

Western Stock Growers' Association

Newsletter

October 2017



WSGA Summer General Meeting

This year's Annual Summer Meeting was held in Gem, Alberta August 30 and 31. "The meeting was a recap of the WSGA activities and fostered great discussion for upcoming initiatives and projects," says WSGA President Aaron Brower.

Highlights of the discussion centered around the on-going CFIA bovine tuberculosis investigation, the formation of the provincial Crown grazing lease advisory panel and a separate grazing disposition holders operational committee to facilitate interaction between industry and government for the enhanced management of Crown rangelands and the on-going debate on checkoff becoming non-refundable.

The afternoon featured presentations from AGLA Chairman James Hargrave on the modernization of the Crown grazing lease rental rate and assignment fee structure, AgCoalition executive director Gord Winkel with an update from that group and chartered accountant Rob Schottner on the proposed changes to corporate taxes and how they impact ranchers. All in all, we had the trifecta of a great meeting; good turnout, good discussion and good company," says Brower.

The second day of the meeting was held at the Mattheis Ranch with a tour of the current research projects by the University of Alberta Range Research Institute. "It was a great tour. The research they have going on there and also in partnership with other locations is so encouraging and provides super outlook on the future of ranching and rangeland ecology," says WSGA Manager Lindsye Dunbar.

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Summer meeting research tour

continued...

Preliminary research results is showing that cattle ranching is the most compatible landscape activity with creating and sustaining biodiversity. There are still a couple of years left in the study examining the relationship between grazing practices and biodiversity but so far it confirms what ranchers and land managers have known for generations. In a separate research project completed in southern Alberta, results show that range health and diversity of bee populations have a positive relationship.

One of the most exciting research projects we heard about on the tour is an AMP grazing study performed on approximately 30 ranches across Canada and the U.S. It is a cooperation of many researchers and grad students looking at a wide variety of landscape factors and how grazing practices affect them. This longer term study is just getting underway. "The science community is starting to realize that longer term studies are necessary in range research because of the length of the nutrient and mineral cycles. Results at year three are proving to be completely different than results seen at year ten," says range scientist Dr. Edward Bork.

As an industry, it is important to be plugged in to what is going on in research. Not only are the learning opportunities important but it helps to keep the research relevant to cattle ranching overall. The Society of Range Management has a fall meeting coming up where many of the projects we saw on the tour will be presented in greater detail. That meeting is scheduled for November 2 at the Coast Terrace Inn in Lethbridge.



Left: Dr. Ed Bork talks about the research ongoing at Mattheis Ranch on industrial ecology and the effects of rig mats on mixed grass prairie.

Right: Dr. Ed Bork and Dr. Barry Irving stand beside a research project on drought effects on mixed grass prairie.



Alberta Bovine TB Investigation— Update

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

- The vast majority of ranches that underwent D & C have been signed off by CFIA and are considered complete.
- In the over 800 samples that were sent for full tissue culture as part of the trace out phase of the investigation, there have been no new positives meaning Canada still retains its TB free status.
- For the trace in phase of the investigation, there are approximately 70 herds that have been identified as needing testing. The initial number for possible trace in herds for testing was close to 150. That number was sliced in half as a result of the epidemiological assessment done by CFIA.
- These 70 herds represent a low risk of TB. The risk is essentially the same as the rest of the cattle herd in Canada and it is not expected to be found in any of the trace in herds.
- Trace in herds have been scheduled for testing with the bulk of testing occurring through mid-October through to mid-November. It is hoped the testing will be close to complete by the end of the year.
- There will be movement controls imposed during testing so the herd remains intact during the testing period. These movement controls are not expected to last more than four weeks.
- The restocking testing for premises that were depopulated will start soon as well. There will be an initial test of new animals to make sure the animals are negative to start with. Then next year there will be a second test to clear the farm for good. Restocking testing can be done by private accredited vets and scheduled to fit into the normal management schedule of the ranchers.
- Unless the farm is under quarantine and movement controls imposed for testing purposes, there is no basis for animals on trace-in farms to not attend livestock shows.

Cow-Calfenomics 2017-18

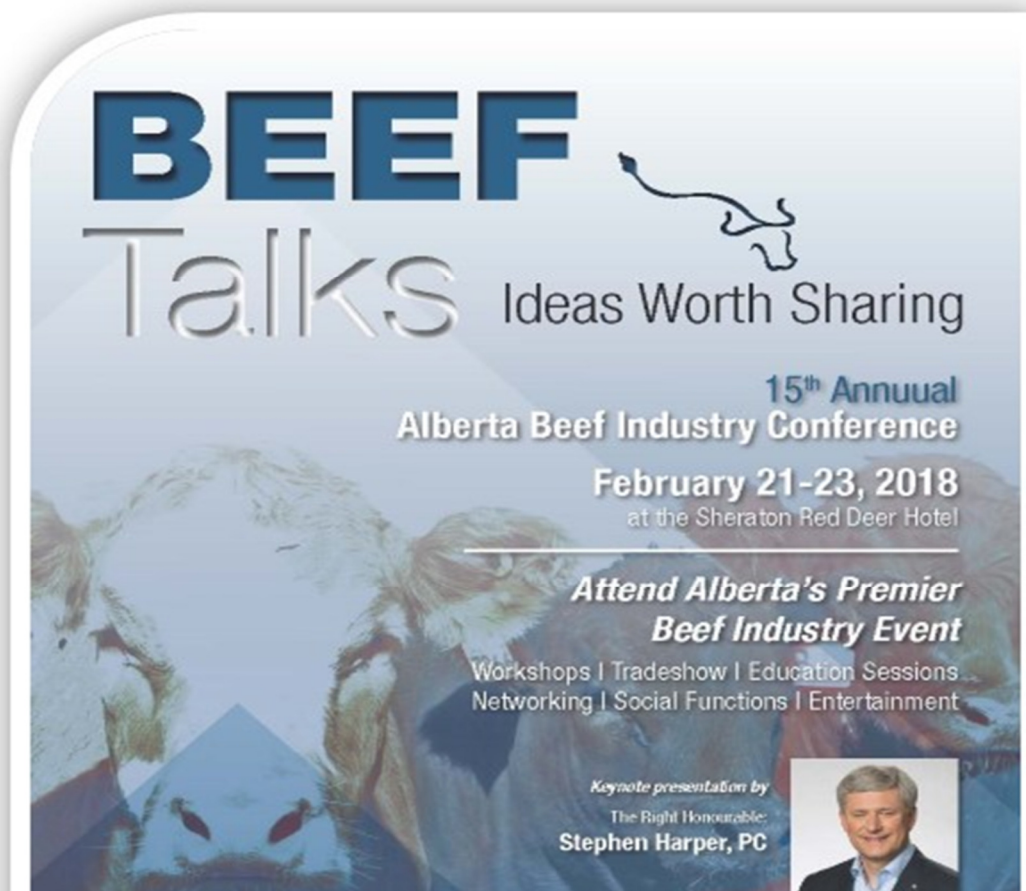
This year's sessions theme is **Enhancing Farm Business Decisions in Alberta's Cow Calf sector.**

Cow-Calfenomics will be held in six locations across the province:

- November 14, 2017— Brooks Heritage Inn and Convention Centre
- November 15, 2017— Lethbridge Country Kitchen Catering (in the lower level of the Keg)
- November 16, 201— Olds Pomeroy Inn & Suites at Olds College
- January 23, 2018 — Vermilion Regional Centre
- January 24, 2018 — Westlock Inn & Conference Centre
- January 25, 2018 — Stettler Agriculture Society

Registration starts at 9 a.m. and the session runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Please register by November 7 for the 2017 fall meetings, and by January 16 for the 2018 winter meetings. The registration fee is \$30 (GST is included in the price) and includes lunch. To register, please call the Ag-Info Centre at 1-800-387-6030 or register online at <https://eservices.alberta.ca/cowcalfenomics.html>.



Proposed corporate tax changes

You are probably aware of the government's proposed tax changes rolled out in July and many in the industry have been working to ensure the government is aware of the consequences of these changes could have. There are three major effects these changes could have on corporate farms. The first is the family's ability to pass down the farm or ranch to the next generation by restricting the use of the lifetime capital gains exemption. This will mean the tax paid upon transition of any privately held businesses will most likely greatly increase. The second is in the treatment of passive income that would restrict the ranchers ability to save up funds in the corporation to purchase new equipment or more land. The proposal seeks to tax any investment income earned from the current tax deferral within the corporation at higher rates, eliminating the benefit of holding these investments within the corporation. This will create a significant tax burden for any business owners that have a passive investment portfolio within their corporation. The third impact is in the ability to spread income across contributing farm family members. The changes will dramatically increase the personal tax burden of business owners across the nation, creating a detrimental effect on generational family businesses and heavily restricting the ability of business owners to split income with family members in a tax efficient manner.

We encourage all our members to meet with their accountant to discuss the personal impacts the changes will have for their operations.

The consultation period for the proposed changes concluded on October 2. WSGA submitted a response stating opposition to the proposed changes on behalf of our membership. Even though the government is not accepting responses in the consultation any longer, we encourage everyone to contact their MP on this issue. Premier Trudeau and Finance Minister Morneau have reiterated their intention of going forward with the proposal.

Grassland Disturbance and Reclamation Resources for Producers

Key to maintaining the health and biodiversity of grass species in rangelands is avoiding surface disturbance. Disturbance opens the door for ruderal or annual plants whose seeds have been sitting in the seed bank for years waiting for their chance to step forth and multiply. Below are a few resources for producers who are looking for a bit more information on how to minimize the effect of disturbance on their grassland.

Alberta Environment and Parks has a section on Native Grassland and Minimizing Surface Disturbance at <http://aep.alberta.ca/land/land-management/native-grassland/default.aspx>. These are either policy or policy support pieces, but some of the documents outlining the strategies to minimize surface disturbance could be really good touchstones for producers who have industrial activity occurring on their lands and want to minimize damage but may not know exactly how to do it.

See these in particular for info on minimizing surface disturbance:

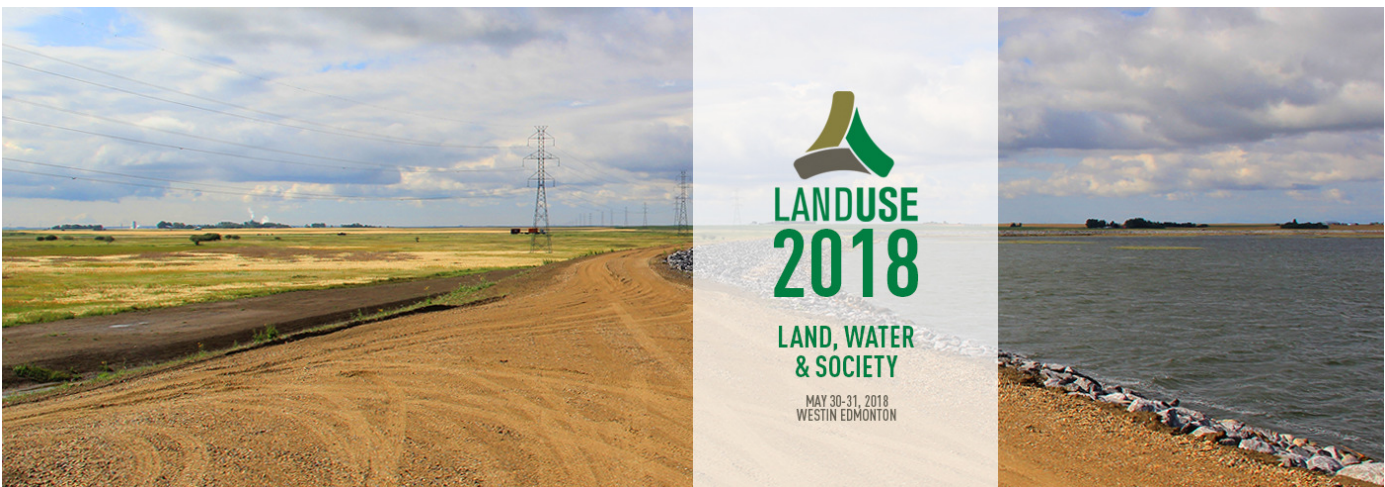
<http://aep.alberta.ca/land/land-management/native-grassland/documents/PrinciplesSurfaceDisturbance-Sep01-2016.pdf>

<http://aep.alberta.ca/land/land-management/native-grassland/documents/StrategiesSurfaceDisturbance-Sep01-2016.pdf>

<http://aep.alberta.ca/land/grazing-range-management/documents/Grassland-MinimizingSurfaceDisturbance.pdf>

<http://aep.alberta.ca/forms-maps-services/directives/lands-information-letters/documents/FoothillsFescueGrassSurfaceDisturb-2010.pdf>

Foothills Restoration Forum is also an excellent resource <http://www.foothillsrestorationforum.ca/>. They have some recovery strategies documents for each subregion that includes preferred approaches and suggested seed mixes for recovery of native rangelands <http://www.foothillsrestorationforum.ca/recovery-strategies/>.



For more information go to: www.albertalandinstitute.ca

UPCOMING EVENTS

Society for Range Management Fall Meeting — “Managing Disturbances on Native Rangelands”

● November 2, 2017 ● Coast Terrace Inn, Lethbridge, AB

- 9:00 am—noon is the annual business meeting and awards
- 1:00 to 5:00 are presentations on managing industrial disturbance, surface and property rights advice for land reclamation projects, U of A post-grad students research projects and a panel discussion.

Cost: \$60 per person

Online registration and payment: <http://srm-ims-fall2017.eventzilla.net>

Mail-in registration and payment:

Cheques can be made to Society for Range Management – IMS and mailed to:

c/o Lisa Raatz
410 Ag/For Bldg
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB. T6G 2P5

Walk-in registration: Cheques or Cash accepted at registration (will include lunch for those who RSVP by Oct 26 to Lisa Raatz at raatz@ualberta.ca or (780)-492-7531)

Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing Profit Above, Wealth Below

● December 5-7 ● Radisson Hotel Edmonton South

“Farming and Ranching for soil health enhances biodiversity and increases biological activity. Now attendees will have the opportunity to attend two great conferences in one”

For more information and to register go to www.absoilgrazing.com

NOTE: The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef will be launching the Verified Sustainable Beef Framework on December 7 in conjunction with the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing.



Alberta Beef Industry Conference 2018

Beef Talks: Ideas Worth Sharing

● February 21-23, 2018 ● Sheraton Hotel and Conference Centre, Red Deer

For more information and to register go to: www.abiconference.com

Western Stock Growers' Association

Box 179, #14—900 Village Lane
Okotoks, AB. T1S 1Z6

P: (403) 250-9121
E: office@wsqa.ca