



Western Stock Growers' Association

Newsletter

July 2017



WSGA Summer General Meeting

This year's Western Stock Growers' Association **Annual Summer Meeting will be held August 30 and 31, 2017**. It's a great event to network with other ranchers, WSGA directors and governors.

The first day is an open meeting with invited guests and speakers at the Gem Hall starting at 9:30 am. We will update the membership on what we are working on and initiate discussion about what is going on in the industry. It's a great way to keep in touch with the organization and exercise your membership privileges through participation in the discussion. We will also have a presentation from AGLA Chairman, James Hargrave on the new proposed framework to modernize the rental rates for grazing dispositions on Crown land.

The second day of the summer meeting is a tour of the Mattheis Ranch. The ranch was donated to the University of Alberta Range Research Institute in 2010 and we will have grad student research projects that are being conducted on the ranch as part of the tour.

For more information on the meeting and to register, contact the WSGA office at 403-250-9121 or office@wsga.ca.

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WSGA Membership Poll

Thank-you to all members who took the time to fill out the membership poll and send it back. We had a good response and the results are definitive.

Question #1: Do you agree the check-off should be changed back to be non-refundable?

Results: 65% of respondents replied NO.

Question # 2: Should funds for government relations and advocacy and funds for research and marketing be covered under the same umbrella?

Results: 72% of respondents replied NO

Question #3: Do you think WSGA should accept the position on the ABIDF Council?

Results: 71% of respondents replied YES

Question #4: Do you think accepting the funds will effectively prevent WSGA from independently advocating on behalf of our members?

Results: 73% of respondents replied NO

Since the time the membership poll was sent out and returned, the Alberta Beef Producers board voted down the idea of ABIDF that was proposed by Alberta Cattle Feeders and Alberta Beef Producers. That makes the results of Questions 3 and 4 redundant.

At this time we are not sure what the next steps are. The Minister and the industry has to decide what to do with the tabled amendment to the Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act. The proposed amendments would give each commission under the Act the ability to determine whether check-offs should be refundable or non-refundable. Under the proposed amendments, members of the Act could change their commission's check-off model through a plebiscite. So it's possible there will be another plebiscite in the future despite the possible divisive effect on the industry.

Please consider joining us at the Summer General Meeting on August 30 for more discussion on this issue when we hope to have more information to share with the membership.

Proposed Framework for Modernization of Rental Rates and Assignment Fees for Grazing Dispositions on Crown Land

During the early 1990's, concerns were raised by government and the grazing industry about how rental rates and assignment fees were calculated. Rental rates (along with assignment fees) were frozen in 1994 in response to concerns about how the rates were calculated. Current assignment fees were implemented in 1960, and are applied over four zones. In 2003 they were incorporated into the *Public Lands Act* at their current fixed rates.

The current rental rate and assignment fee formulas for grazing leases, licences and permits on public lands in Alberta cannot stay in a frozen in limbo state indefinitely. Meanwhile they have become outdated, difficult to justify and do not align with other industries or jurisdictions, nor do they conform to trade rules.

Amendments to the *Public Lands Act* and the Public Lands Administration Regulation are proposed which would establish a flexible, market-based formula for rental rates that is determined by profitability, responsive to mar-

ket changes, and uses updated grazing zones based on justifiable geographic differences. Additionally, these amendments would establish an administrative fee for assignments that helps remove barriers to those entering the industry.

What it boils down to is that government and industry have collaborated to fix the problem that was identified in the early 1990s and put on hold until it can be addressed properly. This proposal is defensible, addresses risk that comes with not aligning with other industries or trade rules and could help address issues with security of tenure.

For more information on the proposal and the supporting information, go to the WSGA website at www.wsga.ca or contact Lindsye at the office at 403-250-9121.



Alberta Bovine TB Investigation— Update

The following information is from updates from CFIA to industry groups.

What we know:

- The CFIA has their protocol in place for the upcoming trace-in part of the investigation which tries to address the question – how was the disease introduced to the index herd?
- They have identified approximately 150 farms that could have sent animals to the index herd over the past five years. The trace-in phase of the investigation includes premises in Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba.
- Each trace-in farm will receive a letter and a follow-up epidemiological interview with CFIA to confirm that herd testing needs to be done. Herd testing will be scheduled for between September 2017 and February 2018.
- Trace-in herds will not be under quarantine until the day testing starts on the farm. These herds will remain under quarantine until testing is complete. The expectation is that will take approximately a month for most operations.
- There is still expected to have 2-4% of reactors to the caudal fold test. These reactors to the caudal fold test will undergo secondary testing on the farm. Around 5% of the animals that undergo secondary testing can give false positives. Any animals that have a positive result in the secondary testing will have to undergo enhanced post-mortem, histological testing and tissue culturing. If there are any ranches that require culture testing, the quarantine will stay in place until the tissue culture results are received – about four months.
- There are no movement controls on herds that have been identified as a trace-in herd until testing begins so ranchers can finish fall run before they schedule their testing.
- As of June 30, 2017: 27 premises are still under quarantine (approximately 2,200 animals), 77 premises have been released from quarantine (estimated 16,500 animals) and an estimated 11,500 animals have been destroyed.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CANADIAN BEEF INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

Canadian Beef Industry Conference — Theme: Sharing Common Ground

August 15-17, Stampede Park, Calgary Alberta

All beef industry stakeholders share a common goal of taking steps to enhance the productivity, profitability and competitiveness of the various sectors in the industry. Supporting the National Beef Strategy, the conference provides a forum for industry engagement and learning opportunities across the beef supply chain.

For more information, go to <http://canadianbeefindustryconference.com>

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