

STARLAND AG TALK

Volume 4, Issue 3

IN TUNE...IN PROGRESS

October 2007



Events to Keep in Mind

Nutrient Management Planning Workshops ~ TBA,
watch for mailouts

Grazing Legumes for a Sustainable and Secure Future
~ November 28 and 29th,
Lethbridge Lodge and Conference center

BEEF IT UP! ~ January 28-29,
Orkney Community Hall

Value Chain Management Workshop Series ~ February 22,
Acme Community Center

WEATHERBUG.COM

The Starland County Agricultural Service Board has installed two weather stations within the county under the Canadian Wheat Board Weather Station project. The stations have been installed in Delia and Morrin and provides producers with an “internet-linked network [which] offers valuable, up-to-the-minute [weather] information to factor into an array of farm-management decisions.” (CWB) Access to the local weather information will be available on the Starland County website (starlandcounty.com) soon.

The WeatherBug weather stations are providing the following live conditions every two and a half minutes: temperature, wind speed and direction, rain, and gusts. It also provides observations such as wind chill, humidity, dew point, average wind, pressure, time of sunrise and sunset, rain/month and moonphase.

If you are interested in getting your own on-farm weather station through the CWB Weather Station project, please contact Guy Ash at the Canadian Wheat Board (guy_ash@cwbc.ca or 204-984-6820).

MULTISAR

Helping Landowners Benefit From Species At Risk

MULTISAR stands for multiple species at risk and reflects its multiple partners; agricultural producers, Alberta Conservation Association, and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. Species at risk (SAR) is a general term for plants and animals that may be declining or are naturally rare in Alberta. Some species at risk include Swift Fox, Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Sharp-Tailed Grouse, Long Billed Curlew and Northern Leopard Frog.

MULTISAR strives to conserve habitat for SAR by working with landholders who manage native prairie. Beneficial management practices (BMP's) and site specific recommendations that benefit species at risk are provided to landholders and discussed with them to ensure they are appropriate and achievable. Recommendations are provided based on a free habitat assessment that is conducted at the convenience of the landholder and usually takes one day. After the one-on-one consultation, a practical report is provided to the landholder and implementation of BMP's is discussed. Many BMP's require only small adjustments to management but provide big benefits to wildlife. If financial investment is required MULTISAR will try to help landholders access funds. MULTISAR also conducts wildlife inventories, performs habitat modeling and provides detailed Habitat Conservation Strategies to landholders that manage extensive SAR habitat in key areas.

The MULTISAR program began in the Milk River Basin in 2002 and operates on over 200 000 acres in that area. Because of its great success it has recently expanded to include the entire Grassland Natural Region, allowing more landholders to be involved and providing more habitat for SAR. Anyone who owns or leases native prairie can now receive a free habitat assessment and recommendations. If producers do not have native prairie but are interested they are also encouraged to contact MULTISAR and may receive recommendations as well.

If you would like to have a free assessment completed on your land or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Shannon Frank at 403-388-3191 or email Shannon.Frank@gov.ab.ca. Assessments can be done anytime of year as long as there is no dense snow cover.

~ MULTISAR

Value Chains

The strategic move to profitability.

If you and your organization are looking to sharpen your competitive edge, a value chain could be the answer. The best place to find out is at an interactive, hands-on Value Chain Management Workshop. It's the perfect opportunity to explore how value chains can help improve your business practices and long-term profitability.

Make your move. Attend a Value Chain Management workshop.

Acme, AB

February 22, 2008

Register today, as space is limited and these workshops are popular. For complete details or to reserve your spot, contact:

Lindsay Cherpin 403-772-3793

OR

Callie Fox 403-443-5541

To learn more about the support and resources available through the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, visit www.farmcentre.com

PFRA Prairie Shelterbelt Program

Shelterbelts provide many benefits for prairie farmers. They reduce the wind around the yard, thus protecting buildings, reducing heating costs and controlling snow. They protect livestock from the cold winter winds. Shelterbelts provide wildlife habitat, protect the soil and trap snow for additional moisture. They also trap and store greenhouse gases.

The benefits of shelterbelts continue to remain the same, however, there have been recent changes to the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada-PFRA Prairie Shelterbelt Program. Some of the **changes** include:

- 5 acre (2ha) minimum to qualify for the program, (last year it was 40 acres.)
- New rating guide – in the past applications have been approved on a first come first serve bases. Each application will now be rated based on the type of planting (riparian, field, livestock, wildlife, yard or roadside); number of seedlings applied for; and species composition.
- Hybrid poplars will now be sent as a mix and no longer available as a single species. This is so that we can send the species most suitable to each area of the province, and also to avoid monoculture problems.
- New application form which lists all of the species available.

No more free plastic mulch. In the past, the Shelterbelt Enhancement Program provided free plastic mulch for weed control. That program has now expired. Clients must now purchase their own plastic mulch. However, PFRA still supplies the plastic mulch applicators.

While there are changes to the Program, some things remain the same:

- The trees are still free of charge (clients must pay the shipping)
- Applications are still accepted from June 1 to March 15 for May delivery.
- Applications are available at the County/MD offices; at PFRA offices; by calling 403-340-4291, toll free 1-866-766-2284 or on the internet at http://www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/shelterbelt_e.htm
- Seedlings are shipped to the local Counties/MD's – where the client will pick them up
- Trees arrive at the County/MD in early May
- Land preparation is important to successfully plant the trees
- Weed control for 3-5 years after planting is vital to the establishment of the seedlings

~DonGeorge, PFRA

Canadian Agricultural Skills Service

Tomorrow's successful farm families will be engaged in life-long learning as they work to compete successfully and keep up with changing markets and technology. The Canadian Agricultural Skills Service (CASS) program will provide funding to beginning and established farmers and their spouses to develop a learning plan and take courses to help them gain the skills they need to reach their goals. CASS will assist farm families to acquire on-farm skills, or skills and training to pursue other income options, or both. Find more information about the program and how to apply: www.agr.gc.ca/renewal

-Alberta Agriculture and Food



BEEF IT UP!!

Linking cattle nutrition, health, handling and economics

January 28th and 29th, 2008
Orkney Community Hall

Guest Speakers Include:

Jennifer Woods ~ Safe Live-stock Handling

Jennifer has worked with Dr. Temple Grandin, and now consults for the North American and European live-stock industries

Also... Calving Season Tips, Herd Health, Nutrition, Market Outlook with CANFAX, Beef Marketing and Business Options, and much more....

Watch for more information coming soon!

Carbon Credit Trading -- What's it all About?

Climate Change Central and its partners, Reduced Tillage LINKAGES, Alberta Environment and Alberta Agriculture and Food are holding eight one-day *Agriculture Sector – Emissions Trading Workshops* at locations across Alberta. The workshops are designed to increase producers' understanding of rules, solutions and opportunities within the Alberta carbon offset trading system.

Morning presentations at the workshops will include the Alberta offset trading system, emissions trading and sector specific opportunities, and will feature an overview of the Alberta protocols.

During the afternoon, sessions include a brief presentation to set the stage for a mock negotiation. During the mock negotiations, participants will be asked to negotiate a contract for emissions reductions and removals. Profiles will be developed based on the protocols developed for the Alberta system.

The workshops offer a no pressure, interactive learning atmosphere where participants can take the time to understand the opportunities and risks. Workshop objectives are to increase producer understanding of:

- issues and considerations involved with carbon credits within the Alberta Offset System
- opportunities for carbon credits in your operation within the Alberta Offset system
- carbon credits/offsets as both an opportunity and a risk

The workshops are being held in:

Central

Airdrie – October 17, 2007, Best Western

Red Deer – October 18, 2007, Black Knight Inn

North

St. Paul – October 24, 2007

Edmonton area – October 25, 2007, Nisku Inn, Nisku

Peace region

Fairview – November 15, 2007, Dunvegan Inn

Registration for the workshop is \$35 per person. This fee includes coffee, refreshments, lunch and a resource package for each participant. For more information or to register, call toll-free 1-866-609-2700.

From the Sept 24, 2007 Issue of Agri-News

Minimize Stored Grain Pest Problems With Bin Preparation and Treatments - Frequently Asked Questions

How can I keep grain beetles and other insects out of my stored grain?

Producers can minimize potential pest problems by cleaning up in and around grain bins during the summer. Most empty grain bins will have some form of insects or mites surviving on dust or grain. Before binning new grain, these bins need to be swept, or preferably vacuumed, out and debris either buried or burned.

Spilled grain, exposed to environmental moisture, can sustain populations of insects that could migrate into the bin later in the year. Cleaning up and removing any spilled grain can minimize future problems within bins. Grasses and weeds around grain bins can also harbour insect pests, so vegetation control around bins will also help prevent stored grain pest problems. These simple housekeeping practices may not eliminate all pest problems, but they will help reduce the potential threat of pest infestation.

Are there insecticides that can be used in empty grain bins?

Malathion can be sprayed in empty bins to control pests, but this can only be used prior to storing cereal crops and must not be used on bins that will be storing canola or pulses. Empty bins can be treated with diatomaceous earth products like Protect-It^(R) or Insecto^(R) prior to storing all grains. Follow product labels to ensure that these crop protection products are used properly.

What insecticides can be applied directly to grain going into storage?

Grain can be treated with either diatomaceous earth or malathion as it is being binned. Diatomaceous earth treatments can either be applied to grain going into storage, to the grain at the top of a bin as a barrier to insect migra-

tion after binning, or both to grain as it is being binned and the surface of the grain. Keep in mind that malathion must not be used on stored canola or pulse crops. Some buyers of malt barley and milling oats also do not want grain that has been treated with malathion so it is best to check with potential buyers of these grains before any insecticide application. In all cases where products are applied to grain, it is important to follow label instructions.

How does aeration affect grain pests?

Grain that is binned warm or tough is especially prone to stored grain pest problems. Aeration to cool the grain and remove some moisture is not only good for grain conditioning, but will also reduce the potential for insect problems. Grain that is binned under less than ideal conditions should be monitored regularly during fall and winter for signs of insect infestations.

~Alberta Agriculture and Food, Doon Pauly

Environmental Farm Plan

Workshops will be coming to the area this fall

If you are interested in attending a workshop, please contact

Lindsay Cherpin

403-772-3793

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 Lindsay Cherpin or Alan Hampton.
Starland County
P.O. Box 249 Morrin, AB T0J 2B0
Phone (403) 772-3793
Fax (403) 772-3807

Winter Energy Saving Tips...

- Install a setback thermostat that controls heating costs by automatically lowering the heat when no one is home.
- Close off heat and doors to unused rooms.
- Consider switching to compact fluorescent lighting. Compact fluorescent light bulbs use about 75 per cent less energy than incandescent bulbs.
- Caulk, weather-strip, and foam to seal air leaks.
- To help reduce home heating demand, consider using motorized air intake and outlet dampers. They minimize the exchange of air through openings and ducts where cooler outside air can enter your home, or warmer inside air escape.
- Change your furnace filter monthly during the heating season. Most hardware stores now carry a washable, universal-size filter that should fit most furnaces.
- Check windows and exterior doors for air leakage. Heat passes through a window with a single pane of glass 14 times faster than through a well-insulated wall.

~Alberta Environment