



Special AGM and Summer Meeting Newsletter

August 20, 2021

2021 WSGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well, what a year and a half it has been since taking over the reins of this great organization from Aaron Brower. First COVID, then the grazing lease contract, then the coal debacle, and now the most severe and widespread drought since the 1980's, possibly the 1960's. The one thing I do know that lies between now and the next AGM in February 2022 is that the Governors will find a new president to take the reins in 2022.

Despite our best efforts to play offence in the last year and a half, we have been stuck playing defense the vast majority of the time. Not that we have been on our heels in our own end the whole time, we have been able to poke the bear occasionally and get the best outcome in a no-win situation periodically. In true Stock Grower fashion, we have been in the back channels, footing the bills and generally too tired to pat ourselves on the back at the finish line like those who like to wait there for us.

Since that is sort of how the world seems to go around, it makes membership into our organization a difficult proposition. "What do you do?" one might ask. Well, we don't get a lot of accolades, but we get results. Despite a renewed effort this past year to increase our membership, it is still a tough sell. People have plenty of other things to worry about and plenty of other places to get their information. As long as the same old guard keeps plugging away at Stock Growers, what incentive is there to join and help make a difference?

That is why membership needs to be a group effort. Not just a board committee. Not just the board of directors. The entire membership needs to pitch in to make sure our organization remains viable. Who are the young producers in your area? Who are the producers with too much at stake not to be involved? If everyone just found one and dragged them along to a meeting or bought them a one-year Associate Membership, surely, we could increase our membership by 50%. With so much going on in the world and so many distractions, we can no longer expect people to find us, we must find them and show them.



On that note, I would like to thank outgoing Honorary President Mabel Hamilton and Director at Large, Michael Munton. Your input and services have been appreciated and valued. I would also like to welcome incoming Honorary President Kevin France and incoming Director at Large, Cody Cronkhite of Warner. Also, for the first time in a long time, I would like to welcome a Zone 9 Director - Chris Sloan of Mallaig. He sends his regrets for not attending as they started silaging this week. I would also like to announce the appointment to the Policy Advisor position. I welcome Keith Lyseng, Charlie Gracey and Trevor Maclean to sit as our new Policy Advisors.

Thank you for the honor of serving as President in this the 125-year anniversary of the organization. Though none of us were around to confirm this, by the number and seriousness of the issues, it looks to me like the organization is just as relevant today as it was when it was founded. I hope each one of you takes up the challenge of member renewal and can help WSGA flourish in the next 125 years.

Respectfully,

Callum Sears

RESOLUTIONS CARRIED AT 2021 AGM

RESOLUTION 2021-01 – tabled by the Board of Governors

WHEREAS the Western Stock Growers' Association was incorporated in October on 1896; and
WHEREAS the Association has advocated for the best interests of its voluntary membership since that date;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we take this opportunity to acknowledge and salute the 125 years of continuous service provided by the Western Stock Growers' Association to the livestock industry.

RESOLUTION 2021-02

WHEREAS wildlife predation continues to impact ranchers to the point of hardship
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that WSGA lobby the government to for livestock producers who have a confirmed kill and/or constant property damage and/or personal safety risk at their property to be allowed to take out a damage permit, to be issued within three days, to address problem grizzly bears.

WSGA SUMMER MEETING 2021

This year due to COVID planning restrictions, we combined our AGM and Summer Meeting and Tour. The afternoon of the 11th, after completing the AGM business, we commenced with our summer meeting. We heard updates from other beef industry organizations to give our membership a complete picture of what we and other organizations are doing on their behalf. It's been a busy year for all!

Our special guest speaker this year was Danielle Smith. Even though the crowd numbered over 100, it seemed more like an intimate discussion touching on a variety of interesting topics.

The 125 year anniversary was celebrated with a speech from our oldest attending past president, George Ward AKA Mr. Stockgrower, and a cake cutting by past-president Tom Gilchrist and current president Callum Sears.

The second day of Summer Meeting is the tour. We took a tour of some of the Bar S pasture guided by Clay Chattaway and Morgan Chattaway. The tour took us on a visit through 2W where the welding robots stole the show and finished with a tour of the Bomber Museum in Nanton.

Our gratitude goes out to our exceptional hosts of this year's meeting, Clay and Avril Chattaway. They did an incredible job with the organization and preparation. They rolled with the news of our exceptional registration numbers with calm and grace.

And Clay BBQs a great steak!



2021 CANADA-ALBERTA LIVESTOCK FEED ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE (CALFA)

On August 6, 2021, the government of Alberta announced an AgriRecovery response to help address the extraordinary costs being incurred by Alberta's livestock producers because of reduced grazing capacity caused by prolonged dry weather and extreme high temperatures. The response provides support and cash flow for Alberta's livestock producers and beekeepers to cover extraordinary expenses incurred to feed livestock.

AgriRecovery responses are cost-shared 60-40 between federal and provincial governments and are designed to cover extraordinary costs not covered by existing business risk management programs, such as those incurred due to extreme drought conditions or other natural disasters. The Government of Alberta has announced a \$136 million commitment under the AgriRecovery framework and asked the federal government to provide \$204 million for a total relief package of \$340 million.

The details:

This initiative provides compensation for extraordinary costs incurred by Alberta's livestock producers due to reduced grazing capacity caused by the drought of 2021 for breeding females only.

There will be two stages to the initiative - an initial payment of \$94 per head for beef cows (for other animals see conversions below) based on inventory as of August 6, 2021.

Producers may receive additional payments up to a maximum of \$106 per head, through a receipt-based approach, to reflect extraordinary circumstances faced in some areas of the province - details are still being finalized.

The following animal conversion rates will be used to adjust the Initial and Secondary payments relative to beef cows as follows: Horses = 1.2, Cows/Bison = 1.0, Elk/Yak/Musk Ox = 0.5, Deer/Llamas = 0.25, Sheep/Goats/Alpacas = 0.2

Applications will be online through AFSC Connect and it is anticipated they will be available in early September. Keep an eye on the AFSC website at www.afsc.ca for further details.

Producers who are current AFSC clients should ensure they have an AFSC Connect account and are signed up for direct deposit to receive program payments.

Producers who are not currently AFSC clients will need to sign up for an AFSC Connect account; directions for sign up will be available soon.

Producers can take steps now to ensure a smooth process when the application is available by preparing an inventory of breeding females on hand as of August 6, keeping records for any expenses incurred for drought-related costs, checking AFSC.ca regularly for updates and following AFSC on social media

Full program details are being finalized and will be shared as soon as possible .

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OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF AFSC UNDER SUSPICION

NEWS RELEASE - August 25, 2021

After weeks of speaking to elected officials and bureaucrats, the beef industry finally has an announcement on the AgriRecovery support but are still waiting on details while more water dries up and more feed is disappearing. "In all our meetings with AFSC, they have been receptive of our input but it seems their hands are tied to take any action," says WSGA president Callum Sears.

"We are in an emergency situation. Throughout trying to get the support we need to minimize the liquidation of the cattle herd, timelines have been stretched to the point of extreme stress for producers despite repeated statements on the need for urgency," says Sears. "It might just be conjecture but it does make one question the integrity of the system. Why has this taken so long in the face of how desperate things are getting?"

Alberta Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) is a Crown corporation that is governed by a private sector Board of Directors. The board's job is to provide 'essential oversight'. According to their mandate, 'AFSC must have a level of operational independence from the Government in making the day-to-day operation and management decisions'. Since October 2020 the interim chair of the AFSC board has been the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

The 'operational independence' guaranteed by a private sector board is to adequately 'ensure the agency's programs and services are delivered effectively and meet the needs of Albertans'. "To ensure effective delivery or, at the very least, to retain client confidence, the chair cannot be one whose day job depends on the Agriculture Minister," says Sears.

"We are extremely grateful for the announcements from both the provincial and federal government in their commitment of the \$200 per head support. It does help, but the brutal truth is that Canfax projects that the average beef producer will have \$535 of extraordinary costs per head this year. There will be liquidation of the cattle herd even with the support," says Sears. "The \$200 per head is the bare minimum and with \$106 being a receipted program, it complicates the participation exponentially for the beef producer. It's a lot of effort and paperwork for a relatively little bit of money."

It's not expected that there will be any change to the receipt requirements for the second payment despite the concerns expressed by industry groups. "The government is under pressure with international trade agreements and the need to be accountable with tax dollars but AgriRecovery is a blunt instrument. Delivering such a program with high detail requirements makes a problematic rollout which will bring further stress and hardship to producers; some to the point of not even participating," says Sears.

Established in 1896, Western Stock Growers' Association is a beef producer organization driven by province-wide voluntary membership. WSGA's main priority is protection of the livestock producer and the rangelands they operate on through advocacy. WSGA encourages interaction within industry leaders that promotes education and helps define philosophical issues in agriculture.

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