

Starland AG Talk

Volume 8, Issue 1

IN TUNE...IN PROGRESS

April 2011

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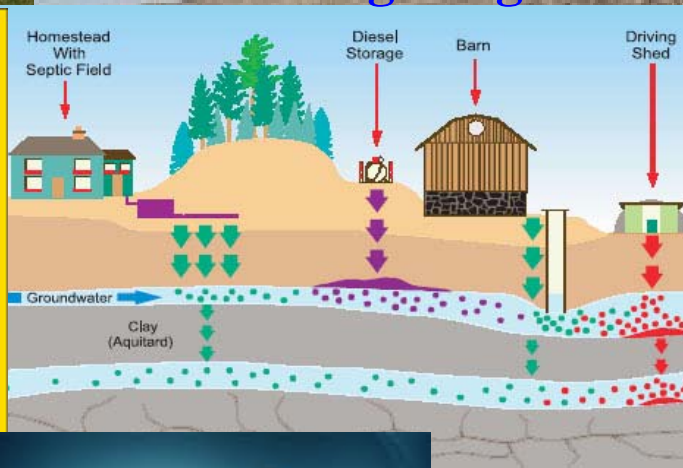


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2011 EQUIPMENT RENTAL / SERVICE RATES**



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Improving Production Efficiency And Meat Quality

US consumers love beef. We eat an average of about 63 pounds of it per person each year, says Sharon Durham, Agricultural Research Service Information Staff. Producing enough cattle to meet that demand requires efficiency and innovation. Agricultural Research Service scientists at the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory (LARRL) in Miles City, Montana, are conducting studies designed to make cattle production more efficient and to provide better beef products for consumers.

Attaining those goals has led to strategies and technologies for reducing the cost of beef production, including more efficient nutrient use and improved reproductive performance. Reducing production costs hinges on maintaining high rates of reproductive success while reducing use of harvested feeds. A common problem that U.S. cow-calf producers face is low rebreeding performance among 2- and 3-year-old cows. This occurs when the cows' needs for additional nutrients during pregnancy and lactation have not been met. But rather than just feed young cows more, the LARRL scientists are attempting to make them more efficient so they'll need less feed.

Reducing Costs: Feed and Reproduction

Animal feed is a large part of beef producers' costs. Cereal grains—often used as a major part of heifer (young female cattle) diets—are becoming less abundant and more expensive because they are in higher demand for human food and ethanol production. Feed represents about 50 to 55 percent of total costs of developing replacement heifers.

According to animal scientist Andrew Roberts and colleagues, heifers they studied developed to target weights lower than those traditionally recommended, consumed 27 percent less feed over the winter months, and gained weight more efficiently throughout the postweaning period and subsequent grazing season. "The strategy of providing less feed may reduce costs of developing each replacement heifer by more than \$31 and extend their life span, with important ramifications for lifetime efficiency and profitability," says Roberts.

“For the last 3 to 4 decades, the mantra has been ‘feed them to breed them,’ which means providing enough feed during the first year to ensure that young heifers reach puberty to start reproducing,” he says. “But our studies indicate this doesn’t seem to be optimal in the long run. Our research shows that by feeding to get all the animals bred, you are also propping up the inefficient animals—those that won’t consistently produce calves when put in nutrient-limited environments later in life.”

In their study, heifers (50 percent Charolais, 25 percent Tarentaise) were divided into groups: The control to industry guidelines, was fed (on a body-of feed consumed by for 140 days, ending old. The restricted heif-weighed less at any quence of less feed. The provided to restricted feeding period was provided to the controls. Final pregnancy rates were 87 percent for restricted heifers and 91 percent for the controls.



(50 percent Red Angus, and 25 percent Tarentaise) were divided into two lifetime treatment groups: The control group was fed according to industry guidelines and the restricted group was fed (on a body-of feed consumed by for 140 days, ending old. The restricted heif-weighed less at any quence of less feed. The provided to restricted feeding period was provided to the controls. Final pregnancy rates were 87 percent for restricted heifers and 91 percent for the controls.

“Our results indicate that restricting feed is a matter of economics for farmers,” says LARRL geneticist Michael MacNeil. “We have also found that other strategies, such as crossbreeding and providing early calving assistance, can increase rebreeding performance of young cows.”

For Full Article visit: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/70954915/Beef-Cattle-Improving-Production-Efficiency-and-Meat-Quality>



Abandoned Water Well Decommissioning Program

Abandoned water wells are those that are no longer being used, and are not intended to be used as a water supply. When not properly plugged off, abandoned water wells can pose a significant threat to groundwater.

BIG OR SMALL
PLUG THEM ALL!

To this end, Starland County, is asking for your assistance in reporting abandoned wells on your property. This information is important as we will use it to create a data base of abandoned wells which will allow us to target programming aimed at properly decommissioning the wells which pose the greatest environmental risk.



In addition, there are often funding programs available to assist landowners to properly plug their abandoned water wells so by reporting our County staff we will be better prepared to assist interested well owners in accessing those funds.

To report abandoned wells or for more information on plugging abandoned water wells, please [contact](#) Jared Malansky, Assistant Agricultural Fieldman / AESA Co-ordinator.

Environmental Farm Planning

Thousands of farmers and ranchers in Alberta have developed an Environmental Farm Plan for their operation. An Environmental Farm Plan helps you identify the natural environmental characteristics of your farm or ranch. It is also a tool for you to plan how you'd like to manage those characteristics, in ways that benefit your operation and the environment.



Starland County assists producers in all aspects of Environmental Farm Planning, from start to finish and through to action. Note that a completed environmental farm plan is a requirement for some of the provincial/federal "Growing Forward" funding programs for producers.

For information, please [contact](#) Jared Malansky, Assistant Agricultural Fieldman / AESA Co-ordinator.

GIVE A HOOT! SLOWING DOWN AT DUSK SAVES BURROWING OWLS!

Background – A “Hoo’s, Hoo”

The charming Burrowing Owl has just completed its long migratory trek from the wintering grounds in the southern United States (e.g. Texas) and central Mexico all the way up to its breeding grounds in south-central Alberta and southern Saskatchewan. Taking 6 to 8 weeks, these small owls, standing only 20 cm tall and weighing about as much as a hamburger (125-185g), are known to move an impressive 200 km/day, mainly during darkness.

Once arriving on the breeding grounds in late April and early May, these owls seek out prime nesting real estate throughout their breeding range: a mosaic of grassland heights: areas of sparse, well-grazed grass for nesting (helps them see predators approaching), and longer grass for hunting (where their favourite foods, voles and mice, like to hide). **Areas east and north-east of Delia towards Dowling Lake are most suitable for these owls in Starland County.**

Sometimes confused with gophers, when seen from a distance (both species stand tall and upright at their burrow entrance, keeping their eyes out for predators), Burrowing Owls are hard to mistake up close. These little owls have long legs giving them a comical appearance, as if they are standing on stilts. Other defining characteristics include a rounded head with bright yellow eyes.

Why give a hoot

Burrowing Owls once occupied most of the grasslands of the Prairie Provinces and southern interior of British Columbia. Today, these owls occupy only 36% of their historical Canadian distribution, and their numbers have declined dramatically over the last 2 decades. They are listed as an endangered species in Canada. Alberta’s population has been declining at approximately 20% per year, and it is estimated that our province now supports *fewer than 400 pairs*.

Each spring and summer (May-July), many Burrowing Owls are needlessly hit and killed by vehicular collisions as they hunt along road-side ditches in the early evening hours.

Juvenile owls, in particular, hunt and scavenge on and near roads at dusk and during the night. Because they are slow flyers and fly low to the ground, they have a difficult time escaping oncoming traffic and are often killed. ***In fact, collisions with vehicles and fences are the second highest cause of juvenile mortality.*** The increase of road networks throughout their breeding and wintering range is a growing concern.

Your daily drive: An easy way to help

You can help save these small prairie owls by slowing down, ***especially at dusk and dawn***, and keeping an eye out for a low flying owl bobbing along a road-side ditch or perched on a fence post - you never know when they will dart across the road!

Other Sources of Burrowing Owl Mortality

PREDATION: A major cause of adult mortality is predation largely by other raptors, but females are also killed by badgers and weasels in their nest burrow.

HABITAT LOSS & ALTERATION: The cultivation of native grasslands has eliminated large tracts of Burrowing Owl and prey habitat.

PESTICIDE USE: Grasshoppers are an important food source for the Burrowing Owl, and a well-known pest on farms and ranches. Spraying for grasshoppers can affect Burrowing Owls in two ways; 1) they can ingest the poison, and 2) a prey source is no longer available. Carbofuran negatively impacts owls by increasing adult mortality and lowering reproductive performance.

RODENT CONTROL: When burrowing rodents like badgers and ground squirrels are controlled, nest sites for Burrowing Owls are reduced. Depending on soil type, ground squirrel holes are only usable for 1-3 years, which means the creation of new burrows is necessary.

LOW PRODUCTIVITY: Researchers have shown that healthy prey populations are crucial for the reproductive success of the Burrowing Owl. Human activities that reduce the prey available to Burrowing Owls will affect reproductive success.

WINTER SURVIVAL AND RETURN: During migration and on their wintering grounds, owls may be affected by many of the same factors mentioned above.

If you have Burrowing Owls on your property or wish to find out how you can help, please contact Operation Grassland Community at (780) 437-2342 or (780) 722-0944.

Photo (below) courtesy of Gord Court



Photo by Ray Poulin

STARLAND COUNTY
NOTICE TO RESIDENTS
TOXIC WASTE ROUNDUP
(Including E-Waste)

DATE: Friday, June 3th, 2011

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Starland County Public Works Shop "Morrin"

Wastes in the following categories can be delivered to the Public Works Yard for safe disposal. **Items that will be accepted include:**

Corrosives: Rust removers, waste acids, batteries (car or household), and household cleaners

Flammables: Oil based paints, degreasers, solvents, wood preservatives and gasoline

Poisons: Outdated drugs, ant, rodent, weed killers, photographic chemicals, anti-freeze

Reactives: Waste bleaches, any unidentified chemicals, aerosols

E-Waste: Computers, computer accessories, televisions

The following items are wastes, which will **not be accepted** at a household toxic waste round up:

Absolutely no commercial toxic waste is accepted.

No biomedical wastes, or radioactive materials

No ammunition, dynamite, gun powder or fireworks

No pressurized refrigerants, gases (i.e. Acetylene) or propane tanks over 20 lbs

No automotive paint, and

No stereos or speakers

The above toxic wastes will be accepted on the day noted above only unless prior arrangements have been made, and no charges will be levied for the collection of the wastes. If you have any questions on a specific disposal item, please feel free to contact the Administration Office.

Alan Hampton
Agricultural Fieldman

Telephone: (403) 772-3793

Weed Wise

Gardening in Alberta

A GARDENER'S GUIDE TO
NON-INVASIVE PLANTS



www.invasiveplants.ab.ca



Avoid This:

Dame's Rocket

Hesperis matronalis

Often confused with garden phlox – Dame's rocket has 4 petals and alternate leaves, Phlox has 5 petals and opposite leaves. Flower color can be magenta through to pink or white. Considered a "traditional" garden flower. Prolific seed producer often found in 'wildflower' mixes. Especially problematic near woodlands.



www.curbthecolors.com



Avoid This:

Common Tansy

Tanacetum vulgare

Perennial. Reproduces by seed and short rhizomes (creeping roots). Forms dense stands. Pungent, aromatic foliage used medicinally, as an insect repellent, and historically was used for embalming. Contains compounds toxic to humans and livestock, if consumed in large quantities. Unpalatable to grazing animals, gives it a competitive advantage in natural areas and rangelands.



www.invasiveplants.ab.ca



Instead Try:

David's Lavender Garden Phlox

Phlox paniculata "David's Lavender"

Stunning lavender-pink blossoms on tall stocks. Fragrant. Blooms mid to late summer. Highly mildew resistant. Deer resistant. Attracts hummingbirds, butterflies.






   Ht. 106 cm
W. 38-45 cm

Purple Smoke Baptisia (aka False Indigo)

Baptisia australis "Purple Smoke"

Hybrid. Tall, bushy mound of grey-green foliage. Long spikes of smoky violet-blue and purple flowers on black stems. Good substitute for Lupines. Excellent cut-flower. Attracts butterflies.



    Ht. 90-120 cm
W. 60-90 cm

Southcombe Double Cranesbill


Geranium axonianum "Southcombe Double"

Unusual double flowers with layers of bright pink petals. Blooms from June to August. A true geranium. Versatile and nearly carefree. Compact plants excellent for edging and borders.



    Ht. 30-40 cm
W. 30-60 cm

Also consider...

 **Autumn Joy Sedum** (*Sedum* x 'Autumn Joy')

Instead Try:




Fine-leaved Goldenrod

Solidago graminifolia aka *Euthamia graminifolia*

Native Albertan wildflower. Excellent for borders or meadow gardens. Upright, spreading clump of feathery, grass-like green leaves. Many small clusters of bright yellow flowers. Blooms late summer to early fall. Terrific for cutting. Does not cause allergies. Attractive to butterflies.



http://www.gardenweb.com/forums/klm/

   Ht. 60-120 cm
W. 60-90 cm

Morden Eldorado Garden Mum

Chrysanthemum x *marifolium* aka *Dendranthema* x *marifolium*

Masses of large, bright, double golden flowers. Blooms late summer to late fall. Tolerates light frost. Among hardiest types of Mums available.



www.burpee.com

   Ht. 45-60 cm
W. 38-60 cm

Gold Coneflower

(aka Black-Eyed Susan)

Rudbeckia spp.

Bushy, upright clump. Profuse display of brown-eyed, golden-orange daisies. Blooms July to October. Good winter interest. Outstanding for mass planting and for cutting. Bright gold-flowered *R. fulgida* 'Goldsturm' was 1999 Perennial of the Year.



www.johns.com

   Ht. 60-75 cm
W. 45-60 cm

NOTICE TO FARMERS STARLAND COUNTY 2% Liquid Strychnine Control Program

The sale of 2% Liquid Strychnine Concentrate (LSC) for the control of Richardson's Ground Squirrels (RGS's) has been approved for the 2011 season.

Starland County is participating in this program and now has 2% LSC available to qualifying farmers April 1st. The abbreviated details of the program are as follows:

The product is only available to Agricultural Producers in Starland County

You must have an infestation which is defined as 1 hole / 2 meters; or a 30% crop loss in 100 m strip of crop or pasture

Each producer is restricted to 2 cases (48 bottles) of Strychnine per purchase and the minimum purchase is 6 bottles

The purchaser must sign a document that states:

- they have a severe infestation as defined by AB Agriculture and Food,
- they will use 2% LSC only for control of the RGS's,
- they will not hold 2% LSC beyond June 17,
- they will not sell or give away any 2% LSC,

At the end of the emergency period (June 17) all unused 2% LSC must be destroyed according to provincial guidelines

The producer must complete and submit an evaluation form back to Starland County within 21 days of using the product

Provincial Pest Inspectors may inspect your property to ensure that you are complying with all the label directions and conditions of use and registration

Any non-target poisonings must be reported and the product cannot be used on any quarter which has burrowing owls or any other species at risk

Violation of any of the outlined terms and conditions will result in the purchaser forfeiting the right to any further purchases of strychnine and could result in a fine of no less than \$1500.00

Cost of the product is \$160.00 per case or \$7.00 per bottle

For further information or to book your product please contact Alan Hampton or Jared Malansky at 772-3793

2011 Integrated Pest Management Strategy for Richardson's Ground Squirrel Control

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has stipulated that Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy for our 2011, 2 % Liquid Strychnine Concentrate (LSC) Emergency Registration Program. The following are nine (9) management practices that will help reduce Richardson's Ground Squirrel (RGS) populations when implemented in conjunction with strychnine application. Please ensure that as many of these strategies are utilized as possible in your operation. Please review all the available RGS strategies and implement those that are best suited for your particular needs and operational requirements.

- 1. Baiting before green up** - Research indicates that Rozol products perform above the 70% control minimum when applied early in the spring before green up. Once vegetation starts to grow Rozol's control drops to unacceptable levels. This product does not perform in alfalfa fields as the alfalfa acts as an antidote to anti-coagulants. Strychnine should also be applied before green up.
- 2. Timing Control** - To optimize RGS population control, toxicants should be implemented prior to emergence of young. Suggested dates are: Calgary south – Prior to May 1st, Calgary north – Prior to May 15th. These dates may vary depending on weather.
- 3. Bait Applications** - Strychnine should not be used twice in sequence at the same location in the same baiting year. It is recommended that an alternate control product or method (Rozol, Phostoxin, shooting, etc.) should be used for the second application to eliminate bait shyness. If baiting needs to be done after the young RGS have emerged you should not apply more than one application of strychnine or Rozol in the same location. This will lessen the impact on non-target predators.
- 4. Cropland** - When controlling RGS in cropland, the headlands and fence lines should be baited prior to crop emergence.
- 5. Other Control Measures** – They should be used in conjunction with Strychnine. (ie) Rozol, Phostoxin, Exit/RoCon, shooting, and trapping.
- 6. Nest boxes** – To enhance predatory birds it is recommended to set- up two nest boxes per section (minimum height of 2.5 m),in landscapes absent of trees.
- 7. Vegetation** - Headland and fence line vegetation in both cropland and hay fields should be left tall (not pastured by livestock).
- 8. Pasture Management** - For RGS control it is suggested that vegetation be left as high as possible. Minimum height of 10 cm is required after fall and spring grazing to significantly deter RGS numbers.
- 9. Phostoxin** – Is most effective if applied after soil temperature warms to above 4° C.

A Note On Shelterbelts

“Shelterbelts are an investment in the future and play an important role in the agricultural landscape and farming operations,” says Laura Poppy, agroforestry specialist, Agroforestry Development Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. “Tree buffers improve crop and livestock production and reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. Keep shelterbelts functioning well by planning ahead and maintaining the health and vigor of individual trees.”

Plan ahead – select tree species to suit the site, soil and objectives. Some trees can grow up to 18 m (60 feet) tall and 6 m (20 feet) wide. Do not plant trees where drainage, visibility and safety will be an issue. Do not plant too close to buildings, utility lines or roads. Choose trees suitable for the soil and environmental extremes in the area

Prepare planting site – stake the rows and begin preparing the site one year before planting. Remove grass and weeds with herbicides or mechanical cultivation. Site preparation is the best way to improve tree survival and growth.

Pre-planting care of seedlings – tree and shrub seedlings from the AAFC Prairie Shelterbelt Program are delivered in the early spring as bare-root stock (no soil around the roots). These seedlings must be planted immediately. The fragile, perishable seedlings can be stored for a short time in a cool, dark location. Do not soak the seedlings in water for more than a few hours or they will die. If you cannot plant within 5 days, it is recommended to temporarily heel-in the seedlings by digging a shallow trench, lining out the seedlings and covering the roots with soil.

Planting
Planting techniques – always plant seedlings into a weed-free, well prepared site. Plant seedlings slightly above the root collar swelling. Take care not to damage or bend the roots. Cover with soil and make sure not to bury branches, or leave roots exposed to the air. Tramp soil firmly to remove air pockets and water immediately. If planting a large number of trees, consider using a mechanical tree planter. Check with the local Ag fieldmen, Ag rep or AAFC-AESB office for availability.

Post-planting care and maintenance
Weed control and mulches – competition from weeds is the leading cause of failure and slow growth in newly planted shelterbelts. Control weeds and grass with mechanical cultivation, registered herbicides and/or mulches. Mulches such as black plastic, landscape fabric or wood chips reduce weed competition, retain soil moisture and moderate soil temperatures. Be aware of wind conditions and exercise caution when applying herbicides in or near shelterbelts and non-target vegetation. Some agricultural and lawn applied herbicides are lethal to trees, so read labels and consult local experts for recommendations.

Watering – water seedlings immediately after planting. In low rainfall regions or under drought conditions, supplemental water may be necessary for the survival and growth of newly planted trees and shrubs. Water heavily (but infrequently) to encourage deep root growth.

Pruning and fertilizing – in most cases, shelterbelts will not require pruning and fertilizing. Pruning is required only to remove dead, diseased or broken branches. Removal of branches close to the ground is not recommended as it reduces density and buffer efficiency. Incorrect pruning can severely damage trees. Topping or pollarding is not recommended and makes a tree more susceptible to disease and insect infestations. Do not fertilize late in the season, as this can lead to winter injury.

Protection from animals – newly planted trees and shrubs are susceptible to rodent damage. Control measures include fencing, keeping the site clean and applying animal repellents. Livestock can also harm trees. Fence livestock out of shelterbelts at all times, even when trees are mature. Manure from concentrated livestock operations or sewer pump-outs can kill trees over time.

Insects and Diseases – regular inspection and diagnosis allows for early control. Trees under stress from weeds, drought, damaging chemicals or flooding are more susceptible to insect and disease problems. Consult local experts for pest identification and control methods.

Replanting and renovation – seedlings that do not survive should be replaced the following spring to prevent gaps in the shelterbelt. Gaps or low-density areas can concentrate the force of the wind and reduce the effectiveness of the shelterbelt. Trees are living systems and eventually become old. Before removing old shelterbelts, consult a local expert for more details on effective renovation techniques.

Website – www.agr.gc.ca/shelterbelt

**STARLAND COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD
2011 EQUIPMENT RENTAL / SERVICE RATES**

EQUIPMENT:

1.	K-Hart Barrier Strip Seeder	No Charge
2.	New for 2011 Brillion Grass Seeder – 10 foot (minimum charge)	\$5.00 / acre \$100.00
3.	Cattle Squeeze	\$10.00 / day
4.	Hoof Trimming Chute	\$20.00 / day
5.	Livestock Weighing Scale	\$10.00 / day
6.	Livestock Water Transfer System	\$250.00 / dugout
7.	Magpie Traps	\$5.00 / week
8.	Back Pack Sprayer	1 day free (\$5.00 / day thereafter)
9.	Pruning Tools - pruning saw, lopper and secateurs	1 day free (\$5.00 / day thereafter)
10.	Measuring Wheel	1 day free (\$5.00 / day thereafter)
11.	Skunk Traps	\$5.00 / week
12.	Transit	1 day free (\$5.00 / day thereafter)
13.	15 foot JD 1590 No-till Drill	\$6.00 / Acre (\$100.00 minimum charge)
14.	Rawhide Portable Corral System	\$200.00 / day
15.	14' Ezee On Breaking Disk	\$395.00 / full day \$200.00 / half day \$6.00 / acre if over 100 acres (No delivery charge)

SERVICES:

1.	Shelter Belt Spraying Program 150 gallon tank (minimum charge of 1 hour)	\$50.00 / hour + Chemicals
2.	Weed Spraying Program 150 gallon tank	\$50.00 / hour + Chemicals (Less 60% on Toadflax and Scentless Chamomile Incentive Program)
3.	Quad Sprayer – Spot Spraying Program	\$50.00 / hour + Chemicals
4.	Tree Planter	Free of Charge for Shelterbelt Trees ordered through Starland County
5.	Treflan Applicator / Disc	\$50.00 / hour + Chemicals
6.	Shelterbelt Fabric Roller	\$20.00 / hour + Fabric Costs (minimum charge \$50.00)
7.	Grasshopper Bait Spreading Equipment	\$25.00 / day (Spreader only) (\$25.00 damage deposit)
8.	Backsloping Program (Fence line Topsoil work)	40% incentive Program for qualifying projects
9.	Solar-Powered Water Pumping System for Livestock Watering	For demonstration purposes only. 2 week demonstration period. Pre-booking required.