



# Western Stock Growers' Association *Newsletter*

December 2019



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2019**

Another year has passed and it has been a busy one for sure. With the election of the UCP government in the spring, we have been working hard to open the communication between us. It has been encouraging to say the least. They have been very receptive to our issues and concerns. We collaborated through the Grazing Disposition Holders Operational Committee with Minister Nixon and his staff to bring Bill 16 The Public Lands Modernization (Grazing Leases and Obsolete Provisions) Amendment Act to fruition, modernizing provincial rental rates and assignment fees. We attended the town halls that Minister Dreeshen held regarding the Farm Freedom and Safety Act, and are generally pleased to see the end result in Bill 26. I have to say that it is refreshing to work with a government and its elected officials that are willing to work with Western Stock Growers on all fronts.

We also had a very successful summer meeting that my family and I hosted here at our ranch. We had very good attendance and several exceptional speakers. With government representation from federal, provincial, as well as a couple Montana State Senators in attendance, the discussion was fantastic. We invited all the beef industry groups for updates on what they are working on for the producers in this province. We heard updates from AGLA, ACFA

and LIS. On the second day we toured the grasslands, which was enjoyed by all those that attended.

There are still many issues to tackle in the new year; recreational access and the marketplace for EGS being at the top of the list. The WSGA board works hard to influence policy and stakeholders for the benefit of beef producers. What we focus on is driven by the input from the membership. We have an open door policy so I would encourage all of our membership to get in contact with myself or any of your directors to bring your concerns or issues forward. Any one of our membership is welcome at any WSGA board meeting table.

At this time I would like to ask you all to take the time to get more involved in our industry—whether is it attending more producer organization meetings or taking in a conference like the Alberta Beef Industry Conference or putting your name forward to become a director on the board. How you get involved is up to you but the progression of the beef industry will happen and it's better to be involved and informed. As an added bonus, it almost always translates to better business for you and your ranch.

Respectfully submitted,  
Aaron Brower  
President, WSGA

## **OVERHEARD AT THE WESTERN CANADIAN SOIL AND GRAZING CONFERENCE**

Looking forward to our great workshop on regenerative agriculture the morning of our AGM on March 4, here are some quick teaser points gleaned from the presentations at the Western Canadian Soil and Grazing Conference to get you warmed up:

- Your ranch is a reflection of you.
- Profitability is 78% higher on regenerative farms.
- Work with Mother Nature, do not operate out of context. Mother Nature is more collaborative than she is competitive.
- Always do split trials when you are trying something new.
- Choose plants and varieties for their root mass. More roots means a larger increase in soil organic matter. Root litter carbon is more important than shoot litter carbon—and root exudates may be even more important.
- Soil aggregates are a physical protection of the carbon in the soil, preventing it from being lost to the atmosphere.
- There is a direct relationship between microrrhizal fungi and soil aggregation. Microrrhizal fungi are fed by root exudates. This highlights the importance of maximizing the time we have living roots in the soil.
- Crop diversity increases soil aggregates. Even increasing from 1 crop species to 2 crop species (an intercropping system) increases aggregates between 15-58%.
- A marketplace for carbon (and other EGS) is a way to offset risks of switching to regenerative agriculture.
- In Alberta, we can have plants growing 260 days of the year (not necessarily consecutive days). Yes—we can have green plants and snow at the same time.
- The action of grazing—the cow wrapping it's tongue around the plant and ripping—rips root hairs from the plants and leads to increased carbon in the soil. The tongue creates little wounds in the plant leaf, stimulating the plant to make more carbon resources for recovery, working to elevate the functioning of the carbon cycle.
- Regenerative ag applied on the farm is simply a compilation of ideas stolen from other farms who are doing it. So build the network, steal the ideas, choose the ones that you think will work on your place, believe in trial and error and build your system on the foundation of the 5 principles of soil health.
- The best tool in your toolbox is — OBSERVATION
- Try to look through the lens of 'What is Mother Nature trying to tell me?'
- Only biology can stimulate biology— hoof action, grazing action, the shedding of microbes in hair, saliva and manure— these things all build microbial interaction in the soil through grazing.
- Livestock is a tool to heal the land again.
- A ranch is not truly sustainable unless it is equipped to foster the next generation.

The presentations from this sold out conference will be available on the conference website [www.absoilgrazing.com](http://www.absoilgrazing.com). The timeline for that is sometime in January.

Don't forget to register for the Alberta Beef Industry Conference pre-conference workshop Regenerative Agriculture: How to F@#% It Up Less on March 4 from 10:00 am to noon. WSGA AGM to follow at 1:00 pm. Register at [www.abiconference.ca](http://www.abiconference.ca).

### **WSGA HISTORY TIDBIT— excerpted from 'An Experiment that Worked' by John Schmidt**

Through the late 1960s it became apparent to WSGA that more capacity was going to be needed to deal with complicated issues forced on the cattle industry by an increasingly urbanized society. It also became apparent that the most equitable way to raising more money was through a voluntary per-head levy on all sales of cattle going for beef. So WSGA approached marketing council for the right to set up a provisional plan for one beef organization empowered to collect 10 cents a head to enable it to finance issues with which the beef industry was grappling. The government at the time said it would allow this if WSGA could get agreement from the Alberta Federation of Agriculture, the National Farmers Union and the milk producers. It took a lot of back and forth and some not insignificant compromises but agreement was found and the Alberta Cattle Commission was established. The 10-cent checkoff was earmarked for assistance in financing the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, research, education and promotion of product. The ACC was originally run by five producers appointed by the minister of agriculture—one each from WSGA, dairy farmers, NFU, the Federation of Agriculture and the newly formed Alberta Cattle Feeders Association. The first chairman elected from these five was Frank Gattey and John Stewart-Smith of Cochrane was hired as secretary-manager.

Happy 50th Anniversary to Alberta Beef Producers!

## **SUBMITTING CARBON TAX EXEMPTION FOR GAS AND DIESEL**

While Premier Jason Kenney and his government repealed the provincial carbon levy in June through Bill 1, the federal government is imposing a new carbon tax in Alberta effective January 1, 2020.

The federal government has announced targeted relief for marked gasoline and diesel fuel used by farmers. A one-time Exemption Certificate must be submitted to your fuel service provider ***before the time of delivery***. An Exemption Certificate must be provided to all of your service providers individually. They are not transferable between suppliers.

Suppliers will be notifying farmers and ranchers in the near term with specific details. Many suppliers are urging farmers and ranchers to submit their Exemption Certificates by December 31, 2019 to ensure that forms are received before the earliest possible fuel delivery.

Delivery drivers representing fuel service providers MAY NOT take completed certificates from farmers to the provider. However, all fuel providers' retail stores will take farmers' and ranchers' completed certificates and may be required at least one day prior to delivery.

Farmers and ranchers are strongly urged to contact their fuel service providers or visit their perspective websites to find out how they can submit their exemption certificates prior to December 31, 2019 (ex. email, in-person, mail, fax, etc.) to ensure they receive the carbon tax exemption.

## **WE WOULD LIKE TO PICK YOUR BRAIN**

As a membership organization, we are able to work completely independently on the issues our membership deem important. And as a membership organization, we rely on membership input to keep us accountable and on track. Recognizing the incredible brain trust our collective membership possesses, we would like your input.

One issue that we have seen escalating over the past few years, this year having the most complaints to any hunting season to date is the issue of recreational access. We have heard reports of ranchers needing to take cover from stray bullets and physical altercations between hunters and leaseholders. While the situation is worse for leaseholders due to the requirement to allow reasonable access, it is a problem for all people who manage any kind of land base.

So here's the question: **what would you propose is the solution to this problem that is only getting worse every year?** You can send your comments directly to the WSGA office: [office@wsga.ca](mailto:office@wsga.ca), 403-250-9121 or contract your director or any of the executive.

## **HISTORIC CHUCK STORM SADDLE AUCTIONED FOR CHARITY**



This Chuck Storm saddle was created initially as a fundraiser for the WSGA 1996 Great Centennial Cattle Drive. It was raffled off and the lucky winner was Welding Kolstad, WSGA President 1993-94. Earlier this year, Welding's family donated back to the WSGA to be auctioned off.

The saddle was auctioned off at the Western Canadian

Calf and Yearling Sale in September. The lucky buyer was Bill Newton. "Welding was an important mentor to me especially in my days of presidency in the WSGA so I am happy I can take this saddle home. I am sure I can find someone to fit it," says Newton.

From the proceeds, \$3400 was donated to each of the Tom Baker Cancer Center Melanoma Clinic and the James Hargrave Legacy Foundation.

We are grateful to the Kolstad family and SALE for their parts in this little project. It simply wasn't possible without them.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Grazing Weeds: If You Can't Beat It, Eat It**

January 9, 2020, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Fort Macleod Community Hall

Register at <https://grazingweeds.eventbrite.ca> before January 6.

### **Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Regional Meeting**

January 28, 2020, 2 - 5pm Pomeroy Hotel Vermilion

### **Rural Roots Ag Days**

February 11, 2020 Fort Macleod Community Hall

Featuring renowned grazier Jim Gerrish. Other topics include succession planning, livestock care and welfare and more. Go to [ruralrootscanada.com](http://ruralrootscanada.com) to register.

### **Jim Gerrish Grazing Workshop**

February 14, 2020 9:00 am to 3:30 pm Wheatland County Office

Register at <https://jimgerrishwheatland2020.eventbrite.ca> before February 7

### **Parkland Conservation Forum AGM**

February 16, 2020 Aldersyde, AB

Check PCF website for more information: [www.albertapcf.org](http://www.albertapcf.org)

### **Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Annual General Meeting**

February 26, 2020 1:00—4:00 pm Coast Hotel and Conference Centre, Lethbridge

### **Western Stock Growers' Association Annual General Meeting**

March 4, 2020 1:00—3:00 pm , Cambridge Hotel, Red Deer

### **Alberta Cattle Feeders Association Annual General Meeting**

March 4, 2020, 3:30 pm, Cambridge Hotel, Red Deer

### **Alberta Beef Industry Conference**

Beef Talks: Endless Possibilities

March 4-6, 2020 Cambridge Hotel, Red Deer

Register at [www.abiconference.ca](http://www.abiconference.ca)

### **AFAC Livestock Care Conference**

Theme: Raising the Bar

March 18-19, Olds

Registration will open in January. Check [www.afac.ab.ca](http://www.afac.ab.ca)



*Merry  
Christmas*

**Western Stock Growers' Association**

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

PH: 403-250-9121  
E: [office@wsge.ca](mailto:office@wsge.ca)