



**FOOTHILLS FORAGE
AND GRAZING ASSOCIATION**
Innovation, education and regenerative agriculture

2017 Annual Report



Foothills Forage & Grazing Association

2017 Annual Report



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Foothills Forage and Grazing Association encourages a profitable and regenerative forage industry by providing an information network for southern Alberta producers.

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Mission Statement

Assisting producers in profitably improving their forages and regenerating their soils through innovation and education.

Vision Statement

We envision a global community that respects and values profitable forage production and healthy soils as our legacy for future generations.

2017 Board of Directors

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FFGA Chairman's Report

Dear Members,

The Foothills Forage and Grazing Association (FFGA) firmly believes in creating strong partnerships with our members, staff, industry partners and government to ensure our voice is heard in this ever-changing environment. Steady and sustained growth, based on a clear vision has enabled FFGA to become a leader that addresses issues, shares ideas, and supports innovations for forage and livestock producers in south-central Alberta and beyond.

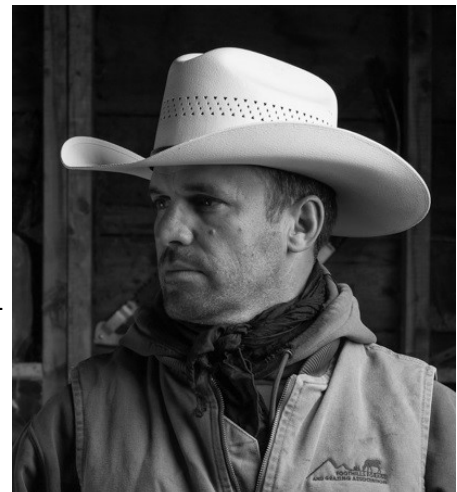
In this last year, we set in motion our practical information and production strategies with three opportunities to learn and practice new skills.

1. Soil School featuring Nicole Masters. This was a one-day, in class, introduction to soil health.
2. Grazing School with Jim Gerrish. A three-day course to help you move to the next level of management-intensive grazing.
3. Stockmanship School by Dylan Biggs. Hands-on learning for stress-free cattle handling.

FFGA continued to drive the message of a healthy environment through information days like the Carbon & Forages field day where Dr. Barry Irvine and Grant Lastiwka helped us understand this very difficult topic. The off-site waterers and watershed management workshop focused on solar watering options, riparian fencing and management of watersheds and wetlands. The low-cost winter feeding workshop provided alternative ideas on how to manage feeding costs.

Our principal collaborative event was the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing. This event was sold out to an average of 525 participants per day, featuring scientists, agricultural extension professionals and producers all expounding the benefits of well managed, healthy soils. We also continued to bring our tried and true programmed events like Ladies Livestock Lessons, Ranching Opportunities and Environmental Farm Plan clinics to our membership. Our annual agricultural tour took 96 producers, in three separate groups, to Spain and Portugal. The opportunity to learn, share and enjoy our respective agricultural communities keeps these tours a favourite experience for FFGA.

To better serve our membership and industry partners, the FFGA Board of Directors and Manager took time individually and as a group to participate in Board Governance and Leadership Coaching with David Irvine. Please consider becoming a director to enjoy opportunities like this to increase your knowledge, skills and network; it really is life altering!

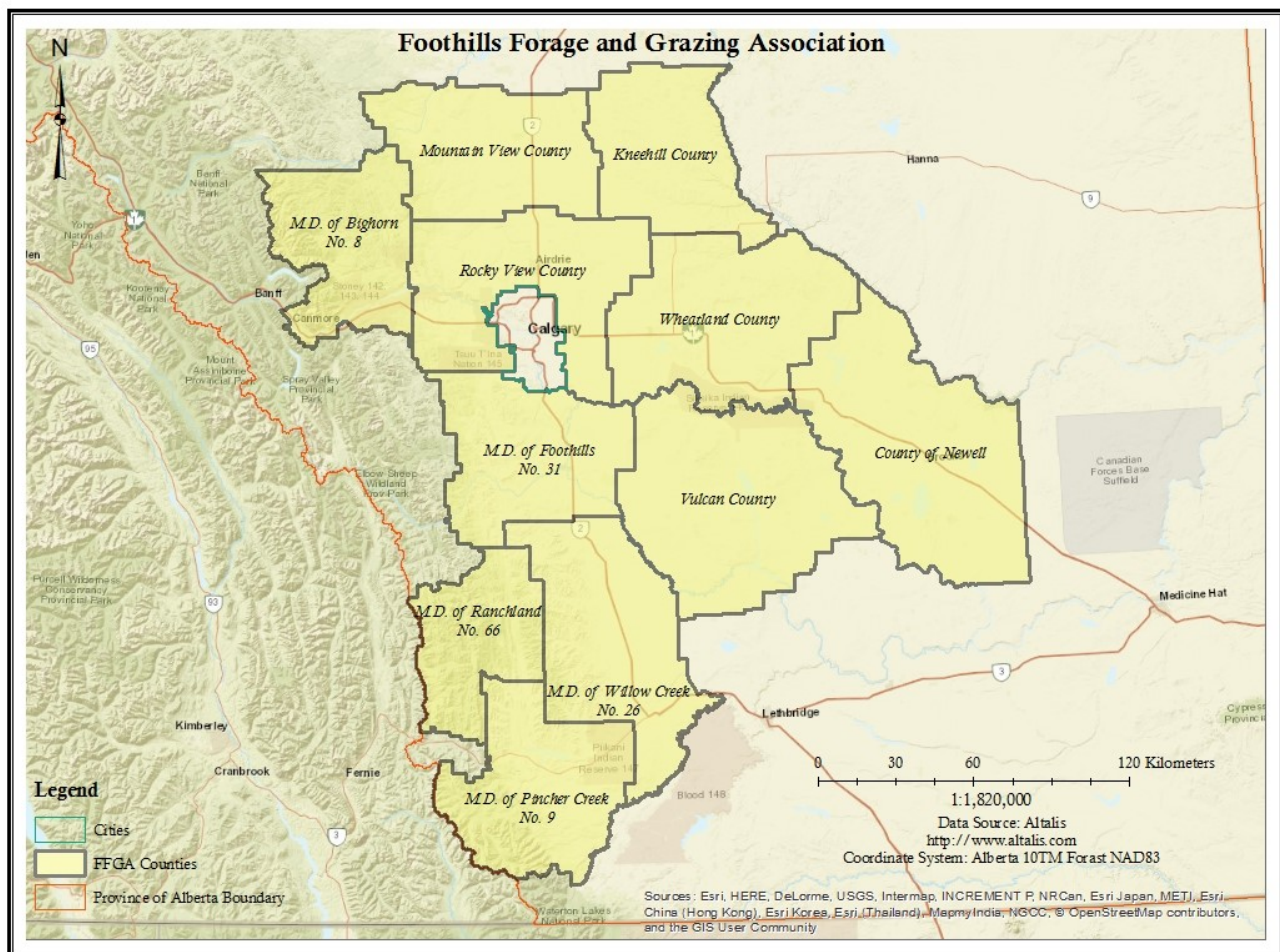


I would like to thank Our membership for their encouragement, input and participation; our industry partners for their continued financial and organizational support; our staff for their long hours of hard work and the board for their tireless dedication to the future of agriculture.

Regards,



Sean LaBrie
Chairman, Foothills Forage and Grazing Association



FFGA Manager's Report

I am excited to report that 2017 was a very successful year for the FFGA! We partnered in the record setting delivery of 24 events with attendance totalling over 1,600 producers from across our region and beyond. Event highlights from this past year include the Nicole Masters Soil Schools, Jim Gerrish 3-day Grazing School and the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing. Our membership has increased by over 100 new Farm Business Units in just one year, which quantifies the significant growth and development of the association.

A lot of this growth can be attributed to the social media campaign our former Environmental & Communications Coordinator, Rachel McLean, worked on so diligently and effectively. In December 2017, the FFGA website (www.foothillsforage.com) received an average of over 1,400 hits per month and had over 1,400 Facebook followers. To put this in comparison, in 2014 we had 300 website visitors per month and 60 new likes on Facebook over a 6 month period. Social media continues to be an essential and economical tool for us to promote our events and stay connected with producers.

Sadly, Rachel left us at the end of December to pursue a career opportunity near her family farm in Viking, AB. Rachels tireless contributions were essential to our success this past year and we miss her passion, dedication and energy—yet we wish her success with her future personal and professional ambitions. On behalf of the FFGA, I'd like to thank her for her significant contributions to this organization.

In 2017, we received support from 11 county partners, as outlined on the map on the previous page. This map was created and donated to us last year from the SAIT School of Construction. The FFGA has the most county partners out of any other Applied Forage and Research Association in Alberta and we also have one of the most populated regions, which makes the potential economic impact from producers who utilize these concepts something well worth noting. It is truly fantastic to have so much support, yet it presents a challenge in meeting the expectations and delivery of our events to so many partners. We try to spread our events out and provide at least one event in each county, but we also have to be aware of the different levels of funding each sponsor provides. It is a tough balancing act! Interestingly enough, we have found that our members will travel up to three hours to attend an FFGA event. Now that's dedication!

In my short time here I have found that producers who are Foothills Forage Members are forward thinking, passionate and very receptive to the leading edge information from researchers, producers and industry representatives that are showcased at our events. New faces are showing up at our workshops, which assures us that our message is not just being repeated to the same group of individuals. We have had new members from adjacent counties approach us and ask us to deliver our services there as well. As we branch out and increase



our presence, producers (young and old) are meeting us there and expressing their interest in learning new methods that may help with their bottom line and manage their natural resources responsibly.

Our workshops are nearly always sold out so the demand for our extension programming is definitely there and increasing. Another challenge for the FFGA is to meet this demand by increasing our presence and awareness, which requires additional manpower and funding. With more funding and staff, the potential for Foothills Forage is vast and impressive and I am excited for Laura to take advantage of this endless list of opportunities and offer even more to the growing membership.

Being the Interim Manager for the past year has been a very rewarding experience and I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting the dedicated FFGA members, Board of Directors, government representatives, staff at our sister associations and our county and corporate partners. The passion for forages and regenerative agriculture in this community is electric and inspiring. As I return home to take care of my two farmers-in-training this summer, I will happily look back at my time here and cheer on the future growth of the FFGA.

It has been a privilege to be a part of this team and meet all of you. Thank you for sharing your energy, knowledge and passion for agriculture with my family and I.

All the best in the future to the FFGA, its members and partners.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Duckering, P.Ag.
Interim Manager
Foothills Forage and Grazing Association



A year in review...

Message from ARECA



Chairman's Report

Hello,

Welcome to the 2017 ARECA annual report. We are proud of the work that has been done throughout the province this year. The nine member associations that make up ARECA work hard to get information to Alberta's producers. The summaries contained in this annual report are just a small portion of the information that each association has. I would encourage everyone to seek out the individual annual reports to see how much goes on. From regional variety trials, pest surveys, grazing and cropping demonstrations, and workshops there is something for most parts of Agriculture.

We are grateful for the great support we get from the provincial government, Municipal governments, Provincial Agriculture commissions, and many industry partners.

It has been an honour to serve as an association representative to ARECA and also as chairman. I look forward to see what 2018 and beyond has in store for Agriculture. ARECA has the potential to do great things for agriculture in Alberta. Strong support from the member organizations for ARECA makes that happen.

Tom McMillan
Chair, ARECA



Report from the Executive Director



ARECA and its 9 member associations had an important place in rural Alberta again in 2017.

Raising the Bar on RVTs: ARECA was pleased to focus attention on Regional Variety Trials again in 2017. We held two excellent training days, one in April and one in July. Thank you to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the University of Alberta for their support of this project. A special shout out to Kristine Polziehn who was a resource for our members for 2016 and 2017.

This summer a significant number of **Pest Monitoring** activities were carried out by LARA and other associations. The 171 canola black leg surveys and 287 site visits for insect pest monitoring are important contributions to Alberta's pest surveillance. Pest monitoring expands our impact well beyond our membership. Pest monitoring is a team effort that involves public employees (federal and provincial/provincial), municipal agriculture service boards, the scientific community, and not for profit groups like us. Together we create a pest monitoring and surveillance system that is the envy of many provinces.

ARECA and its members were quick to respond to **Operation Pollinator** in 2017. This shows how well we are connected to producers, and can quickly deliver initiatives that have support from the greater community. This project creates the opportunity to connect with those outside of the agriculture community on a common topic. The ability of our associations to mobilize collaborators and get the seed in the ground in such a timely fashion says a lot about our community engagement and the nature of ARECA members.

This year, ARECA and its members launched the **Carbon Pasture Management** project. It is exciting to see ARECA step into the arena and become a conduit for information and engagement on the value of pasture and grazing lands for carbon capture and storage. There is a lot of discussion about the public goods and services (water quality, carbon capture, biodiversity, and habitat) provided by well managed grazing lands. This initiative puts our associations in a place to give valuable input, provide collaborators, and communicate about farming to the general public. I look forward to seeing how this evolves in 2018 and beyond.

Congratulations to former ARECA Chair, Ian Murray for being awarded Alberta Beef Producer's Environmental Stewardship Award in 2017. You can all be proud that Ian was your representative at the provincial level in 2015 and 2016.

Thanks to ARECA staff: Paul Watson, Lisa Nadeau, Val Fadden and Sean Chuan for their support and hard work through 2017.

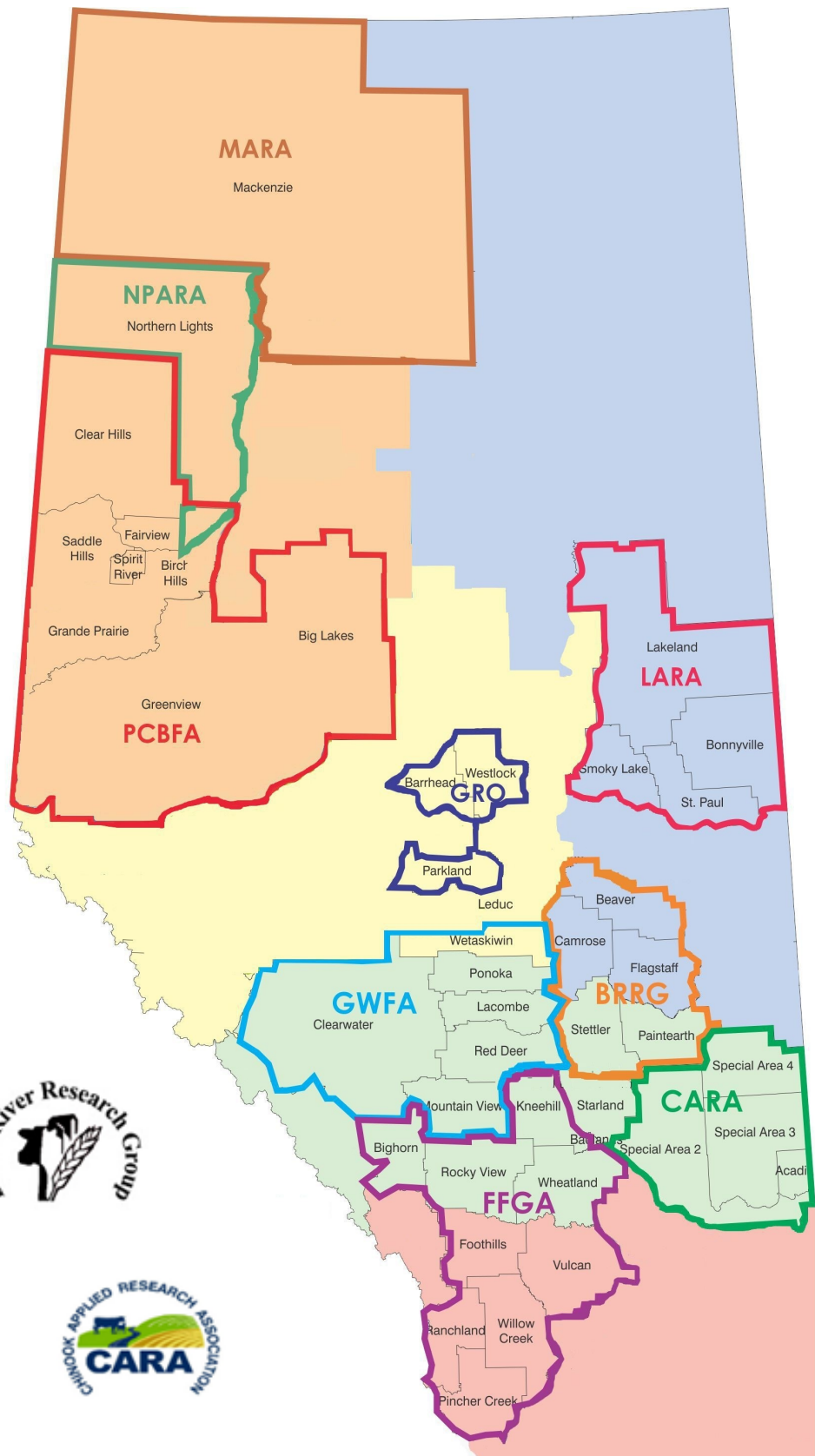
Janette McDonald
Executive Director, ARECA



ARECA Member Associations



2017



1.0 Foothills Forage & Grazing Association 2017 Events

1.1 Farmer's First Aid

The year kicked off with a Farmer's First Aid Workshop on **January 16th—17th** at the Airdrie Ag Centre in **Airdrie, AB**. Nine individuals received their Standard First Aid Certification which included comprehensive training on CPR/AED usage and skills, cold and heat emergencies, strains, sprains, breaks, burns respiratory, cardiac and circulatory emergencies. The course was put on by Philips Solutions and was designed to educate everyone on how First-Aid treatments improve outcomes for the injured in our families, at work, on the farm and in our communities. First Aid Training isn't just for work place personnel ... it is for everyone!

1.2 Calving Clinic

Partnering with the M.D. of Pincher Creek and Country Vets Ltd., the FFGA hosted a Calving Clinic featuring Jim Bauer and Dr. Benjamin Baird on **January 19th** at the Heritage Inn in **Pincher Creek, AB**. 76 people were in attendance to hear Jim Bauer discuss the pros and cons of calving at different times of the year, nutrition and energy requirements for different times of the year and healthy environments for calving (grass versus in the corrals). In the afternoon, Dr. Benjamin Baird discussed common calving problems, in particular, what you can handle on your own and when you should call a veterinarian.



1.3 Ladies Livestock Lessons

On **January 28th**, 65 ladies attended Ladies Livestock Lessons (LLL) at the Canadian Angus Association Office in **Balzac, AB**. The ladies had an exciting agenda featuring Dr. Cody Creelman (Veterinarian and Social Media/YouTube sensation), speak on antibiotic resistance, social licence and livestock pathology for producers. The attendees also heard from Kristin Cumming (Cantos Performance Management) discuss how to “*Bridge the Gap*” in agriculture, which highlighted the differences in generational demographics and their impact in agriculture. Karen Yakimishyn (Alberta Agriculture & Forestry) spoke on wintering site assessments and design and Cameron Carlyle discussed sustainable pasture management.

The day was great for seasoned ranching women as well as new faces and provided a good opportunity for networking and information sharing.

LLL was hosted in partnership with Kneehill County, Mountain View County, M.D. of Bighorn, Red Deer County, Cows and Fish, Wheatland County and Rocky View County.

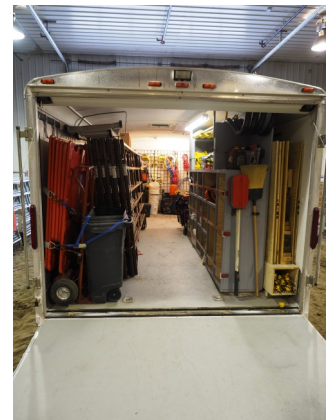


1.4 Ranching Opportunities

Ranching Opportunities 2017 was a hit with 180 students and livestock producers in attendance at **Olds College** on **February 9th**! This year's event featured Andrew Campbell, a dairy, corn, soybean, wheat and hay farmer from Southern Ontario, who has a passion for agricultural advocacy, social media and new technology. Andrew's communications company, Fresh Air Media, works with groups across Canada to help "bridge the gap" and was the focus of his presentation.

This year's three breakout sessions included

1. An "On the Fence" Demonstration with Jim Bauer (Anchor JB Ranch), Grey Wooded Forage Association (GWFA), Garth Hein (Lone Star), Lloyd Quantz (GreenEdge), ACA and Multisar. Topics discussed included electric fencing, 3-D fencing, Gallagher Canada Power Fence, Precision Fencing and wildlife friendly fencing.
2. A Livestock Emergency Preparedness session with Nora Abercrombie who works with Biosecurity Programs at the Government of Alberta. This session featured a discussion on how to develop an emergency plan for your operation and included a demonstration of the Red Deer County Livestock Response Trailer.
3. A session on "Soil Health" featuring Dr. Yamily Zavala from the Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA). Dr. Yamily is leading the development of the CARA's Soil Health lab and believes that it is very important to diagnose (measure and understand) the causes of poor soil health and treat the cause rather than the symptoms of poor soil health.



In the afternoon, William Torres (Cattleland Feedyards) spoke on conventional versus natural beef finishing and Fawn Jackson (Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef) provided an update on the Verified Sustainable Beef Project.

The day wrapped up with a producer panel featuring three producers (Morrie Goetjen, Rod Vergouwen and Graeme Finn) who discussed the "5W's of Cover Crops".

Ranching Opportunities was hosted in partnership with Olds College, Kneehill County, Mountain View County, M.D. of Bighorn, Red Deer County, Wheatland County, Rocky View County and Alberta Agriculture & Forestry.



1.5 Annual General Meeting

31 people were in attendance at the FFGA's Annual General Meeting on **March 20th** at the **Crossfield Hall**, which featured Crystal Mackay, CEO of Farm & Food Care Canada. Crystal was raised on a beef and dairy farm in the Ottawa Valley and has delivered hundreds of presentations to a broad range of audiences from farmers to university students to CEO's across North America and has over 20 years experience in both industry and public relations. At the AGM she delivered two dynamic presentations on the *"Social License and Public Trust in Food—Connecting the dots back to producers"* and *"Earning Public Trust in our Food and the People who Grow It: What can you do?"*



Following lunch, a Nuffield Scholar recipient, Tim Smith, provided an update on his Nuffield research titled: *"Societal recognition of stewardship practices that provide ecosystem services"* and discussed the value of agriculture ecological goods and services globally. Tim's interest is in the development of national support to encourage and improve sustainable habitats, as well as how that support is transferred to the actual stewards of the land. Tim believes that good stewardship of the land will be increasingly important to the financial health of Canadian cattle country.



During the business meeting, Sean LaBrie, Morrie Goetjen, Tamara Garstin and Andy Hart were re-elected onto the FFGA Board of Directors for another 3-year term.

1.6 Solar Energy Workshop

On **March 23rd**, the FFGA hosted a one-day Solar Energy Workshop at the Foothills Centennial Centre in **Okotoks, AB**. The workshop was geared toward farm and acreage owners and focused on grid-tie solar options. The event was sold out with 108 people in attendance! Rob Harlan, Executive Director of the Solar Energy Society of Alberta presented on solar installation, permitting processes, economics, grant programs and how to hire a solar contractor. The audience was full of producers interested in utilizing renewable energy sources right on their property, generating their own electricity and selling it back to the grid. Grid-tie eliminates the large cost associated with the batteries used to store solar energy. There was a lot of information covered during this very popular workshop.



1.7 FFGA Strategic Planning Session

With some additional funding available from the 2016—2018 AOF Enhancement Fund, the FFGA Board of Directors felt it would be a good opportunity to review and update the FFGA's 3-year Strategic Plan and employed John Knapp to lead the Strategic Planning Session on **March 31st** in **Airdrie, AB**. John has significant experience in government industry relations through 36 years in roles as a District Agriculturalist, Livestock Specialist, Regional Director, ADM and Deputy Minister. He has lived in, worked on and understands rural Alberta, rural Albertans and the value of their organizations. During the session, John gave a brief presentation forecasting his vision on what the agricultural industry will look like 50 years from now and did an amazing job leading the group through a very thought-provoking discussion on the what the objectives of the FFGA should be over the next 3-years. The 2017—2020 Strategic Plan for the FFGA was then summarized and drafted by John and FFGA staff and approved and accepted by the Board. Thank you to the Board of Directors for all the time and effort they put into the organization and for taking a day out of their busy lives to work through this process together!

1.8 Soil Health: The Bottom Lines

On **May 23rd**, 103 producers and partners joined us in **Claresholm, AB** to take in a full day introductory course on soil health featuring Nicole Masters. Nicole Masters is the Director & Researcher of Integrity Soils Ltd. based out of New Zealand and is very well received by producers in Alberta. Nicole outlined what was important for producers to know about healthy soils, reduced costs and maximizing yields. The audience was excited to hear answers to questions such as: Am I getting the max yield from my land? How can I reduce costs while increasing production? Is my soil healthy? How can I reduce pests, weeds and disease. Other topics included the role of soil microbiology, sunlight capture, how to build the carbon cycle, biological soil indicators, weeds as indicators and the benefits of proper soil management.



In the afternoon, the group traveled a short distance to view two soil trenches excavated 50 yards apart at Andy Hart's (FFGA Vice Chairman's) farm.

1. The first field site had been a perennial grass pasture for the past 50 years and never had any commercial fertilizer used on it. It had only experienced rest rotation in the past 5 years and prior to that it was continuously grazed in the summer followed by winter feeding.
2. The second site was just on the other side of the fence and had been a perennial grass pasture for 50+ years until a pivot was installed in 2007. Since then it grew barley in the first 2 years followed by 6 years of mixed legume grass hay. Each winter it experienced a heavy concentration of cows winter feeding.

The biological analysis indicated that the irrigated alfalfa/cocktail mix pasture had roughly double the soil carbon! When doing a visual comparison of the soil, the irrigated hay field was noticeably darker from the surface to three feet down the soil profile. The perennial grass pasture which had been subjected to successive years of continuous grazing was only dark for the first 4 to 6 inches and was very light brown to the bottom of the trench. It was a great visual tool to demonstrate the significant impacts our management practices have on soil health!

This event was hosted in partnership with the M.D of Willow Creek.



1.9 Advanced Soil Health: Masters Class

The following day (**May 24th**), a sold out audience of 42 producers and partners joined us again in **Claresholm, AB** to take an advanced soil health class featuring Nicole Masters. A pre-requisite of the Introductory Soil Health class was required as topics discussed in this full-day session were more in-depth, and included nutrient dynamics, soil microbes and nutrients in forage.

This event was hosted in partnership with the M.D of Willow Creek.



1.10 Level I Grazing School

The FFGA partnered with several other ARECA associations to bring Jim Gerrish of American Grazing Lands Services LLC, Idaho, back to Alberta for a two-week Provincial tour, which the FFGA coordinated and lead. Jim is an internationally known expert on forage livestock systems and his research encompasses many aspects of plant-soil-animal interactions and provides a foundation for many of the basic principles of Management intensive Grazing.



On June 12th—14th, the FFGA hosted a 3-day Level I Grazing School featuring Jim Gerrish in **Gem, AB**. Key concepts discussed during the workshop included stocking rate, stock density, residual, intake, balancing use and recovery, year-round grazing and feed allocation. The combination of classroom and field sessions in a native pasture and irrigated pasture provided both the conceptual and practical application of Management-intensive Grazing.



This workshop was hosted in partnership with Wheatland County, County of Newell, Eastern Irrigation District, Gemstone Cattle Company and GW Frank Ag with Northland Seed.



1.11 Carbon & Forages Field Day

In keeping with our focus on soils, the FFGA partnered with Mountain View County, the Grey Wooded Forage Association, Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA), University of Alberta and Alberta Agriculture & Forestry to provide an afternoon workshop on **July 19th** at the Cremona Hall near **Didsbury, AB** on carbon and forages. Dr. Barry Irving from the University of Alberta addressed the 39 attendees for an hour as he discussed carbon capture and provided an update on current research in Alberta. Grant Lastiwka (Alberta Agriculture & Forestry) discussed pasture management, forages, carbon and connecting the dots. He provided an overview of the bigger carbon picture and explained the challenges in measuring soil carbon. Lastly, Dianne Westerland (CARA) provided an overview of the Perennial Forages Project and guided a field tour of the Foothills Forage Perennial Forages Demonstration Trial of 32 different forage varieties.



1.12 Stockmanship School

On **August 9th**, the FFGA Stockmanship School featured Dylan Biggs of TK Ranch. Dylan has been teaching cattle handling clinics to all segments of the livestock industry for over 20 years! Dylan's excellent communication skills with both people and livestock have made his handling clinics invaluable to those who spend their lives working livestock.



The morning classroom session was in **Champion, AB** at the Champion Hall, where low-stress cattle handling methods, tips and tricks were discussed. Following the classroom presentation, the attendees headed out to our hosts farm, Marvin Vaage of Snake Valley Farms Ltd., to observe Dylan's incredible cattle handling skills.

Topics covered included herd movement for success, getting control of direction and speed, dealing with obstacles, going thru gates, eliminating run backs, sorting in alleys and pens, working singles in pasture, moving cow/calf pairs, getting into the corral, what to expect at home and settling after a move. The group observed techniques for handling cattle in corrals and out in pasture. Producers even had a chance to try out the new methods on bulls in a corral.



The Stockmanship School was hosted in partnership with Vulcan County, Alberta Farm Animal Care, Gemstone Cattle Company and Snake Valley Farms Ltd.



1.13 Off-Site Waterers & Watershed Management Workshop

On **October 19th** the FFGA hosted a one-day workshop on off-site watering systems at Community Hall in **Standard, AB**. The workshop was attended by 62 producers and partners!

Joe Harrington (Alberta Agriculture & Forestry) discussed On-Farm Water Management, water rights and responsibilities and future funding opportunities. Representatives from Ducks Unlimited were also on the list of speakers and presented on wetland benefits for agriculture, the new Ducks Unlimited Forage Program, wetland policy and success stories in Alberta and Wheatland County. Management decisions

for grazing and conserving riparian areas and how to fence such areas were discussed in great detail from Norine Ambrose with Cows & Fish. The day ended with Marvin Jackson of Sundog Solar informing the packed and engaged audience on the practicalities of different off-site watering systems and provided a hands-on visual aid to demonstrate the power of solar and emphasized how maintenance is important for optimal performance.



This workshop was hosted in partnership with Wheatland County, Kneehill County, the M.D. of Bighorn, Alberta Agriculture & Forestry, Ducks Unlimited, Cows & Fish, Sundog Solar and Jones Farm Supply.



1.14 Low Cost Winter Feeding Workshop

On **November 16th** the FFGA hosted a Low Cost Winter Feeding Day at the **Fort Macleod** Community Centre in partnership with the M.D. of Pincher Creek and the M.D. of Willow Creek.

Joe Harrington (Alberta Agriculture & Forestry) spoke to the 61 attendees on winter watering systems, specifically how to conserve and collect water for winter. For the remainder of the workshop we heard from four producers discuss their different winter feeding programs, specifically how they implement it, their expectations and the successes and challenges of each. All four of the producers were from the Foothills Forage region and all had different strategies, which ranged from swath grazing to grazing on native pasture. Other options discussed were rotational grazing, use of minerals and protein supplements. Jim Bauer talked about his winter strategies, Tim Wray outlined a full year of his management practices to prepare for winter grazing, Stephen Hughes discussed using what you have with standing stock piled grazing and Andy Hart finished up with a discussion on swath grazing strategies and logistics.

This was one of our most successful events with top quality speakers that were at the grassroots level. We are thankful for our sponsors for this event, working with the M.D. of Pincher Creek and Willow Creek made this a popular and valuable event and we are very excited to work with them in 2018 as our memberships in these municipalities continue to grow.



1.15 FFGA Christmas Party

On **November 24th**, the FFGA hosted a Christmas party at the Best Western Hotel in **Airdrie**. 67 People attended from all over our region. It was great catching up with old friends and colleagues. We also enjoyed a good meal and our three entertainers for the night.

Two of our directors (Alex and Morrie) shared their new insights from their trip to New York for the Grassfed Beef Exchange Conference. It was really interesting to hear the American view of C.O.O.L. and what they are doing with their operations (see picture below of black cattle).



Our third entertainer for the night was a country & western comedian called Ol'Ugly. He was quite comical and had many great stories that kept us all chuckling! This was also Rachel Mclean's last formal event with us and she did an amazing job! She will truly be missed!

At the Christmas Party, we also unveiled our new Foothills Forage promotional displays for future conferences and events. This included a beautiful new tablecloth and two pop-up displays which were designed by Janet Yule, owner of Y2 Publishing out of Gleichen, AB.



1.16 Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing

On **December 5th, 6th and 7th**, 525 attendees gathered at the Radisson Hotel in **Edmonton, AB** for the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing. This conference combined the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health with the Western Canadian Grazing Conference. The theme for the biennial conference was “Profit Above, Wealth Below” and addressed the five principles of soil health: soil residue, minimal soil disturbance, plant diversity, continual live plant/root and livestock integration.

The amazing line-up of speakers included Ray Archuleta, Dr. JC Cahill, Efen Cazares, Tim Hardman, Odette Menard, Dr. Yamily Zavala, Gabe Brown, Richard Teague, David Brandt, Dr. Alan Iwaasa and Jim Gerrish! These folks came from all across North America and each brought leading edge information to share with the very engaged audience of producers!



This year's banquet speaker was Crystal Mackay, CEO for Farm & Food Care Canada, who addressed public trust in food and what it means to producers. The conference also featured three Producer Panels! The first was on *"How I Have Improved My Soils"*, the second panel discussed *"How Non-Livestock Producers Can Integrate Livestock"* and the last panel described *"What My Ideal Pasture Looks Like & How I Manage It"*.

The conference was a tremendous success in large part to the numerous sponsors and tradeshow participants! A total of 41 booths were set up in the Tradeshow area throughout the entire 3-days and all were very well suited to the conference attendees.



This conference was planned and organized by the seven Applied Research and Forage Associations: North Peach Applied Research Association (NPARA), Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA), Foothills Forage and Grazing Association (FFGA), Peach Country Beef and Forage Association (PCBFA), Battle River Research Group (BRRG), Gateway Research Organization (GRO) and West-Central Forage Association (WCFA).



The SOLD-OUT conference demonstrated that soil health and responsible grazing management are increasing and popularity and are being well received. Producers are eager to learn more about how to implement these new concepts into their own operations. A big thank you to all those who attended; the enthusiasm and excitement could be felt in the room! We hope to see you all again in 2019!

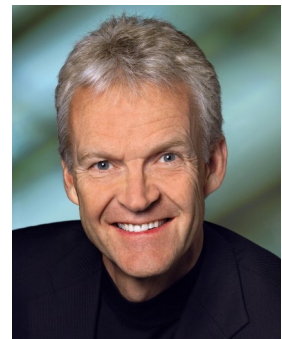
1.17 FFGA Board Governance Training with David Irvine

David Irvine is a local speaker, author, and mentor based out of Cochrane who FFGA has worked with over the years. David has developed a reputation for putting on inspiring and thought-provoking programs on authentic leadership, accountability, building strong relationships and balanced living. David spent two days with the board of directors on **December 15th—16th** in **Canmore**, AB. David covered many topics but succession strategies was a main topic. Learning how to prepare people for executive roles, bringing new board members in and also employee succession planning was covered as well.

The second day was spent learning how to handle different roles and situations that may come up in our industry and families. A lot of these techniques can be extended to every day life as well and will be invaluable to the board.

Through this workshop, a relationship was also built with David and we have been able to reach out to him a few times since for advice and guidance. This relationship will be invaluable to FFGA going forward as we grow our association.

*“Great leadership cannot be reduced to technique or title.
Great leadership comes from the identity and integrity of the leader.”*
—David Irvine



1.18 Other Partnered Events

- Transition Planning Workshops for Farm & Ranch Communities (January 10th & February 7th)
- Environmental Farm Plan Workshop—M.D. of Willow Creek (March 29th)
- Environmental Farm Plan Workshop—M.D. of Pincher Creek (June 21st)
- Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women (July 25th—26th)
- Tools to Build Your Cow Herd (October 24th)
- Environmental Farm Plan Workshop—Mountain View County (November 14th)
- Cow-Calfenomics (November 14th)

2.0 Foothills Forage & Grazing Association Operational Updates

2.1 Environmental Update

In 2017, our Environmental & Communications Coordinator partnered in the delivery of three Environmental Farm Plan Workshops across our region in the M.D. of Willow Creek, M.D. of Pincher Creek and Mountain View County. She also provided free one-on-one help to producers with their Environmental Farm Plans. The aim of the workshops are to introduce the Environmental Farm Plan workbook, discuss Growing Forward 2 Funding incentives and provide help and direction for the completion of the Environmental Farm Plan.

Since March 2016, the FFGA Environmental & Communications Coordinator (Rachel McLean) successfully helped complete 75 Environmental Farm Plans, which is the most of any trained technician in Alberta!! Rachel also offered help and advice on the Growing Forward 2 grants and although Rachel is no longer with us, we plan to continue to do the same with the new Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) funding expected to be released sometime in 2018.



Rachel had attended the **Annual Environmental Farm Plan Training** in **Leduc, AB** on **October 25th—26th** where they discussed ways to streamline the online program, how to improve the Alberta EFP, the new Wetland Policy and the new Species At Risk chapter coming to the Alberta EFP. As well, she attended the **National Environmental Farm Plan Summit** in **Ottawa, ON** on **November 1st—2nd**, where she learned that Alberta has the most technicians (54) in Canada versus the other Provinces, however the technicians are primarily hired by non-profits and counties with other job duties. Most other Provinces have only a handful of technicians employed directly by the government as their sole job. Interesting to note, most other Provinces do an EFP renewal every 3—5 years, whereas Alberta does not currently require a renewal; however, it is expected to be a requirement here shortly.

2.2 Information Hub & Social Media

The FFGA Grassroots News & Views Monthly Newsletter is distributed to over 500 individuals and partners per month and the year ended with 265 Farm Business Units as members –this was an increase of over 100 new FFGA members in just one year! In December 2017, the FFGA website received an average of over 1,400 hits per month and had over 1,400 Facebook followers! Our users online are 46% female and 54% male with our largest online age category being 25 to 34 years old.

In 2017, the Board of Directors selected a slogan for the Foothills Forage & Grazing Association:

“Innovation, education and regenerative agriculture.”

2.3 2017 Bursary

Early in 2017, the FFGA awarded a \$500 bursary to 3 post-secondary students with aspirations to improve the forage and livestock industry. The recipients of the 2017 FFGA Bursary were Erin Anderson, Marie Hettesheimer and Kelsey Biever. Congratulations to all three!!



Erin Anderson, Langdon, AB
U of S's Bachelor of Science
in Agriculture



Marie Hettesheimer
Olds College's Agriculture
Management Degree



Kelsey Biever
Olds College's Land and Water
Resources Program

3.0 Foothills Forage & Grazing Association Volunteer & Sponsorships

3.1 Calgary Stampede UFA Cattle Trail

In July 2017, FFGA Staff and Board Members volunteered their time to showcase our three soil cores in the Natural Resources Section of the UFA Cattle Trail at the Calgary Stampede! The messaging for the Natural Resources section was *"We Love the land. We take great pride in caring for the Canadian landscape."*



Our section of the Cattle Trail was shared with other great contributors such as the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Alberta BioDiversity Monitoring Institute, Cows and Fish, Alberta Conservation Association (MULTISAR), Operation Grassland Community, Prairie Conservation Forum Alberta, Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development and Environment and Sustainable Resources Development.

It was a great opportunity to connect rural with urban individuals and showcase our efforts to responsibly manage our natural resources. The soil cores provided a great visual as to how different management practices can so drastically affect what is right under our feet!

3.2 Canadian Beef Industry Conference

The FFGA partnered with West Central Forage Association, Peach Country Beef & Forage Association and Chinook Applied Research Association to sponsor the Canadian Beef Industry Conference in **Calgary, AB** from **August 15th—17th**. Our sponsorship booth in the Tradeshow provided a great opportunity to connect with producers from across the Province and increase our profile, membership and corporate sponsors.



4.0 Foothills Forage & Grazing Association Projects & Demonstration

4.1 Sainfoin High Legume Pastures Project (2016—2017)

Producer Co-operators: Alex Robertson, Longview & Steve Yule, Gleichen

Foothills Forage had 2 of the 12 project sites across Alberta with various Forage and Applied Research Associations and the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA). The goal of the project was to establish a high legume pasture (60% + legumes and 40% mixed grass) and observe how it fairs under managed grazing in subsequent years.

Year 1 (2016) was the establishment year for the sites.

1. The site in Longview was cultivated, harrowed and packed on May 9th, 2016 and seeded on June 7 to 1/2 to 3/4 inches deep. Fertilizer was applied in the seed row at a rate of 8 lbs/ac of Nitrogen and 25 lbs/ac of phosphorus. It was seeded with 60% Ultimate Pasture Mix (AAC Mountainview Sainfoin & Hay Grazer Alfalfa) at 33 lbs/ac and 40% Graze Master Mix (Fleet Meadow Brome, Tall Fescue, Orchard Grass & Slender Wheatgrass) at 5 lbs/ac. This site was also seeded with a companion crop of Baler Oats at 34 lbs/ac. For weed control the Longview site was grazed with 100 cow-calf pairs and 3 bulls for 1.5 days on August 1st and 2nd. The site was then mowed on August 4th.
2. The Gleichen site was seeded on May 16th, 2016 to 1/2 to 3/4 inch depth with 33 lbs/ac of the Ultimate Pasture Mix (AAC Mountainview Sainfoin & Hay Grazer Alfalfa) and 5 lbs/ac of Graze Master Mix (40% Fleet Meadow Brome, 30% Tall Fescue, 20% Orchard Grass, and 10% Slender Wheat Grass). Due to the late rainfall, the site in Gleichen displayed weed problems and a plant count which rated as poor to fair. The area only received 1.4 inches of rain before July 1st and then experienced excessive rainfall in July of 11.2 inches of rain most likely contributing to this problem.

In year 2 (2017) FFGA continued to monitor the sites:

1. In May 2017, Sainfoin and alfalfa appeared to be coming in very well at the Longview site, although the grass was very slow to appear. There was a fair bit of weed pressure from wild mustard for the most part throughout the season. Only a few areas were re-seeded with some leftover seed from the year prior. The Sainfoin stand was cut on July 14th and baled on July 17th. It produced 11 bales on the 10 acres for about 1500 lbs of hay per acre. Alex made the decision to cut & bale the field instead of graze it because of concerns with weeds. There was approximately one acre of foxtail barley, which Alex slashed and reseeded with leftover seed from 2016. In August 2017, the Sainfoin appeared to be setting lots of seed and the pasture was not grazed during the second year of the



project. Winter plans were to leave the site alone for now and let it continue to set seed. It may be grazed once it is complete in the dormant season.

2. The Gleichen site had troubles with regrowth in 2017, even after the site was reseeded the prior fall (October 14th, 2016). After a tough start to the growing season with poor regrowth and weed pressure, Steve grazed the stand for 2 days with 45 heifers and mowed it the very next day in early June. There were no significant improvements. The stand lacked uniformity and substantial growth, which was likely due to poor moisture in the area this year. When grazed, the cattle did not really eat the weeds and there were no health issues with the cattle post-grazing. There was no notable difference in growth from the half of the stand that received $\frac{3}{4}$ " additional water from the pivot. Steve noted the odd small flower from the Sainfoin, however the Sainfoin presence was few and far between. Steve estimates approximately four Sainfoin plants per square meter and about half of the Sainfoin stand was in flower. Conditions were so dry in the summer the soil was cracking. On July 15th, Steve grazed the site again for 23 hours and the cattle walked the perimeter first and ate all the grass initially before they ate the Sainfoin. By the end of August, the Sainfoin, alfalfa and grass was starting to grow well on the irrigated half of the field. The non-irrigated side was crisp, cooked and dry (very poor growth). Steve was concerned about putting calves and cows in the field again because of the weeds and dust. In September, he did graze it to 50% and decided to leave it for the rest of the year. No animal health issues were apparent.



Although moisture levels were low in 2016, the mix still seemed to take well at the Longview site and the establishment of Sainfoin was successful even when considering the drought conditions experienced in 2017. Additional factors to consider respecting successful Sainfoin establishment at this location could include soil chemistry and climate/temperature. Unfortunately, the site was cut and baled in mid-July to control the weeds and was not grazed in 2017. Although the hay yield was disappointing for a first year crop (1.1 bales/acre), the producer still plans on using the same Sainfoin/Alfalfa mixture with perhaps a few more legumes to help with diversity and looks forward to grazing this site in 2018.

Whereas in Gleichen, the Sainfoin was very difficult to establish itself likely due to the extremely low moisture conditions in 2017. Half of the site received some irrigation, which helped with establishment in that portion of the field and the other half received very low precipitation, which likely explained the poor establishment. When grazed, the producer experienced no issues with bloat and did observe the cattle grazing the Sainfoin where it was available. Unfortunately, the weed pressure was too high to get a good read on the grazing preferences of the cattle. In summary, the results of the project at this location were inconclusive because the Sainfoin stand itself was very poor to establish. However, the producer does believe that if you could get the Sainfoin to establish itself successfully in the first two years, it would be of benefit as the grasses and Sainfoin establish at the same time compared to alfalfa, which comes to head much sooner than the grasses. This would have a positive effect on your grazing management strategy and appears to mitigate producer concerns with bloat.

HIGH LEGUME PASTURES

Creating profit above ground and wealth below.

High Legume Pastures...

- increase calf and yearling weight gains or cow body condition scores.
- extend pasture productivity and quality during and beyond the "summer slump" of tame grasses.
- add biodiversity of plant multi-functional species to increase interactions with soil organisms for increased soil health.
- fix nitrogen to reduce fertilizer costs and increase forage production/profit as well as capture soil carbon.
- provide root systems to different profiles in the soil, therefore increasing utilization of soil moisture and increasing carbon capture depths.
- are more drought averse to help stabilize yields in drier years.

AAC Mountainview Sainfoin...

- is a no-bloat legume containing tannins that can greatly reduce the risk of bloat from alfalfa when in a mixed stand.
- was developed by Dr. Surya Acharya, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge.
- has a similar growth and regrowth pattern to alfalfa as well as yield.
- competes with alfalfa, ensuring it stays in the pasture longer to provide bloat control.

In partnership with eleven forage and applied research associations, twelve producers across Alberta, through the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA), and in consultation with high legume grazing mentors with financial and economic analysis, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) staff coordinated a two year field trial to demonstrate the potential of sainfoin in a high-legume pasture mix on field scale level.

Take away lessons...

Establishment 2016: When establishing forages, seedbed preparation is key. Ensure the seedbed is firm prior to seeding using harrow packers or equivalent.



Grazing 2017: Seed set matters. Enough plant material needs to be left after grazing that at least some of the plants get the chance to set seed and drop viable seed for new plants to grow. Forage establishment is an ongoing yearly process to ensure the longevity of the pasture stand.



- The project's goal was 60% legume establishment in the pasture with the remaining 40% grass/legume the choice of the producer.

- Grazing research at Lethbridge and Swift Current has shown a 95-98% bloat reduction when 25% sainfoin is present in an alfalfa/sainfoin stand.



Forages for Soil Health

In this thought provoking BCRC webinar, Henry Janzen from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, discusses the links between growing perennial forages and soil health.

[BCRC webinar—February 21, 2018](#)

Practical Applications of Forage Rejuvenation

Dr. Mike Schellenberg, Range and Forage Plant Ecologist at AAFC in Swift Current, outlines things to consider when rejuvenating a forage stand.

[BCRC webinar—February 24, 2016](#)

Tough Enough to Grow Pink

Bill & Larissa Newton

[Let cattle do the seeding](#)

A number of cattlemen are doing just that, letting the cattle do the seeding to rejuvenate or add to their existing pasture stands.

Legume seeds are well suited to this manure/seeding technique due to their hard seed coats. Many of the seeds pass through the animal's digestive system without being damaged. Letting some of the pasture plants mature and set seed then turning livestock into graze is a great strategy for redistribution of the seeds in the manure. [October 27, 2016 BCRC Blog](#)

2016 Experiences

During the summer of 2016, eleven events were co-hosted with project teams. In addition to hearing from cooperating producers and seeing the progress in the fields, grazers with many years of involvement in using higher legume pastures came to share their experiences and answer questions at each field day. These "Grazing Mentors" had provided multiple years of economic and financial data to the AgriProfit\$ program for analysis and could speak to not only their experience, but also how it affected their financial bottom line. For the full report on year one, please refer to the [Summary of High Legume Pastures Year 1 for Associations](#).



High legume pasture establishment and grazing at Bob Noble's site, Manning, the first week of July 2017. Photo credits to Nora Paulovich

Why should you consider a high legume pasture...?

2004-2010 **25%** more grazing days and **31%** more profit/acre from grass/legume pasture compared to tame grass alone

2013-2015 **57%** more grazing days and **92%** more profit/acre from grass/legume pasture compared to tame grass alone

Source: 2004-2010 AgriProfit\$ Benchmarks Cost/Return ave. of Alberta Alberta cow/calf pastures Dale Kalish

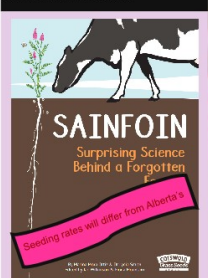
2013-2015 AgriProfit\$ Benchmarks Cost/Return ave. of Central Alberta Cow/calf pastures Nicholas Gainsco



June 13, 2017 at Murray Abel's site, GWFA Photo credit Ginette Bouchard



Dicky Dreidger's site at La Crete summer 2017—MARA Photo credit Sabrina Westra



The **LegumePlus** project was a 4 year research project carried out with funding from the EU. The key objectives were to study how bioactive forage legumes such as sainfoin and birdsfoot trefoil could improve the utilization of protein in ruminants. It has also been found that these legumes **combat parasitic nematodes**. Source: [leg-umeplus.eu](#)



After a dry summer, Gould Ranching finally started to see some moisture in late August. Due to the dry conditions they had not grazed the site prior to the rains so sainfoin plants had a chance to set seed. This photo of a germinated sainfoin seed was taken October 17, 2017. Photo Credit Lacey Gould

Sainfoin

(derived from the French words... **sain**= healthy and **foin**= hay)

Latin name: **Onobrychis viciifolia**

Have you ever checked out Foragebeef.ca ?

If not, you should!

Topics on the website that relate to high legume pastures include...

[Legume grazing](#) [Bloat in pastures](#)

Dr. Surya Acharya

Old varieties of sainfoin from the 60's and 70's could not stand up to the competition of other plants and grazing pressures so sainfoin has been a crop that was ignored...until now. Dr. Surya Acharya, a plant breeder at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Lethbridge recently developed **AC Mountainview Sainfoin** and he is working on others.

What is most exciting about this crop of the past, which is similar in quality and production to alfalfa, is that sainfoin contains tannins which help ruminants process plant proteins more efficiently and in turn prevents bloat. And if that wasn't enough to get you considering sainfoin, it has been known for years in the EU to control parasitic intestinal worms. With GHGs being a hot topic of study, sainfoin is also being researched to determine its potential for reducing methane gas emissions.

Year Two Experiences

The growing season of 2017 varied across Alberta with very little rain experienced in the south/central and northwest portions to high accumulations in the north/central and northeast parts. With varied establishment successes from 2016, the grazing experiences of 2017 were also mixed. Below are the experiences and stories that developed over the 2017 growing/grazing season.



Sheep grazing the newly established site at Stein's (West Central Forage Association) November 2016. The stand establishment was rated as excellent. No sheep bloated. This stand was one of the few that was rated as excellent after the first year. Many of the other stands had issues with moisture, weeds, etc.

Making Forage Mixtures Work for You

Dr. Yousef Papadopoulos outlines the principles of selecting forage species based on the type of cattle being grazed to get as long a season as possible.

BCRC Webinar—February 15, 2017

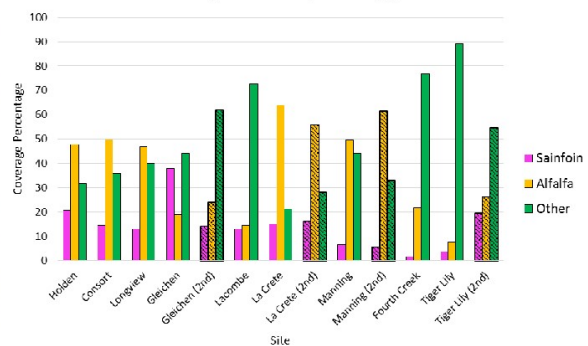


Elgar Grinde's site at Holden, August 2017

PROFIT PER ACRE IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN PROFIT PER COW

Burke Telchert

Vegetation Composition (%)



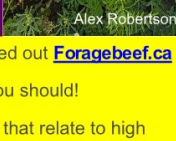
Vegetation composition of nine sites in 2017. Non-hashed bars were averaged over the first clipping (June – July, 2017). Hash marked bars indicated the second clipping data from selected sites (August – September, 2017)



(left) One of two FFGA sites. This one is Alex Robertson's at Longview.

In June 2017, Alex was concerned about the wild mustard and weeds so he cut the site on July 14th and baled on July 17th getting about 1500 lbs/acre.

By August 31, the sainfoin was setting seed. Alex noted that the deer moved in and preferred to graze the sainfoin seed heads instead of alfalfa.



Alex Robertson



Developing a diverse stand of forage allows for greater biodiversity within the soil as well as more biodiversity of flora and fauna above ground.

Wondering where you can get more information about high legume pastures?

Contact your local Applied Research and Extension Association (map with links on page 1)

or the **Ag Info Centre at 310-FARM (3276)**

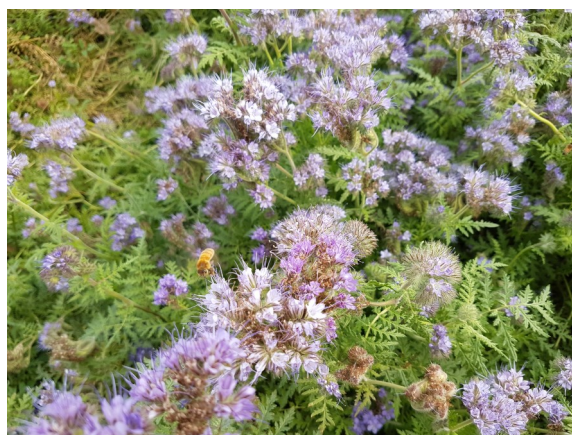
4.2 Operation Pollinator Project (2017—2018)

While farm landscapes often lack the diversity and abundance of flowers that pollinators require, research has shown this trend can be reversed. To support pollinator communities within agricultural land, wildflower field margins provide a range of foraging habitats, with diverse, pollen and nectar-rich nutrition, as well as nesting and breeding areas.

In 2017, Syngenta Canada teamed up with ARECA and its member associations to deliver the Operation Pollinator program, which resulted in 35 sites and 60 acres of marginal land seeded to pollinator habitat across Alberta. The FFGA is participating in this project and has 6 of the 35 sites in our region. The program's mandate is to support activities that enhance biodiversity, habitat and other practical initiatives that contribute to healthy pollinator populations.

2017 was the establishment year of the seed mix. Very low moisture levels in our region prevented 3 of the FFGA's 6 sites from being seeded. Of the 3 sites that were seeded, one had amazing establishment and bees were buzzing through the field by late September! It was wonderful to see all the life coming into this community in such a short period of time! Establishment at the second site was minimal and the third site had none.

As with most producers, we are hopeful for a nice wet spring in 2018 to help these communities establish themselves some more and we will continue to monitor the progress and response from the pollinators. Hopefully in 2018 we can include a tour to one of the sites in our event programming. Be sure to stay tuned!



4.3 Perennial Forages Variety Trial (2016—2018) Evaluation

Producer Co-operator: Morrie Goetjen, Didsbury/Cremona

Thanks to the Alberta Beef Producers and the Alberta Livestock Meat Agency for supporting this project.

Background:

This project will provide performance information on a number of perennial grass and legume species and varieties. It is part of a provincial initiative with sites in 8 regions of Alberta. All are small plot replicated trials except for a demonstration site initiated by Foothills Forage and Grazing Association. Establishment, winter survival, yield and nutritional value are evaluated.

General Project Objectives:

1. To provide unbiased, current and comprehensive regional data regarding the establishment, winter survival, yield and economics of specific species and varieties of perennial forage crops.
2. To identify perennial crop species/varieties that demonstrate superior establishment, hardiness, forage yield and nutritional quality characteristics in different eco-regions of Alberta.
3. To assess any benefits from growing mixtures of selected species.

Strips of all species and varieties included in the provincial project (Table 1) were seeded in June of 2016 by the Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) Technicians at the 1.5 acre site near Cremona, AB for the Foothills Forage and Grazing Association. All were seeded with CARA's Henderson 500 small plot seeder in paired rows on 11 inch spacings. No in-crop weed control measures other than mowing were made at the site during the establishment year. The site was cut and baled after a Field Day in August of 2017. No data was collected from the site as it was intended as a demonstration only.

2017 was the first year yield and nutritional information was collection at the 8 small plot replicated trial sites. Data will be combined from sites for a more complete evaluation of the perennials included in this trial. Yield will be monitored for one more year under the current funding program Support will be pursued to monitor longevity of the forages.

A guided field tour of the Foothills Forage Perennial Demo Site was provided as part of the Carbon & Forages Field Day on July 19th.



Perennial Forages Trial—continued ...

Table 1 **Varieties Seeded and Seeding Rates:**

	Species	Variety	Seeding Rate (lb/A)
Grasses	Meadow Brome	Fleet	14
	Hybrid Brome	AC Admiral (<i>low germ</i>)	18
		AC Knowles	12
		Success	12
	Wheatgrasses		
	Pubescent	Greenleaf	10
	Crested	Kirk	6
	Green Wheatgrass	AC Saltlander	9
	Russian Wildrye	Tom	8
	Fojtan Festulolium		20
	Orchard Grass	Killarney (<i>low germ</i>)	10
	Tall Fescue	Courtney	8
	Timothy	Grinstad	4
Legumes	Alfalfa	20-10	8
		44-44	8
		Assalt ST	
		Dalton	8
		Halo	8
		PV Ultima	
		Rangelander	8
		Rugged	8
		Spreader 4	8
		Spredor 5	8
		Yellowhead	8
	Sainfoin	AC Mountainview	30
		Nova	30
	Cicer Milk Vetch	Veldt	13
		Oxley 2	13
Mixes	Mix 1	Fleet Meadow Brome	7
		Yellowhead Alfalfa	4
	Mix 2	AC Knowles Hybrid Brome	7
		Yellowhead Alfalfa	4
	Mix 3	Success Meadow Br	7
		Yellowhead Alfalfa	4
	Mix 4	Fleet Meadow Brome	7
		Spredor 5 Alfalfa	4
	Mix 5	AC Knowles Hybrid Brome	7
		Spredor 5 Alfalfa	4
	Mix 6	Success Meadow Brome	7
		Spredor 5 Alfalfa	4
	Mix 7	Fleet Meadow Brome	7
		AC Mountainview Sainfoin	15
	Mix 8	AC Knowles Hybrid Brome	7
		AC Mountainview Sainfoin	15
	Mix 9	Success Meadow Brome	8
		AC Mountainview Sainfoin	15

Perennial Forages Trial—continued ...



Legume block at Rude Farms Perennial Forage Trial site managed by CARA (August 2016)



Grass/legume mix block at Rude Farms Perennial Forage Trial site (August 2016)



Legume block at CARA site (2017)



CARA Site (2017)

Agriculture Research and Extension Associations

Supported through the Agriculture Opportunity Fund (AOF)

The annual impact of the research and extension associations supported by the Agriculture Opportunity Fund (AOF) increased Alberta's **total income by an estimated \$41.3 million, and provided over 588 full time equivalent jobs**. These associations have been an important part of the rural landscape, in some cases since the 1970's.

Enhanced Food Production System

Small plot variety trials are the first step in determining which varieties are best adapted to local growing conditions.



- In 2016, the associations collectively delivered over **80 regional crop variety projects**, with data contributing to the Alberta Seed Guide.
- Data was collected from over **400 crop pest monitoring sites**, and submitted to the Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network and canola crop disease forecast and monitoring projects.
- **Unbiased, regionally specific agronomic information is made available to all Alberta farmers through these associations.**

- In 2016 the associations **organized and hosted nearly 300 events**, including crop walks, field tours, technology demonstrations, conferences, workshops and webinars.

Research and Innovation



Associations are currently involved in various hemp projects across the province to determine best agronomic practices by region. One of the uses for hemp is natural alternative to fibreglass.

- In 2016, the associations worked on an estimated **94 agriculture research trials** and employ 10 PhD scientists, 13 technicians, and 14 certified professionals.
- Associations are collaborating on a project to quantify the recovery of crops under various amounts of hail damage to improve risk management tools for farmers.
- Looking for solutions to the declining productivity of pastures in Alberta, the associations are working on a project to determine the regional adaptability of a newly released sainfoin variety under grazing pressure.

Agriculture Research and Extension

2016-17 Year in Review

Leaders in Environmental Stewardship



Tom Thompson, member of the West Central Forage Association, with his ABP Stewardship award.

- In 2016, the associations collectively delivered over **350 activities** on environmental stewardship topics including solar energy, soil health, and water quality.
- Alberta's Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program is delivered by the Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) and they are leading the National EFP discussion.
- 7 out of the last 10 Alberta Beef Producer Environmental Stewardship Awards have gone to members of the agriculture research and extension associations.
- Associations are participating in the round table discussions for sustainable beef, and bring information back to their members.

Did you know?

The province supports 12 research and extension associations and their umbrella organization (ARECA) through the Agriculture Opportunity Fund (AOF).

Over **10,000 participants** attended nearly **700 educational opportunities** in 2016.

Membership is open to any Alberta farmer, regardless of where you are in the province because of the public support through the AOF fund.

82% of the rural municipalities in Alberta collaborate with AOF funded associations; representing over **42 million acres of farm land**.

There were just over **170 Alberta Environmental Farm Plans** completed in 2016, and environmental programming delivered in over 44 municipalities.

Associations currently receiving funding include:

- Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta
- Battle River Research Group
- Chinook Applied Research Association
- Farming Smarter
- Foothills Forage and Grazing Association
- Gateway Research Organization
- Grey Wooded Forage Association
- Lakeland Agriculture Research Association
- Mackenzie Applied Research Association
- North Peace Applied Research Association
- Peace Country Beef and Forage Association
- SARDA
- West Central Forage Association

You can find links to association websites through the Applied Research and Extension association webpage.

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/dept_docs.nsf/all/webdoc7493](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/dept_docs.nsf/all/webdoc7493)

6.0 Foothills Forage & Grazing Association Partners

THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 PARTNERS



This association would not exist without funding from the Agricultural Opportunity Fund from the Alberta Government.



AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND
EXTENSION COUNCIL OF ALBERTA

The FFGA is a proud member of the Agricultural Research & Extension Council of Alberta, the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef and Alberta Forage Industry Network.

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

GOLD



SILVER



THANK YOU TO OUR COUNTY PARTNERS



AND ALL OUR EVENT SPONSORS & MEMBERS!



Unit 4A, 710 Centre Street SE • High River, AB • T1V 0H3 • (403) 995-9466
www.foothillsforage.com

Producer Membership Form 2018

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Business/Farm Name (*optional*): _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal code: _____

County/M.D.: _____

Email(s): _____

I would like to receive the monthly newsletter by: ☐ email ☐ mail (check one or both)

Information collected on this form is confidential and is used in reporting and grant applications.

Acres Managed (including rented land): _____ Total Acres Used for Grazing: _____

% Tame: _____ % Native: _____ % Cover Crops/Cocktail: _____ % Hayland: _____

% Annual Cropping: _____ Number of Animals: _____ Type of Animals: _____

Number of FFGA Events Attended Last Year: _____

I prefer to hear about events from (*circle all that apply*):

FFGA Newsletter FFGA Website FFGA Facebook FFGA Twitter Radio Local Newspapers

Future Topics of Interest/Speakers of Interest/General Comments/Suggestions:

Date: _____

Annual Producer Membership: **\$30.00** *includes gst GST#: 837100346RT0001

(Cheques can be made payable to "FFGA" or you can pay online at www.foothillsforage.com/membership)

**Memberships are valid from January 1 to December 31 of the respective year*

**FFGA membership covers one farm business unit or family and the people associated within that unit.
It includes 2 e-newsletters or 1 hard copy newsletter/month and 1 vote at the Annual General Meeting.*