STARLAND AG TALK

Volume 3, Issue 2 | IN TUNE...IN PROGRESS | June 2006

Events to Keep in Mind

STARLAND COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SUMMER TOUR

Friday July 7, 2006

1pm to 5 pm

Tour will start and end at the Morrin Bridge campground

Steak BBQ to follow

Door Prizes

$15 per person

Tour includes:
Morrin Weather Station
Pipe Plow Demonstration
Demo Plot Tour
Plant Pathology
JD 1590 No-till Drill
Drip Tape Shelterbelt
Irrigation

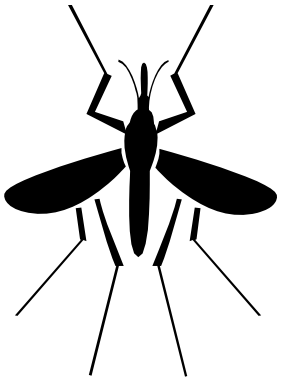
Register by **July 4th**, contact Starland County at 772-3793

Integrated Crop Management School

"This one day field-based workshop is for field agronomists and producers wishing to hone their skills in crop management and diagnostics. Come one of two days: July 4th or 5th. The format will be a full day combining discussion with field exercises. Topics to be covered: Soil Quality, Agronomy, Pathology, Entomology and Diagnosing Herbicide Action and Injury.

Cost $150 + GST

For more information contact 1-800-661-OLDS, www.oldscollege.ca or Starland County.



~ West Nile Virus ~

Starland County is once again partnering with the Villages of Morrin, Munson and Delia to administer the West Nile virus Targeted Mosquito Larval Control Program. This program consists of monitoring mosquito habitat for the species *Culex tarsalis*—the West Nile virus vector. Once identified, *Culex tarsalis* populations that reach threshold levels will be treated with a larvicide.

Things that **YOU** can do to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus:

PROTECT YOURSELF

- Use an insect repellent with DEET on exposed skin and over clothing (Insect repellents containing higher concentrations of DEET last longer, but do not provide any better level of protection.)
- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers
- Wear light coloured long-sleeved shirts and pants and a hat
- Consider staying indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active

AROUND THE HOUSE

- Make sure that there is no standing water in your yard where mosquitoes can lay their eggs
- Cover rain barrels with screens
- Clean out the eaves troughs regularly to prevent clogs that trap water
- Free your yard of debris that can collect rain water
- Empty and clean bird baths twice weekly
- Ensure that window and door screens have no holes or openings and that they fit tightly

~ From Fight the Bite, Government of Alberta

Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women

July 19-20, 2006 ~ Antelope Creek Ranch—Near Brooks, AB

The grazing school offers an opportunity for women to enhance their knowledge of beneficial management practices relating to pasture and riparian health. Participants will be provided with resources to take home and apply to their own pasture situation.

Topics Include: Safe Livestock Handling, Grazing Strategies, Stocking Rates, Range and Pasture Plant Identification, and much, much more…

$40 registration fee includes all materials, 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 1 supper

For more information, contact Lindsay Cherpin at 772-3793 or by email Lindsay@starlandcounty.com

Speaking of Water...

The last month has brought excess rainfall to the area—so where did all of the water go? Is your riparian area functioning properly to manage the water?

What is a Riparian Area?

Riparian areas are the green zones around lakes and wetlands—the transitional land between the surface water and the surrounding drier upland.

What do Healthy Riparian Areas do?

1. Trap and Store Sediment
2. Build and Maintain Banks and Shorelines
3. Store Water and Energy
4. Recharge Aquifers
5. Filter and Buffer Water
6. Reduce and Dissipate Energy
7. Maintain Biodiversity
8. Create Primary Productivity

These Functions Result in the Following Services, Products and Benefits:

- Clean water (lower risk of human illness, reduced water treatment costs, fish populations maintained, healthier livestock, greater livestock weigh gains)
- Water supply (domestic/ag/industrial needs are met, reduce risk and cost of supply, competitive advantage for business, maintain fish and wildlife populations, waste assimilation, drought management, tourism and recreation)
- Plants (sustain livestock fish and wildlife, economic opportunities, shade, shelter, reduce risk to livestock, moderate stream temperatures, large woody debris supply, maintains channel processes, habitat connectivity, migration routes, timber for fuel wood production, trap carbon)
- Soil Creation (higher agricultural production, nutrient recycling, higher property values, greater water storage)
- Aesthetics (tourism, recreation, competitive advantage for individuals to relocate, higher property values, enjoyment and pleasure in healthy ecosystem)
- Fish and Wildlife (hunting and fishing, recreational opportunity, tourism, economic opportunity, fur production, subsistence use, commercial fisheries)
- Buffering Capacity (decreased incidence, risk and cost of floods, decreased incidence, risk and cost of erosion, local climate control, resilience to allow more rapid recovery from disturbance, more stable production of other goods and services)

~ Fitch, L. and N. Ambrose 2003. Riparian Areas: A User's Guide to Health. Lethbridge, Alberta: Cows and Fish Program

Riparian Health Assessment Tools are available to any interested persons. Visit cowsandfish.org or contact Lindsay Cherpin at Starland County ~ 772-3793, Lindsay@starlandcounty.com for further information.

Starland County Tree/Weed Spraying Program

If you are having pest problems with your trees, or have noxious weeds on your property, Starland County offers a spraying program at a cost of $50/hour + chemicals. Ask about our incentive program available for spraying Scentless Chamomile and Toadflax.

Yellow Toadflax

Scentless Chamomile

DID YOU KNOW?

One litre of oil can contaminate up to two million litres of water.

BIODIESEL: Powered by Canola Fueling Our Future

A conference to kick-start the development and growth of a canola-based biodiesel industry in Canada.

The Westin, Calgary AB

July 17-18, 2006

For program information and online registration, go to: www.canola-council.org/biodiesel/conference

2006 AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD EQUIPMENT RENTAL RATES

The ASB recently purchased a JD 1590 no-till drill which is available to rent to county farmers. This is a 15 foot unit with a grass seed attachment and is ideal for seeding grass into standing stubble or even into sprayed out sod.

1. 15 foot JD No-till Drill
$ 6.00 / Acre ***(min 25 acre charge includes delivery)***
2. 10 Foot Brillion Grass Seeder
$ 1.00 / Acre ***(min charge $25.00)***
3. Cattle Squeeze
$ 10.00 / Day
4. Hoof Trimming Chute
$ 20.00 / Day
5. Livestock Weigh Scale
$ 10.00 / Day
6. Water Transfer System
$ 250.00 / Dugout ***(includes delivery)***
7. Magpie Traps
$ 5.00 / Week
8. Skunk Traps
$ 5.00 / Week ***(paid up front)***
9. Pruning Tools
1 Day Free $5.00 / Day Thereafter
10. Measuring Wheel
1 Day Free $5.00 / Day Thereafter
11. Back Pack Sprayer
1 Day Free $5.00 / Day Thereafter
12. Bran Bait Applicator for Grasshopper Control or Broadcast Grass Seeding
$25.00 per Day (***$25.00 damage deposit)***

DID YOU KNOW?
Antibacterial soaps do not clean better than traditional soaps and they contain antibiotics that are harmful to our waterways.

ASB SERVICES

1. Shelterbelt Spraying Program 150 Gallon Tank
$50.00 per hour plus Chemical **(*minimum charge $50.00*)**
2. Noxious Weed Spraying Program for spot control 150 Gallon Tank
$50.00 per hour plus Chemical
3. Backsloping Program for Fenceline Topsoil Work
40 % Incentive Program for Qualifying Projects
4. Weed Spraying Honda Quad 15 gallon Tank
$50.00 per hour plus Chemical **(*minimum charge $50.00*)**
5. Tree Planter Free of charge if trees ordered through County Office
6. Treflan Applicator & Disc for Shelterbelt Weed Control
$50.00 per Hour plus Chemical
7. Fabric Roller for Shelterbelt Weed Control
$20.00 per Hour plus cost of fabric **(*minimum charge $50.00*)**

For further information or to book any of our equipment please contact the office at 772-3793

BERTHA ARMYWORM

Starland County is again participating in a monitoring program of Bertha Armyworm populations. This program consists of two traps set up in each of two canola fields in different areas of the county. Counts of the adult moth will be made weekly and numbers are submitted to the Provincial Surveillance Program.

Adult Populations

The development of the overwintering stage of bertha armyworm, the pupae, into moths is monitored using accumulated degree-days. The flight of bertha armyworm moths is monitored using pheromone-baited traps which attract the male moths. The number of moths collected by these traps gives an indication of the risk of bertha armyworm larval infestations. Generally, higher numbers of moths during the flight period (around mid June through July) indicate greater risk of larval damage (in July and August). Crop protection recommendations for producers based on data for the current year are given as a bertha armyworm risk assessment.

Host Plants and Damage

Larvae are the only development stage of the bertha armyworm to cause crop damage. They feed on a variety of crops and weeds. Canola, rapeseed, mustard, alfalfa, lamb's quarters and related plants are preferred host plants. Bertha will also feed on a range of secondary hosts including flax, peas and potato.

The degree of crop damage varies with the crop, the plant's growth stage, the growth stage of the larvae and the number of larvae present. Significant crop damage usually occurs within a three-week period between late July and late August, depending on the season and crop location.

Small larvae feed on the underside of the leaves, chewing irregularly-shaped holes in the leaves. They usually cause little damage at this stage, even when population levels are high. Crop damage occurs rapidly once the larvae moult to the second-last stage. These larvae are about 1.3 cm (2 in.) in length. Larvae in the last two larval stages eat about 80 to 90 percent of the plant material consumed during the life of the larvae.

If the plants, especially canola, drop their leaves before the larvae are mature, the developing larvae will feed directly on the seed pods. Seed pods may be "debarked," but more commonly, the larvae chew holes in the pods and eat the seeds. At high numbers, the entire seed pod may be consumed. Even if the pods are only stripped of their outer green layer and not eaten entirely, crop losses may still occur because of premature shattering.

In flax, the larvae eat the flowers and developing bolls. Once the flax bolls are full-size and start to ripen, larvae usually feed on the calyx below the boll. Occasionally, larvae will feed on the green stems of ripening bolls, causing them to drop off.

~ Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Government of Alberta

Bertha Armyworm Growth Stages

EGG

LARVAE EARLY INSTAR

LARVAE

PUPA

ADULT MOTH

Starland Ag Talk is published by Starland County Agricultural Service Board four times annually. If you have an article suggestion or questions on the topics you see here feel free to contact Alan Hampton or Lindsay Cherpin.
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