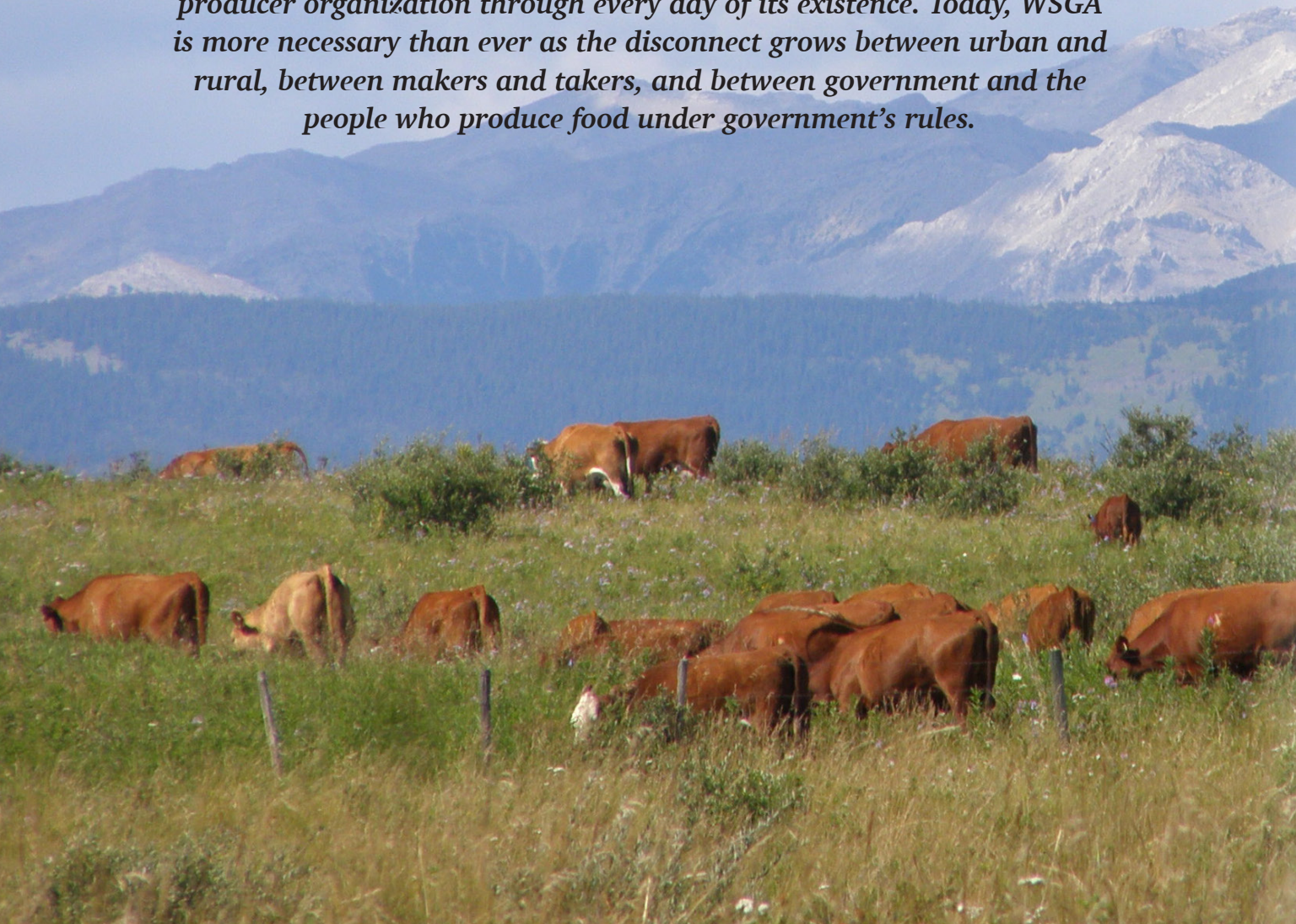




# WSGA: the voice of Albertan stockmen for 125 years

*This fall marks 125 years since a handful of southern Albertan cattlemen met and formed the Western Stock Growers' Association (WSGA). Alberta's longest running agricultural organization, WSGA has been an independent, membership-driven, stockmen-specific, grassroots producer organization through every day of its existence. Today, WSGA is more necessary than ever as the disconnect grows between urban and rural, between makers and takers, and between government and the people who produce food under government's rules.*







“We have the ability to produce more with less today. That’s great and wonderful – it’s what we’ve been working towards - but a side effect is that our opinion as producers matters less and less,” says Callum Sears, WSGA’s current president. “Producers are getting fewer and fewer and we’re being outnumbered and out-voted. It’s so important for people to be involved in organizations like Stock Growers’ so we can come together to make our voices a little bit louder.”

WSGA’s membership is currently responsible for three million rangeland hectares and over half a million head of cattle. While the details of its specific efforts have changed over the years, its mandate to protect stock growers’ rights and the fragile rangelands they operate on has remained absolutely consistent through the years.

“From a broad sense, a lot of the issues we deal with today come back to property rights, and that’s what Stock Growers’ was founded upon,” says Sears. “At the start of the day, we might think we’re talking about two different issues but, once we hash it all out, it’s almost always about basic property rights.”

How has the WSGA lasted a century and a quarter, and what keeps it going strong? The answer lies in three key factors: WSGA is an entirely voluntary organization, run by stockmen, for stockmen.

WSGA is not funded by checkoff or government. The majority of its operating funds come from dues paid by members who voluntarily join the organization. The fact that membership is voluntary keeps the organization keenly focused on its members’ priorities. Membership-raised operating funds also allows WSGA to advocate on behalf of stockmen without being obliged or indebted to government or corporate funds and priorities.

“If you align with how we run our business and how we attack policy, then you become a member,” says Lindsye Murfin, WSGA’s general manager. “That allows us to be more independent in our messaging. We can be nimble and advocate however our membership tells us to advocate.”

“If we don’t meet our members’ needs and if we don’t pursue the work our members care about, they have the option to walk away,” adds Sears. “The fact that we have so many committed and longstanding members is proof that we continue to provide value.”

Ultimately, there’s no one better to advocate and work on behalf of stockmen than stockmen themselves.

Though certain stockmen priorities overlap with those of feeders or other cattle industry groups, land use and other priorities are often unique to stockmen. Rather than trying to meet a broad range of industry priorities, WSGA focuses exclusively on the unique needs of its members.

## WESTERN STOCK GROWERS

**1882** – Pincher Creek Stock Association forms

**1883** – South-Western Stock Association forms

**1886** – Canadian North-West Territories Stock Association (CNWTSA) forms

**1887** – CNWTSA renamed Alberta Stock Growers’ Association

**1894** – Southern Alberta Stock Growers’ Association forms

**1896** – WSGA established

**1905** – Province of Alberta officially forms

**1909** – Edward, Prince of Wales, made a life member of WSGA

**1913** – Medicine Hat Stock Growers’ Association established

**1914** – Medicine Hat Stock Growers’ Association joins WSGA

**1920** – Stock Growers’ Protective Association of Western Canada established

**1921** – WSGA merges with the Stock Growers’ Protective Association of Western Canada, using the latter’s name

**1923** – Stock Growers’ Protective Association of Western Canada changes its name to WSGA

**1936** – Short Grass Stocker Growers’ Association forms

**1937** – WSGA’s longest-ever serving president, Dan Riley, hands off the organization’s reins after 16 years of service.

**1941** – WSGA presents Edward, Duke of Windsor, with a lined buffalo robe not long after he abdicated the throne of England.

**1943** – The Short Grass Stock Growers’ Association merges with WSGA

**1996** – Centennial Cattle Drive

**1896 to 2021** and beyond – WSGA draws from the best in the industry to effectively advocate for Albertan stockmen’s rights.

## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Western Stock Growers Association

"We get things done. We're results driven. And everyone is pulling in the same direction because we face the same pressures, are frustrated by the same issues, and are striving for the same goals," says Sears.

WSGA's alumni list represents the biggest stock industry names: movers and shakers who have played major roles in shaping beef production over the past 125 years. Board members are ultra-active: with the exception of part time administrative support provided by Laurie MacDonald and general manager Lindsye Murfin, all WSGA work is carried out by volunteer board members.

"I could go on and on about the people sitting around the [WSGA's board] table. To me, the reasons the organization has lasted so long is the caliber of the people involved. I work with some of the best people I have ever known," says Murfin.

None of the board directors receive any direct compensation for their

efforts or reimbursement for the costs of participating on the board. As just one example of many, Aaron Brower, WSGA's president between 2013 and 2020, drove more than five hours each way to attend meetings held in Calgary; eight hours when the meetings were in Edmonton, says Murfin. He, like all the other board members, refused payment for mileage or hotel costs.

"I've brought up the idea of honorariums or even just mileage payments for our directors but every time I bring it up, they say no: they want all the money to go towards the work being done," says Murfin.

Despite an aging industry, WSGA has done an excellent job of attracting both experienced and newer cattlemen.

"When I see these young guys that are just starting at the Stock Growers' I think to myself, man, you're in for an education from the people who have been in the trenches," says

Eileen McElroy, a past WSGA board member and current governor (a lifetime honorary position WSGA created for those who carry the wisdom and history of the organization). "Being part of the Stock Growers' makes you a more well-rounded person and a better farmer because you can gain, not just the political and lobbying piece, but practical things too from stock growers with so much knowledge and experience."

While WSGA advocates on every major property rights and land use issue that stockmen face, so much more could be achieved if more cattlemen joined WSGA's ranks.

"I know some people might wonder why they should pay for membership in the Stock Growers' if they can get the benefits of our work for free. The more people that join us, the stronger WSGA's voice will be. We consistently punch above our weight class. If we had a bigger budget, we could do so much more," says Murfin.

**solv**et

Innovation By Request

**Merry Christmas and Congratulations!**

**To the Western Stock Growers  
on your 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**From AVL/Solv**

Proud Canadian manufacturers of animal health products like Solmectin Pour-on and Meloxicam Oral Suspension.



All products are researched and manufactured in Canada for Canadian Cattle producers like yourselves at our new facility in Calgary.



Solvet is a subsidiary of AVL Ltd. - I Care For Cattle logo is a trademark of Solvet/AVL.



Ask your  
Veterinarian  
about our  
**FEEDLOT  
MORBIDITY  
PREVENTION  
PROGRAM**

**BECAUSE  
YOU CALL  
THE SHOTS**

**FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS.**

Vetoquinol is a family-owned animal health company. Just like you, we are passionate about what we do. Our products are backed by years of experience dedicated to quality. Lydaxx gets the job done. You call the shots because your feedlot is your family legacy.

**Switch to Vetoquinol. For all the right reasons.**

**Lydaxx<sup>®</sup>**  
TULATHROMYCIN 10%



Tulathromycin injection 100 mg/mL

CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN



[www.vetoquinol.ca](http://www.vetoquinol.ca)

**vetoquinol**  
ACHIEVE MORE TOGETHER

## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Western Stock Growers Association

Other people might wonder whether their checkoff dollars already achieve stockmen's priorities.

"[ABP] does good work – there's a role in industry from them too – but they are all things to all people. There are some issues that a cow-calf producer faces that aren't in tune with the other sectors. Supporting WSGA is a more individualized way of getting things done: it allows stockmen to have a direct voice to government," says McElroy.

While WSGA welcomes those who would like to actively participate on its board or committees, simply joining the organization is an easy way to support its continued efforts, she adds.

"I donate dollars to causes I believe in but don't have the time or expertise to work on. Just buying a membership is a very inexpensive and effective way to get a lot of work done on your behalf."

### A long history of standing up for rangeland property rights

In 1896, a full nine years before Alberta was even a province, a group of cattlemen met in what was then called Macleod (now Fort Macleod), Alberta to talk about property rights. Finding that they were frustrated by the same issues – cattle losses to collisions with CPR trains, wolf predation, and cattle rustling – they agreed to start a brand-new advocacy organization they called the Western Stock Growers' Association.

DW Marsh, a prominent money-lender and businessman who had served as the Mayor of Calgary six years before he took the reins as WSGA's first president. The vice president role was shared by WF Cochrane (of the Cochrane Ranch Co, who took over from Marsh as second president) and FW Godsall (of the South Fork Ranch, who had previously served as president of the short-lived Southern Alberta Stock Growers' Association).

WSGA wasn't the first or the last stock growers' association formed by and for the area's cattlemen around the turn of the 19th century. Between the 1880s and mid 1920s, several stock growers' groups formed, fizzled out, or amalgamated with others. By 1925, WSGA was the 'last man standing': the one organization that survived to further Albertan stock growers' priorities.

WSGA's list of presidents and board members is a list of the biggest names in Alberta ranching history. Many have been leaders outside of the organization: some started the feeding industry; others served in provincial and national politics; three of the 'Big Four' who started the Calgary Stampede served as WSGA presidents. Many represent the longest-term ranching families and the biggest ranches in the province.

"Looking back through the [19]30's, the '40s, right up to the 1980's, the names on the plaque of



Grass changes with the season.  
Shouldn't your mineral?

**Right Now Mineral**

**Emerald | Bronze | Gold | Onyx**

Congratulations to the  
Western Stock Growers Association  
on their 125th Anniversary!

For more information on Right Now Mineral  
please contact your local Cargill dealer  
or email [beef\\_can@cargill.com](mailto:beef_can@cargill.com)

**ALTOSID** **Cargill**

*Congratulations*  
**Western Stock Growers Association**  
**On their 125 Year Anniversary**

---

**FOOTHILLS  
LIVESTOCK CO-OP**

**25 Years Old & Still Going Strong!**  
**Bred Cow Program! • Feeder Program!**

**NEW MEMBERS  
ALWAYS WELCOME**

**ONE STOP CATTLE FINANCING**  
**BC, ALBERTA, SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Farmers Helping Farmers**

**1-403-845-6669**  
**Toll Free 1-866-848-6669**  
*No Restrictions Purchase and Marketing Your Choice*

**[www.foothillslivestock.ca](http://www.foothillslivestock.ca)**  
Rocky Mountain House, Alberta





past presidents are all the big names of our industry. You read that list and every one of them is 'oh wow', 'he was huge', 'he started this', 'he started that'. It's always been the who's who of the industry," says Callum Sears, WSGA's current president..

Even more importantly than individual names, however, WSGA has always been about teamwork.

"If you look at the history of the Stock Growers' – and this holds true when you look around the room today too – our organization has always drawn the very best people. We've had cattlemen legends at the helm. But they aren't part of WSGA for power or attention. They pull more than their weight and get incredible work done as a team because they believe in the organization and the industry," says Lindsye Murfin, WSGA's general manager. "Stock Growers' has always been about doing what needs to be done."

And, since it first formed, the WSGA has always been about people who truly love cattle. In an article RG Mathews (WSGA's first secretary) wrote that was first published to the March 1947 issue of Canadian Cattlemen, Mathews remembered one such cattleman: Jim Patterson, who WSGA hired as an inspector in its earliest years.

"It seemed as though [Jim] was personally acquainted with every range animal. I remember one occasion when he and I were looking through a herd of some 2000 head of mixed cattle when I suddenly heard him shout, 'Well!



## Short on Feed?



- ✓ Process Bales & Roughage
- ✓ Extend your Feed Supply
- ✓ Reduce Feed Costs

# NDEco

[www.NDEco.com](http://www.NDEco.com) | 888.336.3127

## You're invested in your business

### So are we

Partner with the only lender  
100% invested in Canadian  
agriculture and food.

1-800-387-3232 | [fcc.ca](http://fcc.ca)

DREAM. GROW. THRIVE.





I'll be gol-darned if that ain't old Emma', and he pointed to a cow's head sticking up from the middle of the sea of milling cattle some fifty yards away. He explained later on that 'Emma' was an old friend from his former Cochrane Ranche days some years previously."

In the same article, Mathews wrote a congratulations message to the WSGA board on its first five decades of service:

"Realizing that half a century has elapsed since the Association started on its useful career and that it is still going strong, I venture to speak for the men who did the original spade-work that brought it into existence and who are not here to speak for themselves, and to congratulate those who are today carrying on and to join them in celebrating the completion of the Association's first fifty years."

He'd be impressed – but likely not

surprised – to see WSGA still going strong on its 125th birthday.

Congratulations to the Western Stock Growers' Association on 125 years!

#### Today's priorities and major initiatives

Though WSGA has successfully organized several projects and events over the years, its main role is advocating for stockmen's rights

*17<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
**GRAZE through the SNOW  
 BULL SALE**

*High Fertility • Never Pushed • Calving Ease • Easy Fleshing*

**OLE  
 FARMS**

**February 21, 2022, ATHABASCA, AB**

On Offer:  
 • 180 PUREBRED ANGUS BULLS  
 • 220 COMMERCIAL HEIFERS

**Kelly Olson (780) 689-7822 | Graham Olson (780) 675-0112 | Jay Wildman (587) 777-9004**

**WWW.OLEFARMS.COM**



to government, within industry and – at times - to the general public. Specifically, WSGA's goals are to lead the stewardship of property rights for rangeland producers, to lead land use rights for producers, and to advocate for the appropriate use of grasslands.

WSGA believes in a free-market approach to the production and marketing of livestock, and the enhancement and protection of the environment through sound range management by cattlemen. It bases its perspective on four agreed-upon tenets:

- The incredible and universal influence of the marketplace;
- The supremacy of natural processes that drive ecosystem functioning;
- The finite carrying capacity of the land and ecosystems for any and all uses; and
- The escalating demand for diverse land uses ranging from conservation/preservation to recreation to residential to industrial.

"We have a 'leave us alone; we'll leave you alone' attitude," says Callum Sears, WSGA's current president. "We want a smaller government and for the free market to be allowed space to work."

Back in 1896, WSGA formed to tackle cattle losses from an expanding railway system and cattle rustlers. 125 years later, the details are a little different – for example, encroachment today is by recreational use and the energy sector rather than the CPR, and the theft is by wildlife grazing as well as cattle thieves – but the basic themes remain the same.

"A lot of issues we're working on now were the reason our founders founded the organization. These issues aren't going to go away. We have to stay vigilant," says Sears.

"The primary reason I got involved and stayed involved, and I think it's fair to say most board members would agree, is because it's a way to give back to your industry by helping promote it, protect it,

and advance it, by lobbying in favour of things that would be good and against things that would be bad," says Eileen McElroy, a past WSGA board member and current governor.

Over the years, WSGA has fought for stockmen's rights in relation to brand inspections, quarantine regulations, freight policies for the movement of cattle and feed, and more. It has also acted as a buying agency for its members.

WSGA's website shows a long list of letters and policy papers written to the government on behalf of stockmen, each tackling a hot-button issue critical to stockmen's lives and livelihoods. Additionally, WSGA advocates through meetings with government officials, participation in industry roundtables and stakeholder committees, and by sharing stakeholder perspectives through media interviews, newsletters and email campaigns.

"When new laws are being considered by whatever the government of

## A better mixed feed ration, in less time, using less fuel.



Your maximum performance depends on choosing the right livestock feed mixer to improve your operation with lower fuel consumption and less water. We manufacture strong, durable feed mixing equipment with patented augers and staggered rotors which deliver better total mixed feed ration, quickly and efficiently.

***We are proud to support the Western Stock Grower's Association.***  
**VRP FARMS: Always room for more.**

**VRP FARMS**

For further details contact:

**Calvin Sosick: 403-382-8427 | Kevin Paskal: 403-330-9147**



## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### Western Stock Growers Association

the day is, Stock Growers' has always taken a careful and nuanced view of the proposed legislation and submitted feedback. That engagement with the government – we're always at the table – means stockmen's voices are heard," says McElroy.

**Congratulations  
on 125 years  
from AFIN &  
Farmingtheweb.ca**

**Representing  
Alberta's Diverse  
Forage Industry.**

Want to get involved?  
Apply to become a member today!



[www.albertaforages.ca](http://www.albertaforages.ca)

**Easily buy, sell or lease  
products, services  
and equipment on the  
agriculture marketplace.**

FREE FOR INDIVIDUAL SELLERS & BUYERS



**Farming  
theWeb.ca**

### Project highlight: Grasslands Capital X

After decades of discussion and several years of intensive effort, WSGA began the two-year Grasslands Capital X pilot project in March of 2020. The environmental goods and services project strives to measure and sell on the free market the environmental benefits achieved from rangeland management practices. Unlike a typical offset or protocol program, this program sells the actual outcomes: the measurable benefits achieved. To date, WSGA has in place ranchers who want to sell outcome-based benefits, and buyers who are keen to buy. Currently, WSGA is working on a measurement system to calculate and verify the environmental benefits, and to administer sales.

"This project allows us to showcase the good work stock growers do," says Eileen McElroy, a past WSGA board member and current governor. "When people pay for things, there's more awareness of those things' value. It's a kind of evidence to the general public that stock growers provide real benefit to our rangeland ecosystems."

### Project highlight: Centennial Cattle Drive

In July 1996, 1,500 people, 1,700 horses and mules and 103 wagons

pushed more than 2,000 steers across 60 southern Albertan prairie miles to celebrate the WSGA's 100th birthday. The cattle drive, which occurred over six days and moved the cattle from Buffalo to Medicine Hat, Alberta across CFB Suffield, was a gigantic organizational undertaking. The Centennial Cattle Drive was a huge success made possible by the incredible efforts of Roy Clark and a large team of supporting hands.

### Project highlight: James Hargrave Legacy Foundation

James Hargrave was an Albertan rancher and past WSGA vice president who tragically lost his life fighting wild-fire in 2017. The WSGA partnered with others in industry to establish the James Hargrave Legacy Fund: an annual award to encourage and enable people in the beef industry to carry on the values, leadership and philosophy that James embodied. The fund seeks to support and promote advances and innovations in the beef industry, especially in the areas James was most passionate about: grasslands stewardship and conservation, water conservation, and work done to progress a marketplace for ecosystem goods and services, as well as knowledge transfer on any of these topics. For more information about the Fund, visit [www.JamesHargraveLegacy.com](http://www.JamesHargraveLegacy.com).

**UNION  
FORAGE**

**CANADA'S FORAGE INNOVATORS**



**YEAR ROUND  
Forage and Grazing**



**Perennial Forages • Annual Cover Crop Forages • Drought Grazing Forages**



**Toll Free: 1-877-COW-CHOW [WWW.UNIONFORAGE.COM](http://WWW.UNIONFORAGE.COM)**

**Ben Stuart 780-888-7303 | Graeme Finn 403-312-2240**

**Roger Meyers 306-221-1558 | Mark McNinch 306-845-8036 | Grant Lastiwka 403-350-6394**





### Project highlight: supporting stockmen through COVID

The last year and a half has brought unprecedented challenges to all cattlemen. Callum Sears – who stepped into the role of WSGA's president just a handful of days before COVID closures hit, says that COVID has upended everything for the organization. Key issues he and other board members hoped to tackle - issues like recreational access and wildlife

grazing – were sidelined by necessity. Instead, WSGA has stood strong for stock growers' rights in the face of the pandemic.

"We came together with all other industry organizations, at times pulling in the same direction and at other times standing up and saying, 'hey, what you're proposing isn't what we need and here's why,'" he says.

For example, WSGA stood up against the proposed set-aside program

last fall, arguing that incentivizing the holding back of cattle would only further glut the marketplace and lengthen the time before recovery.

"COVID has been incredibly difficult, but standing up for property rights hasn't changed," says Sears. "Yes, I'd hoped to move forward on some of our other goals, but I'm proud of how we came together to stand up for stockmen through some of the challenges of COVID." ■

**Thank You!** *The Western Stockgrowers wish to thank all those who have committed time in-service to the WSGA past and present - including those that held down the fort at home while others put in time for Stockgrowers'.*

**WATCH FOR OUR BULL SALE  
FEBRUARY 22, 2022**



*Specializing in LIGHT BIRTHWEIGHTS with  
GREAT PERFORMANCE plus REMARKABLE COWS*


**ULRICH**  
HEREFORD RANCH INC  
Claresholm, AB

**Congratulations**  
Western Stock Growers  
Association On  
125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Peter Ulrich: 403-625-1036 | Hans Ulrich  
peter@ulrichherefords.com | www.ulrichherefords.com

**Trouw Nutrition proudly supports  
the cattle industry in Alberta**

Optimize the performance of your herd with a nutritional program you can trust all year round



Westlock: 780.349.5885 Olds: 403.556.3395  
Sherwood Park: 780.449.5850 Lethbridge: 403.328.1731  
Ponoka: 403.783.5037

**trouw nutrition**  
a hutchinson company


www.trouwnutrition.ca

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
WESTERN STOCK GROWERS  
ON YOUR MONUMENTAL ANNIVERSARY


*Cattle Oilers and Automatic Waterers  
for Year Round Use*



For more information call:  
**Clint & Dianne Hutton**  
OFFICE 1.800.361.9722 | Cell 1.403.854.0092  
414 Railway Ave. West, Hanna, Alberta  
d-hutton@hotmail.com  
[www.huttonlivestockequipment.com](http://www.huttonlivestockequipment.com)



Marketing - Exchange - Carriers  
**Specializing in Angus Based Cattle**  
Feeder Cattle | Slaughter Cattle | Livestock Trucking



**GATEWAY LIVESTOCK**  
Les Smith - Garth Schlenker  
Jeff Smith - Jay Good  
Anne Wasko - Jaime Lutz

**403-223-8872**  
Fax: 403-223-8272  
5604-64th Street- Taber, Alberta

**GATEWAY CARRIERS INC.**  
Trevor Currie  
Amy Cunningham  
Curtis Schultz

**WWW.GATEWAYLIVESTOCK.COM**



# **Beef Producers** **ADVOCATING FOR** **Beef Producers**

*Since 1896.*

**DRIVEN BY MEMBERSHIP.**

Western Stock Growers' position is based on the importance of property rights and security of tenure in creating and maintaining a progressive and successful society.

**BECOME A MEMBER!**



[www.wsga.ca](http://www.wsga.ca) | [office@wsga.ca](mailto:office@wsga.ca) | 403-250-9121