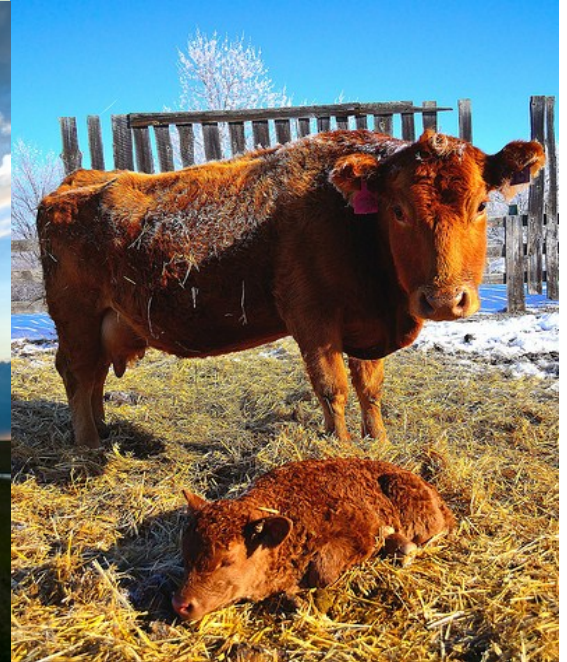




AG Talk



Starland County ASB Members

Chairman: Murray Marshall
Council Member: Norman Stanger
Council Member: Allen Avramenko
Council Member: Barrie Hoover
Council Member: Robert Sargent

Farm Member: Ray Trout
Farm Member: Tracy Nelson
Agricultural Fieldman: Alan Hampton
Assistant Ag Fieldman: Dara Calon
Recording Secretary: Ross Rawlusyk

Shelterbelt Planting

Delivery of trees is delayed until May 17th due to weather conditions in Saskatchewan. If you have received shelterbelt trees this year you can call Starland County to book your tree planting services today!

Women's Grazing School

This is a two day, overnight event on July 24-25th designed to present core grazing principles, plant ID and riparian management. I need a few ladies from Starland County to accompany me to this event, all expenses paid! We will learn some valuable information and have some fun as well. If you are interested in attending the school, please contact Dara at 772-3793. Space is limited.



In This Issue...

A New Information Source for Producers and Agronomists Pages 3,4

Growing Forward 2 Launch Page 5

Strychnine Control Program Page 6

Women's Grazing School Page 7

Moving Equipment Page 8

Alberta Farmers Hope for Profitable Growing Season Amid High Crop Prices Pages 9, 10

Build a pallet garden Page 11

Buy & Sell

Quality used seed cleaning equipment, scales and legs. Call Jim at 364-3733



Reminder: AgriStability deadline April 30th

Reminder: The County has equipment for rent, contact Alan or Dara at 772-3793

Chili-Stuffed Potato Skins

Ingredients

- 1 serving of chili
- 2 large baking potatoes
- 60g of cheddar cheese
- 2 spring onions
- 2 tablespoons of sour cream
- Pam spray

Method

Preheat oven to 200c or 400f

Lightly pierce potatoes with a fork.

Spray the skin with some Pam spray and rub them with some salt.

Place on a baking tray in oven and bake until they are slightly soft to the touch. Remove from oven and allow to cool.

Once cooled, cut each potato in half and carefully scoop out some of the flesh so that you have what looks like potato bowls. You don't want to remove too much of the flesh, but also don't remove too little or they will burn.

Place the potato skins back onto the baking tray (skin side down) spray with some more Pam spray and place back in the oven for about 10 mins until the flesh part is a nice golden colour.

Remove from oven, fill with your chili and top

with the cheese.

Bake in oven until cheese is a golden brown.

Top with sour cream and chopped spring onions.

Enjoy!!



A New Information Source for Producers and Agronomists

Neil Whatley

Farm producers realize they will be making several important agronomic decisions during the upcoming growing season. While dealing with large amounts of daily information on a wide range of agronomic topics, producers sometimes face contradictory information. Separating good information from bad information is a constant with farm producers, which can make decision-making difficult.

Producers and agronomists now have access to a relatively new agronomy extension web-site that offers high quality, unbiased information on soils and crop management on the Canadian Prairies. Without requiring a subscription, anyone may go online to freely access an electronic journal entitled "Prairie Soils and Crops: Scientific Perspectives for Innovative Management" (PS&C) at the following web-site:
<http://www.prairiesoilsandcrops.ca>.

Research scientists submit articles to this journal with impartial scientific knowledge on a range of pertinent agronomic issues, each year offering a different topic theme. Themes include the science of weeds and herbicides, the bi-

ology and management of current crop insect and disease pests, soil related concerns, etc. The most recent edition (2012) is comprised of articles about 'Long-term Crop Rotations in the Canadian Prairies'. In a few months a new theme focusing on Crop Physiology will be completed.

The 2009 edition of PC&S contains articles on the theme of weeds and herbicide management. In this edition, there are a series of articles about herbicide application management practices, weed seed banks, what we've learned from Prairie weed surveys, and the concern about herbicide-resistant weeds, which is currently a hot topic. The 2011 edition of the journal contains articles about significant insect and disease threats in the Prairie region and includes articles on recent pests in cereal, oilseed and pulse crops. For example, extension articles are available on current insect pests such as lygus bug, root maggot, cabbage seedpod weevil, pea leaf weevil, wheat midge, and sawfly. Current disease issues like sclerotinia, blackleg, ascochyta blight, Fusarium head blight, and various cereal leaf diseases are addressed. Most articles are 3 to 5 pages in length and include a topic summary as well as colourful photos. The first in a series of articles on crop rotations in the 2012 edition is entitled "Long-Term Cropping Studies on the Canadian Prairies: An Introduction".

Continued on Page 4

It's interesting to read that the study of crop rotations on the Canadian Prairies emerged soon after the first settlers arrived. Since that time, farm producers and researchers have accumulated much unique knowledge on crop rotations, specific to the Canadian prairie soil zones.

While searching for the agronomic and economic implications of various crop rotations, farmers and research scientists have integrated features such as crop diversity, pest management, soil organic matter retention, and soil water conservation into their experimentation and ways of farming.

Research results that emerged in the 1940s on crop rotations included recognizing the influence of specific crops on subsequent crops, as well as discussions and questions about the underlying reasons for the beneficial effects that legume crops have on subsequent crops. The authors add that several of these questions have been answered through a multitude of studies conducted in Western Canada over the last 30 years.

When reading individual articles on specific weed, insect and disease pests, the phrases 'crop rotation' and 'cropping diversity' frequently emerge as being integral to pest management. For example, with regard to herbicide resistance in weeds, cropping system diversity appears to be the basis for proactive weed resistance management. The author of "Herbicide Resistance in Weeds" says,

"Weed surveys, conducted over the past decade, have shown that the risk of weed resistance is greatest in fields with only a cereal-based rotation. The risk is lowest in cropping systems that include forage crops, fallow (summer or green manure), or have three or more crop types, such as cereal, oilseed, and pulse, grown in rotation".

With crop diseases, most pathogens are host specific, so crop rotations are integral to improved crop management. Several serious pathogens currently affecting crops on the Prairies are clubroot and blackleg in canola, as well as Fusarium Head Blight in cereals. The articles on these and other crop pests generally suggest that integrated approaches are necessary to properly manage the pests we deal with, pointing out that a combination of management methods are necessary for optimal control, including crop diversity.

As an agricultural extension tool for the Canadian Prairie region, the online "Prairie Soils and Crops" journal is a reliable source of non-biased agronomic information that farm producers and agronomists can easily access. A wide range of topics are addressed and more agronomic themes will be presented in upcoming years. □



Launch of the New Framework

On-Farm Stewardship Program

Growing Forward 2 is no longer retro-active; farmers can proceed with purchases only after application and paperwork is submitted. There are four categories within OFS, all from one budget. Cost share is either 30%, 50% or 70% to a max grant of \$50,000.

Grazing Management

- Includes riparian fencing, watering systems, windbreaks, shelters and restoration

Manure Management

- Includes improved storage, runoff control and wintering site relocation

Confined Feeding Operation (CFO) Stewardship Program

This is an enhanced version of the manure management program. The proposed maximum funding level will be \$100,000. Completion of an EFP is not required for this program but grant recipients will need to take part in a CFO process ahead of time. Cost share is 50/50 or 70/30.

Improved pesticide management

- Cost share is 50/50, up to a max of \$10,000. Eligible items include sectional control, low drift nozzles, sprayer curtains and weather monitoring equipment.

Fuel and used oil storage

- 30% paid on fuel storage to a max of \$3000
- 50% paid on oil storage, to a max of \$2000

On Farm Energy Management

GF2 will capitalize on past data collected by fine tuning efficiency incentives. The priorities addressed will be industry competitiveness, environmental stewardship and improved energy management. Funding is no longer available for the solar program. Cost share is 50%, up to a maximum of \$50,000. A sub-meter is required for every project done, and producers will now be able to go online to see their real time power usage. Greenhouses will fit into this program, as well as CO₂ recovery units, energy curtains, insulation, windows and high efficiency boilers. Eligible projects include construction projects, retrofit projects and sub-meter installations. A sub-meter will be installed for every project funded with the program covering 100% of the cost for the first three installed.

**For more information on Growing Forward 2 please contact
Dara Calon at Starland County,
403-772-3793, or visit
www.growingforward.alberta.ca**

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 2013 season. Starland County is participating in this program and will have 2% LSC available to qualifying farmers from April 2nd until June 30th. The abbreviated details of the program are as follows:

- The product is only available to Agricultural Producers in Starland County
- 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:
 - A) they have a severe infestation as defined by AB Agriculture and Food,
 - B) they will use 2% LSC only for control of the RGS's,
 - C) they will not sell or give away any 2% LSC,
- 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 \$180.00 per case or \$7.50 per bottle

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



Did you know?

The sex ratio among adults is about 4 females for each male. Females live about 4-6 years on average, while males usually live only 1 year (maximum 2-3)



10th Annual Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women



FOREMOST, JULY 24-25TH, 2013



Registration Deadline: July 15, 2013

Registration Fee: \$75.00 (Meals Included)

Register early as space is limited!

For additional information or to register contact:

Amanda Halawell (ahalawell@cowsandfish.org)

Phone (403) 451-1182 Fax (403) 274-0007

Or online at www.southernalbertagsw.blogspot.ca



Watch for Moving Farm Equipment this Spring

If equipment is too wide to fit into one lane it can pose a serious threat to oncoming



traffic. Loads not tied down properly can be shifted or dumped onto the road, creating a hazard. Unsecure loads may be subject to a fine under the traffic safety act. Follow all regulated requirements for signage and lighting, including use of SMV signs. Inadequate lighting can result in poor visibility at dawn and at dusk. Most new equipment is fitted with adequate lighting, but keep in mind that older equipment may not meet current lighting standards under the traffic safety act and may be subject to penalty. Complete a safety check on tractor and trailer before travel.

When moving oversized equipment Starland County recommends that the use of additional escort vehicles and lighting be exercised. Plan your route in advance. If you are

not aware of obstacles beforehand you could become stuck on a road with hazards such as narrow shoulders and bridges.

Watch for your neighbours and others moving slow moving farm equipment on the road, and adjust your driving and speed accordingly. Give them the courtesy that you would expect if you were on the equipment.

If you are seen by our Peace Officer Brenda Gallagher moving your equipment in a safety conscious way you will receive a free Starland County map book.



Alberta Farmers Hope for Profitable Growing Season Amid High Crop Prices

High crop prices are fuelling the possibility of a profitable growing season as Alberta farmers prepare for spring seeding.

“With canola fluctuating around \$14.50 per bushel in March and barley averaging about \$5.30, farmers are hoping the weather cooperates better this year— so they can cash in on these high prices with bumper crops,” says Lorelei Hulston, Provincial Insurance Manager for Agricultural Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), which administers crop insurance in Alberta on behalf of the provincial and federal governments.

“Producers would like to avoid the disappointment of last year,” says Hulston. “Prices were high and the growing season looked promising. Then came a series of unexpected weather and disease issues that left many clients with below average yields and crop insurance claims.”

Close to \$532 million was paid out through crop insurance across Alberta last year. Claims were triggered by several factors including widespread hail, lack of moisture, severe wind and heat stress caused by hot July weather. “Many canola fields were hit by an unexpected disease called aster yellows. Diseases like sclerotinia and insects like army cutworms also became a problem,” says Hulston. “It still ended up being a decent year financially for many— thanks to high grain prices—but it was far from what they hoped for,” says Hulston. “With crop prices even higher this spring, there's a lot of value farmers will want to protect this year,”

she adds, reminding producers of the upcoming April 30 deadline to apply for crop insurance in Alberta.

“Mother Nature is in Control”

Whether prices remain at current levels— allowing farmers to cash in once they harvest crops this fall— depends mainly on the weather, says Charlie Pearson, a provincial crop market analyst with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. “Mother Nature is in Control.”

Pearson explains today's high prices were created by last years drought in the U.S, Russia, Ukraine and South America-leaving tight corn and oilseed supplies worldwide.

Grain Prices Could Drop 10 to 20%

“If the world gets good weather and decent crops we'll have larger grain supplies this fall— causing prices to drop 10 to 20 per cent depending on how much grain is harvested,” he predicts. “But if drought conditions continue in these major grain growing regions of the world and supplies tighten further, prices could climb higher.”

While he expects grain prices will soften this fall, Pearson says strong demand for meat and cooking oil in China and the U.S ethanol policy should keep prices “historically high and profitable for most producers.”

SPE Protects High Prices

“However, we'll probably see wild price swings. Historically there's more market volatility when prices are high,” he explains. “It's a good year for farmers to consider locking in some of the profitable prices being forecast with a tool like the Spring Price Endorsement (SPE).”

Continued on Page 10

“The SPE is an optional crop insurance rider that compensates farmers if prices drop 10 to 50 per cent between spring and fall on harvested crops. If grain prices climb higher—by 10 to 50 per cent—a built in crop insurance feature called the Variable Price benefit (VPB) insures farmers at the higher price if their crop fails, adds Hulston.

The VPB paid out nearly \$108 million in 2012—a record amount—when prices jumped by up to 50 per cent on some crops between spring and fall.

Hulston expects interest in the SPE will rise this year as producers look for ways to protect against falling prices, but she says the production guarantee crop insurance provides will once again be the key reason farmers insure as much as 14 million acres of Alberta cropland this spring.

All Risk Coverage

Most farmers enrolled in crop insurance take the highest coverage levels insuring 70 to 80 per cent of their average crop yield—along with the Hail Endorsement rider because it’s impossible to predict what might impact their crops each year, says Hulston, noting about 60 per cent of crop insurance premiums are subsidized by the government. “Its all risk coverage that insures everything from drought and hail to frost, flooding, insects, wind, disease, and wildlife.”

As producers fill out their crop insurance forms, Hulston reminds them to declare all acres they intent to seed this year—whether they plan to insure them or not—to be eligible for the Unseeded Acreage and Reseeding Benefits if those fields become flooded.

Farmers can also Auto-Elect Straight Hail Insurance coverage at a 2 per cent discount if

they choose that option with their crop insurance before April 30. And producers wishing to defer claim payments until the next calendar year are urged to notify AFSC as soon as possible, because once claim cheques are issued, payments can no longer be deferred. Producers with questions about crop insurance can contact their local AFSC District Office or the AFSC Call Centre at 1-877-AFSC before the April 30 deadline.

Pest Corner: Cut Worms

A pest to keep your eye on this spring in our area is cutworms. Eggs hatch in April as the soil temperatures increase, and larvae start feeding immediately on any nearby vegetation for the next 6-8 weeks.



Most damage is done to crops in June. After hatching, the larvae immediately begin to feed on the host plant and will usually be about half grown by freeze-up. The cutworm overwinters as a partly grown larva and resumes feeding again early the next spring as soon as new green growth appears.

You can locate cutworms by digging 2-3 cm below the surface around damaged plants. Damage is characterized by small holes and notches in foliage, as well as severed stems from more mature cutworms. Insecticides, if required, should be applied with as high a water volume as is feasible (200 L/ha). Light to moderate rain within a week after application will enhance efficacy. Application should be done at dusk when cutworms will be above ground.

Vertical Pallet Garden



1. Get Supplies

- Wooden pallet
- Sandpaper
- Staple gun
- Hammer & nails
- Landscaping paper
- Planting soil
- Plants
- 1/4" MDF

2. Prepare

Sand down any rough patches/ corners on the pallet. Attach the MDF to the back of the pallet

3. Staple paper to pallet

Double up landscaping fabric and staple sides, bottom and back

4. Fill with Soil

Fill pallet with planting soil

5. Plant

Start planting at the bottom of the pallet, pack plants tightly

6. Water

Leave horizontally for 2 weeks to ensure plants take root.

Stand the pallet upright and enjoy!



Avoid This: Wildflower Mixes

Many "Wildflower" mixes contain seeds of non-native, aggressive plant species legislated as invasive. Contents of these mixes are rarely listed accurately by their scientific names. The wide variety of common names used for some plants adds to the confusion.

Never purchase a seed mix without the packet being clearly labeled with scientific names. Some seed packets with contents labeled may still contain surprise invaders not listed.

Instead Try:



Individual packets

Planting packets of individual wildflower species is preferable to taking the chance and planting wildflower mixes contaminated with invasive species. It is far LESS work to spend time at the start being careful what is planted. Otherwise, a gardener could spend follow up years battling unwanted invasive plants.



The Alberta Invasive Plants Council recommends researching wildflower seed growers within a local area. Choose only the most reputable local sources for seed to ensure species planted are actually native to, and adapted for, a specific area.

CAUTION: Regional mixes (those listed for certain general areas, e.g. Prairie mixes) don't necessarily contain native seed.

See also:

- ✓ **1. Wildflower Woes.**
www.acfnewsresource.org/science/wildflower_woes.html
- ✓ **2. Alberta Native Plant Council's ANPC Guidelines for Purchase and Use of Wildflower Seed Mixes.**
www.anpc.ab.ca/assets/wildflower_seeds_guidelines.pdf

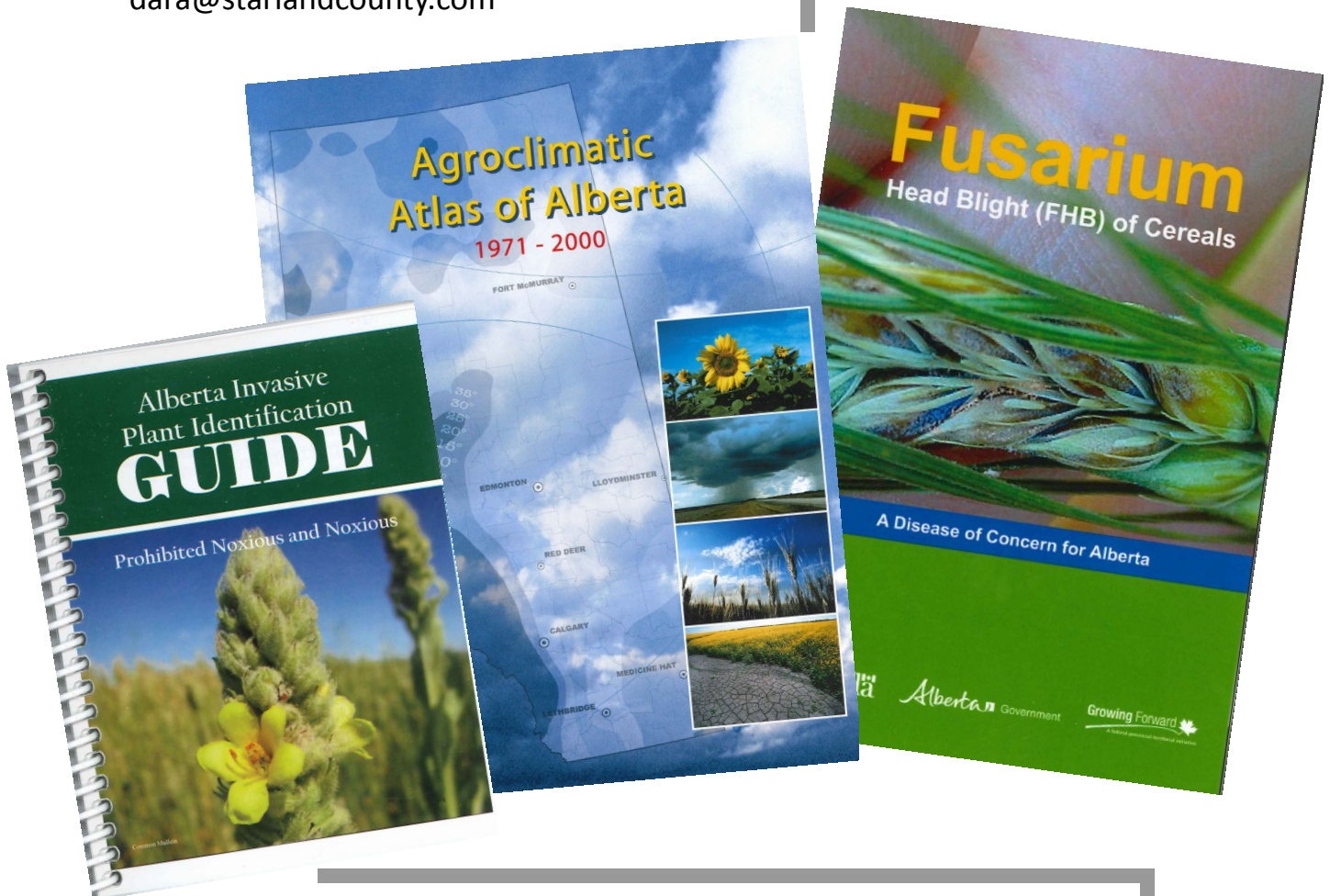


AG Talk

To read online visit www.starlandcounty.com
If you would like to receive Starland County's
AG Talk newsletter electronically please email
dara@starlandcounty.com



@StarlandCounty



Starland County has information available to residents. Stop by the County office to pick up your *AB Invasive Plant Guide*, *Agroclimatic Atlas of Alberta* and *Fusarium Head Blight of Cereals* Brochure today!