifth year as a national program, will put farmers in touch with top-notch marketing expertise and innovation. The program is all about learning to create enduring links with customers, understanding what customers want and reaching out to them with the products or services being offered.

The Marketing Caravan one-day workshop will provide all the resources necessary to identify a target market and reach customers, as well as an opportunity for participants to network and share the successes and challenges of agri-business.

This year, the workshop will cover two topics in detail – consumer behaviour and media relations:

- Jolene Brown, a well-known expert on family farm business, delves into the consumer mind and discusses what consumers are thinking about and how they make their food buying decisions – in her presentation, *When Pigs Fly* she will discuss changes in agriculture today and how they are impacting the buying decisions of the consumer.
- Media relations can be a scary prospect when not armed with the right tools. In *Get the Media Talking about your Agri-Business*, Annemarie Pedersen will share the basics of creating key messages, pitching a story and working with the media to get the message out. Participants will also take home a tool kit to walk them through the process when they are ready to start their own media relations campaign.

The Marketing Caravan workshop dates in Alberta are:

- November 24, 2009 – **Airdrie** – contact Becky Lipton, 780-271-1116, e-mail becky.lipton@goingorganic.ca
- March 10, 2010 – **Camrose** – contact Heather Broughton, 780-608-6364, e-mail bridgestosuccess@xplornet.com

Registration for the Airdrie workshop is \$50, registration for the Camrose workshop is yet to be announced.

For further information on the Marketing Caravan and the one-day workshop, and a complete list of dates and locations, go to www.farmcentre.com/workshops

All registrants for the Marketing Caravan workshop will be entered to win a day of mentorship – a chance to have a one-day, on-farm consultation with a business consultant. Workshop space is limited, so early registration is recommended.

Contact: *Becky Lipton*
780-271-1116

Agri-News Briefs

Going Organic Hits the Road

Going Organic – or GO is hosting two-day seminars in four regions across the province between November 2009 and February 2010. In each region there will be a full day of workshops covering soil management, current applicable organic research and speed dating with experts on topics such as livestock, crop production and marketing. In Leduc, Grande Prairie and Lethbridge there will also be an organic beef sector development meeting at the end of the day. The second day of the workshops will differ from region to region. In Leduc, market gardeners can look forward to Daniel Brisebois from Quebec presenting a full-day course on crop planning. In Grande Prairie, there will be a full day course on transition to organic livestock production and in La Crete and Lethbridge, the course will focus on transition to organic crop production. The workshops will be held:

- November 17 and 18, 2009 – Leduc
- November 30 and December 1, 2009 – Grande Prairie
- December 3 and 4, 2009 – La Crete
- February 25 and 26, 2010 - Lethbridge

The workshops will be of interest for producers already involved in, those currently transitioning to and for those generally interested in organic production. The cost of the workshop is \$75 for both days. One-day registration and student pricing is available. For more information or to register, contact Becky Lipton, 780-271-1116, e-mail becky.lipton@goingorganic.ca

Farming to 2020

The Southern Alberta Conservation Association (SACA) and the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta are hosting **Farming to 2020** conference and trade show in Lethbridge on December 1 and 2, 2009. Topics being covered include: human resources, climate change and carbon markets, saving soils, water issues, fertilizer placement and on-farm research and technology advances. Keynote speakers Guy Dauncey, founder and president of the B.C. Sustainable Energy Association, and Michelle Dagnino, a leading expert on generational change, round out the agenda. Registration cost for the full conference is \$175; registration for one day is \$110. For further information or to register, contact Chris Procyk, SACA, at 403-381-5118 or e-mail chrisprocyk@hotmail.com