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who care*

Western Farm & Forest

Sustainable Land Management Opportunities

SPRING 2007

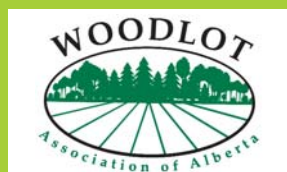
The emerging
bioeconomy

Be bear aware
this spring

What kills
pine beetles?



Grain
check-off
funds
research
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WILD ROSE
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

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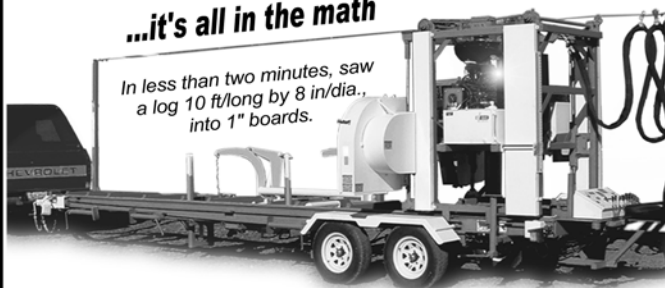


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Western Farm & Forest

Western Farm & Forest magazine promotes innovation and sustainability on farms and woodlots in Canada's four western provinces. It is mailed four times a year to private landowners and to related equipment suppliers, government departments and officials.

The mission of the magazine is to inform and inspire landowners about the economic, ecological and social opportunities available to them through sustainable, integrated management of their resources. We promote the objectives of the Woodlot Association of Alberta, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, and other organizations consistent with our mission.

Submission of articles and photos on any aspect of innovation or management on the farm or woodlot is welcomed. Please contact the Publisher for information on length and desired subject matter.

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Winter back to normal

This has been an old fashioned Alberta winter that everyone my age would consider normal. It started out in my area with record snowfall levels and -30 C in November, and as I look out the window today spring is not around the corner yet. After a lengthy run of above average winter temperatures and low snow fall levels, I think we were all getting a little complacent and expected fall weather to last through to Christmas.

Many of our WAA members were scrambling to finish firewood projects, outbuilding renovations and other general fall preparations for winter. We decided to bring in extra horse feed and I stacked the round bales in the trees next to a pasture I use in the winter to keep a sleigh team and a few saddle horses close to home. That location as it turns out was ideal for the deer to visit each night as the snow got deeper and deeper, and on their way to the hay they

have chewed the buds off 30 of my prized pine trees that were planted three years ago.

Readers will recall that spread of the mountain pine beetle next summer would be dependent on both the winter weather and the aggressive provincial government detection and eradication program.

Since our last issue the -40 C temperatures required to kill over-wintering mountain pine beetle larvae arrived in many areas of western Alberta and fortunately prior to their natural antifreeze buildup. In my travels throughout the province since November, I have been amazed at the discussion and interest around the topic of the recent mountain pine beetle outbreak in western Alberta. This magazine will continue to inform readers of the status of this serious forest health issue, particularly the summer survey results that will confirm the level of mountain pine beetle mortality associated with this winter's weather.



Dennis
Quintilio,
WAA

Gearing up for another year

I'm back! Thank you to the Board of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers for having confidence in me for another year. Three years went by in a flash and there are certainly as many challenges to face as there was when I was first elected. I look forward to working for the farmers of Alberta for another year and would welcome any comments at any time.

Mother Nature was none too kind to us this year during the second week of January. I suppose that one can't be too optimistic about balmy weather in that time-frame but the storm certainly did nothing for our walk-up crowd! Despite the slightly smaller attendance, we still had an excellent event and rejuvenated the organization for another year.

We honoured Neil Wagstaff who stepped off the board after many dedicated years. Neil was the president of WRAP from 2001 to 2004 and we will all miss his skill at understanding difficult issues. On behalf of all the members of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, I would like to wish Neil and Mary all the best in their future.

Welcome to Grant Hicks who joins our board. Grant is the Past-President of the Alberta Beekeepers and I know he will be an excellent board member.



Bill Dobson,
Wild Rose
Agricultural
Producers

Main cover: Marsh marigold (Doug Macaulay). Index photo: Hand with wheat (Western Grains Research Foundation)

Risk management viewed from all angles

Regional director's review of WRAP's annual meeting

By **TERRY LEE DEGENHARDT**

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) held its annual meeting in Nisku on January 9 and 10. There was a blizzard swirling outside, and inside was a room full of farmers listening to seminars on a wide variety of topics with the theme of managing risk on the farm. George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Food, brought greetings from the province. WRAP board and members were pleased to have him present.

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

Richard McConnell highlighted a new type of crop production insurance that should have some pilot projects in place for next year. It will allow a farmer to choose a weather-based index, an area yield-based index, or a combination of the two. Currently there are 111 weather stations in Alberta, with plans to add 68 more. Data will be enhanced with interpolated data from soil moisture tests for a township-based data grid. One of the more interesting options will be the ability to run "what-if" scenarios on your own computer for your farm using historical information to see how often it would have paid out in the last 10 years. WRAP has had a significant advisory role in the development of this idea.

Kate Rich, from the Water Strategy Implementation Section of Alberta Environment, talked about watershed management. No one needs to tell farmers from this area about the importance of water, and the risk from too little or too much. Wetland and riparian management are becoming very important. Environmental Farm Plans are a good way to begin thinking about how to address water issues. She noted that it is important to register your water sources to protect your "1st in time/1st in right" access to that water in the future.

Laurel Aitken, Alberta Farm Safety Coordination talked about the importance of farm safety – safety of loved ones, quality of life, and good business practice.

Farm income is the worst in history, which points to why farmers need to work to familiar risks, think accidents won't happen to us, are too pushed for time, or simply like the thrill of taking risks. From a risk management viewpoint, farm safety has to be #1. Aitken suggested developing a farm safety plan and writing it down. Lead by example and make use of available safety resources. Doug Beever with Agrium is working with stakeholders to identify best safety practices, and a new model to implement farm safety concepts.

Terry Harasym from the Canadian Grain Commission talked about the risks associated with kernel visual distinguishability (KVD). Insisting on KVD can limit plant breeders' attempts to develop varieties for new markets like ethanol production. Not having KVD can jeopardize our world market niche in providing high quality milling wheat for bread and pasta.

Equipment to test quality in the local elevator is yet too expensive. A proposed wheat class re-structuring as of August 1, 2008 will be of some help in addressing both needs. A new class – Canada Western General Purpose – will allow for high yield, high disease resistant varieties designed for ethanol, as long as they don't resemble Canadian Western Red Spring (CWRS) or Canadian Western Amber Durham (CWAD). CWRS and CWAD will continue to require KVD. Other risk mitigation with grain quality include monitor-



Sarah Seinen

Farmers know the importance of water

ing for pesticide residues, mycotoxins and heavy metals.

Bob Friesen, president of Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), covered a wide spectrum of topics. Canadian farm debt is \$51 billion, and farmers earned negative \$3 billion last year. Farmers need to work together more than ever before. While Canadian farmers are experiencing the worst farm income in history, U.S. farmers have experienced the best farm income in their history. WRAP, along with other members of CFA, have drafted a Canadian Farm Bill which addresses the extreme farm income situation, and also looks ahead to propose renewal strategies to help farmers build value added opportunities, and take better advantage of our role as primary producers. The Canadian Farm Bill is a document that covers a broad spectrum of farm policy, linking current needs with strategies for growth and renewal in the future.

Renee Rozier, Loss Prevention Coordinator for Cooperators Insurance, gave a real interesting presentation on how electrical fires start, and how a

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers Resolutions for the 2007 Convention

\$48,000 camera can detect heat, found most often in extension cord connections and breaker boxes, and can pinpoint a problem before a fire starts.

Susan Church, Executive Director of Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC), talked about risks in livestock care. There is the risk involved with personal safety when handling livestock, the risks of losing livestock to injury or disease, and the risks from misinformed groups like PETA or Animal Angels. AFAC is a strong proponent of responsible care for livestock, and as such has helped to deflect nonsense from groups like PETA or Animal Angels.

WRAP Business Meeting

Lynn Jacobson from Enchant gave the Board of Directors report. Directors not only take active roles in WRAP meetings, but also represent the interests of Alberta farmers at CFA, Cooperators Insurance, Farmer Rail Car Coalition, CWB meetings and issues, Canadian Grain Commission, Seed Sector Review, Clean Air Strategic Alliance, Surface Rights, Environmental Farm Plan Company, Farm Tech, Western Grains Research Foundation, Human Resources Agriculture Sector Council, Alberta Farm Animal Care, Grains and Oilseeds summit, biodiesel conferences, Farm Implement Board of Alberta, farm safety, Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) and others.

President Bill Dobson reported on his very busy year representing farmers and looked ahead to some opportunities. Consultations on APF II began January 31 in Wainwright. The federal Clean Air Bill may give some renewable fuel opportunities. Results from the CWB barley plebiscite are coming soon. WRAP hopes to build positive relations with the new provincial Agriculture Minister. The draft of the Canadian Farm Bill has some innovative ideas.

Resolutions covered topics from a moratorium on rail line abandonment, changes to the capital cost allowance rates for farm equipment, CWB, own use imports, supply of grain cars, surface rights, Canadian Farm Bill, funding for combine testing by PAMI, biodiesel plant incentives and potential of butanol from agriculture products.

Resolution 2007 – 1

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers request the Federal Government to approve the usage of 2% strychnine on the farm for Richardson Ground Squirrel control.

Resolution 2007 – 2

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers ask the federal and provincial governments' for an extension of five years to the Canadian Alberta Farm Stewardship Program which is to be terminated on March 31 of 2008.

Resolution 2007 – 3

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby both the federal government and the provincial government to implement a moratorium on rail line abandonment on the prairies – more specifically the longest and straightest line on the prairies, line 43:03 from Camrose to Alliance.

Resolution 2007 – 4

BE IT RESOLVED that the Wild Rose Agricultural Producers ask the Government of Alberta to strongly oppose notices in the United States Federal Register that would, if implemented, impair the market opportunities and access for Alberta sugar thick beet juice given to Canada upon implementation of WTO and NAFTA agreements, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers strongly urge the government of Alberta to also vigorously pursue through the Alberta office in Washington, DC any new market opportunities and access which may arise as the final implementation of NAFTA sweetener agreements between Mexico and the US reach final implementation on January 1, 2008.

Resolution 2007 – 5

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers endorse the equipment dealers and manufacturers submission to the Federal Minister of Finance, seeking changes to the Capital Cost Allowance Rates for farm equipment.

Resolution 2007 – 6

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, along with the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan and Keystone Agricultural Producers approach the Western Producer to provide a regular forum to express agricultural policy.

Resolution 2007 – 7

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers re-affirm its policy that any changes to the Canadian Wheat Board must be approved through a plebiscite by producers of that commodity.

Resolution 2007 – 8

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers urge CN to meet its obligation to move grain in the Peace Region by supplying an adequate number of grain cars.

Resolution 2007 – 9

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers request that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency allow the present OUI program to run in parallel with the new Growers Own Use Import Program on a world wide basis

Resolution 2007 -10

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers urge the Government of Canada to ensure that all protein testers in grain elevators be monitored by Weights & Measures.

Resolution 2007 – 11

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Government of Alberta to separate the landowner from the Land Agent's Licensing Act by removing Section I.C, II from the Act, and;
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the land owner shall also be able to access any expertise he deems applicable and as the proponent initiated the negotiations of the land, the proponent should be expected to pay for the cost of the advisors the landowner uses.

Resolution 2007 – 12

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers endorse the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's proposed Canadian Farm Bill.

Resolution 2007 – 13

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Government of Alberta to establish a policy would provide crop loss and inconvenience compensation to renters/occupants of land where energy development occurs.

Resolution 2007 – 14

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers request that the Government of Alberta reactivate funding for the Prairie Agricultural Machine Institute combine testing program at Humbolt, Saskatchewan.

Resolution 2007 – 15

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Government of Alberta to once again implement a 30% premium discount on Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance, All Risk premiums along with the producer's share of any Spring Price Endorsement payouts being increased from 50% to 70% for the 2007/08 crop year.

Resolution 2007 – 16

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Board of Directors of the Canadian Wheat Board to create a new permanent section in the 2005/2006 CWB Annual Report, or by Special Report, where the CWB can report annually on all the Producer Payout Options (Tonnes, Dollars generated) and the Contingency Fund activity in a clear, easy to find manner.

Resolution 2007 – 17

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers request the Board of Directors of the Canadian Wheat Board to ensure that the fees on the Producer Payment Option programs reflect the true administrative cost of these programs.

Resolution 2007 – 18

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Government of Alberta to facilitate the building of bio-diesel plants that would be producer owned.

Resolution 2007 – 19

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Federal Government and the federal opposition parties to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act to give the CWB Board of Directors and the government equal power in hiring and firing the President, selecting and terminating appointed Directors, determining the question and process for plebiscites on extensions and exclusions to the CWB marketing powers, and determining the process for CWB Director elections and;
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any sections pertaining to the so-called gag order must be ratified by Parliament within a specified period of time.

Resolution 2007 – 20

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Government of Alberta to enforce regulations concerning off highway vehicles such as snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles, and to work with snowmobile and ATV associations to encourage their safe use and respect for private property rights.

Resolution 2007 – 21

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Government of Canada and the Canadian Transportation Agency to ensure that farmers are charged rail freight based on only net weight when cleaned on the prairies.

Resolution 2007 – 22

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers investigate the possibilities of butanol made from agricultural products.

Resolution 2007 – 23

BE IT RESOLVED that Wild Rose Agricultural Producers lobby the Government of Alberta to refrain from using taxpayers dollars for the "Choice Matters Campaign."

Mountain pine beetles don't always win

Seasoned entomologist outlines the pine beetle's worst enemies

By SARAH SEINEN

The cold snap last November had everyone crossing their fingers that the frigid temperatures would kill many of the mountain pine beetles in Alberta's trees.

While temperature is a major mortality factor for the pine beetle, it's not the forest pest's only nemesis.

Herb Cerezke, a retired entomologist with the Canadian Forest Service, said the cold snap killed some beetles in the northern part of the province, but it may have affected only those populations above the snowline.

Mountain pine beetles produce a natural anti-freeze to protect themselves from the cold weather. Furthermore, snow at the base of a tree acts as an insulator, so the heavy snowfalls in Alberta this year are also helping the beetles keep warm. Beetles below the snowline have twice the protection.

Cerezke was involved in survey and monitoring efforts during Alberta's last major outbreak of beetles from 1977 to 1987. Cold snaps during the winters of 1983 to 1985 wiped out most of the pests. Currently, Cerezke, a long-standing member of the Woodlot Association of Alberta, is working with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development on its beetle management plan.

"Farm and woodlot owners have many fears and questions about mountain pine beetle," said Cerezke. "If there are pine trees on your property, you might be comforted to know about some of the factors that contribute to beetle mortality."

A beetle's life cycle progresses through four stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult. Each female adult lays at least 60 eggs, resulting in a potential three- to five-fold increase in population each year. Eggs are laid during the summer and usually hatch before fall freeze-

up, when the larvae begin to build up protection against the cold. They stop feeding, their stomachs are emptied of food, and an anti-freeze substance accumulates within their bodies. The beetle spends the winter mostly in larval stage and resumes feeding in the spring. Adult beetles, though less hardy, may also survive the winter.

"It takes time for beetles to develop hardiness, so if cold temperatures occur early enough, they can be quite detrimental to beetle populations," said Cerezke. "For weather to have a significant impact, though, we need -40°C for about one or two days."

He said eggs have a threshold of about -18°C. Larvae are the most hardy, able to withstand temperatures of -40°C, while pupae and adults are cold tolerant to temperatures between -18°C and -34°C. Beetles tend to reach their maximum hardiness by January.

The moisture content of a tree is another important factor affecting the success of a beetle attack. A tree's moisture level relates to its vigour and production of sap, which is its main defense against pine beetles. A high moisture content in the inner bark and sapwood also limits the blue stain fungus from becoming established in the tree. Pine beetles carry blue stain fungal spores and spread them to the trees they attack, further weakening them.

Natural predators also contribute to beetle mortality. Pine beetles are a particular favourite of woodpeckers, who will chip off a tree's bark to expose the insects. This in turn hastens the drying out of the tree.

During the summer, three common insect species eat pine beetles: the checkered beetle, a type of small fly and a kind of tiny wasp-like insect. As well, there are species of nematodes and



Doug Macaulay

A tree can drown a pine beetle in pitch

mites that may attack eggs and adult beetles.

On top of these natural controls, the beetle also faces a fight from the provincial government, which battles the pest with three main direct-control procedures: the cutting and burning of single trees or groups of trees, sanitation harvesting of heavily infested stands, and prescribed burning of infested stands. Other helpful strategies may include the application of an insecticide, a herbicide and baits such as pheromones. Insecticides have their main value in protecting high-value trees.

"Overall, in order to have a declining population, the beetle mortality rate needs to be 97 per cent or higher," said Cerezke.

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development has revamped its Forest Health website and created a Mountain Pine Beetle Advisory Committee website to ensure easy access to pine beetle information for the public and industry.

The committee formed a Community Sustainability Working Group at its December 2006 meeting. The six-member group, meeting for the first time on February 8 to determine a terms of reference and project outline, will help address community concerns regarding the mountain pine beetle infestation.

Contact the committee at MtPineBeetle.Advisory@gov.ab.ca or visit its website at: www.srd.gov.ab.ca/forests/health/pa_mpb_advisory.html.

Natural protection against pine beetle

With the enormous influx of mountain pine beetles into Alberta's forests, many are wondering what will become of their pine trees. Removing infested trees and disposing of them by chipping or burning as suggested by the Alberta Department of Sustainable Resource Development is a good first step. However, many Albertans want to protect their trees from the beetles and not just see them die one by one.

Fortunately, there is a real solution—Pherotech International, a Delta, BC based company manufactures a synthetic pheromone that mimics the Mountain Pine Beetle's own "antiaggregation" or repellent pheromone.

The pheromone comes in a convenient plastic pouch that can easily be stapled onto a pine tree. When placed on susceptible pine trees, the pheromone sends a "No Vacancy" signal (i.e. makes the beetles believe that the tree is already fully occupied so they must go elsewhere) to incoming beetles with the result that invading beetles avoid the area entirely. Because the effect is so pronounced, Pherotech International has named the pheromone **No Vacancy!**

Pherotech International has been working on the Mountain Pine Beetle pheromone with researchers from the United States for over 20 years. In 2006, No Vacancy was registered for use in Canada and was used

extensively in the Kelowna area of B.C. for the first time with excellent results. For more information, contact Techmist Spray Solutions, Abbotsford, B.C.

The proper use and placement of the No Vacancy pouch is as follows:

Individual tree placement: one–two pouches/tree on the north tree face at 2–3 m height. Staple at the top flap and do not puncture the center of the pouch.

Large forested property placement (0.5 ha or larger): one– two pouches per tree in a grid pattern at 10 m centres on the north tree face at 2–3 m height.

For best results, remove and destroy all mountain pine beetle infested pines on property before application.

Protect your valuable pine trees from mountain pine beetle before it's too late!

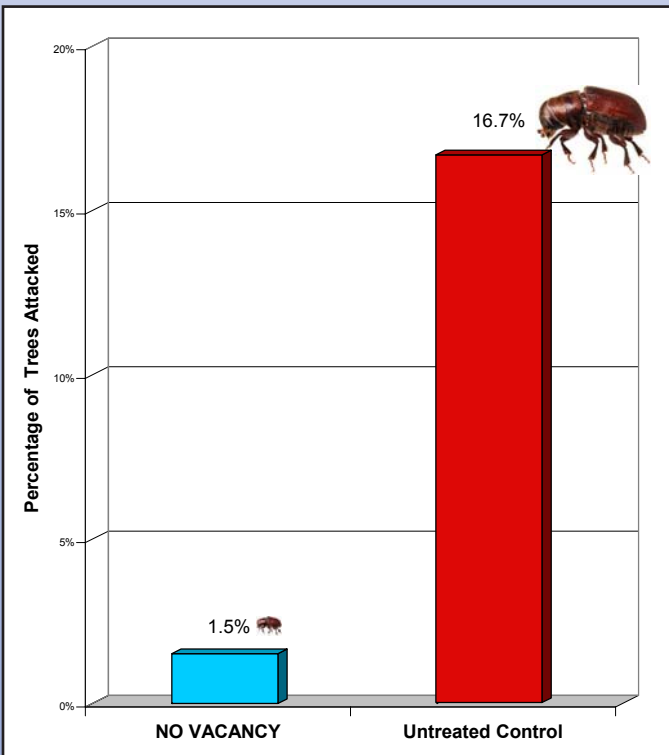
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Pherotech
604-940-9944

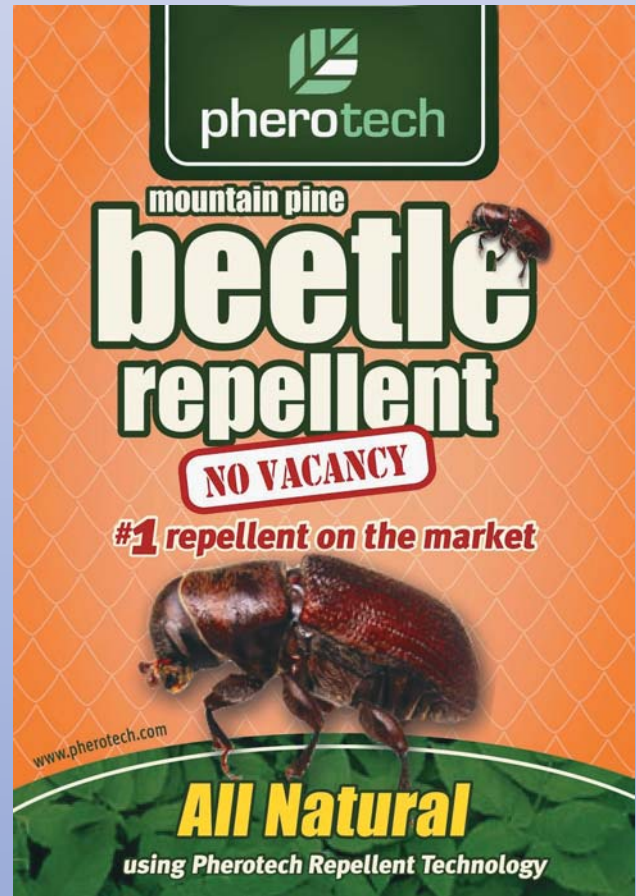
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Graph shows results of using No Vacancy compared with no treatment near Kelowna in 2006



Proper placement of the No Vacancy pouch

Future forests depend on young trees

By **MARTINE BOLINGER**

Just like your farm business, succession is an issue with trees. The future is only as strong as the young ones coming up. Look around your property, assess the age of your trees and plan accordingly.

Some choose to believe their woodlands are best left alone to let nature take its course. Others are more proactive and influence the look, feel and future value of their forest through various management practices including

Woodlot Extension Program

tree planting. One example is under planting older, declining aspen or poplar stands with spruce seedlings. The existing forest acts as a nursery for the small trees, and spruce, being a shade tolerant species, enjoys the shelter of the older trees.

Seedling Sources for Your Farms and Forests

The Prairie Shelterbelt Program is a favourite source of trees for farmers and ranchers. The trees are free and the landowner only pays the cost of shipping. The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Association (PFRA) Shelterbelt Centre supplies seedlings to eligible applicants across the prairies. Applications are accepted from June 1 to March 15 every year. Get the forms and read more about the program at http://www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/shelterbelt_e.htm.

Surplus seedlings, mostly white spruce and lodgepole pine, can often be purchased from forest nurseries. Because most of these nurseries grow on a contract basis for various forest companies in huge quantities, the

seedlings are overages from what was ordered or they are seedlings that don't meet the morphological specifications. So they could be too big or too small or too skinny.

Regardless of where seedlings are purchased, the buyer should be aware of where the tree seed originated to ensure the best match possible to the planting location. Let the nursery grower know your location so they can help you find the most suitable trees

seedlings to plant. Price varies as well, it might be wise to shop around and bulk discounts do apply.

A group known as Tree Time does the marketing for the majority of Alberta forest nurseries from their website (www.treetime.ca). Check out their selection and place your order online.

Pacific Regeneration Technologies (PRT) Beaverlodge is a part of the PRT Group. They market surplus seedlings from their website (www.prtgroup.com). It's worth a look because lots of Alberta seed is shipped to PRT nurseries in BC for growing. There are Alberta seed lots listed in the Overrun Report but the information is pretty technical—you may need help from their staff to translate it.

You might know of a forest nursery in your area. You can approach them and ask about buying seedlings directly.

Here are a few names to get you started:

- Lakeside Nursery, (780) 645-



A young tree growing in a mixed forest

3919, St. Paul—surplus trees available in July.

- Woodmere Nursery, (780) 835-5292, Fairview—welcomes inquiries.

- Boreal Horticulture Services (780) 826-1709, Bonnyville—100 tree minimum order.

The Woodlot Extension Program of Alberta works hard to support landowners who manage and take care of their shelterbelts, woodlots and woodlands. Look for our woodlot and agroforestry specialists Doug Macaulay and Toso Bozic in a community near you speaking about forest health, riparian reforestation and shelterbelt improvement. They can also be found at ag service board tours and summer demo days across the province. For online information about woodlots, go to Alberta Agriculture & Food's website (www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify), and click on the agri-fibre and agri-forestry link.

Landowners to play role in future bioeconomy

Localized production will lend itself to regional opportunities

By **DAVID HOLEHOUSE**

Private farm and woodlot owners will have a big role to play in the bioeconomy and the next industrial revolution, says Len Bykowski of BioProducts Alberta.

That's because the bioeconomy, fuelled by renewable resources and residues that have little value today, will work best at the local and regional scale where feedstock and factory are close together.

Alberta Forestry
Research Institute

Bykowski's vision is of small regional "clusters" that minimize costs on transportation of bulky feedstocks, and maximize the value of locally-available materials, existing assets, labour and expertise.

The feedstocks will include farm straw and grains, animal wastes and woody material. Today's evolving technologies can already turn those materials into high-value electricity and motor fuels, and that's just the beginning. Future manufacturing plants in Alberta will turn out pharmaceuticals, aerospace and automotive parts, biodegradable plastics and much more, based on ligno-cellulosic components of farm and forest fibre.

Bykowski spoke in February at a virtual conference in Edmonton, interacting with community leaders around Alberta by audio and video link provided by the Forest Based Community



Len Bykowski

Virtual Cluster. Regional participants responded with news about efforts already under way to build this type of partnership in Peace River, Westlock, Red Deer, Stettler, Olds, Rimbey, Ponoka and elsewhere.

Commodity farm and forest products will remain a staple of the Alberta economy, as will fossil fuel, Bykowski stressed. It is predicted that natural gas supplies will be in decline in just a few years, and alternative energy supplies will be needed, promoting a good investment area. Interestingly, syngas made from biofeedstock is a suitable and proposed supplement for natural gas similar to alternatives such as coalbed methane.

A defining characteristic of the bioeconomy will be the cluster, Bykowski said. Communities could develop business parks or clusters around, for instance, existing assets like a pulp mill as a host for new plants that can use the "slipstream" byproducts of the mill, or that can provide the mill with some of the ingredients it needs. Together, they all win, and society is rewarded with a cleaner environment, clean products and regional sustainability.

The icing on the cake for landown-



Sarah Seinen

Feedstocks include farm straw and grains, animal wastes and woody material

ers is the opportunity for alternate crops and revenues, even on marginal land. Triticale, producing up to 18 tonnes per hectare of potential biomass in Alberta, could be a valuable feedstock for bioenergy, along with flax, and the same is true for fast-growing willow and poplar.

So before you burn that forest or field debris, check with your local Community Futures or Economic Development offices to see if there's a biorevolution coming to a town near you. Even if it's not here yet, you can be sure it's coming.

For more information, check out the BioProducts Alberta website at www.bioproductsalberta.com

Contact:
Ross Risvold
Forest Based Community
Virtual Cluster
780.865.4698
rrisvold@shaw.ca

Wood chips to biofuel:

Biomass company takes off

By SARAH SEINEN

A new breed of forest products company will break ground near Edmonton by the end of 2007—a testament to Alberta's budding bioeconomy.

Expander Energy, a Calgary-based company, has secured a contract to use Edmonton's waste wood to produce about 30,000 tonnes of hydrogen a year for use in heavy oil upgrading.

The company plans to begin construction of a \$60-million processing facility in the Strathcona Industrial Park east of Edmonton later this year, says Jerry Sunderland, consultant for Expander.

Forest Business

Expander has licensed the technology for its gasification process from CHOREN Industries GmbH of Freiberg, Germany. This technology produces a tar-free syngas, which CHOREN refines further to produce SunDiesel. The syngas is composed of hydrogen, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide.

While the company's initial efforts will be focused on the Edmonton area, Sunderland says Expander is looking at building similar plants in other parts of the province to use mill and forest harvesting residues.

"Forest waste has no commercial value in today's economy, but there are real opportunities on the forestry side of things to improve the use and value of wood," says Sunderland. "When a block is harvested, about 20 per cent of the total volume harvested is left behind as forest residues. While some of that



Jerry Sunderland displays SunDiesel, a biofuel produced in Germany using woody biomass

Sarah Seinen

residue must remain to ensure ecological sustainability, much of it could be used in bioenergy systems."

In addition to forest and mill residues from the commercial forest, there are many private land and woodlot owners with access to solid biomass fuels such as wood chunks, woodchips, sawdust, shavings, bark and needles.

Furthermore, non-commercial trees and shrubs, mountain pine beetle-killed wood, fire-killed trees, rights-of-way salvage, and residues from FireSmart activities are all potential biomass sources.

"For us, privately sourced wood is viewed as a potential supplementary supply. For woodlot owners, they should see Expander as a new customer that doesn't operate on traditional commodity cycles," says Sunderland.

Sunderland spoke in February at a virtual conference in Edmonton, meeting with community leaders around Alberta by audio and video link provided by the Forest Based Community Virtual Cluster. He cited Alberta Energy and Utilities Board estimates that state natural gas reserves could be depleted within nine years, and crude oil in 17

years. To deal with the projected future depletion, Alberta, along with other provinces and the federal government, is starting to develop a bioenergy strategy to look at alternate energy sources.

"Forest fibre is a good source of renewable energy and I'd encourage the forest industry to look at opportunities to turn their waste into wealth, but it has to be a business-driven decision," said Dan Wilkinson, executive director of the forest industry development branch of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

He said Alberta's strategy is in its very early stages, and will include input from several ministries. The bioenergy program was transferred to Alberta Energy from Alberta Agriculture and Food after the recent provincial restructuring.

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Fire permits reduce risk of wildfires

By SARAH SEINEN

Fire season is fast approaching and whether you plan to burn brush piles or garbage, you need to obtain a fire permit beginning April 1 if you are in the Forest Protection Area.

Permits are free and available from your local Alberta Sustainable Resource Development office.

Anastasia Drummond, a provincial wildfire information officer, said permits are required for most types of burning in the forest protection area during fire season. Excluded are fires for heating or cooking.

Forest Protection

“The use of fire permits allows us to track burning across the province,” said Drummond. “That way, if we get a report from an observer or on the 310-FIRE phone line, then we can check our system to see if the smoke is coming from a permitted fire or if we should check it out as a wildfire.”

She expects fire season to start April 1, a month later than last year, when low precipitation and warm and windy conditions triggered an early start. The fire season is scheduled to last from April 1 to the end of October.

Statistics to March 15 show that Alberta had a total of 1,928 wildfires during the 2006 wildfire season. These fires burned more than 119,000 hectares of forested area, an area equivalent to about twice the size of Edmonton. That compares to the 2005 wildfire season, when 1,448 wildfires burned just over 60,000 hectares.

“In the spring, we get a lot of fire permit requests from landowners and woodlot owners who are clearing land



Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Alberta is gearing up for fire season, which starts April 1

or burning brush piles,” said Drummond. She said fire permits are granted throughout the summer and fall.

Each fire permit has specific conditions related to it, such as the day, time and place of the burn, and specific suppression equipment to be used. A permit is valid only for the period for which it is issued.

The legal requirement for a fire permit falls under the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act*, which states, “No person shall light or cause to be lit an outdoor fire during the fire season on land in a permit area unless that person is the holder of a subsisting fire permit.” For fire control purposes, the minister may suspend or cancel fire permits.

Alberta’s Forest Protection Area extends north from Waterton Lakes along the Rockies and foothills, with the

exception of national parks and most prairie and grassland areas.

For any burning that occurs outside of the Forest Protection Area, contact your local municipality for a permit.

Drummond reminds landowners that fires can burn underground even under layers of snow throughout the winter. When spring conditions are right—that is, when fuel and oxygen are available—these holdover fires can make their way to the surface and spread. Check any fall or winter burns to ensure that they have been completely extinguished.

In preparation for this year’s fire season, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development is closely monitoring weather conditions, hiring and training wildland firefighters, staffing lookout towers and preparing the province’s fleet of aircraft for action.

Contact:
Wildfire Information Officer,
Alberta Sustainable
Resource Development
780.420.1968

“The use of
fire permits
allows us to track
burning across the
province.”

- Anastasia Drummond

Micro-credit empowers farmers

By LAURA JOHNSTON MONCHUK

What do Cambodian green beans, a Tajikistan greenhouse, and the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize have in common? Each was made possible through micro-credit.

Through micro-credit, relatively small loans are extended to low-income people who have no collateral and little access to formal banking sources. An increasing number of agriculture producers in developing countries are using micro-credit to develop more profitable businesses.

“For farmers in Canada and abroad, access to capital is key for building an agricultural business,” said Bob Friesen, president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. “While Canadian farmers are able to obtain credit to leverage inputs through to the end of the produc-

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

tion cycle, farmers in developing countries historically have not had access to formal lending institutions or collateral. As a result, developing country farmers struggle to obtain inputs necessary to start and maintain a viable business.

“Micro-credit is allowing farmers to develop and gain ownership of their activities, from production and natural resource management to processing and marketing,” Friesen said. “Micro-financial services are helping family farmers around the world better control their destinies and strengthen their communities.”

Canadians have contributed financial and human resources toward successful micro-credit programs in developing countries. For example, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has long supported community finance projects in Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa.

Through World Relief Canada (WRC), CIDA supports projects to provide micro-credit to the poor in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Through these projects, clientele who are ignored by traditional banks have gained access to

financial services that benefit their families and communities.

Mil Saveourn, her husband and three children live on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Saveourn found it difficult to buy fertilizer, bamboo stakes and other materials needed to produce good crops. There was barely enough to feed her family and nothing left to sell in the market. With her first loan of only \$20 through Credit Cambodia, a WRC-supported micro-credit program, she was able to buy the materials she needed for that year, produce a good crop and pay back the loan. For the past six years she has taken out a small loan for inputs that has made her bean-growing business a prosperous enterprise. Through increased yields, she is able to sell her produce in the nearby Phnom Penh market, pay her children’s school fees and provide healthy foods for her family and neighbors.

CIDA also supported efforts to set up the First Microfinance Bank of Tajikistan, the first micro-credit institution in Central Asia. The bank has helped launch thousands of micro-enterprises, such as greenhouses, hardware stores and pharmacies and has supplied up-front input costs for farmers in this developing country.

In October 2006, Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus, and the Grameen Bank he created, won the Nobel Peace Prize for altering conventional lending rules by making loans available to women and men who previously had been considered “un-bankable.”

Yunus started the Grammen Bank in his home village 30 years ago, loaning as little as \$9 at a time to the com-



Cambodia farmer Mil Saveourn and her family were able to develop a prosperous bean-growing business through a World Relief Canada-supported micro-credit program that provides small loans to poor families to help start or expand a business

munity’s poorest to start income-generating activities. Today the bank claims it has lent \$5.72 billion to 6.61 million borrowers through 2,226 branches with a 98 percent repayment rate over the past three decades. Yunus’s pioneering use of micro-credit has become a worldwide model.

Upon declaring Yunus and the Grameen Bank winners of the Peace Prize, the Nobel selection committee said, “Lasting peace cannot be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty. Micro-credit is one such means. Yunus’s long-term vision is to eliminate poverty in the world. That vision cannot be realized by means of micro-credit alone. But Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank have shown that, in the continuing efforts to achieve it, micro-credit must play a major part.”

Grain research at work

Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF) is a charitable non-profit organization that is farmer funded and directed. Set-up to fund research that directly benefits prairie farmers, the WGRF administers an Endowment Fund and the Wheat and Barley Check-off Funds (with the exception of the barley check-off in Alberta which is administered by a separate organization), with annual research funding in the range of \$4 to \$5 million.

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

The check-off that is collected on wheat and barley is deducted annually from Canadian Wheat Board final payments. These funds are then planted into wheat and barley breeding programs at public research centres across Western Canada. In addition, the producer dollars that WGRF invests in research are leveraged to attain further government funds that double or triple the investment made by farmers.

To date, the check-off funds have supported in part more than 35 new varieties of wheat and 20 varieties of barley, with new and improved varieties in the pipe-line as we speak.

An example of a WGRF supported variety is **Superb**, which was cited as the most popular CWRS variety grown in Western Canada this last crop year according to the 2006 Canadian Wheat Board Variety Survey.

Of the 14 classes of wheat and barley that the CWB Variety Survey examined, eight of the classes have a WGRF funded variety as **number one** on the list, with many others listed in the top five. Some of these varieties include Harvest, AC Avonlea, Snowbird, AC Vista, AC Crystal, CDC Falcon, AC Andrew, CDC Copeland, CDC McGwire and AC Ranger.

New Varieties to Watch Out For:

Wheat

Kane was registered in 2006, and falls under the CWRS wheat class. This variety was developed by Stephen Fox of

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) at the Winnipeg, MB research station. Kane notes many improvements when compared to other varieties in the same class including higher yield, high test weight, very good leaf rust resistance, good stem rust resistance and is touted as an excellent milling wheat.

Alvena received its registered stamp of approval in 2006 under the CWRS wheat class. Ron DePauw, working out of the AAFC station in Swift Current, SK developed this variety. Alvena is an early maturing wheat with strong straw strength and leaf and stem rust resistance.

Barley

Binscarth was developed by the AAFC station in Brandon, MB by Mario Therrien, and was registered in 2006. Binscarth is a six-row forage barley that has high silage production potential for the Parkland region of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It out yields Virden and AC Ranger by up to 9% across the growing region for forage, and the forage quality is superior to any other forage cultivar. Binscarth also can be used for emergency grazing where needed, as it can be regrazed.

Millhouse was registered in 2005 and is the first registered variety of its type, containing properties that allow barley grain to be processed in the same fashion as wheat. Millhouse is bred to complement wheat for milling purposes – the advantage lies in the fact that it provides more dietary fiber than wheat, as well as other unique health benefits tied directly to barley. Millhouse was bred by Mario Therrien from the AAFC research station in Brandon, MB.

CDC Coalition was registered



Check-off funds planted into grain research programs

in 2005 and is a two row feed variety from the Crop Development Centre at the University of Saskatchewan (UofS). With good adaptability across Western Canada, it shows top yield potential, excellent straw strength, high test weight and is resistant to stem rust and the smuts.

CDC Aurora Nijo, registered in 2005, is the first variety resulting from a joint barley R&D project bringing together the U of S Crop Development Centre, Sapporo Breweries (Japan) and Prairie Malt Ltd. It is a two row malting variety with a malting and brewing quality profile suited to processes at Sapporo Breweries in Japan and will be grown under contract in Western Canada for that market. Its performance is similar to Harrington but it has improved straw strength, test weight, and plumpness and better net blotch resistance.

For more information about the Western Grains Research Foundation please visit us on the web at www.westerngrains.com or email us at info@westerngrains.com.

Be BearSmart this spring

Bears are out and about and hungry

By SARAH SEINEN

It's springtime and bears have one thing on their minds—food.

“At this time of year bears are getting active and all they think about is their next meal,” said Lyle Fullerton, information officer for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development in the Peace River area.

If the easiest source of food is live or dead livestock, grain spilled in your yard or garbage bins next to your house, that's what bears will eat, Fullerton said.

Alberta's BearSmart program provides landowners with practical ways to reduce the number of bear-human encounters.

“From our perspective, we'd prefer to see landowners take preventive measures to reduce property loss and damage, rather than deal with bears after the fact,” said Fullerton. “In most cases, the bear loses.”

Bears are not the only ones active in the spring. As the snow melts and roads dry, more people than ever are

heading out to bear country to work and play. Since 1993, there have been 27 significant bear-human conflicts involving both black and grizzly bears, with the numbers of encounters increasing each year.

The exact time that bears come out of hibernation depends on the weather but by May most bears are on the move and looking for food, said Fullerton. This is also when many livestock producers calve out their animals. If a bear can get a “free meal,” it will keep coming back, creating a recurring problem for the producer.

“Calves should be three to four weeks old before being turned out to pasture. They should also be kept in for a couple of weeks after any branding or veterinarian activity,” said Fullerton.

Dead animals are a reality for every livestock operation. Where and how these carcasses are disposed of helps

determine whether they will attract bears.

“Bears have a keen sense of smell—the more rotten and smelly the food, the more bears will be attracted to it,” said Fullerton.

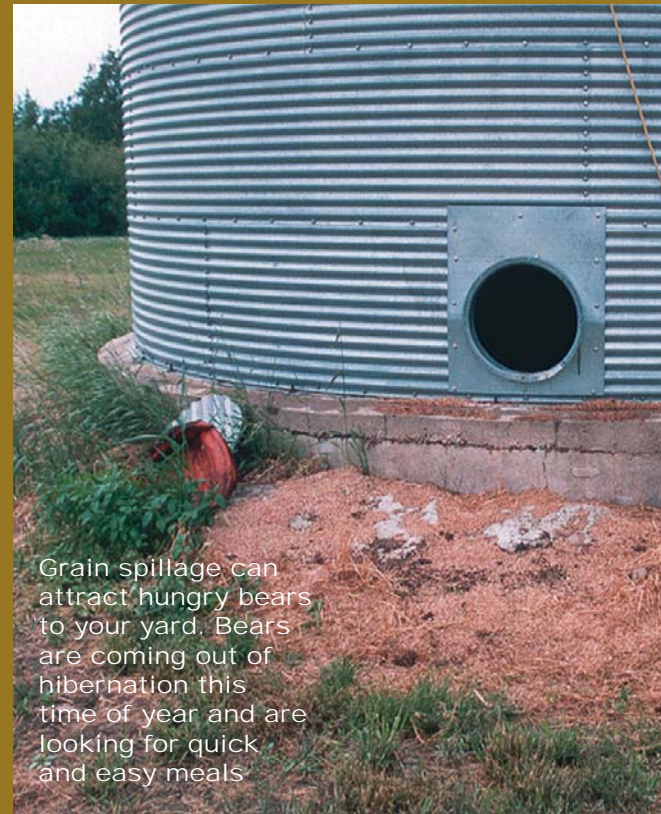
He said the best option is to deliver carcasses to a rendering plant, but if that is not possible, burn or bury them.

Proper disposal of carcasses should follow the *Livestock Diseases and Public Health Acts*.

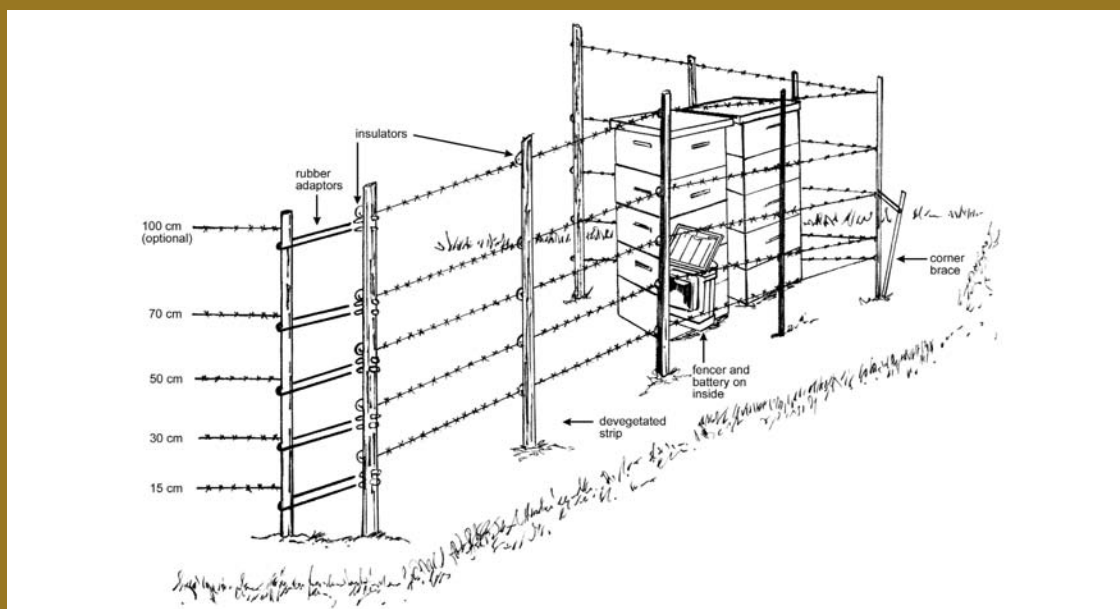
Carcasses should be buried under four feet of soil and covered with industrial lime, available at your local hardware or livestock feed store.

Bears consume up to 25,000 calories per day, 10 times more than the average person.

In addition to livestock, bears are attracted to apiaries, or bee yards. Bees become more active in the spring, which is also when beekeepers set up new yards for summer production. Alberta is the



Grain spillage can attract hungry bears to your yard. Bears are coming out of hibernation this time of year and are looking for quick and easy meals.



Electric fencing can prevent bears from disturbing bee yards



Alberta Sustainable Resource Development photos



largest beekeeping province in Canada, and the third largest jurisdiction in North America following Florida and California, according to Gertie Adair of the Alberta Beekeepers Association. There are about 250,000 colonies and more than 220 producers in the province.

“Beekeepers should consider using electric fencing at every site known to bears,” said Fullerton.

BearSmart information includes diagrams of effective fencing systems, both portable and permanent, for landowners looking to prevent bears from visiting their property frequently.

Electric fencing works but it does require maintenance. It can be fairly expensive, but the alternative of having your hives and bees disturbed is not desirable either. Hives should be located away from areas where bears often roam, such as creek banks.

Although bears prefer natural vegetation, they will eat nearly anything including cereal crops, pellet feed, silage, household garbage and bird feed.

Grain should be stored in a solid facility, and any spillage cleaned up as soon as possible.

Around the house, compost piles, poorly secured or stored garbage bins and bird feeders offer a buffet to bears.

“Suet bags are like candy to bears and are not needed in the spring, when birds have plenty of food sources,” said Fullerton.

He also encourages landowners to keep gardens and fruit trees clear of rotting produce in the summer and fall.

“The simplest message is there are things that attract bears,” said Fullerton. “If you can reduce attractants, it’s better for both humans and bears.”

Alberta’s BearSmart guides focus on residents in bear country, farming and ranching, outdoor recreation, hunting and industrial worksites.

More information is available from the nearest Alberta Sustainable Resource Development office or at www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fw/bearsmart.

Contact:
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Are you BearSmart?

Livestock

- Keep livestock confined for at least 10 days following castration, dehorning and branding. Conduct regular herd inspections. Bears may target injured or sick animals.
 - Monitor newborn and very young livestock carefully.
 - Dispose of animal carcasses according to the *Livestock Diseases and Public Health Acts* to reduce attraction to bears. The carcass should be burned completely, or buried and covered with lime under at least 1.2 m (4 ft.) of soil, or promptly moved to a rendering plant (best option).
- Immediately report any incident where you suspect a bear has killed your livestock.

Crops and Grain Storage

- Be cautious when working or walking around cereal crops such as wheat, oats and barley, especially at dusk and dawn.
- Ensure that granaries are well constructed and that doors are sturdy and well maintained.
- Clean up all spilled and waste grain as soon as possible. If spillage is unavoidable, locate storage facilities away from areas of human use and bear habitat.
- Consider seasonal electric fencing or install alarm systems in areas with valuable products or those at high risk of bear-human encounters.

Beekeeping

- Use electric fencing to protect your bee colonies. Be sure to maintain the fencing, chargers and batteries.

Yards

- Remove pet food and feeders at night.
- Pick up fallen fruit from fruit trees and berry shrubs.
- Consider electric fencing if your garden or stored produce attracts bears.

Children

- Keep a close eye on children when bears are most active (dusk until early morning).

Policy, marketing challenges in the forecast

The federal and provincial governments have been holding consultations to discuss the next version of the Agricultural Policy Framework. I attended three meetings in the preliminary round. The meetings were about Environment, Food Safety and Business Risk Management. The public round of meetings was held in Alberta at the end of January. WRAP officials attended these and were able to provide meaningful input. Although producers seemed skeptical at these meetings about the validity of the process, we should at least be pleased to be asked.

If the APF has done nothing else, it has provided a pretty solid recognition of the industry. The question was asked about what would happen if the government changed during this agreement. I

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bill Dobson



think that the APF agreement is absolutely crucial for just that reason. What we don't want happening is agricultural policy changing at the whim of the government of the day.

There is a lot of effort expended by



Spring is just around the corner . . . or at least we all hope so!

agricultural groups and governments in arriving at sound agricultural policy and programs. Anyone with strong opinions on APF should either write to their provincial and federal agriculture minister or contact our office. We will still have an opportunity for some final input.

CFA Annual Meeting

General farm organizations and national commodity groups from across Canada will meet in Ottawa this month to discuss issues of concern to agriculture. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture was established in 1935 and has worked with governments of all parties since that time. The relationship with the current government has been strained but appears to be improving. When we change government, we are reminded of the importance of constantly talking to the opposition as well as the ruling party. The role of a general farm organization is quite different to that of the opposition party. We need to work with government to develop policy as well as opposing ideas that are contrary to what we feel is in the best interest of farmers. The CFA annual meeting is an opportunity to meet with

many politicians while in Ottawa. Our executive will be attending the meeting during the week of February 26 to March 2.

Barley Plebiscite

After considerable pressure, Minister Strahl agreed to hold a plebiscite on the future marketing of barley. Although the question was not as clear as I would have liked, barley producers have an opportunity to send a clear message one way or the other. The issue is really about the sale of malting barley and whether farmers feel that they would be in a better position individually to negotiate higher prices. Feed is a small part of the CWB's business and often the barley handled is of a lower quality. The Canadian feeding industry usually buys the best feed barley for their requirements. I just hope producers think this vote through very carefully before they make a decision. If Minister Strahl gets the result he is seeking, this plebiscite will become very important!

Bio-Fuels and the Livestock Sector

There has been significant interest and speculation in the emerging bio-

Farm income projections



Sarah Seimen

fuels industry over the past few months. Higher oil prices have sparked a higher interest in the development of bio-diesel and ethanol. Most of the development has been in the U.S. but that filters through to our grain prices as well. There is no doubt that the feeding industry will take a huge hit unless we have programs that are identical to the Americans.

Unfortunately, the grain producers have had to endure the pressure themselves that low grain prices have provid-

ed and the now feeders have to swallow the higher cost of barley and corn. What is worse is that feed grain prices really need to be a lot higher yet to get grain farmers up to the level that they need to be at to be profitable. I don't think there is any doubt that the bio-fuel industry is going to go ahead so this is a time for the entire industry to put their heads together to address this issue.

BSE

The ninth Canadian case of BSE

recently surfaced. Although it is always a concern, it appears that this case will have little impact on the movement to fewer restrictions on the import of older animals into the U.S. Let us hope that the number of cases becomes less in the future.

Finally

Stay warm...spring will be here very soon. Good luck with calving and please call with your concerns.

Alberta

Farm Cash Receipts, Expenses and Income, 2005 to 2007

	2005	Average	2006	* Percent change		2007	* Percent change	
		2001-05		06/05	06/01-05		07/06	07/01-05
	\$ Million	\$ Million		%	%		\$ Million	%
Crop Receipts	2,360.6	2,271.8	2,662.8	13	17	3,150.0	18	39
Livestock Receipts	4,363.1	4,475.9	4,617.6	6	3	4,450.0	-4	-1
Total Market Receipts	6,723.7	6,747.8	7,280.4	8	8	7,600.0	4	13
Program Payments	1,117.0	1,157.2	909.0	-19	-21	926.4	2	-20
Total Cash Receipts	7,840.7	7,905.0	8,189.4	4	4	8,526.5	4	8
Net Operating Expenses	6,443.6	6,331.5	6,754.5	5	7	7,061.3	5	12
Net Cash Income	1,397.1	1,573.5	1,434.8	3	-9	1,465.1	2	-7
Realized Net Income	273.3	463.9	309.6	13	-33	310.0	0	-33
Total Net Income	568.3	552.3	18.3	-97	-97	94.9	417	-83

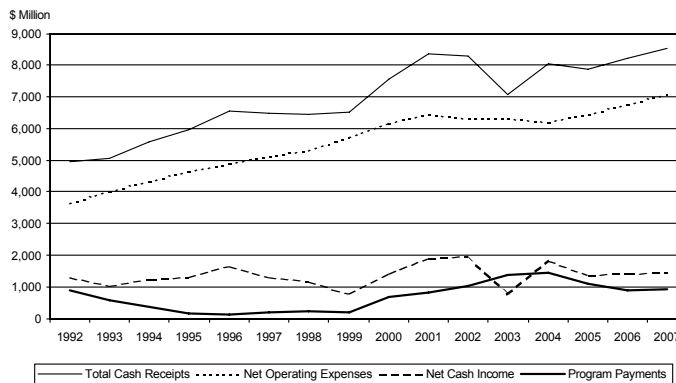
Source: Historical data (2005), Statistics Canada, Catalogue Nos. 21-010-XIE to 21-018-XIE.
Forecast figures for 2006 and 2007, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Net cash income is a measure of the cash available to producers from the farming business for living expenses, principal repayment and reinvestment in the farm. Realized net income includes depreciation charges and income-in-kind. Total net income accounts for changes in on-farm inventory.

* The percent change calculation may not be exact due to rounding.

** The calculation of percent change between a negative number and a positive number yields a counter-intuitive, though arithmetically correct negative result.

Farm Cash Receipts, Program Payments, Expenses and Net Cash Income, 1992 to 2007



WILD ROSE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS DIRECTORY OF OFFICIALS 2007

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Yes! I wish to join the Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ Town: _____

Postal code: _____ Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Membership fee:

1 year - \$137.80 (130 + 7.80 GST) \$ _____

3 year - \$381.60 (360 + 21.60 GST) \$ _____

Associate - \$58.30 (55 + 3.30 GST) \$ _____

GST#: R122545304

A receipt will be mailed out to you.

Type of agricultural operation: Grain _____ Cattle _____ Hogs _____ Poultry _____ Horticulture _____ Other _____

Please make cheques out to **Wild Rose Agricultural Producers**

VISA or Mastercard (please circle one)

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____

Send to: Wild Rose Agricultural producers, #102, 115 Portage Close, Sherwood Park, AB T8H 2R5

ALUS designed by farmers, for farmers

Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) is an ecological goods and services program proposal that is unique because it's designed by farmers, for farmers. It recognizes the value of conserving and restoring Canada's natural capital while respecting and rewarding the important role that farmers play in environmental management.

ALUS is also unique because it's incentive-based. Farmers have always acted as land stewards and provided environmental services to Canadian, though this generally comes as an expense to the farming operation. While ALUS won't compensate farmers for the impact of environmental regulations, it will provide them with the tools and capacity to build on their already sound environmental practices.

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

By its nature as a farmer-led initiative, ALUS encourages the active participation of farmers and ranchers in conserving natural capital and environmental benefits. ALUS will mobilize producers as conservationists. It will also provide a national opportunity to communicate the environmental benefits of agriculture and the ecological services that farmers provide to all Canadians.

A mix of public and private ownership of resources exists on private land (e.g. air and water and wildlife are publicly owned. Soil and crops and trees are privately owned), so the stewardship on natural capital and environmental resources must be a shared responsibility of governments and landowners. Due to this shared nature, environmental services should be cost-shared with producers. Farmers should receive annual payments or other forms of compensation to deliver and maintain environmental services.

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers was one of the first farm groups to endorse the ALUS concept. Since that time there has been lots of exciting

developments. There have been meetings with farmers, and government folk, and watershed representatives, and hunters and fishermen, and conservationists. In the fall of 2006, the County of Vermilion River was selected as a pilot project site in Alberta. Like the Manitoba pilot project, it will pay farmers for conservation or enhancement of riparian areas, wetlands, fragile ecosystems and natural areas.

A funding proposal has been sent to ACAAF (Advancing Canadian Agriculture & Agri-food Program) and is waiting approval. Saskatchewan and

Ontario are at about the same stage – sites have been chosen and funding applied for. The Manitoba pilot is underway.

There is monthly conference call with all the ALUS representatives across Canada. This is a time to check in, and give and receive updates about the progress of ALUS. While ALUS is gaining recognition at the political level and has been endorsed by many MPs and MLAs, there are still a number of MPs in Alberta who don't understand the concept. There is still work to be done, but the goal is in sight.

2006 Farm Equipment Official Guide Order Form

Farm Equipment Official Guide - WRAP Member	\$53.50
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Total Member Guides Purchased (____) x \$53.50	\$ _____
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Final Total	\$ _____

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Payment Method

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Submit Order Form To:

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 102 115 Portage Close
 Sherwood Park, AB T8H 2R5
 Fax: 1-780-416-6530

PART 2:

Shiitake: fresh fare for the woodlot owner

By **KEN FOSTY**

For those of you woodlot owners who have access to fresh-cut firewood, you can try growing your own mushrooms. One of my favourites is the Shiitake mushroom (*Lentinula edodes*).

There is a unique relationship when a fungus is introduced to wood, that being that the fungus will eat the wood. The trick here is to deliberately inoculate the fungus into the wood using spawn. After a log is inoculated, the fungus will travel through the wood cells digesting and breaking down the wood. When the fungus is well-fed and environmental conditions are right, mushrooms will be born.

Shiitake mushrooms, also known as Japanese Forest or Chinese Black mushrooms, are the most widely cultivated wood-loving mushrooms in the world. Coveted by Asian royalty for centuries as a savory source of good health, Shiitake are also highly nutritious and sturdy mushrooms bursting with an assertive flavour. With a long shelf life (several weeks refrigerated), they provide excellent fresh fare for meals on end. Shiitake will dehydrate readily and rehydration returns their original form and flavour in a snap. In many countries, these mushrooms are used as a meat substitute.

Shiitake mushrooms can be grown on oak and alder logs. A small, standing live tree can be harvested or branches from large trees can be pruned out in spring or early summer prior to bud break. Care must be taken not to dam-

age the bark during the harvesting process. Logs or branches about three to five inches in diameter, four feet long should be used.

The logs must then be inoculated with the Shiitake spawn plugs. This is done by drilling a series of holes 1 ½ inches deep spaced about four inches apart in a series of rows along the length of the log. The rows are spaced approximately two inches apart. Spawn plugs, impregnated with the mushroom spawn are then inserted into the holes and driven in with a few taps of a hammer until they are level with the bark surface.

Wax is then heated to approximately 300 degrees F in an old tin can. A very thin layer of hot wax is applied over the plug with a brush. The wax seals the surface, preventing the spawn from drying or pest invasion.

When the inoculation process is complete, the logs are permanently placed in a well-shaded area of your woodlot under a canopy of trees or shrubs. During the winter months, the logs lay dormant outdoors. The area should be sheltered and wind protected. The logs will remain in this area until the following summer at which time they will be fully colonized and able to produce mushrooms.

A good rainfall will usually induce the logs to fruit. The water is the stim-



Shiitake mushrooms growing on oak logs

ulus needed by the mushroom fungus to start the reproductive cycle.

Mushrooms will appear sporadically during the summer and subsequent summers for up to six years. The amount of mushrooms will depend on rainfall, humidity and temperature. Mushrooms should be allowed to grow to a large size with their edges still rounded prior to picking. They can be harvested by grasping firmly at the base of the stem, then twisting them off the log. Mushrooms will grow in many sizes and shapes and at different points along the log. Harvesting them will be an activity you will love.

If you're a hands-on "adventurous woodlotter" and would like to begin growing Shiitake mushrooms in your woodlot, cottage lot or urban backyard, consider purchasing a five-log mushroom growing kit. Each kit has everything you need (except the logs) to grow shiitake mushrooms. To purchase a growing kit or obtain more information, you may contact Ken Fosty at (204) 586-1365 or write to 590 Rupertsland Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R2V 0H4, or visit www.gourmetmushrooms.ca.

Bio-Ken Fosty is a forestry technician with the Manitoba Forestry Association's woodlot program. He manages his own woodlot in southeast Manitoba.



Drilling inoculation holes



Inoculating logs with spawn



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Ken Glover,
Chief Administrator

Are woodlot owners' rights in jeopardy?

Are woodlot owner rights in jeopardy? Woodlot owners are bombarded by resource and utility agents everyday negotiating an ever-increasing number of developments affecting private lands. A particular court case stands to challenge landowner "rights" in Alberta. I share the latest on this issue, via a letter that Bob Weber wrote to the Edmonton Journal on January 3, 2007. This should be a concern to every Alberta woodlot owner.

The letter follows:

In a court case that could change how Alberta's oilpatch gets access to land, a lawyer is expected to argue Thursday that current rules force farmers and ranchers to negotiate. . .with one hand tied behind their back.

"There's no doubt that landowners in Alberta are currently under-represented in these negotiations," said Kevin Feth, defence lawyer for Ray Strom.

In a case being watched closely both in rural Alberta and the provincial legislature, Strom is facing a charge of impersonating a licensed land agent after accepting money for advising a farmer on talks with two energy giants.

The law Strom is accused of breaking stipulates that negotiations must be conducted through a licensed land agent. Strom was charged because he is not licensed under the province's Land Agents Licensing Act, which makes it a crime punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 or six months in jail to accept any kind of compensation for offering such advice.

Alberta has about 1,600 licensed agents, almost all of whom work for energy companies. That means landowners, who may be facing complicated talks involving anything from



Woodlot owners need to know who they are dealing with when it comes to land issues
Doug Macaulay

zoning to environmental mitigation, must accept the advice of those being paid by the industry, go it alone or flout the law to work with someone such as Strom.

That's not good enough, said Warren Brower of the Alberta Surface Rights Federation, a group of landowners planning to mount a protest outside the courthouse. "What we don't want is to have to hire petroleum land agents that are controlled by petroleum companies and work for petroleum companies to defend our interests," Brower said. "That makes no sense."

At least one provincial cabinet minister agrees. Ray Danyluk, newly appointed minister of municipal affairs, tried for two years to pass a private member's bill allowing landowners to hire whomever they want for advice. The bill died on the order paper during the last session. As a member of cabinet, he can no longer introduce private member's bills. "My position hasn't changed," he said.

Iris Evans, minister of employment, immigration and industry, said landowners are free to hire licensed land agents of their own. But Strom, who said he was charged after EnCana Corp. and Exxon Mobil laid complaints,

argues that government and industry shouldn't be able to control who advises farmers. "Our clients are faced with the fact of having to negotiate with these people whether they like it or not because the oil companies have the power to expropriate." He said his company Landcor routinely consults experts from agencies such as the Alberta Research Council. Such consultation doesn't come free, but farmers should have the option of paying for it if they choose, he said.

Feth argues that because the current rules are so broad, they give government bureaucrats arbitrary power to decide who needs to be licensed. He plans to argue that Alberta's legislation is unconstitutional and should be tossed out. "You have a lot of landowners who have believed for a long time they have been disadvantaged in these negotiations," he said. Evans acknowledges she'll have to revisit the issue after the court case. "Many of our rural MLAs are finding this issue a pressing one," she said. "We'll certainly take a look at what the results of this case are." We do have to take some action on this. It is a huge concern for landowners.

The Woodlot Association will keep its members apprised of this matter.

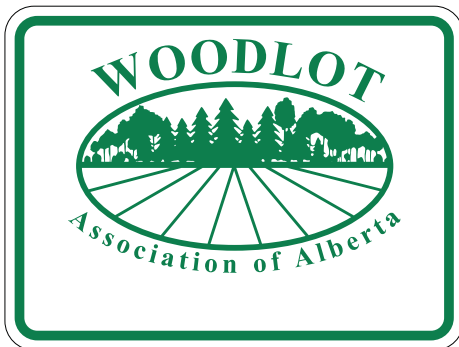
2006-2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The Board of Directors for the Woodlot Association of Alberta:

Top row (l to r): Dan Reesor, Louise Horstman (secretary), Juri Agapow, Conn Brown, Peter Mills (president), Gordon Kerr (past president).
Bottom (l to r): Hamish Kerfoot, Pieter van der Schoot (vice president), Mathieu Bergeron
Missing: Dennis Quintilio, Jamie Giberson (treasurer), Lorne Carson

New 'Woodlot' gate signs have arrived!



Here's how to order. . .

Stemming from membership input at the 2006 AGM, the Woodlot Association commenced the design for a new gate sign to recognize members of the Woodlot Association of Alberta who have completed a Woodlot Management Plan. The Gate Sign is high gauge aluminum and 24" W x 18" H with reflective lettering and logo. To receive your gate sign (1 per member), complete the Woodlot Association of Alberta Membership & Materials Order Form (in this magazine) and fax, mail or e-mail this form to the Woodlot Association along with a copy of your Woodlot Management Plan. There is no cost for the Gate Sign, but if you want it mailed direct, there is a \$17.50 postage and shipping fee. Alternatively, members can make arrangements to pick up their signs at Association events.

Woodlot and agro-forestry extension events

Woodlot Workshop Series: *Tree Health, Woodlot Pests & Management, Mountain Pine Beetle, Invasive Weeds & Control.* All Workshops Commence at 7:00 p.m.

March 28: Worsley & District, Fire Hall & Community Centre

To register: Ph: (780) 980-4230, Cell: (780) 446-0090,

E-mail: martine.bolinger@gov.ab.ca

Forest Biomass for Bioenergy and Bioproducts Workshop

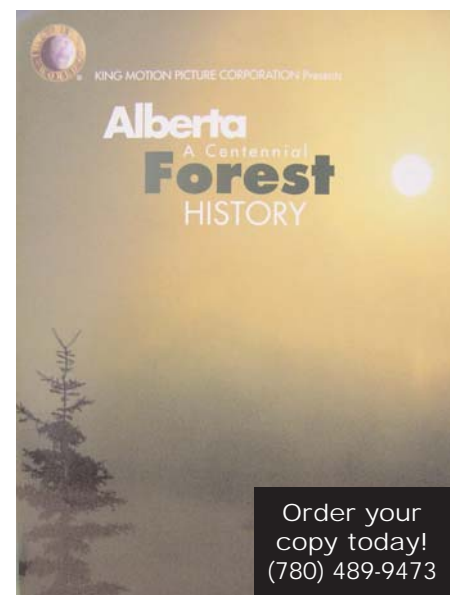
This event is the first in a planned series of information sessions on biomass, biofuels, bioproducts and bioenergy. It will provide an overview of the current situation and technology available in western Canada, and present current and future opportunities for the forest industry.

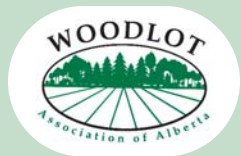
March 28 to 30

Edmonton, Alberta

To register: Contact Renee Grijpen (renee-g@vcr.feric.ca) or visit www.feric.com.

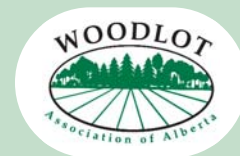
For more information, contact Juri Agapow at (780) 618-4700 or juri-a@vcr.feric.ca.





Woodlot Association of Alberta

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E-mail Address: _____

Woodlot Size _____ ha / ac. Legal Description: _____

Woodlot Objectives: Timber Revenue - Forest Products - Wildlife - Aesthetics - Conservation

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\$10.00ea Woodlot Management Video (VHS) (Includes Shipping & Handling)	\$ _____.
\$40.00ea '07 Forestry Business Directory (Includes Shipping & Handling)	\$ _____.
\$30.00ea <i>Alberta: A Centennial Forest History</i> (DVD) (Includes GST, Shipping & Handling)	\$ _____.
Total (GST EXEMPT)	\$ _____.
<input type="checkbox"/> Payment made by cheque enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> Payment to be made using our Credit Card (below). <input type="checkbox"/> Please send an invoice for payment	

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Web: www.woodlot.org E-mail: fisla@fisla.com

Seeking professional forest management advice

By **LORNE CARSON**

Although successful woodlot management begins with getting to know your woods, there may be times when questions arise that are best discussed with and answered by a professional forester. This article is intended to offer some information on the types of services provided by foresters.

For the purpose of this article, I have broken down the services into four categories: planning, operations, reforestation and general management. This allows me to generalize rather than try to give specific examples.

Planning

A woodlot management plan defines the goals and objectives of management, describes the resources in your woodlot (inventory of trees, roads, water, money and time), develops a schedule of interventions (or non-intervention), describes a monitoring plan and allows for adaptation over time.

A forester can help in all stages of development of a woodlot management plan, although the landowner should take the lead role in defining the goals of management. A forester can assist by assuring goals are realistic, since he or she has in-depth knowledge and information on how to best achieve the goals.

A forester is going to be particularly valuable in creating the inventory of your woodlot, prescribing interventions to be carried out and gauging the success of interventions. These are all areas that require specific knowledge of forest management procedures, and are best handled by a trained professional.

Operations

When speaking of operations, I am referring to the implementation of harvesting interventions on your woodlot. Assuming that you have a woodlot management plan that defines when, where and what type of harvest is going to take place, a forester can provide valuable assistance in organizing and supervising

the harvest. This includes all aspects of the operation from determining the area and volume of timber to be harvested, negotiating with a mill (or multiple mills to get the best price), contracting a logger, supervising the harvest and reclamation activities, and following up with the mill after harvest.

These are all things that many landowners have done themselves, and many more will continue to do. If you go this route and wind up feeling overwhelmed, or are concerned about how things are going, do not hesitate to contact an independent forestry professional for information and advice.

Reforestation

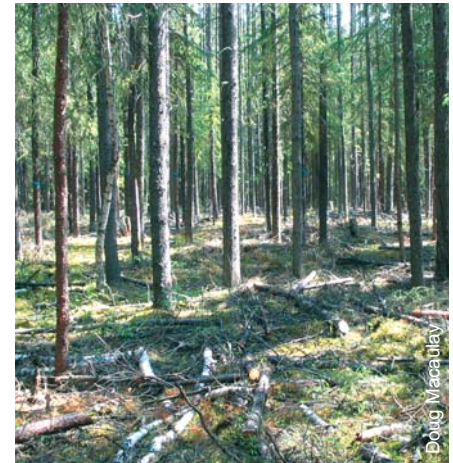
Your woodlot management plan may schedule an old field for afforestation activities, or you may want to reforest an area that has recently been harvested. In either situation, determining what species is most suited to that site is a job that is best left to a forester.

A forester can determine if the site requires some type of preparation activity (either chemical or mechanical) determine the most appropriate species or group of species that should be planted, prescribe the tending activities that should be carried out to help facilitate stand establishment, and then survey the new plantation to determine the level of success.

A forester can help in the development of the reforestation plan, and should be able to look after all aspects of implementation, such as ordering seedlings, arranging for their transportation, and hiring and supervising contractors.

General forest management issues

There are many times that something will change on your woodlot after the development of your management plan. Perhaps there was a wind storm that felled a stand of timber on your land, you want to start diversifying your income with non-timber forest products



A forester can help you manage your woodlot effectively

or you just need some timber scaled prior selling to a mill. With any woodlot-related questions, a forester can provide valuable information and advice.

Finding a forester

I recommend you verify that the professional forester you are engaging is a member in good standing of the College of Alberta Professional Foresters. This is valuable as professional foresters are committed to a code of ethics and continuing competence, and are subject to a disciplinary process if a complaint is filed against them.

Prior to hiring a forester, you should call around and get information on the price of their services, including such things as travel costs. Some consultants have different rates depending on the type of work, and equipment that they will require. For instance, there are usually additional fees when a GPS unit, quad or snowmobile are required.

In some cases, advice can be obtained free of charge from the government of Alberta or through the Woodlot Extension Program sponsored by the WAA.

Remember that even when working with a forester, there is no substitute for spending time in your woodlot.

Lorne Carson owns a forestry consulting company and is a director with the Woodlot Association of Alberta.

FarmTech topics align with policy priorities

By **ROBERT FILKHAZY**

For the second year, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers were a co-host of FarmTech 2007, Alberta's premier crop production and farm management conference. The three day event which hosted 1,300 plus participants ran from January 24 to 26 at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton. The other host organizations on the planning committee are the Alberta Pulse Growers, Alberta Canola Producers Commission, Alberta Conservation Tillage Society, Alberta Reduced Tillage Linkages, Alberta Barley Commission and Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission. The Canola Commission, Pulse Growers and ACTS also had their AGMs during the conference.

The theme of FarmTech is 'Global Perspectives Local Knowledge.' This year's global perspectives covered Asia,

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

Europe, North and South America; and the speakers came from China, USA, Germany, Paraguay and of course Canada.

One of the speakers was John Chapple, General Manager of Sino Analytica, who moved to China from the U.K. in 1999 and established a farming and processing operation exporting to clients in Europe, USA and Japan. His presentation topic was 'China: Threat or Opportunity'? China's 1.3 billion people make-up 20 per cent of the world's population and tries to feed themselves on only seven per cent of the world's farmland. In comparison, China is the same land mass as Canada, but feeds 40 times more people on the same landbase. With 60 per cent of China's population still living in the countryside, 49 per cent of the labor force in China is still involved in agriculture as compared to only three per cent in Canada. Chapple cites a number of farming problems in China that limits their agricultural potential. Heavy pest pressure, very small farm size (less than

one acre on average), all of the land base is owned by the government, soil degradation, poor storage facilities, limited access to quality inputs, no support services and their biggest problem in China is water quality and quantity. He summed up his presentation stating "China is NOT a threat, China is a huge opportunity for exports".

Other global speakers were Terry Roberts, President of the Potash and Phosphate Institute from Georgia, USA, speaking on "Nutrient Management in Today's Environment" emphasizing the importance of nutrient use efficiency. Hansjoerg Kraehmer, a researcher with Bayer Crop Science in Germany, talked about the "Impact of HT Crops on the Crop Protection Industry" stating their are only three companies active in herbicide research. David Layzell, President of BioCap Canada from Kingston, Ontario, spoke on "Towards a Bio-Based Economy: New Opportunities for Agriculture". Rolf Derpsch, a no-till consultant from Paraguay, talked about the "No-till Revolution in South America" telling the conference that 47 per cent of the world's no-till acres are in South America.

Over 40 speakers from across Canada making presentations during 46 concurrent sessions focused on technology, environment, agronomy and management. The event also included hands-on Diagnostic Sessions concentrating on plant disease identification and assessment of seed quality and seed borne diseases, and an agricultural showcase and trade show ranging from marketing info to precision farming technology.

The conference also has a social aspect to it, where a lot of networking



FarmTech 2007 presenters discussed technology, environment, agronomy and management.

takes place which leads to an exchange of ideas and practices. Another feature of the event is luncheon speakers. Lauren Evans from High River, the 4-H Senior Provincial Public Speaking Champion spoke on "Getting the Word Out – The Media in Agriculture." The banquet keynote speaker was Joan McCusker, a three time Canadian and World Women's Curling Champion from rural Saskatchewan. Her biggest claim to fame was winning an Olympic Gold Metal in Nagano, Japan, in 1998, which prompted her presentation, "Ordinary People Do Extraordinary Things."

Brent VanKoughnet, manager of AgriSkills Inc., wrapped up the conference by stressing the importance of innovation, but said the challenge is to put innovation into practice. He also emphasized that the future of agriculture is contingent on producers looking at the world through our customers eyes, and to realize that opportunities rarely come in good times.

One might ask why Wild Rose Agricultural Producers would be involved with the FarmTech Conference? When you consider some of our Policy Priorities that are being discussed during the FarmTech conference – Business Risk Management, Human Resources, Land Use Issues, Bio Fuel Strategies, Environmental Stewardship Programs and Agricultural Research to name a few – it becomes obvious: why would Wild Rose Agricultural Producers not want to be involved with FarmTech?

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