



Innovation, education and regenerative agriculture

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GRASSROOTS NEWS & VIEWS

JUNE 2021

Director's Note - Wolter van der Kamp

Howdy folks!

It's officially springtime in Alberta. As Ian Tyson mentions in his song, 'Warm sunny days and the skies are blue. And without a warning, another winter storm comes raging through.' Regardless of the fact that this seems to happen every year, it is still one of my, if not the, favorite time of the year. There is something in the air that just breathes new life into everything. So many different seasons wrapped up in such a short time. For some of us, who have been planning our different crop rotations or cover crops all winter, we finally get to go out into the field and put some seed in the ground. Calving season has either just wrapped or still in full swing of it, and we get to watch the beauty of new life and see those little calves running around the pasture. Green grass is starting to grow, and the time to start turning out cows is upon us. Now is the time where the grazing plan you've been working on all winter gets put to use. You get to see what works for your area, or what you are going to have to adjust for next year. And then there is my personal favorite, branding season. Finally, you get to put your stamp on some of these new genetics you purchased last year, all the while catching up with some good friends and neighbours over a cold one or two. In this time, where most other social gatherings have been restricted or cancelled, this is even more welcome for a lot of us!

West of Longview, at the Bar AD Ranch, we've had lots of new excitement this year. Thanks to Greame Finn from Union Forage, we were able to come up with a plan for a pasture rejuvenation project. And thanks to some good friends, I didn't have to broadcast it all by hand. As I write this, we're just finishing up our first cycle in our calving season, and what a great season it has been. This is the first year since I started managing this ranch that we have calves on the ground from genetics I picked, and I'm sure excited to see what they turn out like. Thanks

to Gemstone Cattle Company for some great bulls. Due to the nice spring weather, we were able to turn out to grass a few weeks ago already, with a combination of rotational grazing, and instinctive migratory grazing, we've been spending a large part of our time moving electric fences and cows around. And just when we need a little break, another branding seems to come up, and we get a chance to rope some calves and visit for a day. What a great life!

Due to our geographic location, we don't have any crop farming here at Bar AD Ranch. Lucky for me, my brother is doing his own experiments on the family farm, working at minimizing or eliminating synthetic fertilizer with the use of different crops and improving life in the lagoon from the dairy. It's exciting to talk to him, and to see the changes he is able to achieve.

As a new director of FFGA, I'm excited to be able to share some of the observations we're making here at the ranch with the membership. But the part I'm most excited about is the ability to work with, and learn from those who have been in the regenerative journey a lot longer than I have. We have some great members who have been doing some amazing things. This month features a first in a new series called 'Journey to Regenerative'. I'm very excited to get to read this article, as the first one is on some good friends and mentors of mine, Glen and Kelly Hall from Timber Ridge Land and Cattle Company. It is this commitment to researching and sharing new ideas in agriculture that made me want to be a part of the FFGA community, and I hope that as a director I can contribute to keep the organization moving forward.

Here is to another great year of learning on the journey to regenerative. Enjoy!

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Wolter van der Kamp



Photo of Wolter during branding. Photo credit: Rocking A Photography.

Ideas for advanced grazing management



Photo: Sonja Bloom

Once you've established the foundation of grazing management, you're ready to fine-tune the system.

The idea of moving cattle to graze higher-quality forages goes back hundreds of years. Long before barbed wire and electric fences, shepherds would move their flocks every day to new areas to graze. Similarly, on the North American prairie, the vast herds of buffalo were continually on the move in search of better grazing.

The early development of grazing management came from André Voisin, a French biochemist/farmer, in the mid-1900s. His ideas on rational grazing were developed by watching his cows graze. Voisin is considered one of the founding fathers of the modern grazing systems and his ideas can be found in his book *Grass Productivity*, available on the internet. Voisin created a set of grazing rules that are universally applicable to all soil types and climates. He called it rational grazing (not rotational grazing), based on rationing the pasture forage according to the needs

of the livestock, similar to feed being rationed out in confinement feeding. In this way, the plants were protected from overgrazing while achieving a high level of forage use.

Four laws for managing grazing
Voisin developed four universal laws for grazing management focused on the grass and the cows' needs.

His first law was the need for the pasture sward to have a rest period. "Before a sward is sheared with the animal's teeth, for the sward to achieve its maximum productivity, sufficient interval must have elapsed between two successive shearing to allow the grass to accumulate in its roots the reserves necessary for a vigorous spurt of regrowth and to produce its blaze of growth."

Voisin's second law is: Don't graze the regrowth. "The total occupation period on one paddock should be sufficiently short for a grass sheared on the first day of occupation not to be cut again by the teeth of these animals before they leave the paddock."

Voisin's third and fourth laws refer to the nutritional needs of the livestock. "The animals with the greatest nutritional requirements must be helped to harvest the greatest quantity of grass of the best possible quality.

"If a cow is to give regular milk yields, she must not stay any longer than three days on the same paddock. Yields will be at their maximum if the cow stays on one paddock for only one day."

Voisin lectured extensively on his theories in many parts of the world and his

grazing book has been translated into 18 languages and reprinted many times.

By careful observation, Voisin realized that grazing time was critical. He concluded that it wasn't the number of animals per acre, but the time that plants were exposed to animals that was the chief determinant of overgrazing. If animals were permitted to remain on the pasture too long, a palatable plant will be grazed a second time before it has had time to recover from the first. Also, repeated grazing at short intervals didn't allow the plants to achieve maximum growth rate, thus limiting the amount of sunlight energy captured and converted to useful feed by the plant.

The idea underpinning rational grazing is to ration the pasture forage according to the needs of the livestock.

Levelling up

After understanding and implementing Voisin's ideas on your grazing operation, there are some additional ideas that can be implemented to go to the next level of grazing management.

Jack Kyle, retired provincial pasture specialist in Ontario, emphasizes the need to develop a forage budget for the season. In other words, how much forage do you need to meet the grazing animals' needs and how much forage can you reasonably expect to produce on the available pasture acres?

Kyle emphasizes the need to do a forage budget or inventory at the beginning of the grazing season. This will show any deficits and allow time to adjust by having fewer animals, adding acres, adding an annual crop, or buying forage or other feed to supplement.

Pasture conditions need to be monitored on a daily basis in

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On the Cover: Cows on pasture in a field near Pincher Creek, AB with windmills in the background. Photo was taken at FFGA & Food Water Wellness' Soil Carbon Sequestration workshop in the fall of 2019. Photo by Sonja Bloom

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AgriStability sees significant change with the removal of the reference margin limit



Photo supplied by AFSC

Great news, everyone! The reference margin limit has been removed from AgriStability for 2021 and 2022. This change will have a significant impact for many producers and is retroactive to the 2020 program year. The deadline for 2021 program enrolment has also been extended to June 30 to give producers more time to enrol in the program.

What does this mean for producers?

This change makes AgriStability less complex, and more responsive to all types of farming operations. We anticipate that approximately half of participants will benefit from the change over time and their coverage could be increased by up to **30 per cent**.

Before this change, triggering a payout required a significant drop in a producer's margin; however, with the removal of the reference margin limit, a 30 per cent drop in the current year may trigger a payout. Sectors most likely to benefit from the removal of limiting include livestock producers who grow their own feed, organic and commercial crop and forage producers, members of the apiary industry and mixed farmers.

Other enhancements to AgriStability

Beginning in 2020, producers are no longer penalized for proactively managing their price risk by using private insurance. Private insurance payments are not included in the current year, but are included in the farm's history, raising the coverage level. This change includes Livestock Price Insurance and AFSC Straight Hail Insurance.

At AFSC, we've also improved our clients' experience with AgriStability. Clients can chat with staff in real time to access support or assistance, as well as submit forms through AFSC Connect, enabling them to file their information at their convenience. Additionally, improvements to file turnaround times

have been implemented to streamline processing times and get money back in producer's pockets as soon as possible. Each farm is different, and one of AgriStability program's strengths is its individualized nature. If you want to understand how these changes might apply to you, please reach out to our team members today and find out how your farm could benefit from AgriStability.

For more information on AgriStability, please use Live Chat on our website or AFSC Connect, call our Client Service Centre at 1.877.899.2372 or contact your branch office.

Producer example

Let's talk about an Alberta producer and how the changes will apply to their farm. They have a mixed farm, mostly crop and some cattle. It is a good-sized farm, with allowable farm income, including inventory value, averaging about \$1 million. Because they grow most of their own feed, their allowable costs are relatively low, averaging

\$400,000. This means that they have a margin of \$600,000 because we have subtracted the expenses from the income.

From the introduction of the adjusted reference margin limit in 2018, this farm would have had the reference margin limited \$420,000, and if you think about falling below this amount to trigger a payment you would have to have an income loss of 31 per cent. But with the new changes, which are retroactive to 2020, there is no further limiting of the reference margin, so this producer's margin will be \$600,000 requiring an income drop of 18 per cent.

So finally, what does this all look like?

Let's say this farm's income and inventory value in 2020 fell from \$1 million to \$600,000 due to price and production drop. However, their 2020 expenses stayed the same at \$400,000. Added together, we end up with the 2020 margin of \$200,000.

Total margin = Income – expenses

Total margin = \$600,000 – \$400,000
= \$200,000

Article submitted by FFGA Gold Sponsor AFSC.

Program Year

	2018-19	2020-22
Adjusted income and inventory value	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00
Adjusted expenses	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 400,000.00
Reference margin	\$ 420,000.00	\$ 600,000.00
Income percentage drop to trigger benefits	31%	18%
Benefit trigger below which benefits are paid	\$ 294,000.00	\$ 420,000.00
2020 margin	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
2020 margin less reference margin	\$ 94,000.00	\$ 220,000.00
Benefit (70% of dollars below trigger)	\$ 65,800.00	\$ 154,000.00

Journey to Regenerative—Timber Ridge Land & Cattle



It is early morning when Sonja Bloom, Environment & Communications Coordinator with Foothills Forage & Grazing Association grabs a coffee and sits down in front of her computer for a much-anticipated meeting with Glen & Kelly Hall. Calving has wrapped up and the cows are getting ready to go out onto stockpiled native & tame forages within the next few days. Glen & Kelly are taking a small, well deserved break to sit down and share Timber Ridge Land & Cattle's story on their Journey to Regenerative.

In the early 80's Glen & Kelly (the Hall's), took over the Hall family farm. Shortly afterwards they came across a rare opportunity to purchase nearby grassland in 1984. For the next 26 years the Hall's operated the Bar None Ranch along with Lynn & Cheryl Chouinard of DeWinton. Through these years everything grew; the family, the Simmental herd, the land base of both operations and the related infrastructure. But the most impactful change was a greater awareness and love for the industry and those who are a part of it. As this awareness grew so did the Hall's understanding that the water and soil are the most critical assets on the landscape and how the cows, grass and ranch are tools that can be used to improve these critical assets. This led Glen & Kelly to dive into the world of stewardship, conservation, and activism.

Conservation has always been

important on Timber Ridge. In 2009, 800 acres on the Timber Ridge was purchased under a co-tenancy & management agreement with the Alberta Conservation Association. During the process, the Hall's learned so much about the habitat they endeavor to preserve and began forging partnerships with various stewardship & conservation groups who

helped them with wildlife counts, range health assessments, riparian health assessments, and species at risk assessments. This process served to deepen their commitment to stewardship and solidified their belief that healthy food relies on healthy water and healthy land. Taking care of headwaters creates improvements all along the waterways downstream to the benefit of the ecosystem, wildlife, and people.

But conservation is not the only value that has helped guide the Hall's management decisions. "Keep it simple, you can only do what is possible and you should focus on doing it right" is the principal basis for decision making on Timber Ridge. The KISS principal has led the Hall's to focus on management decisions such as;

- never watering directly from the source
- always leave cover on the soil; "cover is like sunscreen for your soil"
- high intensity and low frequency grazing and
- changing which fields get grazed when according to the rest period & condition of the pastures

These management practices encourage diversity on Timber Ridge. Diversity is wide ranging – from the species of plants to the diversity that can be found above ground & below and the diversity in the different enterprises & systems used, diversity can be found in every aspect of Timber

Ridge. The Hall's explained that diversity is so important because while you may have a plan on paper, nature rules always and as land managers "we have to work within those restraints and have a little faith".

So how does management focused on conservation & stewardship play into Timber Ridge's Journey To Regenerative? "Regenerative agriculture has been happening on Timber Ridge for many years and in many ways, mostly without us noticing, we just didn't know it had a name". With the help of their allies and partners, Glen & Kelly have adopted many Regenerative Agricultural practices such as; managed intensive grazing, massive reduction in synthetic inputs on farmland, swath/bale grazing & stockpiled forage, responsible water development and maintenance, multi-species cover crops in farmland and having their cattle incorporated on all land they manage. Changes in practices did not happen overnight or without help. Groups like Cows and Fish, Ducks Unlimited, Oldman Watershed Council, Carrus Land Systems, Alberta Conservation Association, Southern Alberta Land Trust, and Foothills Forage & Grazing Association helped set the wheels of change in motion. Gathering these allies have been invaluable for the Hall's as they add their knowledge, experience, connections, and expertise to the "toolbox". Like all ranchers who start on this journey, the Hall's quickly learned that there are costs associated with these practices. These allies helped them seek out funding opportunities which helped, but most of the costs were taken on by the Hall's which they see as part of the process for preserving the landscape they love so much. "You can have your 5-star resorts, nothing can compare to the million-star views in the dark night skies that can be found on Timber Ridge".

The future at Timber Ridge is bright. The Hall's are leaving a legacy for future generations to live, love and

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Blaine Treloar Timed Online Auction

OPENS WEDNESDAY JUNE 23 AT 9AM
STARTS TO CLOSE FRIDAY JUNE 25TH AT 12:00PM

Directions: From the Intersection of Hwy 7 & Hwy 22 @ Black Diamond, Go South on Hwy 22 for 6.54 Kms (4.06 Mi) to 466 Ave. Turn left & go East 3.21 Kms (2 Mi) to 128st, Turn left and go North 1/2 Mi, Farm is on East Side. **BLUE SIGN 450132 128 ST West.**
From the Tongue Creek Rd & 128 st, go North 4.07 Kms (2.53 Mi) Farm is on East Side. **BLUE SIGN 450132 128 st West.**

VIEWING IS JUNE 19TH – JUNE 22ND
CONTACT NUMBER: 403-560-2828 – BLAINE TRELOAR



TRACTORS

2006 JD 7520 MF-WA Tractor. 3 Hyd, PTO, 3PTH, 741 FEI w/ 8' Tooth Bucket & Grapple, 480/80R42 RR, 380/85R30 FR, Buddy Seat, 20 Spd Power Quad Transmission, 4818 Hrs at Time of Listing. S/N RW7520R053499.
JD 955 Closed Station Tractor. 1:40 PTO, 3 PTH, 2 Hyd, Front Weights, 25x8.50-14 FR, 36x13.50-15 RR. JD 70 FEI w/ Bucket, JD HLA Quick Attach Tractor Pallet Forks

TRAILERS

2013 Mirage 30' Tandem Axle Gooseneck Flatdeck Trailer. 25' Deck, 5' Custom Beaver Tails, 8' Wide. Ratchet Buckles, 2 Jacks, VIN 5M3GU3122D1053397
2008 East Tri Alex '34' Aluminum Trailer End Dump, Custom Grain Slide Installed by Courtney Berg, Electric ROT Winder & Bar & Box Liner.
VIN 1F1D2S3818K42766
Shop Built 18' Tandem Axle 5th Wheel Flatdeck Trailer. w/ Single Jack, Floor Heeds Work. "No VIN"
Pallet Fork Attachment for Moving Trailers Around, Has Receiver Hitch

TRUCKS

2000 Mack Vision 460 Tandem Hwy Truck. 460 Dsl Engine, Eaton Fuller 2 Spd Trans. Equipped w/ Pro Heat Programmable Engine Heater. Approx 600,000 Kms, Digital Display Computer, Double Sleeper, 11R24.5 Rubber (1 yr old) VIN 1M1AE07Y1YW005928 655,054kms, 11,192.7hrs

HARVEST & HAYING

JD 566 Round Baler. 540 PTO, Twine Only, Monitor. S/N E00566X136334. Comes With Extra Belts. Approx. 14,000 bales
JD 2320 SP Swather w/ JD 14' Hay Header (Now Boards & Fingers on PU) Gas Engine, No Hr Meter. Swather S/N 584183E, Header S/N 555247E
Wheatland Model 910-45EL Smooth Side Hopper Bottom Feed Bin w/ Electric Auger, Dopekor Swather Mower

LIVESTOCK

Hi Hog 3 Pc Single Bale Feeder.
Lewis Cattle Oiler w/ Mineral Station.
Qty of Various Poly Feed Bunks.
Qty of Red Tubs for Salt & Mineral
(2) Older Ritchie Waters
Rubbermaid 100 Gal Stock Tank w/ Gravity Feed Float
Asst of HD 2W Livestock Gates 6'-12' Lengths
(2) 15' Livestock Shelters
(1) 18' Livestock Shelter
(2) 20' Livestock Shelter
Approx (9) Hi Hog Double Bale Feeders
Tarp Weights
Hi Hog Squeeze w/ Neck Extender, Steel Floor, Auto Head Gate, Drop Down Side Panels.
Adjustable Hi Hog Palpation Cage
(2) Sections of Hi Hog S Alley w/ Back Stops
Hi Hog Tub w/ Separators
Hi Hog Calf Table/Chute w/ Lift Door & Auto Head Gate WW Roping Chute w/ Rear Slide.
Approx (24) 30' Freestanding Wind Panels. 14' Removable Legs, 10' Grapple Bar, Double Chains on Each End, Deck Boards Nailed & Double Screwed w/ Deck Screws.
(1) 30' Freestanding Wind Panel. 14' Removable Legs, 10' Grapple Bar, Double Chains on Each End, Deck Boards Nailed & Double Screwed w/ Deck

Scrows. w/ 16' Gate.
Lg Asst of Hi Hog Bale Feeders, Gates, Panels, Etc.
Approx (9) 3/4" 5x7 Stall Mats
24 1/2" x 11 1/2" Insulated Livestock Shelter.
2w Maternity Pen

HAY

Approx (254) 1 yr Old Round Hay Bales. 48% Alfalfa, Meadow Broome, Orchard Grass, Timothy, Milk Vetch. Approx (1450 lbs)
Approx (100) Lg Sq Bales. 50% Alfalfa, Orchard Grass & Meadow Broome, Approx (1350 lbs)

OTHER EQUIPMENT & MISCELLANEOUS

Contorra SH4200 Skid Steer Tree Spade
2010 JD 850D Gator XUV. 4x4, Deluxe Cab, Front & Rear Windows Open, Custom Rims, Hyd Dump, Dsl Engine. Front and Rear Receiver Hitches, Bed Rails & Bed Liner, Signal Lights, Fold Down Grill Guard, w/ Bosch Flood Lights. New Battery, 2524 Hrs Showing @ Time of Listing. Block Heater, PIN M0XUVDX031382
Kubota ZD331 Dsl Lawnmower w/ 60" Pro Commercial Mower Deck, Hydrostatic w/ Catch All Self Dumping Bagger, 87 Hrs Showing at Time of Listing.
S/N 33933, Engine S/N 1F66582
JD 59" Front Mount Snow Blower. Fits 6 & 770 / 8 & 955 Units. S/N M02754X150291
2004 Summit Rotax 800 HD Ski-doo. 16x144 Track, Rev 800, Electric Start, Handle Bar Guards, Not Used Much. Comes with Gas Can and Cover. VIN 2BP5402454V000286
2000 ULC 4510L Capacity Double Containment Fuel Vault.
2949mm Diameter w/ Tuthill Corp Series 300 Electric Pump.
1000 Gal Fuel Tank on Stand.
500 Gal 2 Compartment Fuel Tank on Stand. With 2 Valves, Filters, Hoses & Nozzles
Lg Qty of 7' Wood Posts, Various Conditions & Diameters
Lg Asst of Various Large Decorative Rocks
Qty of New & Used Barb Wire
Qty of Cedar Shingles & Siding
Electrical Wire
1400 Gal Poly Water Tank w/ 2" Valve
Qty of 2" Plastic Water Line
Qty of Various Sizes and Dimensional Treated Lumber
Green Line Big G Tandem 17' Disc
6"x20" I-Beam on Stand
Courtney Berg 17' Steel Grain Box w/ 7' Sides & Roll Tarp
17' Galvanized Water Trough (Has Holes in Bottom) "Good for a Flower Pot"
Slide in Truck Box Poly Water Tank
Tractor Mount Shop Built 2 Spear Bale Fork for FEL
Lincoln Electric Power Mig 255 Welder w/ Cables on Castor Wheels. 75/25, New "Owned" Tank, Helmet & Gloves
Qty of Ratchet Straps, Jerry Cans, Extension Cords.
(2) Honda GX 160 Water Pumps
Very Large Assortment of Gallagher Electric Fence Supplies. Solar Fencers, Fence Posts, Electric Rope on Spools, Insulators, 140mm Insulated Line Posts.
Box of 20" Mega Stakes for Tarping Bales.
2' Push Type Nail Magnet.
Lg Asst of Metal Sheds
Asst of Yard Tools, Forks/Rakes, Shovels, Etc..
Sven Apollo Machining Products Electric Grain Roller/Grinder on Pallet Fork

Skids.
Farm Duty 6 HP,
1740 RPM, 230v Electric Motor w/ Several Mini Bulk Bags
Scotts Push Fertilizer Yard Spreader
Pallet of Custom Forage Mix Seed
Pallet of Common No 1 Forage Mix Seed
Tec 90 Spool of Electrical Cable
(2) Orient Pedestal Fans
Qty of 2" Blue Water Hose
6" HD Tow Strap
Approx (4) Rolls of Snow Fence
Driveway Markers
16' Multway Ladder
Jack All Jacks
Volt Master Smooth Wave 10,000 watt Generator w/ Vanguard 16 HP Gas Engine.
Aluminum Ramps
10"x16" Vinyl Sided Shed w/ Large Door
57"x6" Skid Steer Quick Attach Platform
Set of HD Black Steel Ramps
HD Steel Vault Door.
Lg Qty of HD Gates
V Shaped Arena Rake
Lg Qty of 7' x 8' Wood Posts
Lg Qty of 4 1/2" x 16" Doweled Fence Rails
Outback S3 GPS Complete System
17' Shop Built Land Float w/ Newer Chain Harrows
16' Shop Built Aerator w/ Dutch Openers w/ 3 Bar Mounted Flexcoil Harrows
"Newer Rubber & Hyd"
Qty of Hay Tarps
Pallet Jack
Rubbermaid Chore Cart
Craftsman 3/4HP Garage Door Opener w/ Track & Chain
Slate 40"x8" Deck Table w/ 6 Chairs & Cushions
Marathon Electric Pressure Washer
Aluminum Grill Guard off Ford Truck
Solar Pump Station w/ Fittings
Antique JD 10' Horse Drawn Dump Rake
Antique JD 10' Cultivator
Antique 1953 JD 10' Disc
Antique Horse Drawn 6' Pull Type Cultivator
(2) Crowfoot Packers
JD Self Propelled Lawn Mower.
Truck Box Poly Water Tank 46" on Bottom x 5' on Top x 56" Long w/ 2" Cam Lock Valve & Hose
(2) HD Orange Trailer Stands
JD Weedeater
Natural Gas Fire Pit
Webber Natural Gas BBQ
Natural Gas Patio Heater
Street Light & Base
2 1/2 Pallets of Interlocking Patio Bricks
500 Gal Stock Tank on Wood Skid
Approx (30) 8"x14" Fir Rig Mats
Poly Garden Shed
Asst of Garden Supplies
Qty of Re-Bar



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the grazing paddock and weekly in all others. Be aware of any regrowth challenges or early forage maturity and then adjust the program to accommodate those observations.

Realize that as a pasture manager “you have two dynamic life forms: the forages and the animals, and they need to complement each other, not be in competition,” says Kyle.

“When checking cattle, do a serious check of the forages, growth stage, density, species mix, etc.... It is my observation that many times the focus is on the livestock rather than equal between livestock and forage. I have been on more than one pasture walk where all the interest was in the livestock and my pasture story quickly became secondary to that good cow or bull!”

All these factors will likely apply in any situation, although climate and weather may alter the response.

Many years ago, at the Melfort Research Station in Saskatchewan, we were involved with rotational grazing systems. We found that peak above-ground forage production was usually reached during mid- to late-July and management decisions needed to be made at this time to successfully meet the grazing animal’s needs for the remainder of the season.

If grazing begins too early in the spring, herbage production is greatly reduced. The phenological growth stage of the grass is the best indicator for the starting date for grazing. Grazing plants before the third new leaf stage causes negative effects in grass growth. Starting grazing after the third new leaf stimulates tiller production and leads to more above-ground herbage biomass.

With our rotational grazing work, we alternated each year which brome alfalfa/blue grass paddock was grazed first. This really helped sustain our pasture production. In addition, we seeded and grazed crested wheat grass for early spring grazing, before grazing any of the brome/alfalfa paddocks. We also fertilized half of these paddocks on alternate years.

The promotion of tillering in spring is very important. Grant Lastiwka is a former provincial forage specialist and is now with Union Forage in Alberta. Lastiwka starts grazing his cattle after the three-new-leaf stage on tame pastures and after the 3.5-leaf stage on his native pastures. He grazes tame pastures first and gets over all his pastures based on monitoring all paddocks, the plant growth stage and weather patterns.

“Keep records of the number of cattle grazing each paddock and for how long. Use this information in the future to plan your grazing actions, and continue monitoring your results and adjust accordingly. Remember, it is a perennial and one year begets the next,” says Lastiwka.

“Second time over is varied as extended grazing is needed or not. You can take more, maybe 50 to 70 per cent depending on landscape, longer-term plan, year growth environment, growth present, and economics. In addition to forages and animals complementing each other, the third dynamic life form — soil organisms — need to be considered,” says Lastiwka.

Dr. Mike Schellenberg, retired forage scientist at Swift Current, recommends moving cattle to pastures with the best or highest nutritional value. “This requires pastures being seeded to a species nutritionally peaking at different times throughout the grazing season.”

This can be accomplished by seeding a single species with a specific nutritional peak, says Schellenberg. Alternately, producers can seed a mix of different species with different nutritional peaks.

“Mixtures will also diversify the soil microbes, potentially improving soil health. Legumes in the stand will improve the forage nutritional quality and provide biological N to the soil. When using mixtures, one must be aware of what is in the stand to avoid potential animal health issues such as overaccumulation of nitrates in fall or concentration of other undesirable compounds in non-legume or grasses. The ideal mix is dependent on individual requirements and objectives. They can be annuals, perennials or mixtures of both,” says Schellenberg.

Figuring out a forage inventory

Both Kyle and Lastiwka emphasize the need to know how much forage you have available for grazing and how long it will last. You need to estimate the pounds per acre of available forage. One way to do this is to cut a measured area for hay and then weigh the bales. Another is to hand-cut a few square metres or square-yard samples and weigh on a kitchen scale. You could estimate dry matter content at 20 per cent for green growing grass, 15 per cent for really lush grass, and 25 per cent for mature grass. A more accurate dry matter reading could be obtained using a designated microwave and following internet directions.

“Both these methods are time-consuming but the idea is to get a baseline understanding of what amount of standing forage is required each day to meet the individual cow’s requirements. From the estimate of animal needs, how quickly do they graze the pasture down to a suitable residual, and use that estimate of yield,” says Kyle.

To estimate the animal needs, Kyle uses three per cent of body weight, which allows for some tramping and waste.

“I used a grazing stick sometimes but they didn’t seem to give a wide variation. Our mix of species in Ontario doesn’t work well for either the stick or the plate meter. I found that people thought they couldn’t do this, but the good pasture managers didn’t take long to have a good idea of how much forage they had available,” says Kyle.

Lastiwka uses a grazing stick and gets a reasonable yield guesstimate when several sites are checked. He starts with a daily move and modifies for correct paddock size the following day, as it is a small area affected. When one starts grazing after the third-leaf stage, leaving too little residual can be a mistake, but is not as damaging, as the plants have recovered the lost winter nutrient stores.

“Proper management of growth in spring is critical as it sets the stage for how quickly and how much regrowth occurs over all the shorter growing season. Mistakes now are magnified,” he says.

Author: Duane McCartney. Original article can be found at <https://www.canadiancattlemen.ca/livestock/ideas-for-advanced-grazing-management/>



Connect with the FFGA on social media!



(Continued from page 4)

learn from their efforts and passion. Timber Ridge has transformed from more than just a ranch, it's a living lab that strives to reconnect people to water, wildlife, food production and western heritage. Ranchers, scientists, students, botanists, artists in residency, foresters and so many more have all found their way to Timber Ridge and felt this special connection to the landscape that Glen & Kelly strive to protect. In 2017 the Southern Alberta Land Trust (SALTS) worked with the Halls to set a conservation easement on the original 800 acres and in 2020 an additional 320 adjacent acres was purchased under a management system with the ACA. This protection will help ensure their vision for Timber Ridge will be fulfilled and that future generations will find their way back to the land.

Glen & Kelly wanted to leave you with this advice and final thought, "Get involved, tell your story, advocate for agriculture always and be stewards for healthy water, land and food".

"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will only love what we understand. We will only understand what we are taught" – Baba Dioum

Journey to Regenerative is a new feature article introduced by FFGA to showcase our members hard work and dedication to Regenerative Agriculture. If you enjoy this feature and would like to share your story email enviro@foothillsforage.com

All photos supplied by Glen & Kelly Hall



Agromony & Forage Specialist Support

In partnership with Agriculture Research Extension Council of Alberta, FFGA is pleased to offer Forage & Agromony Specialist support to ranchers & farmers across Alberta!

Forage Specialists:

- Grant Lastiwka
- Barry Yaremicio





Agromony Specialists:

- Bill Chapman
- Neil Whatley

Economic Specialists:

- Ted Nibourg

To access this support please call into the FFGA Office at 403.995.9466 or send an email to:
manager@foothillsforage.com or enviro@foothillsforage.com



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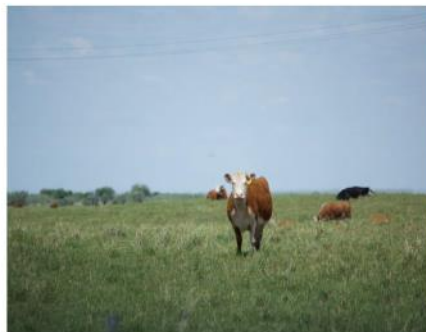




DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL, LIFE & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Seeking:

Cattle herds to participate in a study aimed at determining the pairing of cow-herd genomics with the following pasture characteristics: forage supply, biodiversity, and soil health and carbon storage.



Producers to Receive:

- Free pooled genomic breed composition and hybrid-vigour¹ analysis of the participating cow herd(s). Producer will need to collect tail hairs from cows sometime in the next year, procedure and materials for collection will be supplied.
- Pasture forage quantity and vegetation assessment that may be used in determining and/or improving pasture stocking capacity
- Soil health overview² including soil carbon measurements³

The Ideal Cow Herd / Grazing Situation

- Herd of 50+ cow/calf pairs
- Native pasture – never cultivated
- Grazed by the same group of cattle for the last 5 years (more or less)
- Grazed at roughly the same time every year
- Grazing area of ¼ to full section
- Annual grazing period: starting in July or later and for an interval of 2-weeks or longer

For more information or to participate please contact Foothills Forage & Grazing Association at enviro@foothillsforage.com

The research team at the University of Alberta would like to thank the Foothills Forage & Grazing Association and their members for their ongoing assistance & scientific collaboration.

¹ Hybrid-vigour is associated with increased resilience (health), fertility, stayability, and a cow's lifetime productivity.

² Useful in identifying pasture areas to target for improvement.

³ Documented baseline carbon storage measurements.

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

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

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