

*For landowners
who care*

Western Farm & Forest

Sustainable Land Management Opportunities

SUMMER 2006

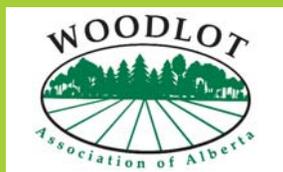
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WILD ROSE
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

WRAP and WAA members!
This is your official membership magazine!
Please see inside for association news

Unused wells should be properly plugged

More producers than ever are asking about the best ways to plug inactive water wells, says a water specialist on the front lines of the agricultural industry.

The process is called decommissioning, and it's the official term that means the job has been done to meet proper standards. A how-to article on the subject, "Plug unused water wells properly," and links to funding support are available at the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (AEFP) Company website at www.albertaEFP.com.

"Some people think of decommissioning a well as little more than plugging a hole," says Ken Williamson, a water specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD), one of a broad range of specialists who act as the technical knowledge base for the EFP program.

"But there's a lot more to it than

that, and producers want to know how to properly decommission a well in order to prevent contamination of water bodies. That intent comes from a general increase in awareness of water management and a genuine desire to act responsibly, but one of the most dramatic reasons is that it costs a lot less and is a lot less hassle than fixing the problems inactive water wells can create."

The process of properly decommissioning a water well follows a basic procedure, says Williamson. The first step is deciding who will do it. "Decommissioning a well is something that needs to be done properly, and there are a number of technical considerations that may be best left to the experts. For those reasons, we generally recommend hiring a licensed water well driller."

Another important step is deciding on the best sealing material. Although grout, concrete and un-

aminated clay are all acceptable, Williamson says high-yield bentonite is considered by many to be the best option.

After disinfecting the well, the next step, if practical, is to remove the well casing. The well can then be filled with the sealing material.

The final steps include cutting off any remaining well casing half a metre below the ground surface, back-filling the hole and recording the details of the project. "Filing these records with the Alberta Environment Groundwater Information Centre in Edmonton is a courtesy to the next owner of the property," says Williamson.

Developing an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is the starting point for addressing groundwater protection and many other on-farm environmental concerns, says Williamson. An EFP is a free, voluntary self-assessment process that helps producers address the environmental risks and strengths on their farms.

Producers that properly complete EFPs are eligible for up to \$30,000 per farm for a broad range of environmental farm improvements through the Canada-Alberta Farm Stewardship Program (CAFSP).

More information on the decommissioning of inactive water wells is available in a new article in the AEFP Journal, AEFP's new web magazine anchored at www.albertaEFP.com.

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Call of the Land host retires from popular radio show

After 36 years, Alberta's renowned *Call of the Land* host is retiring, opening the door for a new voice to deliver Alberta producers their daily dose of agriculture news and information. Jack 'the Howler' Howell, long-time host of *Call of the Land* welcomes aboard Caitlynn Reesor who officially took over hosting duties on May 31.

"The Howler is a legend in this province," said Doug Horner, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "He's made *Call of the Land* a daily must-listen for producers in Alberta. And for an industry that can be unpredictable, he has been a reliable and trusted source for all the latest agriculture news and information."

Howell hands his microphone over to Caitlynn Reesor, a well-known radio personality who has spent the past 10 years as agriculture director on CFCW radio. Horner said it shouldn't take long for the farm community to adjust to the changeover. "Caitlynn is a true professional and has a tremendous amount of respect from those in the agriculture industry. She'll no doubt continue to provide excellent reporting on the issues that matter most to rural Albertans."

Call of the Land is a five day-a-week, nine-minute agricultural radio program that airs on 23 Alberta commercial radio stations, reaching more than 110,000 Albertans daily.

Main cover photo: One of Alberta's most beautiful woodlot residents, a redbreasted grosbeak, poses for Doug Macaulay. Small cover photo: Between-row weed maintenance with discer (AAFC-PFRA Agroforestry).

Western Farm & Forest

Western Farm & Forest magazine promotes innovation and sustainability on farms and woodlots in Canada's four western provinces. It is mailed four times a year to private landowners and to related equipment suppliers, government departments and officials.

The mission of the magazine is to inform and inspire landowners about the economic, ecological and social opportunities available to them through sustainable, integrated management of their resources. We promote the objectives of the Woodlot Association of Alberta, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, and other organizations consistent with our mission.

Submission of articles and photos on any aspect of innovation or management on the farm or woodlot is welcomed.. Please contact the Publisher for information on length and desired subject matter.

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Untapped opportunities may offset drop in farm income

In June, Statistics Canada released some not very surprising statistics on farm income. It showed that Alberta net farm income dropped by 50 per cent in 2005 compared to 2004.

Why were these stats not surprising? Well, first off last year's harvest resulted in poorer quality grain hitting the bins and grain farmers know that drastically affects the price. Furthermore, input costs soared, particularly fuel and fertilizer. Added to that was the rising dollar, poor overall commodity prices, less government support and slowly rising interest rates. On the horizon looms a farm debt of \$12 billion in Alberta alone.

It paints a bleak picture, but there is hope.

Many farm operations are pros-

pering and advances in technology and research will certainly help others. Alberta farms and ranches lead the nation in environmental stewardship and there are economic opportunities that remain

untapped. Redesigning a farmer-friendly safety net program is a high priority. Wild Rose continues to explore opportunities in areas like bioenergy, business management and trade.

Still, one good year would certainly help alleviate the economic stress that many operations are currently experiencing.



Rod Scarlett,
Wildrose
Agricultural
Producers

The hunt for Heritage Trees

Our President, Peter Mills, sent the WAA Directors a web link to the Heritage Tree Foundation of Canada a couple of weeks ago and I thought that the vision and objectives would be of interest to our readers.

The vision statement is simply "to preserve and celebrate Heritage Trees. Heritage means trees of particular interest by virtue of such qualities as shape, special interest, location and/or history."

The Foundation credits the Alberta Forestry Association's Trees of Renown project as the forerunner of the current initiative. Peter Murphy and Bruce Dancik published two popular editions of Alberta Trees of Renown: An Honour Roll of Alberta Trees, in 1984 and 1986. The books listed unique features of many species of trees found in Alberta and cite record ages, heights, diameter, etc.

For example, the oldest living tree is an Engelmann Spruce in Jasper National Park that is over 700 years of age. The tallest trees on record in

Alberta as of 1986 were several white spruce on the Peace River flats that are 43 meters in height.

When the books were first published I recall packing an increment bore and a camera around on

my travels hoping to document unique trees. My best find was a white spruce tree growing out of the top of a large rock at the headwaters of Whitehorse Creek, near Cadomin. It somehow had grown roots through a few cracks in the rock and survives to this day.

In addition to the national initiative you will find reference to the Alberta Heritage Tree Project which is looking for nominations of unique trees for a publication scheduled for June 2007. This new program was initiated and is headed by Libby Fairweather. If you think you have a candidate tree the web address is: <http://heritagetreefoundation.com>



Dennis
Quintilio,
WAA

Woodlot Plan charts path to success

By TOSO BOZIC

In the long term, a woodlot management plan helps build a successful woodlot operation. Very simply, a plan is a guide for what you have, what you want to do and how to do it. Woodlot management planning gives a clear picture of why or why not you should undertake certain activities in your woodlot.

Woodlot Extension Program

Don't Just Think It, Ink It!

Many landowners wonder, why bother with a written woodlot plan? Others say, "I have a plan in my head." The woodlot management plan is about you and your woodlot. It is how you see your land now and in the future. It also reflects your personal interests, expectations and goals. Plans work for landowners because they:

- Set long and short term priorities
- Save time and money, by avoiding costly mistakes
- Become an important record for you and future owners
- Qualify families for intergenerational transfer income tax relief
- Qualify owners for some incentives from various organizations

Trust the Process...

The management planning process includes five steps:

1. Set goals and objectives
2. Identify resources
3. Develop a woodlot management plan
4. Implement and monitor activities
5. Plan adaptation

Goals and Objectives

It is important to establish and know your goals. Assessing your priorities will help you establish short- and long-term goals. The goals and objectives should be clear, realistic and achievable. They should reflect your personal, economic and environmental needs. It is very rare that landowner has only one goal for managing his

or her woodlot.

Common landowner goals are:

- Wildlife habitat
- Recreation and eco-tourism
- Soil and water conservation
- Crop diversification
- Timber production
- Special forest production (berries, mushrooms, willows)
- Source of income
- Security
- Forage production
- Investment

Resources

After setting the goals and objectives, assess the resources needed to achieve them. Assessment includes woodlot inventory, available financial support (including potential revenues and expenses), equipment, labour, and other needs. All this resource information is critical and has to be evaluated as part of developing a sustainable woodlot management plan.

Management Plans

Management plans depend on wishes and needs of owners. The plan usually consists of a written section and maps. The written portion includes: description of goals and objectives, woodlot inventory, activities to achieve goals and objectives, records of income, expenses, harvest volumes and cost of reforestation. Maps may include trails, streams, forest stand types, soils, water and other land features.

The management plan can be as short and simple as two or three pages. It may be developed to achieve a specific goal such as timber production, wildlife habitat, or eco-tourism, but in many cases an integrated resource management plan is produced. Development of a plan may require help from a professional forester or woodlot specialist. The plan needs to be flexible and adaptable. Nothing



Photo: Doug Macaulay

On a woodlot tour near Whitecourt, Toso Bozic explains the benefits of management

should be "written in stone."

Implementation and Monitoring Leads to Plan Adaptation

Even the best management plan is worthless if it is not implemented. Woodlot management plans are not intended to gather dust on the shelf. Monitoring determines whether the goals and objectives are being met. If the goals and objectives are not being met either you need to undertake different activities or change the goals themselves. The take home message here is make a plan, do something and follow-up. It is natural to adapt your plan over time as things change.

Want to Know More?

Alberta Agriculture has two full time woodlot extension specialists who would be happy to answer your questions about woodlot management planning.

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Sustainable woodlot vision for Prairies outlined at Saskatchewan meeting

By VICTOR BRUNETTE

From April 20 to 21, a small group of woodlot owners and agroforestry stakeholders from all three Prairie Provinces met in Prince Albert to discuss issues of woodlot sustainability in the prairies.

This workshop provided an opportunity for forest, agroforestry and agriculture specialists to exchange views on current activities and the possibility for improved programs adapted to woodlot sustainability objectives.

Joanne Kowalski, Larry White and Al Jurgens from the

Saskatchewan Forest Centre presented their ongoing agroforestry activities and projects. Kurt Chesley of Forintek focused on the value-added opportunities for the primary wood products from private woodlands.

Participants were interested to learn that the Saskatchewan government plans to proceed with the afforestation of 10 per cent of the province's arable land. This plan amounts to about 1.6 million hectares (four million acres), and about 81,000 hectares (200,000 acres) per year. It would require the investment of more than \$100 million per year over and above the costs of afforestation and plantation maintenance. Fibre partners have to share the land revenue needed for landowners for the duration of the first rotation (20 years). It is expected that various agencies and partners would be involved - the government, industry partners, landowners cooperatives or landowners groups or agroforestry groups, and Western Economic Diversification. Participants discussed the possibility

of structuring new partnerships with woodlots owners in Saskatchewan.

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration presenters covered well the priorities of the agricultural administration, and have shown some

openings to involve rural landowners and woodlot owners in the program incentives. The participants were presented with a case study of the generous cost-shared programs of the New York City watersheds, and were also made aware of the delivery mechanisms, and local commitment needed (peer delivery

and enforcement) so as to adapt a watershed program to local strengths, opportunities, and supply and demand of the local economy. Peter Joyce attempted to establish the links



Victor Brunette

Woodlot Extension Program

between existing programs (National Farm Stewardship Programs), the current incentives to protect and conserve sustainable natural capital and the ongoing priorities regarding air quality, water and water quality, natural diversity and soil conservation.

Environmental goods and services programs will require clear targets, and the system will need to offer the right mix of incentives and policy instruments. PFRA recognizes the value of woodlots, woody species and forested landscapes and wants to be a proactive partner for a sustainable rural landscape

Jean Pierre Dansereau, champions the woodlot perspectives as part of the National Forest Strategy, and he

reported on the perceived gaps in sustainable woodlot management. The woodlot stakeholders will give some thought to the possibility of developing a prairie hub to bring woodlot issues to the national front. Topics of interest are environmental goods and services, wood energy and mechanisms to address situations such as natural disasters and taxation issues.

Ken Fosty (Manitoba Forestry Association) and Shane Tornblom (Manitoba Agriculture) brought focus to the mechanisms of the ongoing partnerships involved in the delivery of technical services, woodlot awareness and planning in Manitoba. Bob Austman (Manitoba Model Forest) and multiple partners have recently launched a beneficial management practices handbook to assist the landowners of that province. Victor Brunette of the Alberta Woodlot Extension Program discussed the drivers for an active woodlot extension program, and the update of a Woodlot Management Guide for the Prairie Provinces. Pieter van der Schoot provided an update of the WAA activities.

The participants enjoyed the workshop and found time to go out in the countryside to visit Frank Sudol, woodlot owner, wood turner, and artist in his log home in Paddockwood. Another half day venture enabled us to visit Dave and Al Halland's farm in Love. The Halland family are providing value added to the primary products that come through their sawmill, and are also manufacturing log homes.

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Alberta takes aim at pine beetles

Take a walk through your woodlot - early detection is essential for spread prevention

By SARAH SEINEN

Private landowners and municipalities along the eastern slopes of the Rockies are on the front lines in the fight against mountain pine beetle in Alberta.

Community, federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations representatives attended a Mountain Pine Beetle Summit in Calgary in late May to learn more about the forest pest. David Coutts, Minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, characterized the summit as “a pivotal day in Alberta’s future.”

Mountain pine beetle

Coutts announced the creation of a mountain pine beetle advisory committee representing communities, industry, conservation and environmental groups, First Nations and the federal government to provide input and advice to Alberta.

“Part of the job of the advisory committee is to help with communications – not only with the provincial government and industry, but also with municipalities and private landowners such as woodlot owners,” said Coutts. “It’s important that we have open communication with everyone so we can work together to stop the beetles from advancing any further into our province.”

John Irwin, mayor of Crowsnest Pass, will lead the committee. In the 1970s and 1980s, Crowsnest Pass dealt with a major outbreak of moun-



John Irwin

tain pine beetle. This year, over 1,200 infested lodgepole pine trees will be cut and burned in that area.

“As one of the first Alberta municipalities affected by the mountain pine beetle, our community knows its tremendous impact,” said Irwin. “We need to be forward thinking and we need to act proactively to limit the damage of this threat to our forest.”

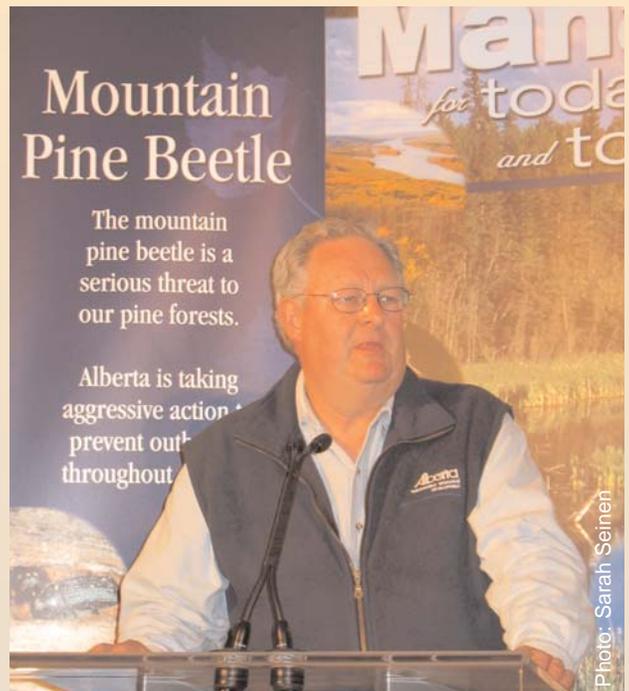
No stranger to the mountain pine beetle, Irwin recalls a recent golfing excursion in Crowsnest Pass where he came face to face with the infestation.

“On one particular hole, I used an eight iron rather than the nine to make sure I got over the water. Consequently, the ball went up into the hillside on the far side of the green and it should’ve rolled back down but it got caught up behind a tree. I went to investigate and noticed pitch tubes on the bark. The reality of mountain pine beetles right here in our community became crystal clear at that point,” he said.

As mountain pine beetles inch forward into Alberta’s forests, more and more landowners and municipalities are recognizing the signs of infestations.

“I’m very concerned that beetles are knocking at the door,” said Gordon Kerr, who owns a woodlot in Water Valley, northwest of Calgary.

As part of its aggressive approach to mountain pine beetle control, the provincial government is aiming to tackle 100 per cent of new infestations



David Coutts announces the creation of an advisory committee on mountain pine beetle

on public land. Private landowners and municipalities are encouraged to pursue a similar target.

The cost of tree removal can be significant, but government funding is available.

“We’re working on a grant system for municipalities to access in case the pine beetle comes into their boundaries and territory, and we at ASRD will be exploring how we can help them out financially with combating the beetle,” said Coutts.

Daniel Lux, Alberta’s provincial pine beetle coordinator, said ASRD is looking at the development of a mountain pine beetle detection training course for landowners.

Natural Resources Canada’s Canadian Forest Service is also assisting landowners through a private forestlands rehabilitation program within its Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative.

For more information on pine beetle in Alberta or to report an infestation, call 1-877-927-BUGS, email fh.info@gov.ab.ca, or visit www.srd.gov.ab.ca and select the mountain pine beetle link.

Keep a lookout for visible signs of beetles under the bark

By SARAH SEINEN

Mountain pine beetles have always been a part of the forested landscape in British Columbia but due to warmer winters and years of very successful wildfire suppression, they are multiplying rapidly and attacking stands of mature lodgepole pine in B.C., and more recently, in Alberta.

Infestations of mountain pine beetles are not limited to public forests. Private landowners play an important role in preventing the spread of mountain pine beetle infestation, so they need to know what to look for.

The Progress of Attack

There are three colour stages of infestation:

- **Green** is the earliest stage of infestation. The beetles have infested the tree, but the needles have not changed colour.
- **Red** is the middle stage. This stage generally occurs in the year after the initial infestation. Beetles from the

following year have already left the tree by mid-summer. (note – Foresters are finding that in some places, the beetles have a two year life cycle so are sometimes still in the tree during the red stage)

- **Grey** is the last stage. At this point, the beetles are long gone and the tree is dead and has begun to lose its needles.

Look for Mountain Pine Beetles

- Early detection, after summer flight season, is key.
- Holes and sawdust created by the beetles drilling into the bark can be found at the base of the tree and in bark cracks.
- Pay attention to pitch tubes, woodpecker activity, or discoloured needles.
- Peel away bark to expose larvae galleries and beetles.
- Avoid transporting firewood from one area to another, especially if the bark is still attached.



A pitch tube, or thin line of sticky sap on the surface of the bark, is a telltale sign of pine beetle infestation.

Photo: FERIC

How To Deal With Infested Trees

- Report suspicious pest findings, especially red pine trees, to your nearest Alberta Sustainable Resource Development office, or phone 1-877-927-BUGS
- Log infested trees and mill or debark them during the winter, before the beetle flight season begins, June through to September.

Points about pine beetle

- The mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae* Hopkins) is a member of the bark beetle family, and is the most damaging insect pest of pine trees in western North America.
- The adult beetles are black, 5-7 mm long, or about the size of a grain of rice. The larvae are small grubs found in the inner bark.
- Pine forests along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains account for 387 million cubic metres of merchantable pine – 60% of which is over 80 years old and highly susceptible to beetle attack.
- The mountain pine beetle normally has a one-year life cycle in Alberta.
- Mountain pine beetle populations are normally kept in check by natural factors such as wildfires, predators, parasites, wet summers, and early, cold winters or late, cold springs.

Aerial surveys show the extent of mountain pine beetle in B.C., and the threat of incursion into Alberta.



Prescribed burns help enhance diversity

By SARAH SEINEN

Weather permitting, a large prescribed burn will take place in the Kakwa-Willmore Interprovincial Park this summer to combat the incursion of mountain pine beetles into northern Alberta.

The 11,000-hectare burn at Meadowland Creek is the largest and most complex prescribed burn planned and approved by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development this year.

The burn would remove some of the infested trees in the area as well as prime potential pine beetle habitat.

“Limiting the spread of mountain pine beetle is the number one goal of this prescribed burn,” said Rus DiFiore, wildfire technologist in the Foothills Wildfire Management Area for ASRD’s Forest Protection branch. “Our second priority is planning burns

Forest Protection

that would stop wildfire or pine beetles escaping from the parks and into tenured forest resources.”

Any time the provincial government uses fire — it’s a prescribed burn.

There are three classes of prescribed burns. Type 1 burns are the largest in size and scope, requiring the most time, resources and planning. Type 2 burns can be significant in area, but minimal resources are required and the burn can be completed in a short time frame. Type 3 burns are the smallest ones, used for hazard reduction such as burning overgrown grass near random camping sites.

“Type 2 burns are of particular interest for community protection,” said DiFiore. “Through FireSmart initiatives, such as the one in Robb, we have been modifying fuel sources by thinning standing timber and removing any resulting debris such as limbs or bark on the ground.”

Forest Protection staff in their

respective Wildfire Management Areas identify potential prescribed burns.

Landowners concerned about wildfire hazards near their property can also request a prescribed burn through their local wildfire management office.

Prescribed burn plans are drafted and submitted to ASRD for approval. If the burns occur in a park or protected area, Community

Development also has to approve the plan — this is the case for the Kakwa-Willmore burn. All plans cover the basics, including a full description of the area, goals and budget. For larger burns, the plan includes pre- and post-burn assessments of vegetation and wildlife.

“Each plan encompasses the process of prescribed burning as well as a plan for informing people about any potential burns,” said DiFiore.

The communications plan informs the public of the planned burns and of any trail closures that may happen. As the date for the burn draws closer, Forest Protection staff step up their communications by contacting local town councils, major agencies and industry in the area, and by airing radio notices and posting signs at major trail heads.

“There shouldn’t be any surprises,” said DiFiore.

Throughout history, fire has played a major role in shaping Alberta forests. However, in the past few decades, efforts to mitigate the negative effects of fire have been so successful that many hectares of the forest are now much older than they would have been without human intervention.

Wildfire is a natural and essential part of forest ecosystems, as it diversifies the age class structure of forests, kick-starts the regeneration process and creates openings for sunlight to



Prescribed burns in Willmore are part of Alberta’s beetle control effort.

boost new growth. The vegetation mosaic of different ages and types that emerges after a fire provides a rich variety of habitats for insects, mammals and birds.

DiFiore predicts that there will be more prescribed burns in the future, especially with the increased threat of mountain pine beetle invasion.

“We’re trying to get back into burns, since they have an important role in restoring natural diversity,” said DiFiore. “It’s also a valuable tool for training forest protection crews.”

Parks Canada has been using prescribed burns in national parks for several years, with similar objectives as provincial agencies. “The smoke from a prescribed burn should be seen as a signal of positive action rather than as a threat to communities,” said Bill Fisher, director general for national parks in western and northern Canada, at the Mountain Pine Beetle Summit held in May.

Fisher said prescribed burns cost the federal government about \$250 per hectare in comparison to wildfire suppression that costs about \$550 per hectare.

To report a wildfire, call toll-free 310-FIRE (3473), anywhere in Alberta.

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Think of fish when working on the land

By SARAH SEINEN

When you think about fish habitat, you tend to think of lakes and rivers. The popular perception is that fish require only water, but more people are starting to think about fish habitat in broader terms, says one expert.

David Park, fisheries biologist for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, sees fish habitat as a range of aquatic ecosystems, from muddy ditches to lakebeds.

“One of my colleagues explains fish habitat this way: when you’re standing in a forested valley, look from height of land to height of land, or the high points surrounding a watershed – everything in between is fish habitat,” says Park. “The message is that everything is connected. When we draw lines on the landscape or in our minds saying this is where fish habitat begins or end, we’re often proved wrong.”

Fish habitat is viewed in terms of the entire watershed. Any activity in the watershed will have some impact on fish habitat. “What happens on land affects what happens in the water,” says Park.

Fish and Wildlife

The interaction between humans and fish is simply a matter of people and fish coinciding in the same place.

“For us, it’s a matter of needs and wants, whereas with fish, it’s strictly a matter of needs,” says Park. “Fish don’t want views and lakefront amenities – their habitat requirements are their needs.”

Where the intensity of development is very high, the impacts and changes to fish habitat are intense as well.

Agricultural, forestry and other industrial activities have the potential to change fish habitat, including the loss of plant cover and degradation of water quality.



Photo: ASRD

Alberta lakeshores and lakebeds host numerous fish species

Fish habitat, according to Park, is important because it is the structure that allows species to exist. “Without that structure, fish don’t exist – it’s that black and white.”

He says it’s no coincidence that habitats with the greatest amount of structural diversity also tend to have the greatest diversity of fish occupying them.

Landowners, as stewards of the land, can protect fish species and preserve their habitat, says Park.

“The single, most important thing is to keep in mind that there are fish on the landscape that require habitat of suitable quality and quantity,” says Park. “If you’re aware that human activity has the potential to change habitat and threaten fish, you tend to view the landscape in a fundamentally different way that may lead to a softer approach.”

He says there are many ways that landowners can reduce their impact on fish habitat, such as rotational grazing of cattle, reduced use of chemicals and proper installation of culverts.

There are 63 fish species in

Alberta. Of those, the St. Mary short-head sculpin, western silvery minnow, stonecat, lake sturgeon and the short-jaw cisco are threatened as defined by the Alberta Species At Risk program. Several more popular species are species of special concern, including bull trout and Arctic grayling. The source of threats varies from direct angling pressure to changes in water quality.

An abundance of information about fish, fish habitat and best practices when working around water is available on the Internet through search engines and the websites of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Environment and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. If you don’t have access to the Internet, contact any Alberta Sustainable Resource Development or Alberta Environment representative at your local government office.

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Leased-land access the neighbourly way

By SARAH SEINEN

Under provincial regulations, it's your responsibility to know whether the land you wish to access is publicly or privately owned or leased.

"Even though some leaseholders may post signs, the best way for recreational users to find out the location of publicly leased land and leaseholder contact information is to access the interactive map on Alberta Sustainable Resource Development's (ASRD) Public Lands and Forests Division website," said Angela Walker, public land management specialist for ASRD. A toll-free number is also available.

Of about 100 million acres of public land, Alberta has about five million acres of agricultural land that is leased for livestock grazing and/or crop cultivation. Only a small amount of this land is located in the forested areas of the foothills. The majority of

Public Lands

leased land is in central and southern Alberta. There are over 6,500 agricultural leases in the province.

In 2003, the provincial government introduced regulations for recreational access on agricultural public land. The regulations are meant to balance the need of the leaseholder to protect the land and livestock from harm with the recreational user's right of access.

"We're trying to encourage leaseholders and recreational users to communicate with each other and work together," said Walker. "Ideally, the recreational user would say, 'I'd like to come on to your lease to go hiking,' and the leaseholders would provide reasonable access, explain any conditions, and inform the user of any hazards."

Reasonable access is defined by the regulations, which outline the rights and responsibilities of the recreational user and the leaseholder.



Angela Walker

For instance, the recreational user must contact the leaseholder ahead of time about the details of the visit. In turn, the holder of a grazing lease or farm development lease must allow access to the land for recreation.

Granted, the leaseholder may have some concerns. Under the regulations, the leaseholder may deny access, or apply conditions to access, when:

- Access would be anything other than foot access, including bicycles, horses, or motorized vehicles.
- The proposed use would occur in a fenced pasture where livestock are present or on cultivated land on which a crop is growing or has not been harvested.
- There is a fire ban, as determined by a municipal or provincial authority.
- The proposed use would involve hunting in an area where livestock are present.

Cultivated land refers to annual crops, but not hayfields. Additionally, if livestock are not negatively affected by the visit, the leaseholder is expected to provide access.

If a dispute about access occurs between the leaseholder and the recreational user, both parties should contact the local rangeland management branch to discuss the issue with a third party. If an agreement cannot be reached, a dispute resolution process

is available.

"Having an interactive map and contact information readily available on the website seems to be working really well," said Walker. "We've had few disputes since the program started, and, in my experience, leaseholders are quite willing to provide information to recreational users."

In 2005, there were over one million hits on the Recreational Access website.

Walker said recreational users are required to provide the leaseholders with information regarding the proposed activity, the time and location of the proposed activity, the number of people in the group, a contact name and number for the group, and any other related information requested by the leaseholder.

"A leaseholder's liability is reduced when it comes to anyone accessing their lease, unless the courts find that the leaseholders intentionally or negligently tried to injure a user," said Walker. "Ultimately, the recreational user is responsible for their own safety."

The recreational user must always pack out all litter, park vehicles so the approach to the land is clear, refrain from lighting fires without consent, leave gates in the same state in which they were found, and not cause any damage to the leased land or the property of the agricultural leaseholder.

For more information about recreational access on agricultural public lands, including the department's interactive recreational access map, please contact your local Public Lands and Forests office by calling (866) 279-0023 or visiting www.srd.gov.ab.ca/land/recaccess

Contact:
Angela Walker
780.644.1084
angela.c.walker@gov.ab.ca

Control the weeds, gain poplar growth

By SARAH SEINEN

An effective weed control program is the key to producing a thriving and profitable hybrid poplar plantation, say experts at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (AAFC-PFRA) Agroforestry Division.

"Plainly stated, hybrid poplar farming is not possible without weed control," said Salim Silim, AAFC-PFRA agroforestry research scientist. "Anywhere hybrid poplar is grown, it needs a lot of weed management, just like any other intensive crop."

He's involved with an ongoing research project to examine various cultural practices for the establish-

Agroforestry

ment of hybrid poplar, to evaluate weed management intensities and techniques and to evaluate herbicide and mulch use.

All study locations have been in Saskatchewan, but researchers say the results are applicable to locations across the prairies and will be valuable for prairie producers and landowners interested in growing poplar for environmental and economic gains.

Silim said the main reason for landowners to manage weeds in their poplar plantations is to improve tree

health and growth, and ensure a profitable crop.

"Weeds compete with trees for water and nutrients, thereby reducing tree growth. Farmers expect a good return on their investment, so the reason for controlling weeds boils down to simple economics," said Silim.

Infestations of weeds like thistles, pigweed, quack grass, wild oats, and volunteer crop species can affect survival and long-term performance of the planted tree stand. But controlling weeds by mechanical means or by hand is costly and time-consuming. Registered herbicides for controlling weeds and promoting tree growth in shelterbelts are available, but these options are limited for poplar farming or woodlots.

Data collected from the project will be used to support minor use registrations for new and promising herbicide products.

Without weed control, farmers and woodlot owners, face a survival rate for their poplar as poor as 20 per cent, and a five-fold reduction in growth, Silim said.

In its first five years, poplar is most vulnerable to the effects of weed competition. Drought, temperature extremes and wildlife damage also affect tree growth.

"If landowners want a successful operation and good economic return,



Photo: AAFC-PFRA

Salim Silim measures hybrid poplar growth in a Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, plantation

they need intensive weed control for a minimum of two years," said Garth Inouye, AAFC-PFRA agroforestry project technician. "If weeds are a major problem, the minimum needs to be extended to at least four years."

Various weed control strategies, such as tillage, plastic mulch and glyphosate, have been applied in-row and between-row to determine how and when seedlings gained the competitive advantage at the planting site and when management intensity could be reduced.

"Time-wise, the cost of weed control can be significant," said Inouye. The treatments such as glyphosate are quite inexpensive, but the equipment can be costly (the hooded sprayer used in the tests cost about \$5,000).

"Weed control is the main investment in growing hybrid poplar," Silim said. "It is the major cost in the first few years, but it pays off in the long term."

If the research project adheres to its original design and timeline, it will be finished by 2007. The results will be available through the Internet or by contacting researchers at the AAFC-PFRA Agroforestry Division.

The project is directed by the AAFC-PFRA Agroforestry Division in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, Mistik Management, Tolko and Saskatchewan Ag & Food.

Contact:
Don George
AAFC-PFRA, Alberta
403.340.4291

www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/shelterbelt.htm

• Overall goal of AAFC-PFRA agroforestry research

To develop agroforestry science, technology and genetic materials for the improvement of the agro-ecosystem

• One of the agroforestry research outcomes is...

Improved technology for enhanced tree performance and health

• Improved tree performance and health includes...

Tree Culture: Healthy trees are necessary for functional agroforestry systems.

This requires research on cultural factors that impact growth and function of trees and shrubs, including nursery management, nutrition, pests, diseases and weed competition. This information is used to develop innovative, environmentally sound management strategies for healthy agroforestry systems (e.g. weed management research project)

Competition and price...common questions (Part 2)



Ken Glover,
Chief Administrator

value of compensation for damages to standing forests (Part 2) from industrial development activities.

The Woodlot Association of Alberta strives to educate landowners on many issues so that they can make informed decisions. In this article I will address the matter of compensation for damages to standing forests.

Most instances of damage to private timber resources occur during industrial development activities and usually relate to oil and gas roads, wellsites or pipeline developments. Sometimes damage to private forests and timber occurs through accidental circumstances and even trespass.

In the instance of a planned disturbance the matter of compensation for private timber resources should be negotiated in advance. Failing to address timber damage compensation can result in dispute resolution at the Surface Rights Board. This process can be time consuming, costly and potentially ineffective. If the instance of disturbance occurs through an accident or act of trespass I recommend notifying the RCMP and registering a complaint and in the case of trespass push for charges.

By far the most common calls we receive by woodlot owners and landowners are related to the **price of their standing timber** (Part 1) and

standing timber
(Part 1) and

The Woodlot Association of Alberta strives to educate landowners on many issues so that they can make informed decisions.

Regardless if the incident goes to trial the fact that a complaint was registered and documented will be beneficial should you pursue a civil trial or law suit (which is your prerogative).

Regardless of the circumstances in determining compensation for damaged private timber, you will need a recognizable and credible method for calculating this amount. While a negotiated settlement is always possible, should the parties prefer to use an acceptable calculated process, I always recommend applying the Timber Damage Assessment Tables (TDAs).

The Timber Damage Assessment Tables apply a dollar value to a specific ecological forest type on a per hectare basis. The TDA's are updated regularly and take into account commercial timber permit information (prices), deciduous timber permit information (auction sale prices), and private timber purchase prices paid by Forest Management Agreement and Quota Holders.

While the TDA's are commonly used and applied to disturbances on Crown Lands, it is not widely known that the Tables can be used for private lands.

Based on my experience public support agencies such as the Farmer's Advocate almost never suggest use of the TDA's, yet they have been accepted in court rulings and in Surface Rights Board rulings. Generally I recommend applying the Full Value Table for private land disturbance calculations, which provides a per hectare dollar value for forest vegetation types that include the cost of reforestation.

In terms of applying and calculating the compensation for a particular disturbance or damage to forest covered private lands, one must undertake the following steps:

1. Determine the specific forest types damaged. Through ocular estimates, timber cruising or assistance of a professional forester, each of the different timber types damaged need to be identified.

2. Determine damaged areas. Through on the ground measurements, aerial photography measurements or GPS based measurements, the total area damaged for each forest type needs to be determined.

3. Determine TDA values. Consult the appropriate Timber Damage Assessment Table (Full Value) and apply the respective per hectare dollar value to each the timber type.

4. Determine total compensation for forest damages. Multiply the TDA's values for each forest type by the respective damaged areas and the combined total will equal the value of the compensation for all timber resources damaged.

It is important to note that while the TDA's provide a fair, acceptable and quantifiable method for determining compensation for private timber resources, one should not ignore nor exclude pursuing compensation for elements such as personal time in determining damages, any consultant fees and personal losses such as aesthetics or property values.

The Timber Damage Assessment Tables can be found on the Alberta Government Website: www.srd.gov.ab.ca/land/m_li_timberdamage.html. For more information please call the Woodlot Association at (780) 489-9473 or a Farmer's Advocate at (780) 427-2433

2005-2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The board of directors for the Woodlot Association of Alberta:

Top row: Dan Reesor, Dennis Quintilio (editorial chair), Jamie Giberson (treasurer), Chuck Kaiser

Middle row: Edwin Erickson, Hamish Kerfoot, Laval Bergeron, Peter Mills (president)

Bottom: Pieter van der Schoot (vice president), Gordon Kerr (past president)

Missing: Louise Horstman (secretary)

As a result of a personal move Mr. Chuck Kaiser has had to resign as a Director of the WAA. The Woodlot Association of Alberta would like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Chuck Kaiser for his brief but very instrumental participation with the Association. He shall be dearly missed and we wish him all the best!

Essential oils featured at recent demo day event

By **KEN GLOVER**

It was a beautiful spring day on May 13, 2006 at the Association's first Woodlot Demo Day at Jurgen and Irene Moll's woodlot near Whitecourt, Alberta. The event started with a visit to the MD of Woodland's woodlot demonstration site, which provided the basis for sustainable woodlot management discussions.

Herb Cerezke, an entomologist, explained aspen insects and diseases and other pests found in the boreal forest. Concerns and discussions on mountain pine beetle were also exchanged during the session. While Jurgen's new portable sawmill was cutting through a log, he was explaining the saw's double cutting capabilities and his lumber cutting objectives. The walk through Jurgen and Irene's woodlot offered insight into other woodlot management options including Christmas and landscape tree growing and markets.



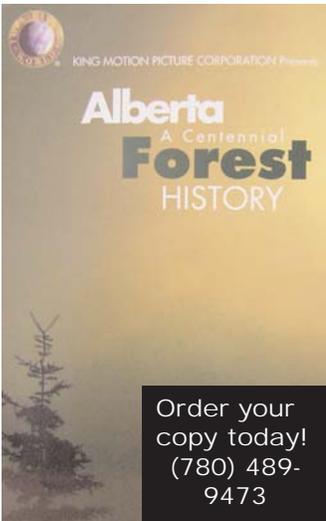
Photo: WAA

Perhaps the most interesting and certainly the most intriguing

part of the woodlot demo event was the presentation on essential oils. The oils were produced through a distillation process and were all derived from boreal forest plants including white spruce needles. The oils are used for aromatic purposes and medicinal treatments such as rheumatism and arthritis relief. Currently small market opportunities exist in Alberta. For more information contact Kirsty G. Piquette, Branch Head, Bio-Industrial Development Branch, Agri-Business Expansion Division, phone: 780-644-2410; e-mail kirsty.piquette@gov.ab.ca.

Herb Cerezke talks about aspen insects, tree diseases and other pests in the boreal forest

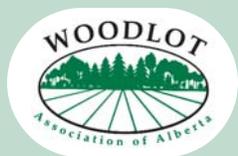
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2006 WOODLOT DEMONSTRATION EVENT - Cypress Hills/Elkwater
Saturday, September 9, 2006

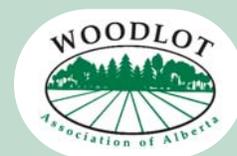
Plan to join the Woodlot Association of Alberta for a unique woodlot management experience in a forest oasis located in the far southeastern part of Alberta. Special travel and accommodation packages from Edmonton will be arranged.

For more information call (780) 489-9473



Woodlot Association of Alberta

Membership & Materials Order Form



Name: _____ Company: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____ P/Code: _____ Ph: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

E-mail Address: _____

Woodlot Size _____ ha / ac. Legal Description: _____

Woodlot Objectives: Timber Revenue - Forest Products - Wildlife - Aesthetics - Conservation

| | |
|--|------------------|
| \$30.00 One Year Membership | \$ _____. |
| \$50.00 Two Year Membership | \$ _____. |
| \$100.00 One Year Corporate Membership | \$ _____. |
| \$40.00ea Woodlot Management Guide / Manual (Includes Shipping & Handling) | \$ _____. |
| \$10.00ea Woodlot Management Video (VHS) (Includes Shipping & Handling) | \$ _____. |
| \$30.00ea 2005 Forestry Business Directory (Includes Shipping & Handling) | \$ _____. |
| \$30.00ea Alberta: A Centennial Forest History (DVD) (Includes GST, Shipping & Handling) | \$ _____. |
| Total (GST EXEMPT) | \$ _____. |

- Payment made by cheque enclosed
- Payment to be made using our Credit Card (below).
- Please send an Invoice for payment

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION:

[VISA] [AMEX] [M/C] # _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name on Card: _____ Authorization Signature: _____

Mail or Fax this Form to the Woodlot Association of Alberta Office.

Make Cheques Payable to:

Woodlot Association of Alberta

18008 - 107th Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5S 2J5

Ph: (780) 489-9473 Fax: (780) 489-6262

Web: www.woodlot.org E-mail: fisla@fisla.com

Woodlot health a priority for owners

Eastern slopes woodlot owners share their views and values in Woodlot Extension Program survey

By **MARTINE BOLINGER**

In March 2006, the Woodlot Extension Program (WEP) contracted a consultant to interview groups of woodlot owners in Rocky Mountain House and Cochrane. Each participant owned more than 20 acres of forest. Here are some of the views and values the woodlot owners shared.

Values of the forest for woodlot owners were: privacy, recreation, lumber for personal use, shelter for livestock and wildlife. Only a few owners were pursuing economic opportunities at this time. Seventy-five per cent of participants were aware of water conservation and watershed issues.

Participants mentioned they wanted to keep woodlots healthy. Farmers commented trees help prevent drought and erosion. Practices mentioned were: fence woodlots and riparian areas from stock, selectively cut mature trees, leave dead fall for soil health, live and let live, use herbicides for weeds, clean out dead fall for human protection, rotational graze and plant more trees. Sixty-five per cent were concerned about mountain pine beetle. Other concerns included water and soil quality, enhanced wildlife habitat and increased property value.

We asked about future plans and goal setting for woodlots. Thirty-six per cent of participants wanted to maintain status quo - they like their land the way it is. The top four goals were: enjoy the woodlot for recreation, harvest timber for personal use, harvest firewood and fence off sensitive areas. Economics, government regulations and threat of oil and gas expansion may get in the way of these

land use goals.

We asked about woodlot management plans. A participant said it is typical of rural and farm owners to have unwritten plans. They wanted to actively manage forested land, continue to fence, plant more trees, pass on land to relatives, expand or sell. Land values in southwestern Alberta have increased significantly due to location and interest.

Some expressed concerns with how their neighbours manage land. In Rocky Mountain House, there was a concern with outsiders buying land to clearcut and resell. However, those in attendance at Cochrane were very conscious about preservation of forests. They commented their neighbours had similar values.

We asked where landowners go for more information. Sources include neighbours, county resources, watershed groups and forage associations. Farmers said they use practical knowledge and their own research to determine best practices for their land. Fifty per cent indicated they weren't aware of WEP.

During group discussions, participants indicated a need for support to plan and manage their forests. One participant said we need to proactively manage and stop the "knee jerk" reactions for woodlot health. Cost sharing and tax incentives appealed to many. Forty-five per cent of the participants said they would accept government and industry associations' support to manage woodlots.



Photo: Doug MacGillivray

Woodlot owners raised a wide spectrum of priorities and interests in survey

Fifty-nine per cent of participants said it is extremely-to-very important to work together. It is significant that nine per cent of farmers compared to fifty per cent of non-farmers said it was extremely important to work together. One participant commented it is not the nature of farmers to work together but others disagreed. Participants said it is important for farmers to work together to maintain the right to do what you want with your deeded land.

The views and values of the eastern slopes woodlot owners reveal much about the level of awareness and practice of woodlot management. It is important for WEP to hear the voice of those who own and manage private land in Alberta. Group interviews and focus groups are one way to achieve this objective.

Contact:
Martine Bolinger
780.980.4230
martine.bolinger@gov.ab.ca

The Essence of the Forest

Cooperative captures healing properties

By SARAH SEINEN

A walk in the woods always feels good - but Albertans are also finding that tree needles can be converted into essential oils and sprayable products with valuable therapeutic properties.

It's common knowledge that trees provide shade, shelter and oxygen, in addition to lumber and other wood products. What you may not know is that a unique cooperative in northern Alberta is enhancing the value chain of boreal trees by extracting essential oils and hydrosols from needles and branches.

"Our goal is to provide the public with natural health and wellness products that are made in Alberta and that make the best use of the whole tree,"

AFRI

said Pat Coulter, secretary-

treasurer of the Aurora Natural Products and Essential Oils Cooperative. The multi-stakeholder venture in Manning is gearing up for its first year of marketing and mass production.

Testimonials from those using the cooperative's products range from a grandmother who applies white spruce hydrosol to relieve the pain of arthritis in her knees to an elementary school teacher who burns essential oils in her classrooms to clean the air and calm the students.

Coulter said once the idea was born last spring, there was no looking back. The group recruited several volunteers to gather needles and branches. They managed to rent a mobile distiller and performed some initial extractions.

The Manning project was initiated by the North Peace Applied Research

Association as part of its agroforestry and economic development programs and was backstopped with financial support from the Manning Forestry Research Fund and Peace Region Economic Development Alliance.

The Alberta Forestry Research Institute (AFRI) provided support in the early phases of the project. AFRI is a resource to government and industry in the development of research priorities for forestry innovation.

With help from Mikael Zyat, an essential oil producer from Quebec, and interest from several stakeholders, a cooperative was formed and held its first meeting in 2005.

Since then, the cooperative has purchased four distillers designed by Zyat and currently rent a facility in Manning. The volunteer-based group has also hired a manager to run the facility.

During the process of distillation, water is boiled by a gas burner and the steam travels up through the plant material, collecting oil and water-soluble compounds on its way up to the condenser. As the steam enters the condenser, it is cooled and slows down, condensing to form an aqueous liquid that is collected in a separator. In the separator, the oil rises above the water fraction, or hydrosol. Therefore, when botanicals are extracted with steam, two products are generated: essential oil and a hydrosol.

Coulter said one distiller holds about 45 to 50 kilograms of plant material. The distillation process usually takes about five hours. In a black spruce extraction, about 250 to 300 millilitres of oil are produced per dis-

tillation. The cooperative uses the first 20 litres of hydrosol from the same distillation. Hydrosols can be sprayed directly on the skin while the highly concentrated oils must be mixed with a carrier oil such as olive oil before application.

"I definitely see this as an opportunity for individuals," said Coulter. "Our customer base continues to grow, and in the last year we've managed to



Photo:Aurora

Sprayable hydrosols made from needles are applicable to many ailments

increase our yield by 400 per cent by harvesting more needles and tree tops by hand. We are constantly learning and developing new products."

Coulter said the cooperative is hosting a workshop later this summer called "Healing from the Forest," which will feature key speakers Bev Gray and Robert Rogers who will talk about first aid, aromatherapy, mushrooms and harvesting techniques.

Contact:
Aurora Natural Products and Essential Oils Cooperative
780.836.0006
www.auroraessentialoils.ca
Don Harrison, AFRI
780.427.2567
don.harrison@gov.ab.ca



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Farm organizations work for you -

I have had a lot of disappointments over the last three years, during my time as President of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, but a recent event has topped them all.

These were the recent comments made by Agricultural Minister Chuck Strahl regarding the “political agenda” of CFA President Bob Friesen. Mr. Friesen was later locked out of a press conference which was supposed to explain the rollout of money announced in the federal budget. I am only too familiar with the attitude which triggered those remarks. Perhaps there is an Alberta influence at work which says that Farm Organizations are the enemy.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bill Dobson



It is interesting that a year ago I was scolded by the Federal Conservatives for not being more vocal against Liberal agricultural policy. Obviously, these guys just don't get it!

Farm organizations are working for farmers, not for any political party. The Canadian Federation of

Agriculture has been in existence since 1935 and has brought forward agricultural policy that has been developed democratically to many different governments. That is the very reason that we communicate with all parties, including the government and the opposition.

I believe that the comments are also very disappointing in light of the fact that Mr. Friesen has made an incredible commitment to agriculture in this country and done it for an embarrassingly small amount of money. Like most farm leaders, Bob doesn't do his job for the money. He does it for the love of his industry and the fact that he desires to see policy that is beneficial for the majority of farmers in this country.

Let us hope that this issue blows over and we can concentrate on fixing what needs to be repaired in agriculture. I have a great deal of faith in Chuck Strahl as our Ag Minister. I don't know where he is getting his advice but I wish his advisors would take a hike!

Federal Budget Announcement

On May 4, the Conservative Party of Canada introduced their first budget. There was a lot of anticipation regarding what would be in the announcement for agriculture.

Farmers have clearly articulated, over the past few months, the severity of the economic situation and the government has indicated that it definitely understood that. The result was the



Photo: Sarah Seinen

The political climate in Canada has the potential to affect the farm and ranch environment

announcement of an additional \$1 billion in addition to the \$500 million that was promised during the election. Exactly how the money will be delivered and who it will end up going to is still not perfectly clear. Most of the dollars are supposed to be going towards adjustments in inventory values in the CAIS program.

This will be calculated retroactively to 2003 so there could be some significant changes in the calculations in some sectors. We will be monitoring this change closely to determine if the changes will really help those in the position of most need. We certainly have to be very thankful for the extra money, but it drives home the magnitude of the problem when you realize how little a billion dollars does.

Rail Car Decision

As I'm sure most of you are aware, the federal government has opted not to sell the hopper car fleet to the Farmer Rail Car Coalition. This is extremely disappointing in light of the countless hours that many people have invested in putting the FRCC proposal together.

and not for any political party

er. There is still some degree of hope but considering that there has really been very little consultation on the issue it does not look good. We need to all send a clear message to our Members of Parliament that they have indeed blundered on this one.

CAIS Changes

During the federal election campaign the Conservatives vowed to eliminate CAIS if they were elected. There is little doubt that there is considerable frustration with this program and farmers would lose little sleep if it were cancelled tomorrow. However, the fact remains that there is a need for a stabilization program and until something better is designed we are probably better not to dump CAIS down the drain. The provinces have certainly stated that they wish to see the program continue and would also like to see changes that will lead to something workable. Minister Strahl has struck an ad hoc committee to look at changes. The recommendations will be reviewed at the federal-provincial agricultural minister's conference in Newfoundland at the end of June. Whether CAIS is scrapped or redesigned, we need to design something that meets the needs of farmers, fits into government budgets, is predictable and covers the shortfall that this industry faces.

Seeding Progress

The spring began quite early in Alberta this year. Farmers, for the most part, got started early and have gotten most of the crop in during the first half of May. There has been some cool, wet weather lately which has slowed the finish. Moisture conditions vary a great deal this year but

it appears that there is a good start to 2006. There has been some recovery in grain prices which has given some hope to those folks in that sector of agriculture. Unfortunately, the high cost of inputs has made it difficult to pencil in a profit in any commodity.

Progressive Conservative Leadership

The big news in Alberta this summer will no doubt be the leadership race of the Progressive Conservative party. Politics are a funny business in Alberta and the winner of this race will no doubt be the Premier of this province for a long time. There are several people seeking the position each with their own philosophy and style of leadership.

It is certainly important to question the candidate's views on agriculture as the Premier does have significant influence on the direction that our

province takes on farming issues.

Summer Council Meeting

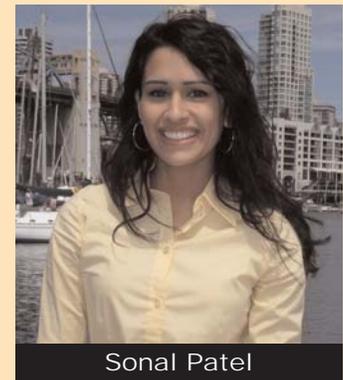
Each year, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers holds their Summer Council Meeting at a different location in the province. This year we will be meeting on June 27 and 28 in Taber. The folks who are planning this meeting have been working diligently to put together a very interesting event. This gathering offers the board, regional directors and industry representatives the opportunity to discuss pertinent agricultural issues. We all look forward to the event.

Finally....

I hope the calving season has been productive, the rains come at the right time, hailstorms stay away, the animals stay healthy and the prices of our commodities skyrocket. Most of all – stay happy and healthy!

Summer student STEPs up to the plate

WRAP (Wild Rose Agricultural Producers) is pleased to announce a new addition to the team! She is our summer STEP student and her name is Sonal Patel. She was born and raised in Edmonton. Sonal enjoys reading, traveling and tennis. She has a Microcomputer Specialist diploma from Grant MacEwan College, which she received in 2002. Sonal also recently graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Commerce degree with specialization in Finance and Human Resources. Her career goal for the future is to own a business.



Sonal Patel

Although she does not have much experience in the agriculture industry, she looks forward to the opportunity of learning more about it. Sonal will make every effort to be an asset to this organization and hopes to meet many new people.

Quick 'n Dirty guide for farm safety

“Sixteen farmers will die this year in Alberta. Most will die from machinery or livestock related injuries.”

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Canadian Agricultural Safety Association are pleased to introduce the “Quick ‘n Dirty” guide to farm safety.

Many incidences can be avoided if farmers are able to control the risks involved. Be aware of potential hazards, and know how to handle harmful situations. These are the goals of the Quick ‘n Dirty guide. This pocket-sized guide can be carried around for a reliable and convenient reference, as well as for interesting quick facts. It has a ruler on the last page as well as space for writing notes.

The two main sections of the guide include “Safety Know How” and “Farm Smarts.” The first section teaches farmers the importance of being trained in every aspect of their

job from equipment and tool operation to working around dangerous gases. Succession planning is important in case you get injured and are unable to work. The “Quick ‘n Dirty” guide goes into detail about machinery, livestock, chemicals, protective gear, electrical, first aid, and fire extinguishers.

The second section, Farm Smarts, displays conversion tables in terms of length, surface, capacity, weight, and metrics. The “Quick ‘n Dirty” guide has clear diagrams on various screw and bolt heads. There is a section on knots, including types of knots and when to use them. This type of knowledge can make your job more efficient.

Hand signals are imperative in farming because if they are not consistent, communication may not be effective and people’s safety could be at risk. The “Quick ‘n Dirty” guide includes diagrams of hand signals and their meaning to decrease risk on the

farm.

There is also a resource section with various websites that give you safety information, training opportunities, and more.

In addition to acquiring this vital knowledge, if the feedback section is completed, you will be entered into a draw to win a **\$250 gift certificate!** The feedback section from the back of the Quick ‘n Dirty guide can be mailed in or completed on the Internet.

Find out more information by picking up a copy of the Quick ‘n Dirty guide at Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (#201, 115 Portage Close in Sherwood Park, Alberta) or at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Farm Safety Program (Room 201, J.G. O’Donoghue Building – 7000-113 Street in Edmonton, Alberta).

**Remember to know the job.
Know the hazard.
Know the drill.**



We're pleased to announce that at last the most popular farm cookbook is back in print!

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Can you spot the hazards on your farm?

Identifying hazards is key to preventing injuries.

Let's face it, with all the tasks that are completed, all the chemicals that get used, and all the machinery that's required, it's no wonder that farming operations can be a minefield of health and safety hazards. Each one has the potential to be very dangerous. So you cannot underestimate the significance of these hazards. Even common everyday hazards can seriously harm workers, family members, visitors, or yourself. It's not worth the risk.

There are health hazards and safety hazards. Health hazards can be any agent, situation or condition that can cause an injury or illness. Some of these hazards can be:

- Chemical (e.g. battery acids, solvents, pesticides, fertilizers)
- Biological (e.g. bacteria, viruses, dusts, moulds)
- Physical agents strong enough to cause harm (e.g. electricity, heat, light, vibration, noise, radiation)
- Work design (ergonomics) (e.g. lifting or moving heavy loads)
- Workplace stress (e.g. associated with work shifts, workload or harassment)

Safety hazards can include anything that causes a physical injury, such as a cut or fracture. These occur when safety controls are not adequate.

How can you eliminate hazards?

First, you need to spot the hazards. Think about the tasks that are completed on your farm, as well as the

equipment and substances you or other people will use. What potential hazards come to mind? Think about past or near accidents that have occurred on your farm. What caused



Photo: WRAP

Wear protective clothing and equipment when working with chemicals on the farm.

these incidents? Once you have identified the hazards that may lurk on your farm, you need to assess the risk. In other words, how likely is it that the hazard will actually harm someone? How severe could the injury be? Once you have determined what could happen, you can make the necessary changes to prevent these accidents.

What causes farm injuries?

In most cases, it's the machinery that causes the most serious injuries. Some of the most hazardous tasks that involve machinery include:

- Transportation of family or workers (rollover, run over)
- Starting equipment or fueling up (bystander, operator run over, explosion)

- Using PTO driven implements (entanglement)
- Using farm equipment on public roadways (rollover, collision)
- Machinery around power lines (electrocution)
- Loaders (electrocution, entanglement, crushing, falls)

Other injuries may involve noise, such as sustained exposure to high decibel noise produced by farm machinery or animals. Loud, high-pitched noises can cause impaired or loss of hearing.

Confined spaces or water storage can also be a safety hazard, including manure pits, grain bins, and septic tanks which are common on most farms. They can cause asphyxiation, poisoning or drowning. You should also consider hazards such as inappropriate lifting of heavy

objects, which can cause back injuries. Certain weather conditions may also increase the risk of harm, such as lightning, hail or strong winds.

Identifying risks and doing what you can to eliminate or reduce the risk is critical to preventing injuries on your farm. If you would like help identifying and assessing the hazards on your farm, you can contact the Loss Control Department at an insurance company, such as The Co-operators.

The best way to prevent an injury is to remove or reduce the hazards that could cause an injury. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Canadian farmers lend expertise abroad

By CAROLINE EMOND

Agriculture worldwide is going through difficult times. Farmers are affected, among other things, by declining incomes and loss of market power. In many developing countries, where agriculture is crucial for the subsistence of millions of people, the farmers' situation is disastrous.

According to many experts, reduction of poverty in those countries can not be achieved without a strong agriculture sector. In that context, sharing expertise between the North and the South, through international development programs could play a key role.

Farmers in Quebec have been involved in international development since the creation of UPADI in 1993 (Quebec Farmers Organization, international development). Now farmers across the country will get more intensely involved in international development programs.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) announced recently its participation in a three-year pilot-project in collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Agri-Cord and UPA-DI to help build farm leadership capacity in developing countries.

The program, "Organizational Capacity Building of Professional Agricultural Organizations of Developing Countries within the IFAP," aims to strengthen professional agricultural organizations in developing countries. In doing so, they can play an active role in the fight against poverty, at home and at the international level, and contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of farmers.

More than a dozen projects should be selected among those sub-

mitted by farm organizations from IFAP members' developing countries to receive financing by this CIDA's program, under three sections: Organizational Development; Organizations' Management; Leadership Building; Economic Capacity; and Implementation of knowledge and technical, economic and commercial information networks

"CFA has agreed to participate in the program to offer a Canadian dimension to the project, by providing members' experience and knowledge, in an effort to help reduce poverty and empower farmers," said the President of the CFA, Mr. Robert Friesen. He added, "The CFA firmly believes in the benefit of sharing expertise and knowledge with developing countries

on systems and structures that provide a strong voice for farmers."

An important part of the program is to sensitize the Canadian public, most particularly in the rural communities, to the situation of farmers and agriculture in developing countries. To that effect, several articles will be published in the next year on the problems faced by producers in the developing countries. Canadian farmers will also be encouraged to share expertise with their colleagues from the South.

Indeed, farmers from developed countries, such as Canada, are well-equipped to help farmers in developing countries. It is a question of showing support and solidarity. A story to be followed closely in the coming months.

Members have access to WRAP's 2.5¢/min long distance program

Members of WRAP can now take advantage of simple straightforward long distance calling at only **2.5 ¢/min.** for all calls between the WRAP subscriber group program. Under this new program WRAP members can also have family and friends they call, anywhere in Canada, join the program and the 2.5¢ rate applies. All other calls are only **4.5¢/min** (Canada/US) (24/7).

This same rate (4.5¢/min.) applies for toll free inbound calls (ie a 1-866 number that rings on your home phone) – this is a great method and easy to use with no pin number required whenever you need to call home anywhere in Canada or the US. It is also an ideal way for children to call home while away at school or university, or family members when traveling. The program also includes (ie no additional plan fee) competitive direct dial international calling. Subscribers also receive a Canada/US calling card with a preferred rate of 12¢ per minute with no surcharge, transaction fee or connection fee. The calling card can also be used with most cellular phones as a speed dial to decrease cellular long distance charges. The program has a low network fee of \$1.25 per month per account (ie can have more than one phone line on one account) and is a non-contract program (ie no fee to join or leave the program).

A special from now to July 31, 2006, for new sign-ups to the program will provide a \$5.00 credit on their bill, provided they stay on the group program for a minimum of 6 months.

For more information on this valuable program, call **Michelle at the West Can Group at 1-800-665-0384.**

Grain check-off drives opportunity

The investment of western Canadian farmers is helping drive emerging opportunities for wheat and barley in premium health foods, functional foods, nutraceuticals and alternate uses.

Through the Wheat and Barley Check-off Funds, administered by Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF), farmers are investing in the development of new wheat and barley varieties with a range of key traits to fit market potential in these areas.

“Research and development is something that throughout the history of Canadian agriculture has delivered strong returns and helped our industry adapt and grow,” says Dr. Keith Degenhardt, a Hughenden, Alta., producer and Chair of WGRF. “Even in a period of challenging times, it’s something we as farmers can look to as a high-return investment and as a means to build a stronger future.”

In WGRF’s new long-term agreements with research institutions, which set targets for the use of Check-off Funds, there is a greater emphasis on innovation than ever before, notes Degenhardt. Performance characteristics to generate higher yields and top quality remain a core priority, but added to those are an increased number of targets to create and capitalize on new opportunities for the wheat and barley crops.

“There are all sorts of avenues we have to look at as producers to fund the research that gives us the tools to innovate,” says Degenhardt. “We’re looking at food, feed, fibre, biofuel, nutraceuticals - a whole range of options. We’re also looking at new innovations for traditional wheat and barley uses. Farmers need all these tools at their disposal in order to be more competitive and sustainable.”

More information on this effort is featured in the new, May edition of



Photo courtesy of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, with permission

Wheat and barley check-off funds are fueling research

WGRF’s Industry Report newsletter, available at www.westerngrains.com.

A key highlight is the new potential in functional foods and nutraceuticals. Ten years ago, these terms were relatively foreign to many Canadian farmers. But today they represent one of the fastest-growing areas of opportunity in food production, with world consumption estimated at up to \$250 billion annually.

It’s not that functional foods and nutraceuticals are all necessarily new - far from it. But they describe a new way food is being viewed by consumers and marketed by food companies. They also represent tremendous market potential for grains.

In basic terms, a functional food is a food or food ingredient that has been linked to specific health benefits beyond basic nutrition. For example, a food ingredient might be shown to directly lower the risk of a specific chronic disease.

Barley is a great example of the potential. Science has unveiled the grain as a very good source of beta-glucan soluble fibre. It also contains

antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients such as phenolics and lignans. Each component has biological activities that have been linked to health benefits, including reduced risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

“With the strong outlook for this area, Barley Check-off Fund allocations to hullless food barley breeding were set at 10 percent under the new barley breeding agreements implemented during 2005,” says Degenhardt.

The May edition of Industry Report also discusses potential for hard white wheat, low-phytate barley and organic wheat, while offering perspective from a leading barley breeder on the importance of funding “pure innovation” research.

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Nozzles and low volume may reduce herbicide effectiveness

Herbicides may underperform when mixed with low water volumes and very coarse applications, say researchers with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

The results of a three-year study conducted by Dr. Tom Wolf found that a selection of wild oat herbicides generally lost effectiveness on tame oats as water volumes were decreased and spray quality was more coarse.

During the study, sprays were applied in three qualities (medium, coarse and very coarse) and each of these spray qualities was applied using water volumes of 45, 85 and 125 l/ha. The four herbicides tested in the study included Horizon, Assure II, Puma and Everest.

"Of the Group 1 products, Horizon was the most tolerant while Assure was the most sensitive. Puma was immediate in its response," said Wolf.

Meanwhile, Everest, a Group 2 product with soil activity, did not show any sensitivity to water volume or spray quality, likely due to post-spray rainfall.

For Group 1 products, Wolf recommends that low-drift sprays should be applied at no less than 85 l/ha and that very coarse sprays be avoided.

The full research report can be found on the Canada Sprayer Guide Web site at www.CanadaSprayerGuide.com.

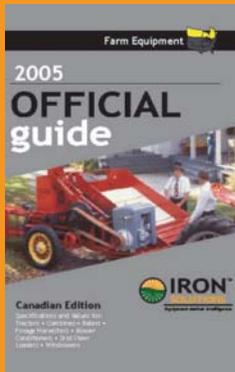


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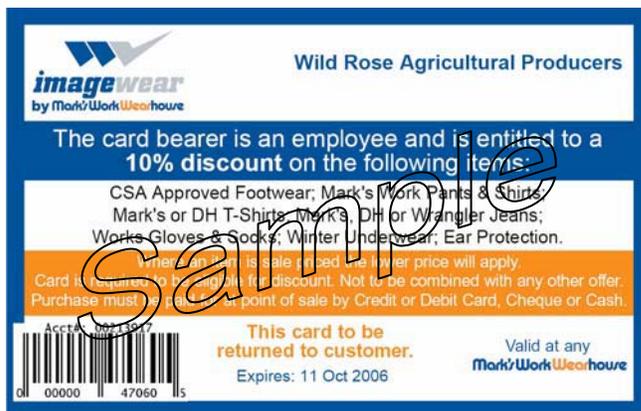
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