

# Western Stock Growers' Association *Newsletter*

July 2019



## **REGISTER NOW! WSGA SUMMER MEETING**

This year the WSGA Summer Meeting will be hosted by the Browers at Aden, Alberta on July 31 and August 1.

The first day is an open meeting discussing current issues facing beef producers, WSGA initiatives and activities. We have Dr. Kevin Keough, executive director of the Alberta Prion Research Institute to present on what is going on there with prion research including CWD. We will also have updates from other industry stakeholders and discussion around their initiatives.

The second day will be a tour of the grassland management in the area, highlighted by discussion on management with WSGA membership.

Nestled in the shadow of the Sweetgrass Hills along the US/Canada border, the expanse of natural grassland will take your breath away. For those of us where the grassland lives in our souls, the experience is biblical.

What this meeting lacks in accessibility more than makes up for it in locational beauty! You won't want to miss it!

For more information or to register contact Lindsye at the WSGA office: 403-250-9121 or [office@wsga.ca](mailto:office@wsga.ca)

## **Serving on the Board Serves Your Ranching Business**

The WSGA board of directors is populated by people who are passionate about the industry and want to help the industry succeed and grow.

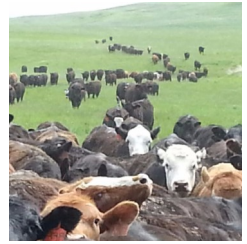
In an industry that is getting progressively global, more tech-savvy and less populated, building a network within the industry is vital to success. The outside-of-meeting discussion and opportunity to make contacts

throughout all levels of the industry while serving on the board should be capitalized on to improve your ranching business.

WSGA has vacancies on the board of directors. Join the board now! For more information, contact a WSGA director or the office at 403-250-9121 or [office@wsga.ca](mailto:office@wsga.ca).

## **THE BEEF BRIEF**

The Beef Brief is the document containing the policy recommendations the WSGA has put to government. The full document is available through our office or on our website. Here are some highlights:



We recommended changes to current legislation. The legislation we targeted include:

- ⇒ the Carbon Capture and Storage Statutes Amendment Act 2010 (Bill 24),
- ⇒ the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act (Bill 6),
- ⇒ the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Bill 30),
- ⇒ the Alberta Land Stewardship Act and
- ⇒ the Surface Rights Act.

We also put forth recommendations for new legislation. Including:

- ⇒ legislation to protect and enshrine the agricultural right to water,
- ⇒ New Farm and Ranch Safety legislation through meaningful consultation
- ⇒ Property Rights Preservation Bill after meaningful consultation

Our recommendations for general policy focused on resolutions from our AGM and include:

- ⇒ Reinstating funding to the Western Canadian Veterinary School at the U of S
- ⇒ Addressing inadequacies of the current wildlife damage and predation compensation programs
- ⇒ Reducing bureaucracy to increase efficiencies and reducing duplication with private sector
- ⇒ Prohibiting environmental / conservation departments and entities within government from purchasing agricultural land and / or operating an agricultural enterprise wherein a competitive private market exists.
- ⇒ Reconsider funding to 'conservation' organizations who undermine and act as barriers to the proper stewardship of the land
- ⇒ Work with federal government to eradicate TB And brucellosis in northern Alberta Wood Bison and address the succession problems that come out of estate taxes and rollover

We made recommendations specific to Crown lands under grazing dispositions, including:

- ⇒ Adopting the Alberta Public Land Grazing Framework to modernize the grazing lease system
- ⇒ Allowing subletting of grazing leases to facilitate succession
- ⇒ Implementing 20-year tenure for eligible leases as stated in regional plans
- ⇒ Move Rangelands Sections from Environment and Parks into Agriculture and Forestry
- ⇒ Continue the Grazing Disposition Holders Operational Committee as a vital link between government and leaseholders
- ⇒ Uphold the current Recreational Access Regulations and commit to respecting the rights and investment of leaseholders.

We also recommended the government start putting the pieces in place to facilitate the creation of a marketplace for Ecosystem Goods and Services. Areas that are ripe for development include a marketplace for carbon sequestration on rangeland and paid access for hunting.

The full policy recommendations document can be found on our website [www.wsga.ca](http://www.wsga.ca).

## The Dangers of Just Ranchin'

As ranchers, we take God's gift of sunshine, green grass, a little rain, and the ultimate conversion tool of the cow to create lifestyle, food, and a healthy ecology around us. That beautiful cow that turns invisible sunlight into pounds of beef is the greatest solar technology not created by man. We as ranchers are merely stewards of these great creatures.

A glorious history of risk takers, pioneers and hard-working people have made a strong cattle industry that we fight hard to maintain. Where our challenges were once weather, disease and natural dangers, we now face new challenges unfamiliar to most of us. The political, environmental, and social mood swings of an urban class too disconnected from where food comes from. We also face violent volatility in market prices due to too many well financed people globally betting on the success of less than 2% of the population that actually feeds them.

This is not our grand fathers' era of ranching.

We operate in a massively turbulent marketplace. No matter what certification program you are chasing these days, we are all still paid "by the pound". Our dream is to add a hundred pounds more on our grass yearlings through good grass, the right bulls, and a bit of good management all at less cost, hopefully 5 or 10 cents over market. Heck, a hundred pounds more on our grass steers is over \$175/head more in your jeans, not bad.

In April, we could lock in 30 cents/lb higher with WLPPI insurance on our grass steers than today. That is nearly \$300/head difference. That simple market move over-shadowed all the management efforts it took to put on 100 lbs more weight on your grass cattle. Those who were able to capture those prices in April pre-locked in nearly \$300/hd more than their unhedged neighbours, and yet less than 25% of our industry are using these tools!

We have grass management plans, breeding plans, vet protocols, corral plans, feeding plans. I encourage you to explore reducing market risk as one of those "plans" this year. Not only does it add profit to your operation, but it helps you sleep at night.

*Article courtesy of Ryan Copithorne at Cows in Control.*

[cowsincontrol.com](http://cowsincontrol.com)



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **WSGA Summer Meeting**

July 31 and August 1, Aden, Alberta

Email [office@wsga.ca](mailto:office@wsga.ca) or phone 403-250-9121 to register

### **International Livestock Identification Association Conference**

July 14—17, Spruce Meadows, Calgary, AB

For more information go to: [www.internationallivestockid.com](http://www.internationallivestockid.com)

### **Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women**

July 16-17, County of Warner / Milk River, AB

For more information contact: Kristi Stebanuk 403-382-4345 [kstebanuk@cowsandfish.org](mailto:kstebanuk@cowsandfish.org)

### **Alberta Range Stewardship Course—Theme: Resiliency**

July 30-31, Buffalo, AB

Field sessions offer hands-on learning in water infiltration, litter retention, stocking rates with link in range health and economics, plant identification, record keeping and tools to support management.

For more information go to: [www.albertapcf.org](http://www.albertapcf.org)

### **Canadian Beef Industry Conference—Theme: Securing Our Future**

August 13-15, 2019, BMO Centre, Calgary, AB

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

### **Grasslands Conservation Market Symposium**

November 19—20, Calgary, AB

The Grassland Conservation Market Symposium will bring together ranchers, farmers, conservation groups, developers and industry to identify opportunities for rewarding land owners and managers for conserving and managing healthy grassland ecosystems for ecosystem service and biodiversity benefits.

For more information go to: <https://ecoservicesnetwork.ca/blog/>

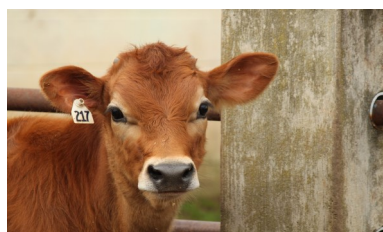
### **Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing**

Theme: Our Future Is In The Soil

December 10, 11 and 12, Edmonton, AB

Last time this conference sold out before early bird pricing expired! Register early!

For more information and to register go to: [www.absoilgrazing.com](http://www.absoilgrazing.com)



## **Western Stock Growers' Association**

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

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