



Western Stock Growers' Association

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2012 Volume 1, Issue 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Where did the summer go? More of a rhetorical kind of question I suppose, but it deserves a deeper look. When does summer start anyway? For the Western Stock Growers it kicks off in the middle of May with the politicians and bureaucrats gearing up to have everything wrapped up before July. We spend as much time as possible trying to influence the direction and thinking of our regulators. The more we can steer before rules are made the easier life is for everyone. This year however was different; a spring election threw a giant spanner in the cog of our sprocket requiring a whole new set of relationships to be built.

We have a new Premier, Alison Redford, a new Ag Minister, Verlyn Olson, a new joint Ministry of Environment and SRD headed by Diana McQueen and a new Energy Minister Ken Hughes who is the only one of the aforementioned with agriculture roots. Several of your Executive and Directors have spent time this summer building relationships with the government's new

leadership. Stampede week was a perfect opportunity for me to make contact and others found their way to make contact as well.

Our think tank has met and discussed among other things, Bill 202 which attempts to redefine grasslands. We are expecting to bring a paper out on this subject in the near future. In brief, it is another part to the land use bills. Recently, the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan was unveiled. In preparation for the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan we will review how the Athabasca Plan rolled out. One red flag certainly is the cancellation of oil and gas leases. This of course does raise concern about our security of tenure on grazing dispositions. The Grazing Leaseholder Association recently sent a letter to the government on this subject which will be available on our WSGA website.

There have been a few personal milestones this summer. One of our directors Mike Munton has recently

been to a wedding out on the short grass native prairie near Warner. It was, of course, his own and his lovely bride Dai-cya's. Congratulations. Also it was a privilege for Pam and me to attend the award ceremony of the Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal which was presented to Wendy Adam. Congratulations.

I trust your harvest is plentiful and your calves top the market. I am looking forward to a busy fall and winter of advocating on your behalf and keeping this the most special place in the world.

*Phil Rowland
President*

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What you need to know about Bill 202

- Bill 202 was proposed by Dr Neil Brown, PC MLA for Calgary-McKay-Nose Hill constituency.
 - It passed first reading in the Spring legislative session and will be brought forward this fall when Legislature resumes.
 - The purpose of Bill 202 is to help ensure the continued protection of remaining native grasslands and grazing leases containing significant or sensitive wildlife habitats.
 - It is an amendment to the Public Lands Act.
 - It only pertains to public lands south of Highway 16 (including Special Areas) greater than 160 acres which have not been previously cultivated.
 - Under Bill 202, before a disposition or grant can be made on any public grassland, the Minister must conduct an assessment of significant wildlife habitat on the land.
 - The definition of 'significant wildlife habitat' and the specifications of the assessment are determined by the Minister.
 - The findings of these assessments will be made public and open for comment for 90 days prior to the disposition being renewed or newly created.
 - If the assessment finds there is significant wildlife habitat, no disposition or grant can occur unless use is limited or the party receiving the land offers an exchange of private land that has similar significant wildlife habitat.
 - The Minister defines what the limited use will be.
 - Bill 202 gives the power to cancel the grazing lease at the end of the lease with no compensation.
 - Bill 202 also provides the means for public scrutiny of all proposals, essentially inviting conservation groups to the table when disposition or grants are sold or transferred.
 - This poses a serious problem for ranching operations where the grazing leases are integrated into deeded land, thus allowing a regulatory taking of the deeded value of the ranch.
 - WSGA has been lobbying MLA's, making them aware of the dangers if this Bill gets passed in fall session and urging them to prevent this from happening.
- Please feel free to contact your local MLA to voice your concerns regarding Bill 202.

WSGA Update

On August 1 and 2 the WSGA descended on Benchmark Angus Ranch in Warner, Alberta for our annual summer meeting. There was a full agenda including two guest speakers in Alan Evans and Tom Gilchrist and a tour of Benchmark Ranch.

Cattle Rustling Reward Posters Now Available

At the annual meeting in February, a resolution was passed instating a reward fund for tips on cattle rustlers. Up to \$50,000 is available for information leading to the conviction of cattle rustlers stealing cattle from WSGA members. We now have available 11x17 reward posters for auction markets and other businesses. Farm gate posters for WSGA members are available in a smaller size. If you need posters, please contact the WSGA office.

Growing Forward 2

The federal agriculture policy, Growing Forward, is up for renewal. There were three public consultation meetings held across the province in late July. WSGA had representatives Aaron Brower and Bill Hanson each attend one. In short, the new program must cut \$435,000,000 from the budget. The information we are getting from the Impact Committee is there will not be much change to AgriInvest, AgriInsurance and AgriRecovery. However, there will probably be major reductions in AgriStability, especially in regards to crops and oilseeds.

We raised some key messages at these meetings including the continuing need for safety nets. Although reference margins are up right now for both cattle and crops, there is still the impending downturn where the industry will need safety nets. In addition, if

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they are going to continue with an insurance program, it must benefit the whole industry, not just a few people as the track record has shown. There is no effective production insurance for livestock.

We recognize the government needs to commit to cut-backs and agriculture is a willing participant in these cuts. But if it means giving up safety net programs, we need something back by way of free trade or a reduction in regulatory burden.



Tom Gilchrist, Michael Munton and Bill Newton chat after the speaker presentations.



Touring Benchmark Ranch from L to R: Michael Munton, Bill Hanson, Clay Hanson, Jeanne Hanson, David Pope, Eileen McElroy,

New LIS representative

With Phil Rowland being elected the new chair of Livestock Identification Services (LIS), WSGA needed to appoint another representative to the LIS board. A secret ballot vote was cast at the meeting and Aaron Brower, WSGA 1st Vice President, was elected as the new representative on the LIS board.

Bill 202

The Honourable Drew Barnes, Wildrose MLA from Medicine Hat, stopped by the summer meeting. We were able to reiterate our concerns around Bill 202 and were assured the opposition to the Bill is on the radar for the Wildrose Party.



From L to R: 1st vice president Aaron Brower, MLA Drew Barnes and Dr. Larry Delver



Speaker Alan Evans and his wife Rene were up from Montana for the summer meeting.

In other news...

New director

There will be a new face at the next WSGA board meeting. The Zone 9 director position, which has been vacant for some time, will be filled by Dr Gary Etherington of Dewberry, Alberta.

We are very happy Dr Etherington accepted the nomination and look forward to his representation on the board. Phil Rowland and Bill Hanson will be in his zone in early October to speak to producers about WSGA.

LIS cattle inspection fee increases – finally

As of September 1, 2012 the LIS inspection fee will increase from \$1.00 to \$1.25. This increase has been an issue the WSGA has been chasing for many years now, stretching over the terms of four different provincial agriculture ministers. Because LIS is a delegated authority for the Minister under the Livestock identification and

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Commerce Act and the Stray Animals Act, an increase in fees could only be put in place through the Minister.

Although the fee increase is needed to enable LIS to continue to provide inspection services to the cattle industry without outside grants, Alberta's inspection fees still remain the lowest in Canada.

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan moving forward

Over a year ago, the Land Use Secretariat released the 'Advice to the Government of Alberta for the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP)'. The SSRP is the second regional plan to be developed under the Land Use Framework and the first plan where agriculture is a major land-use within the region. The SSRP will create a blueprint for land-use development in the region over the long-term.

Several months ago WSGA met with government representatives to discuss the agricultural content of the document. Phase 2 public consultation of the document will be moving forward in the fall. WSGA will be involved in the public consultation and attend these meetings on behalf of their membership.

Invitation from CFIA

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is inviting comments on its draft improved food inspection model. You can find the document for review and complete the online survey at <http://inspection.sondages-surveys.ca/s/draftmodel/?l=en>.

Comments are due by October 31, 2012 and can also be submitted via fax or letter to the CFIA. A report summarizing the input received during the consultation will be made available on the CFIA website.

If you would like more information on the modernization of the food inspection model, contact either the WSGA office or go to the CFIA website.

WSGA Director recognized

One of our very own, Wendy Adam, was the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in a ceremony in High River this month. Only 60,000 Canadians will receive a medal which recognizes Canadian citizens who have made significant contributions to their community. For those of you who know Wendy, there is no doubt she is deserving of this honourable recognition. Congratulations, Wendy!

UPCOMING EVENTS

AEPA Fall Forum – November 8, 2012, Sheraton in Red Deer. The fall forum is held to raise the level of awareness and knowledge of land-use and water issues to assist agriculture in providing informed input in policy development and consultation processes

Canfax Cattle Market Forum – November 13 & 14, Deerfoot Inn and Casino in Calgary

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association Conference and Optional Tour – Dec 10 – 12, Toronto, ON.

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