



Agri-News

December 7, 2009

Alberta Publishes Forest Health Annual Report

Many of Alberta's farmers and landowners also have forested land or woodlots on their farms. With the threat of mountain pine beetle, woodlot owners are cautioned to be vigilant and survey their wooded areas as carefully as they survey their crops.

"Most of the problems noted on private land in 2009 were related to Poplar borer," says Toso Bozic, woodlot specialist/agroforester with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. "However, with the threat of mountain pine beetle (MPB) infestation, farmers, ranchers and woodlot owners need to watch their trees for signs of mountain pine beetle attack. This is especially important in areas along the foothills and in the Peace regions. Private woodlot owners' help is needed to prevent its spread."

An overview of the forest pest surveys and pest management programs carried out in Alberta's forests for the 2008 fiscal year has been posted on the Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) website.

Forest health staff surveyed Alberta's pine forests to estimate the impact of the 2009 mountain pine beetle flight. Results indicate that the dispersal was more severe than the flight Alberta experienced in 2006. Mostly found in the west central areas of the province, beetles are now being detected farther east, north and south than before.

Survey work by forest health staff has been aided in the areas around Slave Lake and north of Whitecourt where heavily attacked trees are already showing signs of fading. This has allowed SRD to get a better idea of where the beetles are. Fortunately, many of the heavily attacked stands in the Slave Lake area are relatively poorly connected to other pine stands, meaning that these beetle infestations are less likely to spread to other pine stands.

As expected, the mountain pine beetle proved to be the most harmful pest in Alberta's forests in 2008. SRD's mountain pine beetle management program removed more than 125,000 infested trees through cut and burn operations. Municipalities added an additional 119,000 trees to the tally through their participation in the municipal grant program. Forest companies also harvested beetle infested stands.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Alberta Publishes Forest Health Annual Report	1
The Classroom Agriculture Program Needs You	2
Horse Health a Focus at the 2010 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference	3
Animal Care is Everyone's Responsibility	3
Young Farmers - Lend Your Voice to the Future of Agriculture!	4
Agri-News Briefs	5

The best control of MPB is to cut and burn the entire tree. High quality trees can sometimes be sold to local mills or processed by a local sawmill owner as long as all the bark is removed and debris burned. This is important because unburned debris may still contain live MPBs that could infect more trees.

“Processing this timber is a great option for woodlot owners who would like to recover some of the tree’s value,” says Bozic. “It is also suggested that landowners replace their trees with saplings (pine or spruce) purchased from a local nursery. In the case of shelterbelt trees, farmers can acquire new saplings from the PFRA’s shelterbelt program.”

Insecticides as a control method are not recommended because they kill beetles but not the fungus. Prevention from the attack is the key. A product known as Verbenone is a repellent or anti-aggregation pheromone that can prevent beetles from attacking trees. For the best results, a fresh pouch of it should be placed on the tree part way through the year before the beetles fly in the summer.

Woodlot owners in high-risk areas of the province will find that the best solution is to keep watch and explore ways to prevent MPB attacks and infestations. Watch for symptoms such as pitch tubes that indicate pine tree may be under attack. The following list outlines the steps to take if pitch tubes are observed or if you suspect a mountain pine beetle infestation:

- call Alberta Sustainable Resources at 310-BUGS to register infested trees
- contact the local county or MD agricultural fieldman
- coordinate a visit from a trained MPB surveyor
- develop a control and harvest plan to deal with infected trees. (e.g. “Woodlot Management Plan”)

remove and burn infected bark material by no later than May of the following year

To read the **2008 Annual Report: Forest Health in Alberta**, visit the SRD website at www.srd.alberta.ca/MapsFormsPublications/Publications/ForestHealthAnnualReports.aspx

Contact: Toso Bozic
780-415-2681

Alison Bulloch
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Public Information, Education and Outreach
Programs
780-422-2079

The Classroom Agriculture Program Needs You

Every spring, when the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP) gets underway, Grade 4 students from across Alberta ask volunteers some very interesting questions:

- “Are brown eggs more nutritious than white eggs?”
- “Why don’t all cows give milk?”
- “If carrots come from the dirt, are they safe to eat?”
- “You mean milk is warm when it comes from a cow?”

Questions like these are wonderful conversation starters and are central to the volunteer experience, and the CAP experience is so positive that some volunteers return to schools year after year.

“CAP has a long history of leadership in the area of agriculture awareness,” says Karen Spelay, CAP coordinator. “Since 1985, thousands of CAP volunteers have reached hundreds of thousands of students with current information about agriculture. Students who don’t have direct experience with the farm often don’t understand rural realities. They are unaware of the sources of their food and rarely consider the diverse career opportunities that agriculture offers. The CAP program strives to re-establish connections between these students and the industry that plays such a vital role in their lives.”

When CAP trained volunteers head into the classroom, they establish a personal connection with students who are then able to put a face to agriculture. Volunteers are free to customize presentations to suit their area of expertise, and CAP provides resources to facilitate planning. There are so many requests for speakers each year that the scope of the program is limited only by the number of people willing to take on this important and rewarding task.

Albertans who would like to volunteer to become part of this award-winning program are asked to call Spelay at 403-710-1959 or e-mail capcoordinator@albertabeef.org

Contact: Karen Spelay
403-710-1959

Horse Health a Focus at the 2010 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference

It can be difficult to differentiate a sinus problem from an upper respiratory tract infection in horses. Both present with similar symptoms and both should be checked by a veterinarian to determine the best course of action. It is important for horse owners to know what to look and watch for, and this is the focus of a presentation by Dr. Chris Bell, DVM, at the **2010 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference** (HBOC).

Bell is originally from Airdrie, Alberta where he grew up around horses on his family's farm. He received his BSc in microbiology and immunology from the University of Saskatchewan, earned his DVM with distinction from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and completed a one-year equine internship at Arizona Equine Medical and Surgical Centre in Gilbert, Arizona, U.S.

"Dr. Bell was accepted to a three-year equine surgical residency position at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, and he is currently chief resident in his final year of the program," says Teresa van Bryce, manager, Horse Industry Association of Alberta. "His primary areas of interest are upper airway, neurological and orthopaedic surgery in horses, and it is in this area of expertise that he will be presenting Understanding Sinus Problems in Your Horse at the conference."

Bell's presentation will include information about what to look for, what owners should do if they suspect sinusitis or an upper respiratory infection in their horse, as well as discussing a newly developed technique that will help with sinus drainage and could potentially allow horses to avoid invasive sinus surgery.

This is one of the 15 international presenters on the agenda at the 28th annual HBOC, being held in Red Deer on January 15 to 17, 2010.

"Each year, the HBOC 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," says Les Burwash, head of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. "The agenda for the 2010 conference is packed with presentations on horse health, training, nutrition, breeding, horsemanship and horse industry business concerns."

In addition to being a unique opportunity to listen to and learn from a full slate of world renowned horsemen and horsewomen, event sponsors will be on-hand during 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.

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 2010 conference, contact van Bryce at 403-420-5949 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 403-420-5949.

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

Les Burwash
403-948-8541

Animal Care is Everyone's Responsibility

Albertans concerned about livestock in Alberta should be aware of the Alberta Farm Animal Care Livestock Care Action Line and Response Team (ALERT) service.

The ALERT service provides a toll free confidential help line, 1-800-506-2273, for anyone who has concerns about livestock in Alberta. It is also available for self-reporting to assist those who may be experiencing problems in caring for their livestock. The ALERT team strives to assist before animals are in distress. The resource team includes farmers, veterinarians and other community members that offer solutions to improve animal care.

By far, most livestock owners are attentive to the needs of their livestock and ensure daily care. Unfortunately, there is a small number that do not or cannot and animals can suffer as a result. Poor care can arise from lack of knowledge, life's pressures, old age, sickness and absentee owners. Financial hardships, coupled with tough winter conditions, add extra challenges.

"The livestock care ALERT service is a very important part of Alberta's livestock industry – producers helping producers to alleviate problems and make sure the animals are looked after in a proper manner," says Brian Chomlak, producer and industry representative on AFAC's board of directors. "The ALERT line has been operating for 14 years now, and there are many success stories of how one call has helped many animals and their owners."

Cont'd on page 4

December 7, 2009 – page 4

To increase awareness of the ALERT service, AFAC will be running an awareness campaign. This campaign includes a series of radio spots and the distribution of ALERT posters and magnets to RCMP detachments and auction market offices as well as through industry group meetings and events in Alberta.

AFAC is a livestock based group that promotes responsible animal care, for more information, visit the AFAC website at www.afac.ab.ca

Contact: Doug Sawyer

AFAC chairman

403-598-5144

Mikki Shatosky, AFAC project manager

403-932-8050

mikki@afac.ab.ca

Young Farmers - Lend Your Voice to the Future of Agriculture!

Earlier this week, the Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture) Jean-Pierre Blackburn's office announced that the minister is seeking input from across Canada on the key challenges and issues facing young and future farmers.

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC) would like to give Canada's young farmers an opportunity to contribute their ideas. Comments are welcomed on questions such as:

- what should be done to assist new and upcoming producers?
- how can the federal government (Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada) help new and young farmers start their business and capture more opportunities to grow and diversify their businesses?

Received suggestions, recommendations and comments will be compiled and incorporated into a briefing note, which we will present to Minister Blackburn on behalf of CFBMC and its young farming partners.

Responses can be emailed to info@cfbmc.com. To ensure that comments are received correctly, include 'Blackburn' in the e-mail subject line.

Very basic demographic information would also be appreciated. If possible, state if you are a young/beginning farmer, an established producer or a consultant, and what region of the country you reside in. More information is available on the CFBMC website at www.farmcentre.com/Home.aspx

Contact: CFBMC

1-888-232-3262

info@cfbmc.com

Agri-News Briefs

Community Economic Development Conference

Growing the North – A Community Economic Development Conference is being held in Grande Prairie on January 21 and 22, 2010. The agenda features economists, industry insiders and politicians who will speak at this conference. The event, hosted by the County of Grande Prairie, with its partners the Northern Alberta Development Council, Farm Credit Canada and the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce, is an opportunity for north community members to learn about community economic development, the links between local economy and transportation, industry projections, innovation and to find out whom and what can help small business and northern communities grow. Early registration is \$90 plus GST (\$94.50) until December 15, 2009, after that date, registration until January 20, 2010 is \$100.00 plus GST (\$105.00). Additional tickets for the evening dinner are available for \$30 plus GST (\$31.50). Further information and an online registration form can be found at www.countygp.ab.ca

Marketing - What Every Rural Business Needs to Know

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC) and the Edmonton Regional Tourism Group want to help farmers build their business muscle and are bringing a new workshop to communities across the country to do just that. The Marketing workshop is designed to connect farmers and rural entrepreneurs with the tools and techniques of agrimarketing. Participants of the workshop will learn:

- the basics of marketing: what it is and why it matters
- taking your own pulse: the marketing self assessment
- how to choose and implement essential marketing tactics
- how other agribusinesses have used these techniques to boost sales and profitability

Jerry Bouma, a well-known management consultant and agrimarketer with years of experience in the industry, will lead the discussions and marketing workshop. Participants will also have the opportunity to meet others in their region and begin building their network. The workshop is being held in Josephburg on January 20, 2010. For further information and to register, contact Tam Andersen toll-free at 1-866-622-0740, e-mail info@prairiegardens.org or go to <http://farmcentre.com/workshops>