

Western Stock Growers' Association

The latest news and updates from Western Stock Growers' Association

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Western Stock Growers' Association

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Celebrating 125 Years of Western Stock Growers' Association



This year marks a significant milestone for the Western Stock Growers' Association. 125 years old.

Established before Alberta was a province, WSGA is Alberta's longest running agricultural organization and continues to be a driving force in protecting and advocacy for the Alberta rancher. Thank you to all the members who continue to support this organization.



A special thank-you also goes out to Clay and Avril Chattaway for hosting our General Summer Meeting which was our official 125 year celebration.



WSGA December 2021 - President's Update



Hello everyone, as I sit down to finally write this, it is clear and a balmy -26 here in the Porcupine Hills this morning, leaving me thinking maybe this past summer wasn't so bad after all. What a ride Mother Nature has taken us on this year. Her mood swings over the past year lead me to believe she is as sick of Covid as the rest of us! Heaven forbid if Global Warming and Covid ever merged! We would have Covid Change which would present us with a new variant every 4 months that would require us to... never mind.

Luckily 2021 didn't just give us weather and Covid to talk about, but most of our challenges we faced as Stock Growers' did stem from those two things. So, I don't think there is much need for me to write about them as there are certainly enough places you can read up on Covid and this newsletter covers the CALFA program in detail for you. I sincerely hope that you don't need to access the federal portion of \$106/head and if you do, that you are able to jump through all the hoops and qualify without too much effort.

What 2021 did bring us was the 125th Anniversary of our organization. Alberta Beef Magazine did an excellent feature article this month and I strongly encourage anyone who hasn't read it to do so and pass it along to anyone else you think should read it. A digital copy can be found on our website, wsga.ca.

This year was also the second year of the Grasslands Capital X pilot project. We are really starting to see some exciting stuff on that front and I would encourage you to stay up to speed with it. While this project has commandeered some of our capacity, knowing the potential value that an actual outcome-based voluntary market for ecosystem services would have to our membership is what drives us. We just launched the website grasslandcapitalx.com and will have opportunities across the province to have lunch with the project managers in the new year for you to learn more.

Summer meeting, held at the Bar S Ranch west of Nanton, was a great success with good attendance, great speakers, and a very nice tribute to our 125 years. A big thank you to Clay and Avril Chattaway for their hospitality. On that topic, I would like you to know that applications are now open for hosting the 2022 Summer Meeting and 126th Annual General Meeting. Please contact the office if you are interested.

As members, you should all be proud to belong to and have helped build and maintain such a resilient organization that has stood the test of time. While we may not have the largest membership base, we certainly offer great bang for your membership buck and the most cost-effective approach to getting the best results for our members. Anyone interested in helping improve this cost effectiveness is encouraged please contact the office for our new promotional opportunities package. Whether you need to advertise for your own business or you would like the businesses you support to advertise with us, this is an excellent opportunity for both advertiser and WSGA alike.

Finally, one of your duties as a member is to ensure the continuity of our great organization. We are always looking for new members and now is no different. As you gather with friends, neighbors, and family over the holidays, please discuss the benefits of becoming a member or even a director on the board. I guarantee that topic will be a welcome relief to some other topics that seem to arise in every conversation these days!

As always, we have an open-door policy and encourage our members to take advantage of that. Please feel free to contact any of our directors, the office or myself.

I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May your water recharge and your cows get fat this winter as we prepare for a prosperous 2022.

Callum Sears

TOPICS OF INTEREST

Canada-Alberta Livestock Feed Assistance (CALFA) Phase 2

YES, you are eligible to apply for assistance even if you did not apply in phase 1. If you participated in phase 1 and are applying again in phase 2, the payment received from phase 1 will be deducted from your final benefit.

Phase two of the CALFA initiative is opening on January 5, 2022. To apply for the assistance, have the following items ready:

1. AFSC Client Number. If you do not have an AFSC client number please go to www.afsc.ca, click on Income Stabilization click on AgriRecovery, scroll down and click on "Getting Ready for AgriRecovery"
2. An inventory list of breeding females that you owned on December 31, 2021.
3. Proof of expenses or other supporting documentation incurred due to drought related costs from June 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

This second phase of CALFA is based on a feed need calculation and/or extraordinary expenses that you incurred from June 1 to December 31, 2021.

For the feed need calculation:

Number of Extraordinary Feed Days	X	Feed Pounds per Day Required (based on animal type and class)	X	\$0.115 feed costs per pound
= TOTAL EXTRA FEED COST PER HEAD				
Total Extra Feed Cost per Head	—		Initial Payment per head	
= TOTAL SECONDARY PAYMENT (to a maximum amount per head based on animal type)				
Total Secondary Payment	X		Total Number of Eligible Animals	
= MAXIMUM SECONDARY PAY				

Extraordinary Feed Days = number of days you had them on feed above what you would in a normal year.

If you have extraordinary expenses not covered by the feed need calculation, you can claim items you purchased from June 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 due to the drought. These can include, but are not limited to the following:

- Feed
- Temporary water provision (not covered by the CAP water program)
- Temporary fencing
- Transportation costs related to hauling feed, water or animals not normally incurred
- Pregnancy testing
- Other activities required to secure feed supplies or maintain the breeding herd.

The eligible extraordinary expenses will be paid out at 70 percent. The combined payment (phase 1 and phase 2) will not exceed the per head maximum by animal type set out in the CALFA terms and conditions (\$200 per head for cattle).

You do not need to submit your proofs of expense with your application. You will need those records if you are selected for the random audit of applications so make sure you have them handy, just in case.

The AFSC website has multiple videos and several documents that outline the program under AgriRecovery. AFSC is updating their page and social media with additional information so please check regularly for information. Alternatively, you can call the AFSC Client Service Centre at 1-877-899-2372 or reach out to your local AFSC branch office.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

Changes to WSGA Membership Form Coming

The Western Stock Growers' Association (WSGA) is the longest running agriculture organization in Alberta. Stated in the objects of the Association, the WSGA strives to promote, encourage, develop and protect all branches of the livestock industry. As we advocate for our members, we need to answer the questions "Yeah, but so what? Who are you?" in a way that will speak to the credibility of our messaging.

To this end, WSGA will be changing the annual membership renewal form and adding a space to include the number of acres that you own/lease. This number will be kept confidential and will only be used in aggregate with other members. As always, WSGA retains the policy that we do not release individual membership information to anyone for any reason.

Populating the additional requested information is voluntary.

If you have questions or concerns on how the information will be used or its confidentiality, please give the office a call (403-250-9121) or send us an email (admin@wsga.ca) and we would be happy to answer any questions.

WSGA Zone Changes - What this means to you

Options to decrease the number of membership zones were presented at the AGM and Summer Meeting by the Zone Committee. As a result of that discussion and other member engagement, a resolution to amend the WSGA Constitution in regards to membership zones has been tabled, decreasing the zones to four. The number of directors will remain the same, but there will be eight zone directors and the rest directors at large. The Zone Committee felt that in order to communicate and ensure we are working with all our members closely that a reduction in zones and an increase with in-touch conversations was the best way to bring issues and successes to the forefront of the organization.

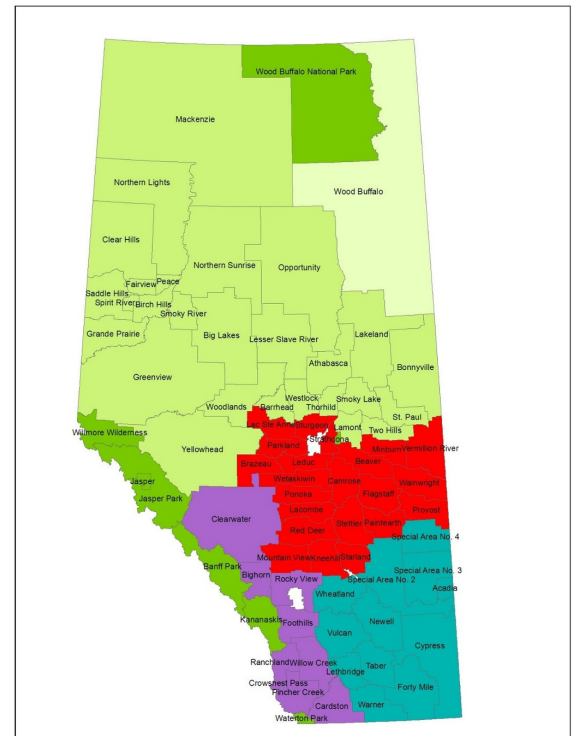
Below is the resolution:

"WHEREAS Western Stock Growers' Association zones have not been revised in several decades

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Western Stock Growers' Association revise the Constitution to reflect a change in the number of zones from the current 11 to four, and the total number of directors remain the same as up to 22, which includes the Past President as one, two directors per zone, and remaining directors serving as Directors at Large with up to 3 Directors at Large being from outside the Province of Alberta."

The resolution will be tabled at the next AGM to be ratified by a vote of the membership.

Proposed Zone Map



TOPICS OF INTEREST

Recommendations for Moisture Deficiency Index



This past year has served to magnify the problems with AFSC's Moisture Deficiency Index program. The payments did not reflect what was going on at the farm level, causing widespread frustration that had many asking why they pay the premiums on this program. Extreme temperatures are not considered in the calculations and the thresholds and caps are not realistic. Coming out of a producer consultation in November of this year, AFSC is putting forth recommendations for changes to the program. Please keep in mind these still need to be approved at the federal level.

Recommendation 1: Increase the moisture threshold

The current moisture threshold is 0.1 mm. The recommendation is to increase the threshold to 1 mm for any rain event to be included in the overall precipitation calculation. This will mean that the overall precipitation in the calculation will be less but it could also increase the premiums per acre.

Recommendation 2: Include temperature triggers

Temperature is not currently accounted for in the calculations but had a significant impact on pasture growth this year. The recommendation is to include a dual temperature trigger in the calculations. For every day that is 30 to 34 Celsius, the accumulated precipitation in the calculation will be reduced by 1 mm. For every day that is 35 Celsius or above, the accumulated precipitation in the calculation will be reduced by 3 mm.

If these recommendations are accepted by the feds, the changes will not be backdated so there will be no top up for the failures of 2021 coverage.

We are told AFSC will continue their search for additional improvements that may make their programs more applicable to cow/calf producers. This includes how to use personal weather stations for higher accuracy and the possibility of including wind thresholds.

NOTICE OF AGM

The WSGA Annual General Meeting is traditionally held the afternoon before the start of the Alberta Beef Industry Conference (This year being held March 2-4 - registration is currently open and the speaker line up is awesome). Due to restrictions related to COVID being imposed by the venue, the WSGA board felt that attendance at the AGM would be too low. Therefore, it was decided to again hold the AGM in conjunction with the General Summer Meeting. The date for the 2022 AGM and General Summer Meeting has yet to be set so keep an eye out for dates and registration information. We hope to see you there!

2021 Manager's Message

125 years. That is no small feat this day and age. This year I have spent some time reflecting on WSGA and how it has stood the test of time. The short answer is people, governance, and structure.

People



If you have been watching our Facebook during December, you know a little bit about WSGA people. Some of the best people I have ever known are the people I work with at WSGA. They prove again and again they are the best, recently in a way that brought me to tears. Over my years with the organization, they have become like family to me, and I have learned so much from them. WSGA has made me a better and stronger person.

Sometimes advocacy is really hard. There are wins and losses. The losses are hard to swallow, and the wins are hard fought. It can be discouraging, frustrating and a little bit hopeless, especially in the face of the growing divide between the urban majority and rural minority. The commitment and dedication of Stock Growers' has given me strength in times where I was tempted to give up.

Governance

It is important to learn from the past, particularly so you don't repeat past mistakes. (There is a famous quote from Roosevelt along those lines.) The governance of WSGA reflects this bit of wisdom. We have a board of elected directors who make the decisions and an appointed board of governors. The board of governors is populated with past presidents and key directors who serve an advisory, non-voting capacity. We learn directly from those that have spent time in the trenches. This is a lot like the intergenerational knowledge transfer and succession that is important to running a ranch.

Structure

We are, without a doubt, producer-led and membership driven. We take our marching orders from our members, and we have an open-door policy to all our members. Our voluntary membership is what allows us to speak as an independent voice. Being beholden to only the membership also allows us to be nimble and action-oriented in addressing issues. Over the years Stock Growers' has gone to bat for producers on key property rights, free market, and land-use issues – cattle rustling, wildlife predation, interference of regulation in the free market, supply management in the beef sector, Canadian Wheat Board and BSE to name a few.

There are challenges with being voluntary in that we are constantly trying to increase membership but as George Ward says, "Any organization with money is no good." We are as fiscally responsible as we can be, but it does cost money to keep the doors open. More than once in the past 125 years the hat was passed around to keep the WSGA in working order (there's that admirable WSGA commitment and dedication again).

With that in mind, I am grateful to ABP for undertaking the necessary task of looking after our industry's marketing and research interests. Those are important, come with big price tags and I am happy not to have that burden at WSGA.

At this year's Annual Summer Meeting that was also our AGM, we heard from several past presidents that commented that they were honoured to have served this organization. I must mimic this sentiment. I am truly honoured to work for this organization and especially for the people we represent.

Wishing you all the best in 2022

Lindsye Murfin
WSGA General Manager

TAKE SURVEY

How do we know?

There is generally widespread recognition that surveys suck and nobody likes doing them. But the fact is, they remain the most efficient and wallet-friendly way of garnering opinion and information.

There are many programs and initiatives for the beef industry out there. The challenge is figuring out how to structure the programs so that they deliver the most value to producers. What we need is producers to tell us what will work and what won't work for them. The easiest and most cost effective way of doing this is through surveys.

Surveys help define programs. For example, with the AgriRecovery rollout this year, the results of the national cow/calf producer survey were used to determine payout numbers. If we had full participation in that survey, the numbers would perfectly reflect production costs and the usefulness (and thus programming) is improved.

There are currently a few surveys asking for feedback from you and we humbly ask that you take the time to complete these. In the case of the vaccination survey from BCRC, which was sent out via email, you could be rewarded with the \$500 gift certificate offered as incentive (bribe) to complete the survey. Behind this vaccination survey and project is the need to help with the vet shortage issue in any way possible that we as an industry can find.

The deadline for this one has been extended to January 15. If you would like the link resent to you, please contact the office.

Other surveys currently underway are specific to Crown grazing leaseholders – the Alberta grazing lease cost survey (which will feed into the formula to calculate the rental rates for the next 10 years) and the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association recreational access survey. Leaseholders will be receiving the lease cost survey in the mail. This survey is being conducted confidentially by Serecon Inc where the information will be aggregated to be reported back to government. None of your individual information will be able to be accessed by any government official. If you are a member of AGLA, you will be getting a recreational access survey with your membership renewal. With the Environment and Parks Minister flagging access as his number one issue for grazing leases, AGLA needs to hear about the issues leaseholders are having on the ground (the good and the bad) so they find solutions that will work for leaseholders. This survey will also be available on the AGLA website – albertagrazinglease.ca in January 2022.

Periodically we will be sending out links to surveys where the results could directly impact you or your operation. Please consider taking the time to complete these – it is better for everyone, including you.

The Grasslands Capital X Project

As the grassland conservation market pilot starts to take on its own identity, Grasslands Capital X now has its own website! Go to GrasslandCapitalX.com for your information on the pilot.

We will be hosting a couple of webinars in January – one with BCarbon and one with MaiaGrazing. Keep an eye out for those – these are companies that you want to hear from.

We will also be hosting several lunches for producers to get all the information they need on the grassland conservation market and how it can benefit your ranch. The lunches start at 11:30 and will be held:

- February 16 in Okotoks
- February 17 in Lethbridge
- February 18 in Brooks
- February 22 in Grande Prairie
- February 24 in Red Deer

Stay tuned for more details. If you would like to register, call or email the office: (403) 250-9121 office@wsga.ca

Upcoming Events



BEEF Talks

March 2-4, 2022 | Cambridge Red Deer Hotel

THAT'S RIGHT.
A real live conference. With real live people.
Plan to join us in Red Deer.

Fireside Chat with
Lord Conrad Black
Financier, Author, Columnist

ALBERTA BEEF INDUSTRY CONFERENCE 2022

Details & Registration: www.abiconference.ca



Don't miss this webinar!

JANUARY 20, 2022
10:00 am

BCarbon Project

To register call
403-250-9121 or
email office@wsga.ca

BCarbon are redefining how soil carbon stocks can be measured for carbon credit trading. In this webinar you will learn about BCarbon's protocols as well as their plans to achieve their goal of certifying 25 million tons of soil carbon credits by 2026.

A Grassland Capital X Webinar



Soil Health Webinar Series

Join the Western Canada Conference on Soil Health & Grazing Organizing Committee for an exciting webinar series on Soil Health with Joel Williams!

Joel Williams is an independent plant and soil health educator and a healthy soils advocate. Joel provides lectures, workshops and consultation on soil management, plant nutrition and integrated approaches of sustainable food production.

Feb 11 - What is new in soil health and plant nutrition 101?
Feb 16 - Transition to low input
Feb 23 - Strategies for regenerating forage stands and using perennial and annual forages in crop rotation.
Mar 2 - Q & A with Joel Williams

To register: www.absoilgrazing.com



PCBFA
PRAIRIE COUNTRY BEEF & HORSE ASSOCIATION
APPLIED RESEARCH

VIRTUAL GRAZING CONFERENCE

Every Friday from
January 7th - February 11th
via Zoom

Hear from Renowned Grazing & Pasture Management Experts on How to Make the Best of the 2022 Grazing Season!

January 7th Dr Kris Nichols Grazing for Soil Recovery	January 14th Dr. Allen Williams Adaptive Grazing	January 21st Dr. Martin Entz Organic Grazing
January 28th TBA	February 4th Jim Gerrish Year-Round Grazing	February 11th Dallas Mount Pasture Economics

Recordings Will be Available to Registrants. To Register & for More Info:
peacecountrybeef.ca | 780-523-4033 | info@pcbfa.ca



The Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership presents the

Ranching Opportunities Conference

save the date!
FEB 03, 2022
OLDS COLLEGE
Virtual & in-person options available

Logos: ALUS, AFSC, CORTEVA

From the Soil Up
Protecting your soil after drought
Dr. Kris Nichols

Developing an effective vaccine program for your ranch
Dr. Joyce Donkersgoed

Grassland Research
Dr. Edward Burk

Breakout Sessions

- Alternative Feeds
- Using Technology to Predict Forage Yields
- Vaccine Tools & Care
- ALUS Grazing Forefront Program

Producer Panel
What regenerative agriculture means to you and how to make it pay!

For the current agenda, speakers and for registration visit
www.redbowag.com

Make sure we get what you send us!

Years ago WSGA made the decision to move from a bricks and mortar office to a virtual office which was a smart budgetary move and also created the necessity to change where we picked up the mail. WSGA rents a mailbox from UPS so our address contains both a box number and a street address in Okotoks. Both are required on our correspondence in order to get to us. We have had some mail go astray, some by fault of the post office, and the owner of the post office box has asked we send a note out for clarification. Our address, in its entirety is Box 179, #14 -900 Village Lane, Okotoks, AB T1S 1Z6.