



ANNUAL REPORT

2022





2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Unit 4A, 710 Centre Street SE

High River, AB

T1V 0H3

Phone: (403) 995-9466

Email: manager@foothillsforage.com

Website: www.foothillsforage.com

MISSION

Assisting producers in profitability 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.

Find us on Social Media
[@foothillsforage](#)



Information in this publication is not to be copied or used for reprinting without the permission of Foothills Forage and Grazing Association





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE

Daniel Doerksen - Chairman

(403) 633- 0530

Gem

Daryl Chubb - Vice Chairman

(403) 836- 2202

Irricana

Justin Blades - Secretary - Treasurer

(403) 336- 5952

Nanton

DIRECTORS

Jerry Baerg - Director

(403) 826- 2016

Linden

Tanis Cross - Director

(403) 652- 0954

Nanton

Morrie Goetjen - Director

(403) 863- 7484

Cremona

Sarah Green - Director

(403) 603- 8722

Nanton

Emily Lowe - Director

(403) 990- 4548

Nanton

David Sammons - Director

(403) 934- 0940

Gleichen

Ryan Scott - Director

(403) 682- 8377

Stavelly

**Wolter van der Kamp -
Director**

(403) 335- 3249

Longview

Staff

Laura Gibney - Manager

(403) 995- 9466

manager@foothillsforage.com

Kayla Minor - Communications Coordinator

(403) 682- 7116

comm@foothillsforage.com

Sonja Bloom - Environmental Coordinator

(403) 612- 7204

enviro@foothillsforage.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGES

Pages 4 - 11

IN-PERSON EVENTS

Pages 13 - 18

VIRTUAL/ONLINE EVENTS

Pages 19 - 20

PROJECTS

Pages 22 - 26

ENVIRONMENT & BURSARY/ SPONSORSHIP

Pages 27 - 28

PARTNERS, SPONSORS & MEMBERSHIP

Pages 29 - 31





MESSAGES

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
DANIEL DOERKSEN
PAGE 4 & 5

MANAGER'S REPORT
LAURA GIBNEY
PAGE 6 & 7

ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR'S REPORT
KAYLA MINOR
PAGE 8 & 9

ARECA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
ALAN HALL
PAGE 10 & 11

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

DANIEL DOERKSEN

Welcome to the 2023 Annual meeting of the Foothills Forage and Grazing Association.

It has been my privilege to serve as the Chairman of Foothills Forage over the last year.

The last few years in agriculture have been challenging to say the least. Multiple years of drought for many, causing high feed prices, softening cattle prices, and all while input costs continue to climb. Many producers have been facing the challenging decision of buying expensive feed or selling cows into a soft market. There are times when mother nature can humble us and it does not matter how well we manage our pastures, if we simply don't get rain, it's hard to grow grass. 2022 saw a big reduction of the cow herd. Our local auction market had three sales in a row with record numbers of cull cows. 1700-1800 a week. However, enough with the negative, I like to be optimistic that this is the year we have been waiting for. Most of Alberta has had a good snow fall to get some grass started and dugouts filled. If the 90 days from fog means moisture, April is going to be WET. The cattle market seems to be responding as well as 7wt steers are pushing \$3.00 a lb.

After two years of limited events and mostly webinars it has been great to be able to meet in person at field days and events again. In the fall the FFGA board took on the task of updating FFGA's 3-5 year Strategic Business Plan. In November the board and staff took part in a strategic planning workshop with facilitator Scott Ackerman. It was a great two-days of setting the direction of FFGA for the next five years. Many great ideas came from these meetings and I hope that the goals and vision that were set will continue to make FFGA an organization that our members are excited to be part of. The board and staff with Scott's expertise, have now wrapped up the plan and accompanying budget. Six other groups, including our umbrella association; the Agriculture Research & Extension Council of Alberta, are also updating their plans which will position us all well in individual and joint initiatives while identifying areas of collaboration and gaps that to be addressed. This process is also being looked upon favorably by our main funder; Results Driven Agriculture Research, and we will be sharing the results of our work with them this spring.

We had a great turnout for the Ranching for Profit School with Dallas Mount held in November in Okotoks. It was a sell out event with a large waiting list. We look forward to hosting another school this fall. A highlight for me this year was attending the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing in Edmonton in December. It was a great 3 days of learning and networking with many like minded producers.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Laura, Kayla, and Sonja for all the work they do to keep FFGA running so smoothly. The amazing work they do makes our job on the board easy and enjoyable. We would also like to welcome Sonja back after time away on maternity leave.

I would like to thank our Sponsors and members for continuing to support FFGA. As we move into 2023 and beyond; with some of the climate restrictions coming, I believe FFGA can be a leader in practical solutions to keep producers profitable. Watch the FFGA newsletter, website and social media channels for many upcoming events this year!

Daniel Doerksen

CHAIRMAN

Foothills Forage & Grazing Association



MANAGER'S REPORT

LAURA GIBNEY

The start of 2022 found us slowly crawling out of the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns, and health restrictions. It was a time when many people were divided and trying to get back to normal. This made for a challenging start to the year for FFGA as we were holding some in-person events again, but with mandatory restrictions in place. It was a relief for everyone in the spring when things improved and we could get back to normal.

FFGA was ready and excited for this and with our partners we delivered 24 in-person events with an attendance of 1,311 producers, industry, and students from across our region and beyond! We also delivered 6 webinars with 502 registrants in 2022. The Grassroots News & Views newsletter continues to be distributed monthly to all our members and partners. Currently FFGA has a membership of 167 Farm Businesses, 1,200 hits on the website monthly, 2,721 followers on Facebook, 1,395 on Twitter and 464 followers on Instagram. Through our producer members, online followers and industry partners our impact on agriculture, the environment, and rural communities continues to grow.

In 2022 Kayla Minor held down the position of interim Environmental & Communications Coordinator while Sonja enjoyed maternity leave with her son Robert. Kayla stepped into this role with passion and an eagerness to learn, and what a year we had! Some highlights were the local summer field days, the 7-day Ranching For Profit School with Dallas Mount and the 3-day Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing (WCCSHG) in Edmonton which sold out with 525 producers, industry, researchers, academia and students. It was an honour for me to Chair this renowned event and FFGA's contribution to the event was significant. It was rewarding to see it come together so well. Agricultural & Irrigation Minister Nate Horner opened the event and Senator Paula Simons attended all 3 days of the conference as well as shared that Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (AGFO) are getting their hands dirty with a study of soil conditions in Canada, the first of its kind since 1984. It was also hugely rewarding to see so many producers, especially from the FFGA region not only attend, but shut the place down every night networking, sharing ideas and laughing. While I am looking forward to being a part of the 2024 WCCSHG, I am relieved we have a year in between to catch our breath, and have our ear to the ground on future topics and speakers.

In the fall the FFGA Board and Staff took on the challenge of renewing FFGA's 3-5 year Strategic Business Plan. This took a lot of time and energy, but we were successful in securing funding to hire a top-notch facilitator to assist with this process. Six of our sister associations as well as our umbrella association, the Agriculture Research & Extension Council of Alberta, are also updating their plans which will position us all well in individual and joint initiatives, while identifying areas of collaboration and gaps that need to be addressed.

Thank you to the FFGA Board of Directors for putting in so much time, energy, and excitement into this process. Not only is it beneficial to unite the board and staff in an even more cohesive way and hone in on focused goals for the association, but it has also become a key piece of securing funding from our main funder, Results Driven Agriculture Research, as we move into the 2023 year.

It was a very busy and active year for FFGA with several different grants and projects on the go that come together in the delivery of our full program. The balancing of a wider variety of funds and projects comes at an administrative cost but has also enabled us to access more revenue streams. We were successful in our joint application for the Regenerative Alberta Living Lab and kicked off that 5 year project in the fall of 2022. FFGA continues to assist producers in navigating the On-Farm Climate Action Fund which will see dollars reaching producers for on-farm initiatives related to nitrogen cycling, cover cropping, and grazing management in 2022 and 2023.

With the added workload and funding opportunities available FFGA is excited to be expanding in a purposeful way in 2023. With Sonja returning from maternity leave 3-days a week in Feb 2023 to take on the Environmental Coordinator position, FFGA is excited to also be able to keep Kayla Minor on as our Communications Coordinator. This is an exciting time as we navigate this growth and potential for FFGA and our members.

As we move into 2023, we have been busy wrapping up the WCCSHG, writing grant reports, wrapping up the 2022 financial year, preparing for our AGM and continuing to deliver events. We are gearing up for another busy summer and growing season of events.

We continue to deliver innovative, regenerative, and pertinent agriculture information to our members through workshops, conferences, field days, webinars, our monthly newsletter, and social media platforms. As always, I very much enjoy working with the innovative and passionate producers through the FFGA membership and board. It has been fabulous being back to in-person board meetings where the energy and ideas flow and create an atmosphere of excitement for the future. Thank you to all of our members and partners for staying connected and supporting us through another year, your support has been crucial in our building momentum and we look forward to what the future brings!

Laura Gibney

MANAGER

Foothills Forage & Grazing Association



COORDINATOR'S REPORT

KAYLA MINOR

In the beginning of 2022, we found ourselves coming out of the COVID 19 pandemic, with big plans getting back to in person workshops, events and tours. I started with FFGA in the end of 2021 filling a maternity position for Sonja Bloom. Over the last 15 months I have gained so many great experiences, learned a significant amount of information that has helped me in my position with FFGA as well as at home on the ranch. Along the way I met a variety of unique, knowledgeable and industry leading people! My first few months gave me plenty of opportunities to learn and meet our membership as we hosted and partnered on 22 in person events and 7 webinars in the FFGA region.

Highlights of the year for me included being able to participate in the Ranching for Profit School with Dallas Mount that FFGA hosted in partnership with Ranch Management Consultants in Okotoks in early November. During the 7-day intensive school I learned so many beneficial aspects that have impacted me personally on the ranch and the role I want to play. During the school, myself and 48 other producers learned about economics, finance, people, ecology, grazing and production. One element that the school really focuses on is the Paradigm Shift. The concept is trying to get producers to look more at Working on the Business rather than Working in the Business. Not only did I gain top tier knowledge, but I also met a lot of great producers from all over Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan that have helped develop my skills and my confidence to take on more responsibilities within my personal life and on the ranch. The attendees of the school have become a network of resources. At FFGA we are excited to maintain this relationship with Dallas Mount and Ranch Management Consultants and are planning to make the Ranching for Profit School an annual event in our region.

Another highlight included the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing that I was able to participate in the planning as well as attending the 3 day conference and tradeshow in Edmonton in December. At this renown conference, speakers and attendees came from all over the world. Our keynote speaker James Rebanks was fabulous! James and his wife traveled to the conference from the Lake District in the UK. His family has farmed in the area for over 600 years and in his presentation, he shared a little about his life of being a producer, or as they call it in England a "Shepard", how he has transformed his farm from bare and dead to something beautiful and restored. At the conference we saw 525 producers and industry members and lots of networking done within the industry!

At the end of 2021 I was trained by Sonja to become an Environmental Farm Plan Technician and since then I have led 3 Environmental Farm Plan Workshops as well as helped 30 producers receive their Environmental Farm Plan. I saw a rise in requests in the fall for an Environmental Farm Plan as it is a prerequisite for the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) Farm Technology and Security program which closed in December. We are now waiting for the new Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) to take effect and replace the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) on April 1, 2023. SCAP will make a number of important improvements to the Business Risk Management (BRM) programs and set a number of new goals and targets. Many of the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) programs will also need an Environmental Farm Plan as a prerequisite.

Communications continue to be strong for FFGA. We currently to have 2,721 followers on Facebook, and 1,395 followers on Twitter. I will continue to post relevant information on our social media channels such as articles, upcoming event and webinar posts, and sharing details from our partners. Our website sees around 1,200 visitors monthly with our upcoming events tab being the most popular. Our Newsletter, Grassroots News & Views, continues to be a favourable resource among our members and supporters and goes to 167 farms and ranches each month, as well as 60 companies, and 18 Municipalities.

In early 2023, Sonja Bloom returned from maternity leave to FFGA as the Environmental Coordinator. I am very grateful that this has allowed me the opportunity to stay with FFGA in a full-time permanent position as the Communications Coordinator. I am excited to continue to grow the communication portfolio as well as advocate for our ever-evolving industry. I am excited to continue to grow professionally and learn from the best! We have an exciting year a head of us and hope to see you at our events!

Kayla Minor
Communications Coordinator
Foothills Forage & Grazing Association



ARECA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

ALAN HALL

ARECA continues to highly value our relationship with Foothills Forage and Grazing Association. With your strong Board of Directors, members, Laura and Staff, you have been very successful in supporting the ranchers and farmers in the area you serve. Our compliments on your valuable efforts and top notch performance over the past year!

Foothills, several other forage and applied research associations and ARECA are taking a hard look at what we individually and collectively will focus on over the next few years. We anticipate that by mid year we will have things worked out and agreed to.

This will enable us all to attract new and additional funding support for all on a longer term deal. Over the past few years, financial support to Foothills and the rest of us has been characterized by short term and uncertainty. We have been working closely with Results Driven Agricultural Research (RDAR) and the Province in this undertaking and things are looking most positive in getting stable, longer term support in place later this year. We are all very pleased and most appreciative of the current financing support from RDAR and the Province that is helping us through this time of transition.

This work will also lead to some new programs and projects, in the years ahead, that ranchers and farmers have said they need. Coupled with this will be some changes with ARECA in providing support services to Foothills and other associations that they are needing.

ARECA, with the help of Foothills, other Associations, Agricultural Service Boards and Commissions are continuing to deliver the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) service to individual producers. Over 3,000 farmers and ranchers have their up to date EFP now in place. We anticipate that doubling or tripling over the next 3-5 years.

EFP is proving to be a very useful tool for producers to use within their supply chains for sustainable sourcing of on farm commodities, government producer grant programs are trending to requiring an applicant to have an EFP, and several provincial and national farm organizations are supporting their producer members in securing an EFP. This is proving helpful in messaging to the consumer retailers, and international buyers with regards to the sound environmental production practices Alberta ranchers and farmers use. Consumers here and abroad are driving the need for such messaging from our agricultural community.

ARECA is helping with the On Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) producer grants for ranchers and farmers that assist them with putting best management practices in place in their businesses around rotational grazing, cover crops and nitrogen fertilizers. We are also working closely with Associations, Agricultural Service Boards and others in getting a peer to peer grazing mentorship program in place. ARECA is under contract with Canadian Forage and Grassland Association for this OFCAF and grazing mentorship work and we are working closely with RDAR on their OFCAF programs as well.

ARECA is working with and helping finance extension activities that Foothills and other Associations are undertaking. This includes things like workshops, tours, field days, grazing clubs, on farm demonstrations, etc.

ARECA, with strong support from the Province, Commissions, and the medical community, have teamed up with University of Alberta in the development and provision of mental health services support to individual producers and their families throughout rural Alberta. Research and conversation with farmers and ranchers is showing that intergenerational farm/ranch transfers, depopulation of livestock on farms due to diseases like avian flu and chronic wasting disease, and farm financial pressures due to weather/markets are taking their toll on producers and their families. When looking for help and support it has often been hard to find. Further the medical community have come to us for training in how to work with farmers and ranchers. Often, they have services available, albeit not always close to home, but the medical professionals often struggle to develop a solid working relationship with producers as they do not fully understand producers or the farming/ranching culture. ARECA is developing these programs and will be working with many organizations like Associations, Commissions, community based groups and the medical community through a program called AgKnow. We welcome you to visit our ARECA website at www.areca.ab.ca to find more details.

It has been a busy past year and an exciting upcoming year with these new developments. We look forward to continuing a strong working relationship with Foothills in helping to continue a strong track record of excellent service that you provide to your members.

Alan Hall

**Executive Director
Agriculture Research and Extension
Council of Alberta (ARECA)**





EVENTS

IN-PERSON EVENTS

- Ladies Livestock Lessons
- Ranching Opportunities
- Preparing for the Grazing Season
- Building your Forage Plan
- Annual General Meeting
- Tongue Creek Ranch Prescribed Fire Information Session
- Soil Structure and Production Field Tour with Dr. Abbey Wick
- Soil Health Field Tour Series with Odette Menard
- Southern Alberta Grazing for Women
- OH Ranch and Tongue Creek Ranch Field Tour
- Prescribed Fire Workshop
- Using Cattle Behavior to Your Advantage
- Livestock Watering Systems Tour
- Managing Soil Microorganisms to Improve Soil Nutrient Availability and Plant Growth
- Cattle Drone School
- Ranching for Profit School
- Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing
- Environmental Farm Plan Workshops

VIRTUAL/ONLINE EVENTS

- Get in the Know about Mental Health Literacy
- Finding Fairness in Farm Transitions with Elaine Froese
- Farm Transitions with Merle Good
- Resilience and Responding to Change in Agriculture with One Health
- On-Farm Climate Action Funding Opportunities



IN-PERSON EVENTS

LADIES LIVESTOCK LESSONS

January 21, 2022 - Rosebud, AB

The Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership was joined by 46 producers at the annual Ladies Livestock Lessons; the popular event designed for women involved in or interested in the profession of managing livestock. It was developed with the goals of encouraging and educating women in the business and to facilitate the opportunity to expand their professional network. This year's event took place at the Rosebud Mercantile in Rosebud. Topics covered included; Small Vet-Big Cow- Tips for the Calving Season, Pollinator 101; Establishing Pollinator Habitat, Multi-Species Grazing, Best Practices for Grazing to Sheep, Equine Pasture Management, Grazing through Drought, and Invasive Species ID & Control. The Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership includes: Mountain View County, Red Deer County, Kneehill County, Clearwater County, MD of Bighorn, Wheatland County, Rocky View County, Olds College, Cows and Fish, FFGA and Grey Wooded Forage Association.

RANCHING OPPORTUNITIES

February 3, 2022 - Olds, AB

The Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership was joined by 81 ranchers, farmers, students and industry members for the annual Ranching Opportunities. Ranching Opportunities is a conference designed for producers involved in or interested in the profession of managing livestock. It was developed with the goal of promoting environmentally and economically sustainable livestock production. This year's event saw presentations including; From the Soil Up - Protecting Your Soil After Drought, Developing an Effective Vaccine Program for Your Ranch, Grassland Research, Alternative Feeds, Using Technology to Predict Forage Yields, Vaccine Tools & Care, Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Grazing Forward Program, and a producer panel on What Regenerative Agriculture Means to You and How to Make It Pay. The Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership includes: Mountain View County, Red Deer County, Kneehill County, Clearwater County, MD of Bighorn, Wheatland County, Rocky View County, Olds College, Cows and Fish, FFGA and Grey Wooded Forage Association.

PREPARING FOR THE GRAZING SEASON

February 17, 2022 - Didsbury, AB

Hosted by FFGA, MD of Bighorn and Olds Fertilizer and Soil Services, this workshop focused on how to Prepare for the Grazing Season. Speaker Jim Bauer focused on pasture management, how to assess when perennial pasture is ready to graze, how to calculate AUMs, selection of tools to use for rotational grazing and how to assess when you can re-graze. Kent Price discussed pasture and hay species selection as well as different types of grasses and legumes and what conditions they are best suited for. Kendra Reimert gave a presentation on the types of fertilizer to use for perennial pasture establishment & longevity. The day saw 36 producers in attendance.



BUILDING YOUR FORAGE PLAN

February 28, 2022 - Stavelly, AB

Hosted by FFGA, Union Forage, MD of Willow Creek, Vulcan County and MD of Ranchland; this workshop provided expertise on building a forage plan for your own ranch or farm. Speakers Graeme Finn and Grant Lastiwka from Union Forage discussed perennial and annual species selection, summer grazing, cover crop mix selections, annual mixes for swath grazing, perennial stand establishment with high legume mixes, adaptive grazing for annuals and perennials, as well as economics first, soil health second. The day was filled with lots of great discussions. There were 17 producers in attendance.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

March 15, 2022 - High River, AB

Celebrating 50 years of FFGA, 1972- 2022. FFGA hosted our Annual General Meeting at the Highwood Centre in High River on March 15th. There were 64 members in attendance, joining the Staff and Board of Directors. Our business meeting started off by being called to order by Chairman Rod Vergouwen

An Election of Directors took place as Rod Vergouwen stepped down after service of 2 consecutive 3-year terms. Marcel Busz had also stepped down after his first 3-year term. Successful candidates; Sarah Green and Dave Sammons joined the FFGA Board of Directors. Outgoing Director Marcel Busz remained on the board as a non-voting member and FFGA's ARECA Representative.

After the business meeting, attendees had the option to stay and listen to Keynote Speaker, Danielle Smith. Danielle discussed the importance of sharing the agriculture story with the world but starting with our youth. The presentation was well received with lots of discussion from attendees.

TONGUE CREEK RANCH PRESCRIBED FIRE INFORMATION SESSION

April 13, 2022 - near Hartell, AB

Hosted by FFGA, and Tongue Creek Ranch, this information session focused on how Tongue Creek Ranch will begin to use prescribed burning to their advantage. At the session, attendees learned how Tongue Creek Ranch intends to use prescribed burns as a tool to reverse the encroachment of grasslands by woody species (brush and trees). Tongue Creek Ranch Owner Carter Siebens, and Fire Boss Rick Arthur provided historical and vegetation context to the issue, explained the role of prescribed burns and how they impact Tongue Creek Ranch plans. The information session had 20 producer and industry attendees.



SOIL STRUCTURE AND PRODUCTION FIELD TOUR

June 22, 2022 - Gem, AB

Daniel Doerksen at Gemstone Cattle Company walked us through their crops and pastures including their barley under seeded to rye grass for feed after the barley is harvested for grain. We toured their corn inter-seeded with clover. Daniel showed us their perennial pasture that is considered a sacrifice area, it is flood irrigated then used in a more continual grazing system once they are short on grass in other areas. This field tour also featured Dr. Abbey Wick; an expert in soil organic matter dynamics and nutrient cycling, soil structural development and microbial ecology. All the way from North Dakota, Dr. Wick shared her expertise and knowledge on the soil structure of these fields. The field tour was well attended with 45 producers. Partnership for this event included: Gemstone Cattle Company, Starland County, Vulcan County, County of Newell, Wheatland County, and AgVisor and FFGA.

SOIL HEALTH FIELD TOUR SERIES

July 11, 2022 - Pincher Creek, AB

July 12, 2022 - Strathmore, AB

July 14, 2022 - Madden, AB

This three day field tour series was well attended with a total of 54 producers and industry members at the tours with special guest; Odette Menard, an agricultural engineer who has had a major role in the promotion of soil conservation. Odette is an expert in earthworm behavior and practices that promote health & fertility. We started the series off by touring the Palmer Ranch near Pincher Creek. We looked at their long term grazing plans, and how they've built soil health over time. The second day of the series, we toured Valley View Ranch, and looked at how they have enhanced their grazing options, how they've added to the land's natural value and reclaimed land for production. The final day of the Soil Health Field Tour Series was on some of the Olds College demo sites near Madden. Here we saw the research and technology used, soil amendments used in their perennial and annual stands, and the efforts they have put towards riparian health. Partners at these events included: MD of Pincher Creek, Deseret Ranch, Vulcan County, Ducks Unlimited, Starland County, Wheatland County, MD of Bighorn, Mountain View County, Rocky View County, Union Forage, and Olds College- Smart Farm and FFGA.

SOUTHERN ALBERTA GRAZING SCHOOL FOR WOMEN

July 13 & 14, 2022 - Oyen, AB

The Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women (SAGSW) was developed with the aim to provide ladies with information on range and grazing management that will help them manage their farm or ranch, and to give them hands-on skills that they can apply at home. This was the 19th year that the school has been offered. Topics in 2022 included; grazing principles and practices, soil health, hands-on, plant ID, range health assessment, livestock behaviour, pasture diseases, sounding creek community pasture background, nutrition and ranching women talks.

The SAGSW was hosted in the Oyen area and had 48 producer and industry attendees. This school is hosted by; FFGA, Cows and Fish, Government of Alberta, MD of Willow Creek, Multisar, Special Areas, Starland County, Chinook Applied Research Association, Warner County, MD of Ranchland, Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum, and Alberta Conservation Association.



OH RANCH & TONGUE CREEK RANCH FIELD TOUR

July 28, 2022 - near Longview, AB

This field tour was our most popular in 2022 and saw 52 producers and industry members in attendance. Deb Pigeon from OH Ranch presented their brush encroachment history on the grassland and how they've used tools such as mechanical, and chemical control and grazing management. Deb discussed the partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and OH Ranch and some of their water projects. While touring OH Ranch, we looked at some of their field sites including their MULTISAR project, historical observations, disturbed and reclaimed grassland. We continued on to Tongue Creek Ranch, where Carter Siebens showed us how they've used prescribed burns as a tool to manage brush encroachment on their grasslands. Carter discussed the changes the prescribed fires have had since their burns in the spring. Partners on this field tour included: Tongue Creek Ranch, Cows and Fish, Canadian Prairie Prescribed Fire Exchange and Nature Conservancy of Canada and FFGA.



PRESCRIBED FIRE WORKSHOP

October 4, 2022 - near Hartell, AB

Tongue Creek Ranch presented on how they've used prescribed fires as a tool to reverse the encroachment of grasslands by woody species such as the brush and trees. During the workshop they explained how they've used fire as a management tool. Rick Arthur and Renny Grilz discussed with us burn strategies, tactics, safety, tools as well as permits, and regulations required to burn. Following the indoor presentations we had the opportunity to do a hands-on burn on 8 acres of native grassland on Tongue Creek Ranch. The day was attended by 19 producers and industry members. Partners on the workshop included: Tongue Creek Ranch, Cows and Fish, Canadian Prairie Prescribed Fire Exchange, and Nature Conservancy of Canada and FFGA.



USING CATTLE BEHAVIOUR TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

October 5, 2022 - Benalto, AB

Hosted by FFGA, Grey Wooded Forage, Red Deer County, Spruce View Ag Society, Lacombe County and Mountain View County, this workshop focused on Using Cattle Behaviour to Your Advantage. Speakers Dylan Biggs presented on low-stress handling, wetland stocking and wildlife predation. Joe Engelhart, a stockman and range rider in the Foothills of Alberta's Rocky Mountains, just north of the U.S. border, who works on extensive public land grazing leases spoke on cattle handling. Dave Voth, Rangeland Health Coordinator with the Nevada Department of Agriculture, and a Ranch Manager with the Nevada Gold Mine discussed his experience. There were 28 producers in attendance.



LIVESTOCK WATERING SYSTEMS TOUR

October 6, 2022 - Claresholm, AB

Tour hosts Jack and Gerald Vandervalk of VXV Farms, walked us through their extensive watering systems that they build themselves. We toured their spring development, dams, winter troughs, year-round water systems, and how they've adapted and managed their water systems during drought. RDAR gave a presentation and update on the On-Farm Climate Action Funding available for producers who are looking for financial support on rotational grazing, cover crops and nitrogen management. The presentations and tour were very informative and successful with 42 producers in attendance. Partners on the field tour included FFGA, VXV Farms, MD of Willow Creek, MD of Ranchland and RDAR.



MANAGING SOIL MICROORGANISMS TO IMPROVE SOIL NUTRIENT AVAILABILITY AND PLANT GROWTH

October 25, 2022 - Vulcan, AB

Hosted by FFGA, R.A West, Chinook Applied Research Association, Vulcan County and AFSC, this workshop looked at how to Manage Soil Microorganisms to Improve Soil Nutrient Availability and Plant Growth. Speakers Dr. Isbelia Reyes spoke about plant growth, and plant promotion with microbial inoculants. Dr. Yamily Zavala gave a presentation on the introduction to soil microbiome evaluation, as well as showing what the microorganisms look like through a microscope. Bob West with R.A West gave a presentation on the products they offer. AFSC also gave a short presentation on the programs they are offering producers. The workshop was well attended with 48 producers.



CATTLE DRONE SCHOOL

November 1 & 2 2022 - Claresholm, AB

This two day hands-on school hosted by FFGA, LandView Drones and the MD of Willow Creek was well received. On the first day attendees received an introduction to RPAS (remotely piloted aircraft systems), a presentation on on-farm uses of drones as well as an intro to air law. Markus Webber and Dr. John Church gave presentations on site surveys, and pre flight planning, emergency management and semi-autonomous mapping workflows. On the second day of the school, presentations were given on map data processing, RPAS around livestock, and spraying drones. Finishing the day, attendees took the Transport Canada's Small Basic Operations test, and then got to fly a few different drones into the neighboring pasture. The Cattle Drone School was attended by 16 producers.



RANCHING FOR PROFIT SCHOOL

November 13-19, 2022 - Okotoks, AB

The Ranching for Profit School, run by Ranch Management Consultants (RMC), is a renowned program offered to producers who want to learn how to make their ranch more profitable. It's a one-week intensive school where producers learn about economics, finance, people, ecology, grazing and production. The school allows producers to face a paradigm shift on how to work in the business versus how to work on the business. The school we co-hosted in Okotoks was the first back in Canada after many years and it was sold out with 50 producers, and had a large waiting list! We are excited to host another Ranching for Profit School in 2023.

WESTERN CANADA CONFERENCE ON SOIL HEALTH AND GRAZING

December 13, 14 & 15, 2022 - Edmonton, AB

The Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing (WCCSHG) was held in December 2022 and sold out with 525 producers and industry representatives in attendance. The theme of the 2022 WCCSHG was "Soil & Grazing, Biology Not Geology" and the presentation reflected this theme. FFGA Manager Laura Gibney opened the conference as Chair and did a wonderful job running the event. The WCCSHG is planned and hosted by 10 Applied Research and Forage Associations; Foothills Forage and Grazing Association (FFGA), West Central Forage Association (WCFA), Peace Country Beef & Forage Association (PCBFA), Gateway Research Organization (GRO), Battle River Research Group (BRRG), Grey Wooded Forage Association (GWFA), Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA), Lakeland Applied Research Association (LARA), North Peace Applied Research Association (NPARA), and Mackenzie Applied Research Association (MARA).

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN WORKSHOPS

February 9, 2022 - near Balzac, AB

November 20, 2022 - Claresholm, AB

December 7, 2022 - Pincher Creek, AB

Environmental Farm Plan workshops are designed to give producers a chance to work with an EFP Technician one on one. They are popular and most municipalities work with FFGA to host a workshop in their slow seasons to give producers more availability to attend. On February 9th, EFP Technician Kayla Minor was joined by Rocky View County, MD of Bighorn and 5 producers. On November 20th, Kayla was joined by the MD of Willow Creek, MD of Ranchland, and Cardston County as well as 16 producers. The last EFP Workshop of 2022 was on December 7th with the MD of Pincher Creek and 9 producers. For more information on the Environmental Farm Plan Program refer to page 26.



VIRTUAL / ONLINE EVENTS

GET IN THE KNOW ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

February 23, 2022

This virtual webinar provided information on the importance of mental health on the farm. In the Know is a course designed to help you learn about mental health and illness, promoting wellbeing in your life, how to recognize when someone is struggling, and how to respond. This webinar was hosted by FFGA, AgSafe Alberta, ARECA, Alberta Ag & Forestry, Foothills County, Kneehill County, Newell County, Rocky View County, Starland County, and Wheatland County and saw 15 people in attendance.

FINDING FAIRNESS IN FARM TRANSITIONS

March 15, 2022 - with Elaine Froese

Elaine Froese; Certified Speaking Professional, certified coach, and farm succession expert, provided a webinar on Finding Fairness in Farm Transitions. Topics included: learning how to ask powerful questions of everyone involved in the farm transition, gleaned better conflict resolution language, knowing how to activate the FAIR approach of financial transparency and attitudes towards money, intentions and roles. Elaine also discussed how to answer questions about debt servicing, gifting, farm viability, entitlement, and defining reasonable expectations. Hosted by FFGA, West Central Forage Association, Battle River Research Group, Lakeland Agriculture Research Association, North Peace Applied Research Association and saw 126 attendees.

FARM TRANSITIONS WITH MERLE GOOD

April 5 & 7, 2022 - with Merle Good

The two part Farm Transition Webinar was developed to help participants begin building a Farm Business Succession Plan. Unique ideas and strategies need to be explored in determining whether a transfer of land is primarily an income asset or wealth asset to the beneficiary. The webinars also focused on what to do and what not to do when it comes to concerns of potential future wealth tax. The webinars were hosted by FFGA, Kneehill County, Rocky View County, Vulcan County, Mountain View County and Wheatland County and saw a total of 281 attendees.



RESILIENCE AND RESPONDING TO CHANGE IN AGRICULTURE

April 20, 2022

This virtual webinar on Resilience and Responding to Change in Agriculture focused on how water is critical for successful farming and ranching, and how too little or too much creates problems. Research at the University of Calgary is exploring perceptions and opinions of southern Alberta's agricultural community around social-ecological changes and sustainable future for agriculture. Through their research they hope to support the development of local on farm practices and regional decision making strategies that can effectively respond to change. FFGA gave a short presentation on the changes seen by members in the association, FFGA programs, and activities involved in regenerative agriculture. Partners included FFGA and University of Calgary, and saw 60 attendees.

ON-FARM CLIMATE ACTION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

October 19, 2022

The final webinar of 2022 focused on On-Farm Climate Action Funding Opportunities (OFCAF) for producers. Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) gave a presentation on the OFCAF financial support that is open to producers to accelerate their adoption and implementation of on-farm Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) to lower Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, support production efficiency, sustainability and resiliency on their farm operations. RDAR discussed two out of the three categories that are available including Rotational Grazing and Cover Cropping.

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association followed with a presentation on their Advanced Grazing Systems program that is available for producers. CFGA has developed the Advanced Grazing Systems curriculum and mentorship program in collaboration with Farmers for Climate Solutions. The program aims to provide education to potential mentors for farmers to learn within their support networks and to build grazing plans that will be used to apply for funding. Partners on this event included FFGA, RDAR, and CFGA and saw 18 attendees.

VIRTUAL/WEBINAR IMPACTS IN 2022

In total, 502 people attended our webinars/virtual presentations in 2022. We will continue to offer webinar presentations in the future as this style of workshop is popular among some of our audience. It doesn't replace that value that producers have in networking with their peers, but it allows them flexibility to attend shorter presentations from the comfort of their homes.

If you wish to view our webinar recordings, visit:

<https://www.foothillsforage.com/recordedwebinars>





PROJECTS

SOIL HEALTH BENCHMARK STUDY

Page 22 - 23

REGENERATIVE ALBERTA LIVING LABORATORY INITIATIVE

Page 24 - 25

AGRICULTURE SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Page 26



SOIL HEALTH BENCHMARK STUDY

2022 is the final year for the Soil Benchmark Project funded by the Canada Agricultural Partnership (CAP). The project was designed to generate a data base of soil parameters related to physical, biological and chemical indicators from sites across Alberta. This database will be the first of its kind as previous soil information focused primarily on chemical soil parameters. In addition to establishing a baseline for the status of soils across the province, the database will also contribute to soil analysis standards and curves specific for Alberta.

The Chinook Applied Research Association's Soil Health and Crop Management Specialist Dr. Yamily Zavala has led the provincial initiative. A majority of the soil analysis takes place in CARA's Soil Health Lab, utilizing protocols from Cornell University and the former Canadian SoilFoodWeb Lab. Dr. Zavala supervises analysis of biological and bio-physical characteristics, including soil respiration rate, texture and wet aggregation stability, the level of active carbon rate and total and potential biological biomass. Analysis of chemical components are currently contracted to A & L Labs and the University of Alberta's soil lab determines the total organic carbon, carbon and nitrogen levels. All information is being summarized into a data base which will help generate strategic management practices targeting specific regional soil constraints in the future.

Sites previously sampled in 2019 were re-visited in 2022 to monitor the impact of management practices since the initial benchmarks were taken. Further assessment of management practices at other sites sampled during the course of the Benchmark project also began under a new project supported by Results Driven Agricultural Research (RDAR) entitled Verifying the Impact of Management Practices on Changes in Specific Soil Health.

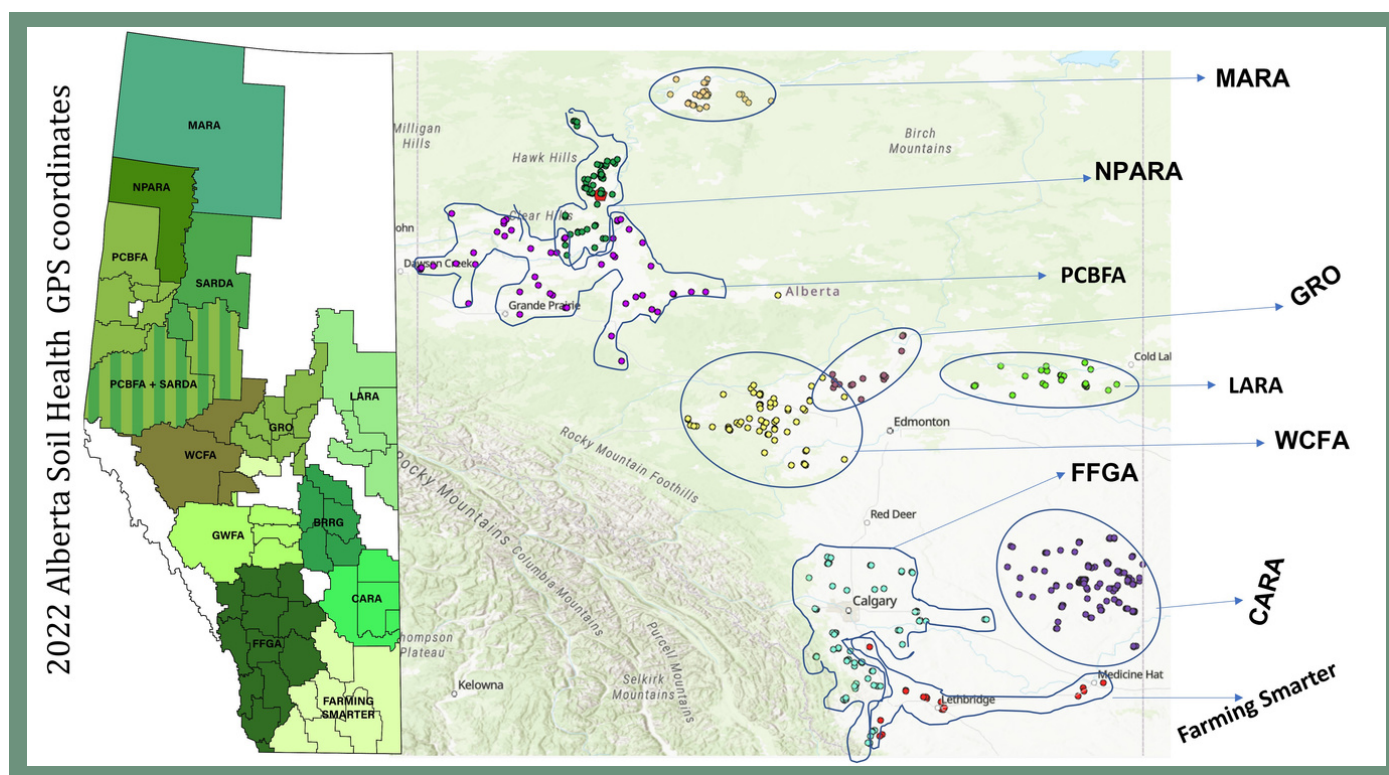
Eleven of Alberta's applied research and forage associations have participated in the soil health benchmark study, working with farmers and ranchers in several soil zones throughout the province. Each group documents field history and management information and uses the same protocols when collecting soil samples. Samples are received and processed through CARA's Soil Health Lab.

The CARASHLab generates a comprehensive report for each site sampled, which is compiled and shared with the local association and landowners. The report captures a picture of the soil health and is a point of reference for comparison to future sampling or following management changes. It includes measurements of the individual soil indicators as well as a ranking of whether the measurement is an area of concern or constraint for over-all soil productivity. Suggestions for mitigation or improvement of problem soil components may also be added to the soil score card. Discussion of the soil health report cards have been the focus of several extension activities held by participating producer associations.

Due to lab instrument and staffing challenges, not all samples collected to date have been processed or added to the data bank, but Dr. Zavala has observed a few trends from samples collected to date. Compaction and poor water infiltration are common concerns at many sites and are often associated with lower biological components. She has found a great diversity of beneficial soil creatures and predatory species. Evaluation of the samples from site re-visits will be a highlight of the project. It is anticipated that the results will show trends in activities which improve specific soil health parameters. The information is intended to be a working tool that helps managers better understand soil health, how various management practices impact it and those which might contribute to improving land resilience.

Approximately 1800 soil samples, from 1138 fields managed by 434 farmers have been received to date under Soil Health Benchmark study. Data from analysis of samples submitted by individual farmers or as part of other studies will also be included in the data base. CARA anticipates the data base will include information from over 3000 samples once the current inventory of submissions is processed and added.

Dr. Yamily Zavala shared an update on the Benchmark project with 525 attendees at the Western Canada Conference for Soil Health and Grazing in Edmonton in December 2022. She also participated in RDAR's January 2023 Research Review with a poster presentation of the project.



Dianne Westerlund
 Manager
 Chinook Applied Research Association



REGENERATIVE ALBERTA LIVING LABORATORY INITIATIVE

A process of collaborating with partner organizations, meeting with producers, and negotiating with AAFC that began in 2020 met with success in June of 2022 when the Regenerative Alberta Living Lab (RALL) project was officially approved.

[Government of Canada launches nine new living labs: collaborative on-farm solutions to combat climate change in agriculture - Canada.ca](#)

“Maximizing Agricultural Solutions through Integration of Beneficial Management Practices” is funded through Agriculture Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)’s Agricultural Climate Solutions-Living Labs program. The \$1,720,270 of in-kind and cash contributions provided by industry will be supplemented by \$5,291,783 from AAFC and \$2,400,000 of collaborative research and development support over five years, making this a \$9,412,053 project.

Signatory to the agreement with AAFC is the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA). The project is managed by the Food Water Wellness Foundation (FWWF), with partners FFGA, GWFA, GRO, WCFA, NPARA, MARA, BRRG, LARA, ARECA, and Organic Alberta providing producer engagement, knowledge transfer and education support. Partners McCain, Quattro Farms, Union Forage, MyLand and Hudson Carbon offer additional in-kind and cash support.

The project has at its heart more than 100 producers who will be working with the science and socio-economic team to collect data on soil carbon sequestration and ecological goods and services resulting from the implementation of beneficial management practices (BMPs) on approximately 500,000 acres across the province. The overall goal is to improve soil health, reduce costs of production, and sequester carbon in the soil using regenerative agriculture. This will include but is not limited to cover cropping, intercropping, relay cropping, adaptive multi-paddock grazing, and the use of perennials and animals in cropping systems. This Living Lab will also amplify and support traditional ecological knowledge and efforts of First Nations, including producing a summary of guidelines and good practices for ethical engagement.

Work has begun on the following components:

Soil Sampling and Lab Analysis

A big part of the project includes three rounds of soil sampling (years 1/2, 3 and 5), with approximately 1500 cores per round. We sample to a depth of 1 metre. Back in the lab we will look at total carbon, total organic carbon, total nitrogen, the biology in the soil through genomics, both classic and biological nutrient availability, soil aggregate stability, texture, bulk density and a host of other variables.

Soil Mapping

Building on the data collected through FWWF's soil carbon quantification project, this Living Lab will make accessible farm-scale soil maps for the core participants from the year 2020 with data from 2022 coming next year.

Knowledge Transfer

Workshops and field tours have begun to be organized by the partner organizations and will continue throughout the five years of the project to bring together shared understandings of both producers and scientists in the project while celebrating successes and working through challenges.

Plant and Grazing App

It is important to have cost-effective and useful data related to grazing management and plant communities that encompasses both pasture and crop land throughout the growing season. To achieve that, the project is developing apps that will enable each producers' unique conditions and management practices to be gathered and studied in relation to their soil and carbon sequestration data.

Socio-Economic and GHG data collection

Olivier LaRocque from FWWF has begun reaching out to producer participants to begin socio-economic data collection. This data will be essential in evaluating the economic feasibility of the various BMPs looked at within the project.

Keri Sharpe from FWWF is beginning to gather management data from producer participants that will enable estimation of GHG emission reductions throughout the project.

Kimberley Cornish
Director
Food Water Wellness



AGRICULTRE SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Foothills Forage & Grazing Association connected with many FFGA Members with relevant agriculture experts through our Ag Specialist Program in 2022. FFGA has 5 agronomy & forage specialists on contract who can help FFGA members with specific questions. FFGA is pleased to partner with ARECA to offer ranchers & farmers in our area a unique opportunity to connect with these experts. The program will end on February 28, 2023.

26

AGRONOMY & FORAGE SPECIALIST SUPPORT

In partnership with Agriculture Research Extension Council of Alberta, FFGA is pleased to offer Forage & Agronomy Specialist support to Foothills Forage & Grazing Association members across Alberta!

FORAGE SPECIALISTS:

Grant Lastiwka
Barry Yaremco

AGRONOMY 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

Not a member yet? Visit <https://www.foothillsforage.com/membership> to purchase a membership online for \$50.00 for your entire operation





ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMING

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

Maintaining a healthy environment is essential to the success of Alberta’s agricultural producers. The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program helps you identify and address environmental risks in your operation. It will also increase your understanding of legal requirements related to environmental issues. Protecting water, air and soil quality is key to the sustainable production of crops and livestock and to leaving a healthy and productive farm for the next generation. An EFP will identify what you are already doing well and pinpoint where improvements can be made. By addressing these risks you increase operational efficiency while reducing farm costs, which results in increased profit for you.

FFGA has an EFP technician on staff to help producers navigate their workbook and implement their action plans. Whether you prefer to work one-on-one, virtually, or in a group workshop setting, our technician Sonja Bloom is always ready to help you with your EFP. Visit <https://www.albertaefp.com/> and click register.



ON-FARM CLIMATE ACTION FUND

On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) cost-sharing funding supports farmers in adopting beneficial management practices (BMPs) for in-field nitrogen management, expanding cover cropping, and implementing rotational grazing practices. OFCAF funding will help producers approve, test, and build diverse projects to help tackle climate change. Applicants are eligible for multiple projects to a combined maximum grant payment of \$75,000. Applicants are eligible for a maximum 85% reimbursement of eligible cash expenditures across the three BMP target areas. Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) is one of the main organizations facilitating OFCAF in Alberta.



Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGa) is focusing on the rotational grazing practices stream of the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) in Alberta. Participating in the CFGa’s Advanced Grazing Systems Program means producers can: Learn the basic techniques of rotational grazing independently with the Advanced Grazing Systems online courses, which use curriculum developed with Farmers for Climate Solutions, or create a grazing plan with the help of a grazing mentor.



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year, \$3 billion federal-provincial-territorial investment in the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector that began in April 2018, and is the successor of the 2013-18 Growing Forward 2 partnership. In Alberta, the Canadian Agricultural Partnership represents a federal - provincial investment of \$406 million in strategic programs and initiatives for the agricultural sector. In consultation with stakeholders, programs were updated in 2021 to include the following themes: Efficient Grain Handling, Farm Technology (and Farm Security), Market Assurance, On-Farm Value-added and Water. The roll-out of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program suite in Alberta began in April 2018 and will end March 28, 2023.





MEET THE 2022 FFGA BURSARY AND NUFFIELD SPONSORSHIP RECIPIENTS

SHAYNA JONES

My name is Shayna Jones, born and raised in the rural community Nanton, I am an avid supporter of agriculture and the western lifestyle. Interests and extra-curricular activities for me include hunting, roping and barrel racing. Upon graduating high school, I took a couple years off to work and find a career path that would compliment my lifestyle. This led to employment with the Municipal District of Ranchland. Working in the Ag department developed my interest in environmental and agriculture sustainability. I am excited to be continuing my education in this field through the Environmental Assessment and Restoration program at Lethbridge College and look forward to my future in the industry.

I would like to thank the Foothills Forage and Grazing Association for making this bursary possible, I am truly grateful for the support.



SARAH BRAUL

My name is Sarah Braul, I'm 20 years old and I'm from Linden, Alberta. I'm currently in my 3rd year at the University of Lethbridge studying a Bachelor of Arts in Agricultural Studies with a concentration in Agricultural Business. In my spare time I ride cow horses, do a bit of leatherwork and enjoy gardening in the summertime. I was a 4-H member in home making, horse and beef projects for most of my youth as well as a Green Certificate Student in high school.

I can't thank the Foothills Forage and Grazing Association enough for their support!



INGRID JOHNSTON

FFGA is sponsoring Nuffield Scholar Ingrid Johnston. Ingrid is delighted to jump into the Nuffield Scholar experience to stretch her knowledge, and absorb everything she possibly can! She has a creative personality and loves brainstorming ideas and solutions. She has a developing, keen fascination, with agriculture based direct marketing. She is studying "farm to door" and "urban rural connection" through her travels and interviews. Her goal is to help producers be able to share their products in Canada a little easier, even if they are quite rural and unable to regularly access urban areas.



MUNICIPAL & FUNDING PARTNERS

THANK YOU TO OUR MUNICIPAL PARTNERS



Mountain View
COUNTY



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING PARTNER



CORPORATE SPONSORS

THANK YOU TO GOLD SPONSORS FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Agriculture, Automotive & Short Line Equipment Distributor
For information on some of the quality products we carry, please click the logos below:

THANK YOU TO OUR SILVER SPONSORS FOR YOUR SUPPORT



MEMBERSHIP

FOOTHILLS FORAGE AND GRAZING ASSOCIATION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



AFIN

ALBERTA FORAGE INDUSTRY NETWORK

FFGA Producer Representative:

Alex Robertson

Longview



CRSB

FFGA Producer Representative:

Graeme Finn

Madden



FFGA Producer Representative:

Marcel Busz

Duchess



