

*For landowners
who care*

Western Farm & Forest

Sustainable Land Management Opportunities

WINTER 2005



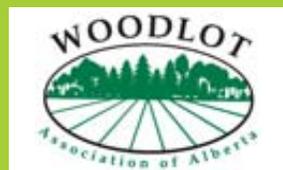
WTO: hopes for positive outcome for farmers

Taxes and woodlot sustainability

Willow - a new crop for Alberta's landowners?



Prompt action tackles infestation of mountain pine beetle.



Membership news for the Wild Rose Agricultural Producers and the Woodlot Association of Alberta



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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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Farmers are working with impossible numbers

It has become very obvious that the current economic crisis in the Canadian agricultural industry is not simply a small hurdle, which we will hop over in the near future. The problem, especially in the grains and oilseeds sector, is chronic and it is severe.

The focus of farm organizations and governments in the past year has moved from short-term fixes to discussion on how to deal with this problem on an on-going basis.

There has historically been an understanding that if you are an efficient operator and effective marketer you will be successful.

Everyone now admits that we are simply working with impossible numbers. The current round of World Trade Organization talks could be

extremely important to our industry. If the deal is right the playing field could be evened up and significant market access could be achieved.

It is, however, absolutely vital that farmers maintain and develop market power. We really need to work together to address this economic crisis. The annual meeting of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers will address the challenges of "Improving the Bottom Line." Expect that to be the theme of a lot of farm meetings this winter!



Bill Dobson,
president of
Wildrose
Agricultural
Producers

Careful planning of harvest creates deal that's best for all

I recently had a telephone call from a chap who, unfortunately, was not a WAA member (yet) but had heard about us and was concerned about some proposed timber harvesting on his land. In this man's case the land was the family homestead up here in the Peace River Region.

However, he now lived in Edmonton and the rest of the family was even further away.

What I found gratifying was that even though this chap rarely got the opportunity to set foot on his land anymore there was still a very strong attachment to it. Yes, there was some money on the table for the timber but what he was really asking was "Is it worth it?".

Obviously, given the circumstances, I couldn't tell him that one course of action was correct and the

other was wrong, as it ultimately had to be his decision.

We did toss around a lot of different ideas that night and I think in the end he had decided that the harvest would proceed but with a number of conditions. These

would see riparian areas protected, small blocks of habitat retained, winter activities only and even some buffers left for visual purposes. In the end it would be a scenario where everybody wins; it was going to mean a little bit less cash in his pocket, but not really that much less. The

timber company would get the logs it needed and he was going to get something that he was very much more comfortable with - the knowledge that the ecology and environment of the original homestead land would survive.



Peter Mills,
president of
the Woodlot
Association
of Alberta

"Even though this chap rarely got the opportunity to set foot on his land there was still a strong attachment to it."

The landowner's value

By DAVID HOLEHOUSE

What is a farmer, or a woodlot owner, worth to society? Is it a couple of bucks for a packet of rolled oats? Is it a couple of bucks for a tonne of logs? Is it a special levy on groceries, as proposed in October by the Agricultural Institute of Canada?

Let's face it, in a world where the major powers hold to protectionism and farm subsidization (while Canada doesn't) the individuals and communities that produce our consumables by the sweat of their brow are no longer afforded the value they once enjoyed.

It's a situation that occupied almost every speaker at the national woodlots conference in Vernon this fall (see pages 28 & 29), and it's a situation we need to get serious about.

Forgive my boldness, but I think it's time we did a better job of telling society and the politicians exactly what caring landowners do for society other than produce cheap commodities, and what those goods and services are really worth.

Sure, give us more for rolled oats and logs. But if urban populations really care about clean drinking water, pay us a fair return on maintaining the riparian cover that saves them millions in water treatment costs each year. If urban populations (and they are the decision-makers, these days) care about landscapes that support wildlife and a diversity of recreation and hunting opportunities, pay us a fair return. Clean air created by our forests? It comes at a price. Carbon sequestration? Ditto. So come on folks. Let's get serious. You have a lot more leverage than anyone suspects.

dholehouse@mediamatchwest.com

Publisher's column

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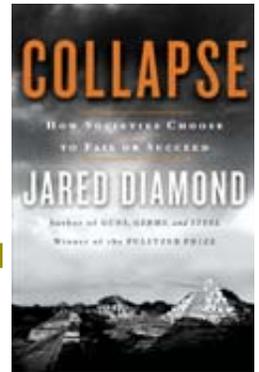
Wild Rose Agricultural Producers member news. Pages 20-23

Achieving strategic growth for agriculture. Page 24

New market opportunities for barley. Page 6

Late fall poplar excursion around Edmonton. Page 18

Habitat destruction behind human downfall? Book review on page 19.



Cover pictures:

Sleigh ride near St. Paul, by Alberta Travel and forester Erica Lee, submitted by Dan Lux, with our thanks.

Concern raised about Cypress Hills fire plan

Dear Sir;

Excellent job on the magazine. I like the little note in the bottom corner of the cover – “For Landowners Who Care.”

It is a shame that this is not always the case when it comes to our provincial government. For many years residents of southeast Alberta have been trying to get some action regarding the potential for a disastrous fire in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. We have been told by Alberta Community Development who manage this park that there is no money and no management plan for this forest.

We have been told by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development who manage Alberta's public forests that because we are in the White Zone there is no money for Cypress Hills unless it is on fire.

I and many others have written to Community Development Minister Gary Mar. . We have had one meeting with the Minister, but received not much more than a thank you for our concern.

Luckily we have had quite a wet year with just a few extreme fire condition days. But it is just a matter of time until disaster occurs in this dry, windy part of the province.

Perhaps you can help raise awareness of this issue through your mag-

azine.

As a postscript – why can't a forest in a provincial park be managed similar to a woodlot – the Woodlot Association's Code of Ethics would fit nicely.

**Dan Reesor, Member,
Woodlot Association of Alberta,
Walsh, AB**

“Why can't a forest in a provincial park be managed similar to a woodlot?”

Editor's note:

We contacted Cheryl Robb with Communications for Alberta Community Development, and she told us attention is being paid to wildfire risk in the park.

This past summer, crews removed hazard trees and potential fuel from about 56 km of trails and from around facilities in the town site.

She said the goal in Alberta's protected areas is to protect natural landscapes and the integrity of the forest. Wildfire occurring in the Cypress Hills Park would be a priority for suppression, utilizing all the resources ordinarily used by Forest Protection managers responsible for the Green Zone's Wildfire Management Units.

In general, she said, parks policy is that forest management practices are considered within the goals and objectives of Alberta's protected areas network.

Mystery solved!

By CARINA CHRISTIANSEN

This picture of a John Deere tractor in the field caused some confusion among readers in the fall issue of Western Farm&Forest.

The actual cultivator attached to the tractor is a weed badger. It did not show very well on the picture we published.

Readers eager to know how to plant and manage trees on farmland wanted a closer look at the actual attachment. So, we went back out into the field and took a close up shot of the cultivator.

The attachment rotates to remove weeds between the rows of trees. The intervention keeps the weeds down to a level where they don't jeopardize the healthy growth of your young trees.

The operator in this picture is **Leonard Steward**. **Al Bertuschi**, standing on the front wheel, is a hybrid poplar specialist with Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries in Bayle.

For more information, visit the website www.weedbadger.com.



Photo: Victor Brunette



A closer view of how the plantation cultivator actually looks.

Photo: Carina Christiansen

Letters to the editor

A new synergy has been created

Dear Sir;
Just received the current issue of Western Farm and Forest and found all of it most interesting.

I suspect many woodlot owners will enjoy reading the farming articles that are included. Getting a better idea of how farmers think is also probably going to enable us (as woodlot owners) to talk to our neigh-

bors better. And the wildlife and general land-use articles -and even ads!- really bring home the feeling of joint stewardship. These images and articles put together in this way give a new feeling to the magazine - a new synergy has been created.

**Louise Horstman, member,
Woodlot Association of Alberta**

Results pleasing

Dear Sir;
I am not sure if it was you who put Carina Christiansen on to me for the article (September, 2005: "A tidy yard offers insurance against wildfire") - but I am pleased with the results. Anytime you are looking for news, I would be happy to put in a plug for FireSmart or Fire Prevention.

**Wes Nimco RPFT Wildfire
Prevention Officer Lac La Biche
Athabasca Office**

Future carbon industry story worth sharing

Dear Sir;
I want to inquire about the possibility of using an article from your magazine in our local newspaper.

Our municipality runs a full page each week in our local paper with news from the County of Athabasca.

About 1/3 of the page is used for agricultural articles and ads that we feel are important to our local producers. I was very interested in the article "Landowners advised to be aware of future revenue potential" (Western Farm & Forest, September, 2005).

I believe we would reach a good number of producers with this information.

Thanks!

**Roxanne Senyk
Agriculture & Emergency Services
County of Athabasca**

New market opportunities for barley

Features unique health-boosting components

Research funds pave the way for new generation varieties that perform better in the field

Western Canadian farmers have long grown barley for feed or malt. But today the malting barley market is expanding and the feedgrain environment is getting more sophisticated, both of which are diversifying and increasing the demands on barley varieties. In addition, growing recognition of barley's unique and powerful human health benefits are launching

Grain Research

food and nutraceutical opportunities, and the list of new uses for barley components is increasing every year.

"There are some great new market opportunities for barley," says Dr. Keith Degenhardt, a Hughenden, Alta., producer and chair of Western Grains Research Foundation. "We want to go after these while still looking after today's needs and strengthening our traditional markets. If you look where the dollars are going in the new agreements, I think you'll see our producer board members and advisors have come up with a pretty balanced approach to do that."

"The new barley agreements pave the way for a new generation of varieties that perform better in the field and deliver higher quality for an expanded number of market options," says Degenhardt.

It can take from eight to 12 years to develop a new variety of barley, with

malting barley typically requiring several more years of evaluation than feed barley. Each year of the process needs consistent funding.

"Because the Barley Check-off is just 10 years old, the main varieties resulting from this investment have only begun to emerge," says Degenhardt.

"But several of these are already well accepted by producers and are among the acreage leaders."

Under the new agreements, 48 percent of annual Barley Check-off Fund investment goes toward breeding programs for two-row malting barley varieties, 22 percent to two-row feed barley, 10 percent to hulless food barley, nine percent to six-row malting barley, eight percent to hulless feed barley and three percent to forage barley.

Arguably the most exciting new area in barley research these days is food barley, observes Degenhardt. Researchers have learned in recent years that barley features unique health-boosting components that make the grain a particularly beneficial dietary component for humans. Most notably, barley contains beta-glucan, exceptionally high in fibre, and tocopherols, which provide health benefits such as a reduction in serum chole-

Erin Armstrong of the Brewing and Malting Barley Research Institute.



It can take from eight to 12 years to develop a new variety of barley.

terol.

"Hulless barley is key to tapping barley's food market potential since the food industry is better-equipped to handle so-called naked grains. Some of the early hulless food barley varieties developed with Check-off support have already been tested or used for products from breakfast cereals and tortillas to nutritional supplements."

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Keith Degenhardt
Western Grains Research Foundation
306-975-0060
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Minister urges responsible advertising

Government wants to support recreational use of off-highway vehicles that doesn't damage land



Recreational use of off-highway vehicles has increased over the last 10 years.

By **CARINA CHRISTIANSEN**

You might have seen the fancy advertising images for off-highway vehicles: drivers in the wilderness, water and mud splashing, wilderness conquered by man and machine.

It might look tempting, but there is

Public Lands

another side to the images.

In a speech in Calgary recently the minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, David Coumts, pleaded with manufacturers of vehicles such as ATVs, dirt bikes and snowmobiles to not emphasize the kind of use that might have a negative impact on land and wildlife.

Recreational use of off-highway vehicles has exploded in Alberta over the last 10 years. Every long weekend more than 5,000 ATVs and dirt bikes are loaded on trucks and trailers for a weekend of fun somewhere on public land.

"There are many drivers who do a very good job of respecting land. They build bridges and stay on trails, and that's the kind of activity and stewardship we want to encourage," says Marina Irwin, a land management planning forester at the Public Lands division of Alberta Sustainable Resource development.

She says there is a real opportunity for manufacturers, drivers and government to increase awareness among all users to be careful and to be good stewards while enjoying their sport.

"Some drivers don't understand that driving in the watersheds might disturb the spawning beds for fisheries. When they run through the water

they stir up sediment that may prevent the eggs from hatching," Irwin says.

There are also issues on public land used by ranchers for grazing. Sometimes it takes only a few hours to wreck land that a rancher may have looked after for years.

"A few drivers have fun making 'donuts' on grassland, spinning the vehicle around at high speed, digging the wheels deep into the soil," says Irwin.

It doesn't take many people to do a

lot of damage.

Irwin says she has seen advertisements for all-terrain vehicles with images that perhaps could encourage reckless use of the machines.

"I guess it is visually interesting, and the focus is on speed and testing the limits of the machine."

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Trail closed down over long weekend

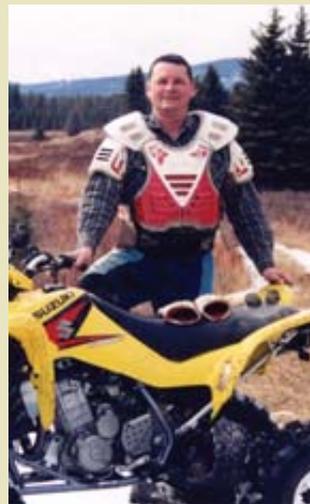
By **CARINA CHRISTIANSEN**

It was members of the Big Horn Heritage ATV Society who asked the government to help them close the popular McMullen's Trail to motorized use on the September long weekend.

The group arranged to have Alberta officials present at the Big Horn Dam to stop motorized recreationists from proceeding. The concern was the trail's condition in light of excessive rainfall.

"Last year's rain made the trail wet, and this year's extreme weather just polished the surface right off," explains Cal Rakach president of the Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association.

"The trail couldn't withstand fur-



Cal Rakach, president of the Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association.

ther use. We were afraid that after the September long weekend there'd be no trail left at all."

A committee of user groups including cyclists, First Nations, outfitters, trappers, dog-sledders and OHV riders monitor the trail. They all agreed the action was necessary. "I was there all weekend as well, so that people wouldn't get mad at the government guys," says Rakach.

When he wasn't standing on the dam with the officers, he was visiting campsites

explaining to OHV users why the 20-km trail was closed. This helped keep the number of riders who had to be stopped by the officers down to about 30.

Woodlot Extension partners adopt a new strategic plan

By VICTOR BRUNETTE

By encouraging landowners to manage their forests in a sustainable way, WEP addresses the issue of forest depletion in agricultural areas.

The sustainable management of more than 1.5 million ha of privately owned forestland in the province's agricultural areas will yield important benefits. The goals adopted initially during a pilot phase remain: increased awareness of economic, social and environmental implications of agricultural area forest management and increased landowner participation in

Woodlot Extension Program

sustainable woodlot management and agro-forestry. A third goal gets more focus now: Integrated community land use planning that acknowledges the values of forest resources. Rural communities have to commit to sustainable forested land development at a landscape level to address wildlife habitat, clean water concerns and other social values.

The new focus is on growth opportunities. WEP will do an assessment of farmers and woodlot owner's extension needs and a gap analysis for resource inventory and delivery mechanisms. It will work at integrating with other service providers and consultants in the private forest sector. It will develop a wider range of agro-forestry, agri-fiber and agri-product management options to include agro-tourism and the economic valuation of recreational and environmental goods and services (emerging environmental and public values).

The drivers of the new WEP strategy are linked to forest industries need for new sources of fiber in light of a decreasing traditional wood supply although there are few incentives to assist landowners to plant trees or leave harvested land for potential restocking. WEP has to make an economic case for new investments in agroforestry and woodlot management. WEP partners are also interested in the growing of agri-fibers to pro-

vide alternate sources of procurement to forest industries. This could become a profitable and sustainable component of agriculture enterprises. The rate of deforestation on private land in Alberta has to be reduced from a current estimate of 15,000 ha per year.

The interest in agro-forestry, farm diversification and for the economics of woodlots is increasing among Alberta farmers seeking alternatives to traditional farm crops. New values and new incentives will have to compensate or stack up to offer socio-economic compensation for providing environmental services. With proper incentives, farmers and rural dwellers are ready to accommodate wildlife habitat, species at risk, water conservation and other environmental concerns in their land use management.

Woodlots play a significant role in maintaining water quality and quantity. This could attract conservation organizations and service providers interested by those issues. Major cities



“Rural communities have to commit to sustainable forested land development at a landscape level to address wildlife habitat, clean water concerns and other social values.”

in this province are most preoccupied by the quality of their water procurement.

Municipalities and municipal districts are also concerned. Service providers could be valuable partners with whom to share concerns for watershed management, riparian area protection and the role that woodlots and plantations have to ensure water quality.

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The Woodlot Extension Program started in 2001.

The Woodlot Extension Program is a joint venture between government, Alberta forest industry, conservation agencies and the Woodlot Association. WEP reflects the commitment of partners to sustainable management, agro-forestry, innovation and value-added, and the adoption of best management practices on private forested land.

- Ainsworth Lumber Company Ltd.
- Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
- Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Inc.
- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
- Canadian Forest Service
- Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd.
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Footner Forest Products Ltd.
- The Land Stewardship Centre of Canada
- Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.
- Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (Agriculture Canada)
- Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.
- West Fraser Mills Ltd.
- Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd.
- Woodlot Association of Alberta

Province boosts commitment to livestock welfare

The Alberta government has strengthened its commitment to farm animal welfare with a 15 per cent increase in funding to two non-profit agencies.

A new three-year contract was signed with the Alberta SPCA for

Animal Welfare

enforcement and livestock protection programs, with annual funding of more than \$860,000. A further three-year contract with Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) will see that organization receive \$92,000 per year for livestock care, education and work with industry.

“Alberta has a high standard of animal care that is backed up by one of the strongest pieces of legislation in Canada,” said Doug Horner, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. “We are fortunate in this province that these two organizations do such an exemplary job in

addressing the humane treatment of animals and in enforcement and education programs in Alberta. They are respected across the country.”

James Arends, President of the Alberta SPCA Board of Directors said, “Without question, animals have benefited from our partnership with industry and the Government of Alberta. Our new three-year agreement with the government better positions the Alberta SPCA to effectively meet the growing demand for animal welfare enforcement services.”

The Alberta SPCA is funded to

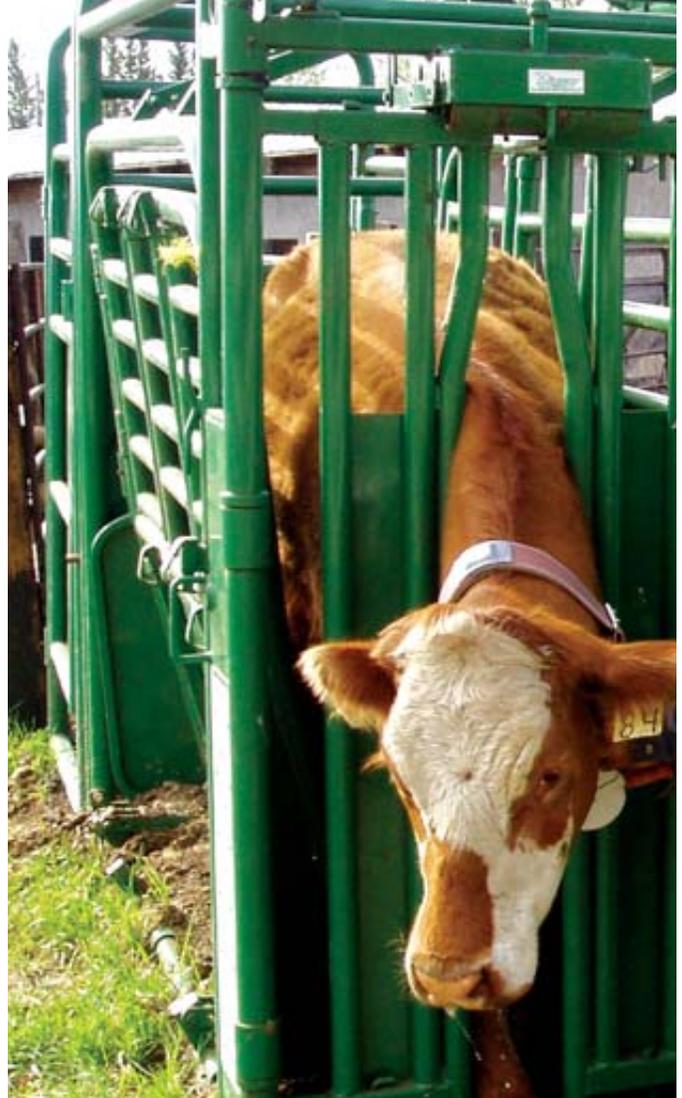


Photo: AAFRD, with permission

Alberta leads the nation in cattle and calf inventories, with 6.9 million head.

deliver livestock welfare protection services throughout Alberta and companion animal protection services outside the larger areas, not served by other local humane societies.

David Hyink, chairman of AFAC and a chicken producer, said, “Our partnership with the province and Alberta SPCA enables us to respond quickly to any livestock care concerns through our ALERT line. On behalf of the livestock industry, AFAC also takes the lead on extension and training to improve animal care and transportation in Alberta.”

Animal numbers in Alberta

Alberta leads the nation in cattle and calf inventories, with 6.9 million head. At present the hog population is more than two million and the sheep population more than 248,000. There are also more than 37,000 domestic elk; 90,000 bison; 300,000 horses and 8,700 domestic deer in the province.

Four million acres to be forested in Saskatchewan

Imagine the challenges for the agriculture, forestry and rural development sectors if the Government of Alberta were to announce the afforestation of 10% of the province's arable or the planting of 4 million acres.

Well, this is what is happening next door, in Saskatchewan.

Monday, Nov 7th, the Province of Saskatchewan delivered the Throne Speech to open the 2nd session of the legislature. In it is a very exciting announcement for

Saskatchewan regarding agroforestry. The key paragraph is on page 4 of the speech, and indicates a major provincial commitment to expanding agroforestry across the farm land base of Saskatchewan.

The commitment is to plant 10% of the arable land base to trees. When fully implemented, this would see upwards of 4,000,000 acres of land planted to trees over the next 20 years. That's 200,000 acres per year when fully ramped up.



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New president of the Woodlot Association of Alberta:

Peter Mills

By CARINA CHRISTIANSEN
Congratulations, to your new position!

Thank you very much. I am looking forward to it. I know there's a great deal to be done and I'm sure there will be a couple of surprises along the way as there always are. I'm confident that we can carry on with all the key items and I just hope that I can do as good a job as **Gordon Kerr**, the previous president. I know that I have a good board in the WAA and that everybody will pitch in and do their share.

For how long have you been involved in the WAA?

I have been a director for the past two years, and have been a member for several years before that. A good friend, Gordon Grant, was a member before I joined, and he kept me informed for many years before I became a member myself.

Why did you join the WAA?

I think the WAA appeals to something in all of us. There is a saying: "Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs." I have lived in the Peace region since 1979 and I have seen very large changes in the landscape, primarily with respect to land clearing. While I'm not opposed to harvesting of the timber resource, in my opinion land has sometimes been

cleared that shouldn't have been, and I have also seen too many cases of poor harvesting practices.

What are those poor practices?

Liquidation of forest cover through use of heavy equipment and poor operators that leaves a mess behind that's unusable for man and beast. I think in too many cases not enough thought and consideration was given to questions such as habitat, water courses, erosion and silviculture. I believe the same goals could have attained much differently. In these cases, there is failure to address the issue of sustainability.

What is the most important issue for the WAA?

I think extension, getting the message out to the population, is probably our number one priority. That is one reason we try work closely with the Woodlot Extension Program. Second is to make people understand the inherent value of woodlots. Alberta's hardwood species are not weeds!

Do you own forest yourself?

I am fortunate enough to have three pieces of land and we spend as much time as we can out there. We have 350 acres of forest in total, some pri-

Photo: Victor Brunette



Peter Mills on a field trip in August.

marily hardwood, some mixedwood, and some land that was commercially cleared before I bought it. The latter is in the process of regenerating. We have an active program of introducing spruce on the area that is primarily hardwood in an effort to re-establish a more natural composition. We also have set up one of the WAA's Demonstration Woodlots on this property.

What do you do for living?

I work for Agriculture Canada at the research station here in Beaverlodge. My work is in the areas of crop-weather relationships - the correct term is agro-meteorology - and in the honeybee program.

Any hobbies?

I guess I am severely addicted to antique Caterpillar tractors. I am interested in how the technology has developed since the early part of the century. I also volunteer time to the South Peace Centennial Museum in Beaverlodge.

Contact:

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Woodlot association's 10th annual meeting ...a milestone

By KEN GLOVER

The Woodlot Association of Alberta's annual general meeting, Clinic and Fair attracted over 80 woodlot members and enthusiasts from across Alberta, and featured a guest presentation from the Leader of the Alberta Liberal party, Mr. Kevin Taft

Other presentations addressed issues relevant to the government's proposed Forest Management Agreement renewal process and the inclusion of woodlots, mycorrhiza and mushrooms, woodlot extension, mountain pine beetle, Forest 2020, and new generation co-operatives. The annual event included a fair, which hosted static displays and equipment on display from Cycle Works in Spruce Grove, Alberta.

Busy summer

It was a busy summer (and fall) for the woodlot association. From June through to the end of September the Association worked with 10 of its woodlot

owner members to host woodlot demonstration events. Many landowners applauded the demonstration events, but expressed the desire for more specific and in-depth events in the future.

With this direction, the Association aims to work with the Woodlot Extension Program toward the delivery of "higher" end woodlot education and training activities.



The new board of Directors for The Woodlot Association of Alberta:
 Top Row: Dan Reesor, Dennis Quintilio(editorial chair), Jamie Giberson (treasurer), Chuck Kaiser. Middle Row: Edwin Erickson, Hamish Kerfoot, Laval Bergeron, Peter Mills(President). Bottom: Pieter Vander Schoot(vice president), Gordon Kerr(past president). Missing: Louise Horstman (Secretary)

PRESIDENT
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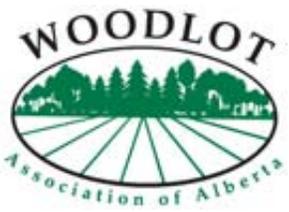
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Ken Glover



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Woodlot Association of Alberta

Membership, Materials, & Services Form

Name: _____ Company: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____

Province: _____ P/Code: _____ Ph: (____) _____ Fx: (____) _____

E-mail Address: _____

Woodlot Size _____ ha / ac. Legal Description: _____

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

- \$30.00 One Year Membership \$ _____.
- \$50.00 Two Year Membership \$ _____.
- \$100.00 One Year Corporate Membership \$ _____.
- \$40.00ea Woodlot Management Guide / Manual (Includes Shipping & Handling) \$ _____.
- \$10.00ea Woodlot Management Video (VHS) (Includes Shipping & Handling) \$ _____.
- \$30.00ea 2005 Forestry Business Directory (Includes Shipping & Handling) \$ _____.
- \$200.00¹ up to 3hr one-on-one visit with an Experienced Woodlot Association Representative to address your specific questions (some support materials provided) \$ _____.
- \$1,200.00¹ On-Site Assessment and Report by an Experienced Woodlot Association Representative to address your specific issues (support mat Total (GST EXEMPT) \$ _____.

Payment made by cheque enclosed Please send an Invoice for payment.
Payment to be made using our Credit Card (below).

CREDIT CARD INFO.:

VISA [AMEX] [M/C] # _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name on Card: _____ Authorization Signature: _____

Mail or Fax this Form to the Woodlot Association of Alberta Office.

Make Cheques Payable to:

Woodlot Association of Alberta

18008 - 107th Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5S 2J5

Ph: (780) 489-9473 Fax: (780) 489-6262

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

¹ Additional Fees for Travel may apply. Additional travel costs will be confirmed prior to services.

Taxes and woodlot sustainability

By VICTOR BRUNETTE

In 1999, Senators and elected Members of Parliament recommended tax change following the hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on the Boreal Forest. However, only one of the 1999 report's recommendations led to fiscal change. This recommendation on capital gains treatment was taking into consideration that, too often after ownership transfer, private land had to be harvested to pay for transfer taxes or capital gain taxes, much before optimum harvest time. The recommendation read:

"The federal government should review the tax treatment of transferring a family owned woodlot from one generation to the next. Some woodlot owners find that the only way to pay the taxes arising from such a transaction is to harvest the trees, precluding preservation of the family forest."

The Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners lobbied

Ottawa and the government agreed in 2000 to amend the Income Tax Act and delay capital gains payments for as long as a commercial woodlot is transferred and kept within the family.

The only other gain concerning the Canadian tax system as it applies to woodlots has been a publication of the Information Bulletin #IT-373R2 which attempts to explain how the federal government treats woodlots for income tax purposes. Commercial woodlots are meant to have a "reasonable expectation of profit." A commercial non-farm woodlot has to declare all income and expenses on the accrual basis.

Expenses are deducted from taxable income when the related revenues are earned.

For example, a non-farm woodlot owner/silviculturist has to save his receipts for tree planting until the

time that the harvest is done. This is very different from a commercial farm woodlot where expenses are deducted when they are paid.

The gains were modest; the numerous other recommendations made by the Senate Subcommittee were shelved. There is a missed opportunity to use the tax system efficiently at a time when woodlot owners and natural resources managers are expected to supply their community with Environmental Goods and Services (EGS). The taxman ought to take a second look at how public goods and

services are produced on private woodlots and provided, most often free of charge.

Currently, in BC, and some parts of Alberta, there are woodlot owners who are quite concerned with the mountain pine beetle epidemic, and the harvest decisions that they may have to make, such as harvesting much of their mature wood-

lots over a short time frame.

Current tax rules for woodlot owners do not encompass provisions for landowners facing such situations.

Such measures should lead sensible income tax averaging or income sheltering when the income is generated as a result of a fire, insect or disease epidemic, and when decisions to harvest can not be postponed because of the urgency of the situation.

Current taxation affects the land use decisions and environmental choices made by landowners. In the wake of policy making related to climate change, carbon sequestration, species at risk, the mountain pine epidemic, dire need for forest fire prevention and the Water for Life strategy, the following recommendations of the Senate Subcommittee on the Boreal Forest deserve to be revisited:

☛ Tax incentives should be considered for landowners who forego cut-

ting of woodlots to protect endangered species or habitat.

☛ Tax incentives should encourage reforestation of marginal agricultural land.

☛ Small woodlot owners should be encouraged to shelter timber harvesting income in interest-bearing trust accounts. Income tax would only be due when it is withdrawn and used for purposes other than the sustainable management of the woodlot.

☛ Forest management expenses of small woodlot owners should be treated with the concern that benefits of such investment may not be realized for decades. Revenue Canada still uses the realization of regular income as the test of "a reasonable expectation of profit" from these expenditures. A longer time horizon is needed.

☛ Modifications are needed on the restricted farm loss rules to take into account the longer time frame needed in forestry to realize a profit.

☛ Tax incentives should be one of the many ways and means to promote sustainable resource management. Other incentives can be forged to link programs that can offer technical assistance and direct cost share.

Conservation easements are another way to commit landowners to integrated land use and beneficial management practices.

Here, we are talking carrots. Regulations are sticks. If federal, provincial and municipal governments were to work in a concerted effort to devise novel ways of taxing private forested land and the products it provides, then a good mix of carrots and sticks would be conducive to sustainability. For woodlot owners willing to provide "public" environmental goods and services, tax relief is an attractive carrot.

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"...a non-farm woodlot owner/silviculturist has to save his receipts for tree planting until the time that the harvest is done."

Fight against the clock

200 firefighters were called in to burn 6000 trees infested by mountain pine beetle

By CARINA CHRISTIANSEN

On the last day of June, Erica Lee, forest health officer with Sustainable Resource Development, booked a helicopter to monitor white bark pine in the Willmore Wilderness area.

Suddenly, she saw some fading trees below with needles that had turned slightly golden.

She instructed the pilot to find a place to land and then walked over to

Mountain Pine Beetle

the golden trees. Sure enough, her suspicion was confirmed: she had found mountain pine beetle-infested trees.

Lee noticed that the beetles were still in a larval stage under the bark, meaning they had not yet developed wings for their flight to the next tree. She knew there was not much time for action.

The next day, she went back armed with a hand-held GPS - a global positioning system the size of a deck of cards. The GPS takes data from satellites to determine an exact position on the globe.

Lee flew close to all infested trees in the area and used the GPS to create an exact map of the infestation. Altogether, she found 507 infested trees. She also knew they had only 30 days to deal with the beetles. Another month and the beetles' wings would be fully developed, allowing them to leave the host trees and search for new



Due to forester Erica Lee's prompt action the largest ever infestation of mountain pine beetles in Alberta was found and fought.



The infested trees had to be burned one by one. Approximately 150 beetles live in one tree.

Photos: Dan Lux.

ones.

Representatives from Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and Alberta Community Development held a teleconference to discuss necessary actions.

"We decided to burn the trees before the beetles could fly," says Dan Lux, the province's pine beetle coordinator. The day after the meeting, a rappelling crew was flown to the area. They are firefighters trained to drop by rope from helicopters.

By July 9, a camp for 80 people was in place. The mission was to individually fell and burn every infested tree. The crew worked 10-hour days, cutting the trees into one-metre sections or shorter and burning them on the spot. However, as the crews worked, they noticed more infested trees.

Soon the number was not 507, but more than 5,000. All of the infested trees were mature, around 80 or 90 years old, and in otherwise good health. Without wildfire or mountain pine beetles, they would have lived for many more years.

"We were working against time and we realized we had to call in more people," says Lux.

Almost 200 more firefighters were flown in, using 11 helicopters.

When time ran out, the crew had burned 5,301 of the infested trees.

For the remaining trees, the crew attached pheromone baits, packed in a box as big as a pack of cigarettes, to nearby healthy trees. Hopes were that the flying beetles would take the bait and end their migration. Pheromone baits have proven effective at attracting the beetle.

This winter, ASRD will fell and burn the baited trees.

"We will know this winter if we succeeded in stopping the spread of the mountain pine beetle into the area," says Lux.

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New market place for timber

Website launched by The Woodlot Association of Alberta

The first real attempt to create a solid market situation for timber sales

A new website developed by the Woodlot Association of Alberta better describes the marketplace for timber and other agro-forestry products in the province and beyond.

The project was funded by Sustainable Resource Development. Patrick Guidera, of the department's

Strategic Forest Initiatives

Sustainable Forestry Initiatives division, says the website enables private landowners to determine market rates for their products.

It may, for instance, help landowners understand current market values and get them better returns on their wood.

"This website is the first real attempt to create a solid market situation for private timber sales," says Ken Glover, administrator of the Woodlot Association of Alberta. The website (www.woodlot.org) allows landowners to advertise any commodity they wish to sell, whether it be logs, sawn products, mushrooms, berries or farm-made wine. The seller may solicit offers from buyers and choose the most attractive one.

The website is a valuable information tool for the woodlot owner who finds a timber buyer knocking on the door and offering a price.

"We hope this website opens up the private woodlot marketplace and makes it more transparent," says Guidera. "We want to ensure that private woodlot owners in Alberta understand the value of their products and make informed decisions."

A new website for timber sales allows sellers to solicit offers rather than accepting the offer from the first buyer knocking on their door.

Photo by Linda Miller



Accessible to people far beyond Alberta's borders, the website allows those who offer items for sale to get a real sense of what the broader market is willing to pay.

Woodlot owners in the province may also find buyers elsewhere. "There are lots of marketplaces like this working very well in the U.S.A., so we're optimistic that it will work well here," says

advertiser products.

"We hope woodlot owners will use this tool to actively seek bids for their products and be well informed about the market they are operating in," says Glover.



www.woodlot.org



Patrick Guidera

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Guidera.

The website allows advertisers to post and update ads themselves, as well as include pictures of the commodity and other documentation as needed. There is no cost for those who



Canadian Forest Service's 25 year old Walker plantation.



Landowners eager to learn about poplar.



Ryma Aneliunas made trails for visitors.



Derek Sidders in action.



A brush helps keep spray on the soil.

Photos: Carina Christiansen

Late fall excursion promoted poplar planting

By CARINA CHRISTIANSEN
They were initially bred half a century ago, long before anyone had heard of greenhouse gases and the issue of carbon pollution. The hybrid poplar clones Walker, Northwest, Brooks #6 and Brooks #1 are still top-notch performers today. No technology since has produced anything better for the harsh prairie climate.

Back in the 1940s the tree-breeder's mission was to provide maximum protection against wind and snow for prairie farms. While these objectives are still important, today's breeding work also addresses global concerns.

For instance, poplar plantations on

previously non-treed lands – afforestation – are expected to play an important role in the offsetting or reducing greenhouse gas emissions and meeting Canada's commitment under the Kyoto protocol. Alberta landowners had the chance in October to take a daytrip around Edmonton and see some of these poplar clones at different stages of development.

Derek Sidders and colleagues from the Canadian Forest Service talked about the clones, the importance of weed control in the first three years, and to always plant a variety of clones in blocks, rather than a single clone. In that way you decrease your risk of

pests, disease and weather variability. Here is a brief description of the four most popular clones:

Walker: Named after its breeder. Will live for approximately 30 years. The most requested clone for shelterbelts.

Northwest: The unbeatable choice for urban and rural landscaping. Grows wide at the bottom, which deters weeds. Lives 50 years.

Brooks #6: (AKA Green Giant) Fast growing, lives for 20-25 years.

Brooks #1: (AKA Griffin) A sibling of Brooks #6. Fairly short-lived. Can be harvested after 15 years. Also known as a Griffin Poplar, after the breeder.

Government sees a role for private timber supply

By DAVID HOLEHOUSE

Alberta's new FMA renewal criteria contain a clause of interest to landowners with timber to sell.

Jerry Sunderland, acting assistant deputy minister with Strategic Forestry Initiatives, Sustainable Resource Development, said the policy has been given government blessing, and is now ready for implementation. The policy sets out the commitments Forest Management Agreement proponents must make, and may make, to meet the interests of the people of Alberta in utilizing the public forest. "There are certain mandatory things the proponent must do, such as prompt reforestation of Crown land, and then there's a list of nine optional elements that companies can do – according to what fits their business plan – to receive the credits they need to successfully renegotiate an FMA," Sunderland said in an interview.

One of those optional elements is to demonstrate support for private-land woodlots, through working with local landowners or with the provincial woodlot program, or both. "The government is showing that it does think private timber has a role to play in supporting the forest products sector

long term, and in providing alternate income streams for farmers," Sunderland said.

A company developing faster-growing high quality aspen for deployment on private land might be one example of supporting the woodlot program. He urged farmers to keep an eye on government timber sales and private sales on the Woodlot Association Website, because they will provide an idea of what timber is worth. That way, business decisions such as clearing a quarter section of trees can be made with the knowledge of all the revenue options, and whether the ground should be replanted to trees or traditional farm crops.

For instance, private-land aspen might be worth \$7 to \$8 per cubic metre today in a government auction. Sixty ha. of land generating 150 cubic metres of aspen per ha. would potentially yield about \$72,000 come harvest time. It at least makes sustainable woodlot management an option to consider, especially when replanting to faster growing hybrids, Sunderland said.

Contact:
jerry.sunderland@gov.ab.ca



Footner Forest Products Ltd.

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Collapse: How societies choose to fail or succeed

By VICTOR BRUNETTE

This is recommended reading if you have a concern for nature and a sustainable society. The author links a combination of environmental factors such as habitat destruction, the loss of biodiversity, and degradation of the soil that have caused flourishing societies to disintegrate. The journey begins in present-day Montana, which has squandered its mineral resources and over-logged its forests. Small communities face a

Book review

decline in living standards with the depletion of natural resources and the loss of related jobs, in counties where mining residues and toxins leak into the soil, diseases infect deer and elk, and older hydroelectric dams have become decrepit.

Diamond has the ability to paint a provocative picture of social decline. He draws social and economic links between past and present. Modern societies are divided into those that have begun to collapse, such as Haiti; those whose conservation policies have helped to avert disaster, such as Iceland and Japan; and those currently dealing with massive problems, such as Australia and China.

Diamond provides well-reasoned historical examples, making the case that many times, environmental concerns are linked to species at risk, flora, fauna, and climate. Extending his treatment to contemporary environmental trouble spots, he finds today's technologically advanced civilization far from solving the problems that plagued primitive communities. This book is a reminder of the social and environmental links that bind humans to nature.

Hard to believe that the 2005 growing season is behind us

Wow! It's hard to believe that the 2005 growing season is almost behind us.

Producers endured another tough year with an ongoing battle with the weatherman stretching harvest out for almost three months.

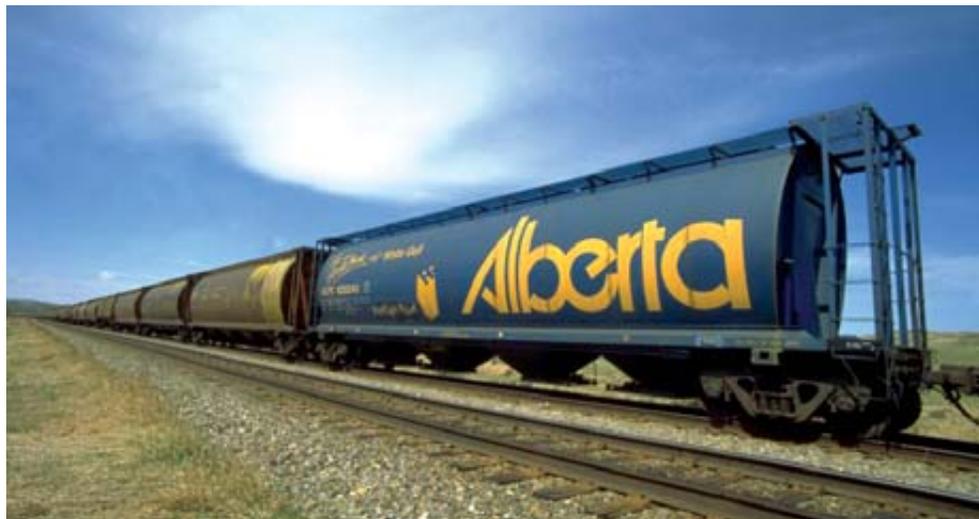
There is a pretty good run of weather as I am writing this article so things should pretty well get cleaned up in most parts of the province.

I put out a plea in the last issue of Western Farm&Forest for everyone to put an extra effort into coming through harvest with no serious injury accident so hopefully we have all done that for the most part.

Frustration

We issued a press release last month that received a lot of attention from media, farmers and government. In it, I suggested that the Province of Alberta need to open its eyes and realize that agriculture is in a mess.

The message was pretty direct and not really typical of this usually diplomatic president of a fairly docile farm organization. What inspired this change?



"We advocate that a strong value-added sector will be the answer to our problems. How is this wealth going to get into farmer's pockets?"

Frustration.

I see it everywhere - in my community, around the entire province, in my friends, even in myself. We certainly have grounds for that frustration. Here we are, living in the richest province in Canada, "celebrating" our 100th anniversary with farmers going further in the hole and with no end to the problems in sight. This has been

a particularly difficult season with the usual weather challenges, skyrocketing energy prices and ridiculously low commodity prices.

Most farmers in Alberta are mixed farmers and cow-calf producers and other those who raise other ruminants are still reeling from the effects of the BSE crisis and the drought, which preceded that.

Why did I single out the Provincial Government for criticism? Producers are constantly calling me and saying that these guys just don't get it.

We pat ourselves on the back for developing a wonderful "agri-food" sector and advocate that a strong value-added sector will be the answer to all of our problems.

We need to hear how this wealth that will be generated is going to get into farmer's pockets. If the "desirable environment" for value-added processing means lower and lower commodity prices, what is in it for us? I don't think that we can build a strong agri-food industry at the expense of grassroots producers. All that Alberta farmers receive out of the booming oil industry is a massive shortage of workers willing to work in agriculture.

"The Province of Alberta needs to open its eyes and realize that agriculture is in a mess."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bill Dobson



Highlights of President's agenda in 2005

January

6,7 - WRAP AGM
13, 14 - Co-operators Board Meeting
26,27,28 - Farm Tech
26 - WRAP Board Meeting

February

2,3 - Rural Electrification Association AGM
10 - Meeting with Don Johnson, AAMD&C
22-25 - CFA Annual Meeting and Board Meeting
28 - Federated Co-op AGM

March

1, 2, 3 - CWB U.S. - Canada Farmer Connection
4 - Met with UFA Co-op Chair & Vice-Chair
5 - Ag-Expo, Lethbridge
10 - FRCC announcement by Goodale, WRAP district meeting in Hussar
12 - Peace Classic, Grande Prairie
15 - Meeting with CWB - Adrian Measner and Ken Ritter, attended CWB Regional Accountability meeting in Sherwood Park
29 - Rutherford, CFCW, CTV Newsnet, Reuters and Calgary Herald interviews on \$1 Billion announcement
31 - Farm & Ranch Show

April

1, 2 - Farm & Ranch Show
2 - Slaughter Capacity Meeting with Cam Ostercamp, Dennis Duncan, Bob Christie and Stan Schellenberger
19 - Meetings with Doug Horner, Jim Kiss, MLA Reception, WRAP Board
25 - Food Safety & Quality Update, Edmonton
27 - 29 CFA Board Meeting, Ottawa

June

6 - George Rogers, MLA
7 - Doug Horner
14,15 - Alberta Beef Producers semi-annual meeting
15 - Hugh McDonald, Liberal Ag Critic
20-22 - Co-operators Planning session
26-28 WRAP Summer Council

July

25 - CWB meeting, Saskatoon
26 - 30 - CFA semi-annual meeting

August

3 - Met with Nova Scotia Co-op Council.

September

23 - Farm Writers Association Supper in Paradise Valley

October

17 - 21 CCA, Ottawa Meeting with Wayne Easter, Leon Benoit
25 - 28 CFA Board meeting

November

2,3,4 - APAS Symposium on Farm Income
7,8 - CWM meeting, Regina
9,10,11 - Red Deer Agri-Trade & board meeting

"Producers are constantly calling me and saying that these guys just don't get it."

Ottawa

As I write this report, I am on my way to Ottawa to the October CFA Board Meeting. We will be

meeting with federal government folks this week and will no doubt be driving home the point that the situation on farms is no better and in fact worse than a year ago.

I would like to feel some comfort that if we make progress with the feds that the province will be there to enhance that support. I certainly prefer working with the province on agricultural issues and am smart enough to know that bashing their ideas will not serve us well in the long term.

CAIS

Speaking of frustration, this has to be the item that is top of mind. A new program like this takes time to roll out but farmers simply are fed up with questions, changes, bills for accountants, and coverage that is below the cost of production.

Many government folks insist that the CAIS program is the answer to the farm income crisis. We have consistently told these people that you have to have a healthy industry before you can stabilize with any success. I know that I received my 2004 notice and there will not be a dime for a year that was certainly not a banner year in my area. There are just simply too many poor years in the reference period. We will continue to work to come up with ideas that simplify the program and make it more responsive to producer needs.

WTO talks

The world trade talks are entering a crucial period. There is hope that a meaningful deal for agriculture can

be reached and there is no doubt that a trade-dependent country like Canada would benefit greatly from increased market access.

What we are willing to put on the table is the question. There are many folks in our country who are only too willing to sacrifice our supply managed industries and the Canadian Wheat Board because they are philosophically opposed to them anyway.

Canadian negotiators have been cautious in their approach to what we offer. We are so below the Europeans and Americans in domestic support that what we give up is huge to us but not much to them.

I think we need to be very careful that we don't lose entities that give us marketing strength if we get nothing in return. This week I will be hearing from **Steve Verheul** who is the chief negotiator for Canadian agriculture.

Hopefully, Alberta farmers will take the time to read up on the WTO issue and really think through what is at stake here. Our future is on the line.

"I don't think that we can build a strong agri-food industry at the expense of grassroots producers."

2006 Annual Convention

Plans are nearly complete for the 2006 annual convention. The theme of this year's meeting is "Improving Farm Income for Farmers 2006". That is certainly the issue at the top of mind for most folks. We have a great line-up of speakers and look forward to your participation. I'll see you at the Royal Executive Inn, Nisku on January 10th and 11th!

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Executive Director	Sherwood Park, T8H 2R5	Toll-Free: 1-888-616-6530			Web site: www.wrap.ab.ca

Yes, I wish to join the Wild Rose Agricultural Producers.

Name: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ **Postal code:** _____ **Fax:** _____

I enclose membership fee:

<input type="checkbox"/> Producer	\$139.10
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years	\$385.20
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate	\$58.85

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

International and domestic markets need to function

By **ROD SCARLETT**

The increasing interdependence of national economies and the growing and competitive global market place have reinforced the importance of export market opportunities and the importance of fair and effective trade rules.

Canada must approach trade negotiations with the objective of achieving positive results for Canadian farmers. Clear and effective rules governing international trade should result in a better functioning of international and domestic markets and contribute to the

improvement of Canadian farm incomes. The range of processes, initiatives and options on Canada's current trade policy agenda is very large (e.g. WTO, NAFTA, Canada/Chile bilateral, Canada/Israel bilateral, APEC, Quad, G-7, OECD, FTAA etc.). The breadth of this agenda provides opportunities, but also poses risks.

Rod Scarlett
Wild Rose Agricultural Producers
780 416 6530
wrap@planet.eon.net

The Canadian government's trade policy must:

- identify the WTO as the principal vehicle for the establishment of fair and effective trade rules and improved export opportunities.
- approach all trade negotiations in a coordinated fashion that ensures trade agreements and initiatives complement each other.
- give high priority to the review of the effect of existing trade agreements and give high priority to the achievement of full implementation of existing commitments in the consideration of future action.
- achieve the maximum possible access for agricultural exports, but also respect the domestic interests of Canadian farmers.
- preserve its right to enable Canadian farmers to design and operate marketing systems, including orderly marketing¹, and preserve those measures necessary for the stability and profitability of Canadian agriculture.
- ensure that farmers' marketing structures are not subject to stricter international trade rules than other corporate structures and private enterprises.
- ensure that government involvement in marketing structures and state trading enterprises remains transparent and is fully notified to all WTO members
- recognize that change is negotiated on a reciprocal basis, but insist that the results establish clear and effective rules and standards that apply equally to all countries.
- ensure a continuing commitment not to allow one commodity to be traded off to enhance the interest of another commodity nor to trade off agriculture in general for another industry sector.

Body condition scoring for livestock on CD



Show sheep at Northlands in Edmonton. Photo: Northlands Park.

Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development has completed a body condition scoring for livestock in a package of two CD-ROMs.

The scoring is designed to help livestock producers and horse owners determine the body condition score of their animals.

Proper body condition is essential to the profitability of livestock operations and the well-being of animals. Body conditioning affects the production, fertility, reproduction success and general herd health. Animals that are too thin or overweight aren't efficient.

The first CD-ROM in this package outlines the importance of body condition scoring. It uses both video and animation to show the ideal body condition scores for beef cattle, dairy cattle, horses, elk, bison or sheep. It also shows exactly how to properly score animals.

The second CD-ROM features several information factsheets about body condition scoring and related topics. The CD-ROMs cost \$10 plus GST.

Contact:
Alberta Agriculture,
Food & Rural Development
1-800-292-5697

How do we achieve strategic growth for agriculture?

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) in conjunction with Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, and its other member organizations, is looking to the future of agriculture in Canada.

The following draft documents will be discussed with minister, politicians and members. Your feedback is important.

When the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) was first developed, its purpose was to enhance the capacity, capabilities and profitability of the Canadian agriculture and agri-food industry. The programs that formed within the APF were largely

Strategic growth

focused upon the primary production sector and have had varying degrees of success and shortfall. Most notably, farm incomes continue to fall. If the APF's purpose is to positively enhance the agri-food industry as a whole, no one segment should be left behind.

Specifically for producers, primary agricultural policy should work to:

- create an environment for producers to be efficient and responsive to consumer desires, market signals and social responsibilities such as food safety and the environment;

- create an environment for producers to be competitive, domestically and internationally; and,

- empower producers with the ability to achieve sustainable net incomes.

For the entire agri-food chain, a strategic framework should work to:

- create an environment in which innovation and development is encouraged at all segments along the production chain;

- create a strong and vibrant agri-food sector that generates equitable value along the entire agri-food production chain; and

- stimulate growth, development and diversity in the industry into the future.

Why are these important? First, it is essential to acknowledge the significant contributions that the agriculture and agri-food sector provides to Canada. Agriculture is a significant contributor to Canada's economic engine. It provides one in seven Canadian jobs and employs nearly two million Canadians. In 2004 the Canadian agri-food industry exported \$26.5 billion worth of products and contributed \$6 billion to Canada's trade balance accounting for 11 percent of Canada's total trade surplus.

Agriculture is the backbone of Canada's rural communities.

Every year Canadian agriculture producers pay almost \$2 billion in salaries to Canadian workers, spend \$1.9 billion for fuel, \$2 billion for fertilizer, \$570 million on veterinary services and drugs, \$800 million on electricity and telecommunications, and over \$300 million on rental and leasing of

machinery, equipment and vehicles. The majority of these expenditures occur in rural communities, and in turn provides a host of spin-off industries and economic flow within these communities. Producer production, innovation and service are the life-blood of rural communities.

Most importantly the industry is a provider of high quality, safe and environmentally responsible foods to the Canadian people. From the last Agricultural Census, Canadian producers spent \$170.9 million in 2001 towards environmental protection.

To date, producer organizations have committed \$2.2 million towards the development of on-farm food safety programs. This does not begin to account for the cost to producers for the implementation of these programs, which could

be from \$5,000 - \$30,000 per farm.

Our agricultural producers provide Canadians with highly affordable, high quality foods that are safe, contribute to the health of Canadians and are produced in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Agriculture is a key industry for

Agriculture is a significant contributor to Canada's economic engine. It provides one in seven Canadian jobs and employs nearly two million Canadians.



Agriculture is a key industry for Canadians, for its contribution to our economy, for its role in sustaining rural communities, for food security and for its contributions to health and the environment. Photo: Northlands Park

Canadians, for its contribution to our economy, for its role in sustaining rural communities, for food security and for its contributions to health and the environment. Yet despite its importance, a vital link in the production chain, primary producers, have floundered and incomes continue to fall. The APF goals of profitability and strength have been thus far unsuccessful. Solutions must be found. It is in our national interest to ensure the industry remains strong.

Starting in November, 2004, the CFA initiated and contributed to a number of consultations across the country on the issue of falling farm incomes – and its solutions. Working with the Honourable Wayne Easter and Minister Mitchell, both government and industry emphasized the need to find solutions for transformative change to sustainably improve incomes through the marketplace. Many issues and solutions were proposed.

These included actions to:

Seek opportunities to reduce farmgate costs:

- ⊗ Streamline regulations efficiently and effectively
- ⊗ Government payment of inspection fees
- ⊗ Reform the PMRA to provide improved technologies to producers
- ⊗ Address human resource issues and labour shortages
- ⊗ Improve transportation infrastructure

Improve trade mechanisms at all levels:

- ⊗ Continue to seek the establishment of fairer and more effective trade rules and improved export opportunities, in a manner which maintains our ability to provide effective marketing structures and needed domestic programs.
- ⊗ Importation of products must hold to the same standards as Canadian products
- ⊗ Interprovincial trade barriers should be minimized

Seek opportunities to improve farmgate revenues:

- ⊗ Movement into niche markets
- ⊗ Enhance consumer communications and extract greater value from the production chain
- ⊗ Public payments for public goods such as environmental improvements and food safety
- ⊗ Greater investment in research and new technologies for new product development and greater efficiencies

Improve market power for producers at all levels:

- ⊗ Producers compete and market power imbalances occur both upstream and downstream and to achieve sustainable incomes, producers need market power to negotiate better prices
- ⊗ Promote and provide capital for the development of cooperatives and collective marketing tools

Feedback:

Rod Scarlett, 780-416-6530
wrap@planet.eon.net

Hunters urged to make safety a priority

With hunting still under way in certain zones, hunters are urged to ensure a safe experience. They are encouraged to be alert for the presence of bears and never use propane cooking appliances as heaters. Grizzlies and black

bears are constantly searching for food in the fall as they fatten up for hibernation..

After hunters shoot an animal, they should immediately separate the carcass from the gut pile. Dragging a carcass back to camp should be avoided, because bears may follow this scent trail.

A carcass should be cut, packed and removed as soon as possible. If a hunter must leave a carcass, it should be hung out of reach of bears, at least three metres high. Hunters should also check a carcass with binoculars before approaching. If it has been moved or partially buried, this may indicate the presence of a bear.

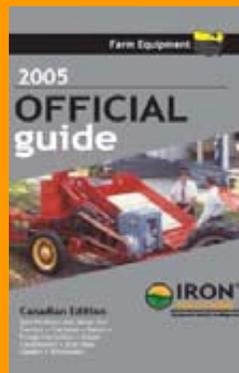


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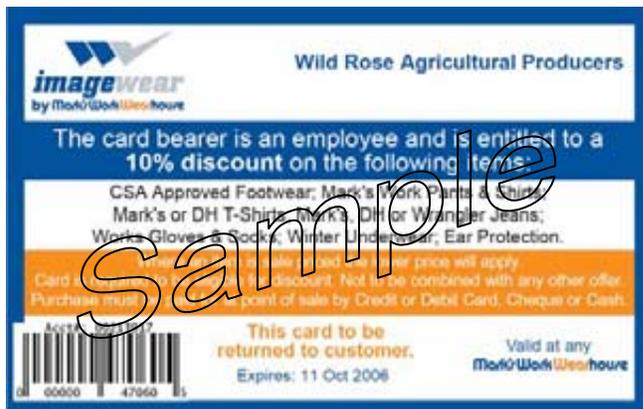
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National woodland conference 2005

“Family forests contribute enormous values to society”

By DAVID HOLEHOUSE

A well-attended national conference in Vernon focused on the many ways that family forests, just like family farms, contribute enormous values to society.

The October event was sponsored by the Canadian Model Forest Network, the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations and the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners (CFWO).

In his opening remarks, CFWO president Peter DeMarsh said woodlot owners need to strengthen their relationship with a society that depends on them for clean air and water, recreational opportunities, business opportunities and more. “We are here because we sense that partnership is weak and seems to be eroding,” he said. “Canadian society seems to be gradually losing its connection with the land as the number of people who grew up on farms and in forests gets smaller. Fewer understand the challenges we face in balancing stewardship and economic viability.”

Keynote speaker John Bliss, holder of a chair in private and family forestry at Oregon State University, was even more blunt. “Many people have seen woodlot owners as a problem to be solved,” he said. “In fact family forests and their owners repre-



Prof. John Bliss

Lee Hesketh has a passion for managing an Okanagan ranch for cattle and timber - and a multitude of less economic values.



“If I’m a bad steward, I can make a hell of a mess out there; but if I do a good job, everyone comes out ahead.”

sent incredible resources that we not only have not recognized, but also have not valued.” In the U.S., private forests account for four of every 10 forested acres; The 450,000 family forests in Canada cover fewer acres, but tend to be located in key areas near population centres. Family woodlots and their owners are tremendous sources of economic, natural, human, and social capital, Bliss said. Natural capital can be measured in part by diversity of forest ownership, which leads to diversity of forest type and benefits to biodiversity, watershed protection and more. For human and social capital, the value of woodlots can be measured in how owners live in and contribute to their immediate community, sustaining vibrant rural fabrics and amenities.

In short, families who care for forested land are a critical component of modern society. They must deal with threats from land development, changing markets and a weak “social contract” to manage the natural environment on behalf of an increasingly urbanized population.

Some challenges offered to woodlot owners by Bliss:

- ☛ Get involved in politics and policymaking in ways that help keep woodlots profitable and help ensure they can be passed down through the generations.
- ☛ Develop new products and niche markets, from wood for guitars to flooring to Christmas trees.
- ☛ Build up the human capital account by collaborating and learning with other woodlot owners so that valuable experience is not lost.
- ☛ On the social side, throw full support behind regional woodlot associations, get involved in politics, share equipment and experience through cooperatives and other mechanisms.

Bliss closed on a positive note: “For the future, I see family forests being viewed as tremendous sources of all four types of capital, as well as other values from wildlife to spiritual,” he said.

“And while they are part of an important way of life, they also respond to economic and ecological signals. Recognizing these values has to be part of any region’s rural policy.”

Managing the land with heart and soul

Anyone wondering what today's farmer and woodlot owner contributes might like to spend a morning with Lee Hesketh of Silver Hills Ranch near Vernon.

He's looking for every avenue possible of keeping the 2,000 acre family operation going for coming generations - and that involves ecological as well as economic creativity.

Birch trees with low market value:

Hesketh provides short logs to a new business that peels them for veneer and makes wood cutlery for a massive North American market.(picture on page 4)

Dead, decadent trees:

Hesketh places them along the banks of the Shuswap River to slow the current and protect the banks in vulnerable areas - saving taxpayers the cost of concrete and rock retaining walls.

River restoration:

Hesketh contracts his skills to rebuild riparian forest cover for area clients.

Firewood: "My son bought his first pickup splitting firewood."

Timber sales: "We probably made more on timber than on cattle recently, though our management focus is cattle."

Fish: Hesketh created an off-river pond for fish as part of his water supply strategy. "If I'm a bad steward, I can make a hell of a mess out there; but if I do a good job, everyone comes out ahead."

Certification update

A world-recognized woodlot certification scheme will provide one way of measuring the value of family forest operations. Consultant Tony Rotherham said plans are for the Pan Canadian Woodlot Certification Program to be accepted under the Canadian Standards Association's sustainable forestry standards, giving it credibility and acceptance worldwide. Canada is already a world leader in forest certification with 113 million ha. certified - most of it under the CSA standard. The European Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) recognizes and includes the CSA.



Tony Rotherham

Rotherham said any wood mill that uses 10 to 15 per cent of private timber will want certified timber, so woodlot owners' involvement in certification will be important. Alberta woodlots provide about 12 per cent of

the province's total annual wood supply. The new system is voluntary, however, and will be very practical and affordable. The affordability will be even greater if woodlot associations can get "group rates" for several owners at a time.

The program's requirements are drawn from CSA rules, as well as requirements of the Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiatives. Certification under the CSA standard, which should be available in draft form at the end of this year, will involve basic management efforts such as land use planning, inventory and communication with neighbors.

Special and vulnerable sites should have some protection plan, and forest renewal and protection need to be addressed. Independent and qualified auditors will assess the woodlot owner's work.

The value of information

The Vernon conference included about a dozen separate workshops and sessions that delved into the details of woodlot contributions and their valuation.

Proceedings will be available shortly on the website of Private Woodlot Strategic Initiatives, www.modelforest.net Speakers addressed the many ways that woodlots contribute to society, from wildlife and watershed quality to landscape aesthetics and community vitality. University researchers also explained the difficulty of identifying just how much society values these contributions, and how much it is willing to pay in extra taxes or service fees.

Jean-Pierre Dansereau, theme champion for private woodlots within the National Forest Strategy, said woodlots are recognized for their role in sustainability of landscapes and communities. Action items that have been identified so far include identification of obstacles to sustainable development, expansion of extension

services, development of incentives for the provision of environmental goods and services, and the holding of national forums to address policies and program needs. A forum will be held in September, 2007, in Quebec City, to review progress.

The National Forest Strategy offers an opportunity for all woodlot owners to get involved in creating a policy framework for Canada, Dansereau said. Victor Brunette of Alberta's Woodlot Extension Program interjected with the point that funding is required, and governments are getting away from the forestry cost-sharing agreements of the past. The future, he suggested, might lie in alliances with funding agencies that support the agricultural sector, which has much in common with the woodlot community.

Another participant said it is essential that woodlot contributions are better defined, so that the work of raising awareness in political circles can gain momentum.



Presents

Improving Farm Income for Farmers 2006

10th Annual

CONVENTION & SEMINAR in conjunction

with the ALBERTA YOUNG

FARMERS' FORUM

Royal Executive Inn, Nisku, Alberta

January 10 & 11, 2006

2006 Convention

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Commission
Syngenta Crop Protection Inc.

Tuesday, January 10, 2006

Day One Seminars
8:30—8:30 Introduction and Welcome
Bill Dobson, President, Wild Rose
Agricultural Producers
8:35—9:00 Setting the Stage
Speaker Dr. Roger Epp, Dean, Augustana
Campus, University of Alberta
9:00—9:45 Why Hedging may not
Improve Your Farm Income
Speaker Prof. Jim Unterschultz
9:45—10:00 Coffee Break
10:00—11:30 Understanding the
Factors Affecting Current and Future
Income Prospects in Canada
Speaker Dr. Garth Coffin, Board Member,
Can. Ag. Policy Institute/John
Groenewegen, Project Manager
11:30—12:10 The Provincial Perspective
on Farm Income
Speaker Honourable Doug Horner, Minister
of Agriculture, Food and Rural
Development
12:10—1:10 Lunch
1:10—2:00 New Initiatives in Financing,
Data and Energy
Speaker Ron Witherspoon
2:00—2:45 Where International Trade
Can Provide Economic Opportunities
Speaker: Bob Friesen, President, Canadian
Federation of Agriculture
2:45—3:00 Coffee
3:00—3:40 Co-operation in Agriculture:
Adding to the Bottom Line
Speaker Bill Dobson, President, Wild Rose
Agricultural Producers
3:40—4:20 Consumer Attitudes on
Farms and Farming:
What Obstacles are there?
Speaker Shelly Thompson SJT Solutions
4:20—4:30 Wrap-Up

6:45 p.m. Banquet Opening Remarks –Bill
Dobson , Introduction of Guests
6:55 Guest Speaker
Banquet
Speaker
7:30 Social
Silent Auction

Wednesday, January 11, 2006

Day Two Seminars
7:45 a.m. Breakfast—Speaker
8:45 Welcome and Call to Order – Bill
Dobson
Approval and/ or Additions to the Agenda
Call for acceptance of the Minutes of the
Ninth Annual Convention as circulated
Nominations Open
President's Report – Bill Dobson
9:10 Board of Directors Report – Keith
Degenhardt/Lynn Jacobson
9:20 Executive Director's report
9:25 Financial Report – (Financial
Review conducted by Colleen Ewashko of
C. Ewashko Accounting) presented by Rod
Scarlett
Motion to Approve Submitted Financial
Statements
Motion for the Ratification of the actions
of the 2005/2006 Board of Directors
9:30 Discussion and voting on 2006
Resolutions
10:30 Coffee Break
10:45 Update from Doug Wright—The
Co-operators
11:15 Discussion and voting on 2006
Resolutions – continued
12:15 p.m. Nominations For the
Board of Directors Close
12:30 Lunch
1:15 Close of Resolutions
1:30 Presentations/Election of

2006/2007 Board of Directors (if necessary)
1:45 Discussion and voting on 2006
Resolutions – continued
2:00 Election Closes
2:30 Election Results
Coffee Break
Board Meeting
3:30 Executive Announced
Discussion and voting on 2006
Resolutions - continued
4:00 New Business
Summary President Elect
4:45 Motion to Adjourn

Alberta Young Farmer's Forum Agenda January 10, 2006

8:30 – 8:45 Welcome &
Introduction – Tanner Pollack, AYF
President
8:45 – 9:05 National and
International Opportunities for Alberta
Young Farmer Members – Zane Lewis, AYF
Vice - President
9:05 – 9:45 Successful Canadian
Young Farmer Groups: A Case Study –
TBA
9:45 – 10:00 Coffee Break
10:00 – 11:00 Alberta Young Farmers
Meeting and Elections
11:00 – 11:30 Address by the Minister
– The Honorable Doug Horner—TBA
11:30 – 12:10 TBA
12:10 – 1:10 Lunch
Afternoon sessions will run together with
the WRAP sessions – open partition.

For Further Information Please Call Rod
Scarlett, Executive Director or Bill Dobson,
President

Biographies of some of the speakers:

Honourable Doug Horner, minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Doug Horner was elected to his second term as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert on November 22, 2004, and on November 26, 2004 was sworn in as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Born in Barrhead, Alberta to Jean and Dr. Hugh Horner, Minister Horner has spent most of his life in rural Alberta.

Bob Friesen, President, Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Bob Friesen became president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in March 1999, after servicing as second vice-president since 1996. He chairs the Federation's Trade Committee. Mr. Friesen is past president of the Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency.

Shelly Thompson, SJT Solutions.

Shelley has worked in many parts of the agri-food sector in Canada. She has been an Assistant Professor at the University of Saskatchewan and has worked in various capacities for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Shelley also spent several years with Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in both research and operational positions and some time with KPMG's consulting practice in Regina.

Dr. Garth Coffin, Board Member, Can. Ag. Policy Institute

Dr. Garth Coffin, former Principal of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (retired) and former Professor and Associate Dean, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Macdonald Campus of McGill University. Dr. Coffin is an agricultural economist whose research and teaching focused on areas of marketing and trade policy, including supply management.

Professor Jim Unterschultz

Jim Unterschultz is an Associate Professor in Agribusiness Finance and Marketing in the Department of Rural Economy, University of Alberta. He teaches and undertakes research in agribusiness finance, commodities, farm level policy and risk models.

Ron Witherspoon, P.Ag., CAFA. CEO IMG Ltd.

Mr. Ron Witherspoon has worked with multi-national companies such as John Deere and Cargill, worked for the Farm Credit Corp, in turn, as A.V.P Business Development, Portfolio Management, Lending, and Administration.

Dr. Roger Epp, Dean, Augustana Campus, UofA

Dr. Roger Epp is Acting Dean of the new Augustana Faculty, where he is Professor of Political Studies. A native of rural Saskatchewan, and a graduate of the University of Alberta (B.A., Honours) and Queen's University (M.A., Ph.D.), he has taught at Augustana since 1990.

Bill Dobson, President, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

Bill Dobson and his family operate a 1600-acre grain and oilseed farm at Paradise Valley, Alberta, near Lloydminster. He is a fourth generation producer and has been farming since 1973. Bill is the President of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers, Alberta's General Farm Organization.

Improving Farm Income for Farmers 2006

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 Package B - \$65.00
 Package C - \$95.00
 Package D AYFF only. \$60.00

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PACKAGE A

Tuesday, January 10, 2006. Includes Seminar and Lunch, Evening Banquet-Entertainment, Wednesday, January 11, 2006 Continental Breakfast, Lunch & AGM
Cost: \$133.75

PACKAGE B

Tuesday, January 10, 2006, Seminar and Lunch only
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Fax: 780-416-6531

Willow - a new crop for Alberta landowners?

National initiative focuses on production of woody biomass

16,000 stems per hectare in Whitecourt demonstration



Willows, 14 weeks old, planted this year on a site near Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

Photo by Derek Sidders.

By REBECCA DIBBELT

Does willow have a future as a new crop for farmers and other landowners?

That's what Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service (CFS) wants to determine in two innovative research projects that it just started with the Town of Whitecourt in Alberta, and with the Cudworth Pork Investors Group and Clear Green Biotechnologies Inc. in Saskatchewan.

Diversification

The projects are part of a national initiative, through the Canadian Biomass Innovations Network (CBIN), focusing on production and conversion of woody biomass for energy. CBIN has helped to fund 30 demonstration installations across Canada.

The CFS contribution to this ambitious 3-year project is to provide planning expertise, monitor the growth of the trees, and oversee planting and harvesting.

At Whitecourt, Richard Krygier, CFS intensive management specialist, is looking at the feasibility of energy production from willow.

This project is different from the rest, points out Krygier. "Here, we'll be looking to see if production can be pushed further along by irrigating."

The Town of Whitecourt is on side with the Kyoto-friendly project, donating five acres and access to a water supply. The project diverts treated sewage water before it goes into the

Athabasca River. Alberta Environment sees the potential of this research for other communities and has provided \$32,000 over two years for the project.

In the fall of 2005, irrigation systems were installed in half of the research area, which will be planted in the spring at a high density (16,000 stems per hectare) with five varieties of willow and two hybrid poplar varieties on each half. The side-by-side comparison will illustrate the impact of irrigation and the difference it makes in terms of production of willow biomass, said Krygier.

Harvesting won't happen until 2009, but results will be measurable as early as next fall, he said.

Willow takes three to four years to reach maturity and will re-sprout from the stumps after harvest. Its prolific growth habit explains why willow has gained wide use in Europe for biomass production. "Certainly we're not reinventing the wheel," says Krygier. "The technology is proven. We're testing it in Canada to determine how well it works and if it needs to be modified for Canadian conditions."

In Sweden, for example, the growing of willow for energy got off the ground some 30 years ago after the oil embargos of the '70s.

Willow boasts several bonuses for

the environment, adds Krygier. It's carbon neutral, and its three-year crop rotation means three stages of development are consistent and simultaneous. New sprouts, 3-metre tall stands, and mature 8-metre tall willow trees bring diversity to the landscape and make it attractive for bird nesting, for example. The root system earns points in soil conservation and reduction of erosion; staggered planting of several

varieties contributes to disease and insect resistance.

Researchers will learn more about optimal growing conditions, looking at parameters such as varieties, soils, and moisture levels, explains Krygier. Other jurisdictions produce between 12 and 20 oven dry metric tons (odmt) of willow biomass per

hectare per year (without irrigation), he said. With irrigation, Krygier said the figure has been pushed to 20-30 odmt/ha/yr.

"Willow may in fact be an alternative crop for western Canadian farmers and woodlot owners," said Krygier. The Canadian Biomass Innovation Network is a three-year program with an annual budget between \$2 and \$3 million.

Contact:
Richard Krygier
435-7210
rkrygier@nrccan.gc.ca

"Willow may in fact be an alternate crop for western Canadian farmers and woodlot owners."

Undisturbed forest doesn't always benefit wildlife



Black bear cub practising climbing.

Photo: Bill Dehaan

By **CARINA CHRISTIANSEN**
Wild creatures share many needs with humans. Like us, they need a place to eat and somewhere safe and comfortable to sleep.

And as government officials point out, private landowners have many opportunities to help meet their needs with some fairly simple choices.

Fish and wildlife

"Let's say you harvest all your trees and make room for lots of new grasses and aspen - but you still might not get any wildlife because there's no shelter left," says Butch Shenfield, a forest officer with Sustainable Resource Development.

If you want to attract moose to your land, you might think it is a good idea to harvest all the conifer and leave all the aspen as a food source - but that could be a mistake if the aspen leaves are high and out of reach.

"The best course might be to harvest the aspen at the same time as the conifer, encouraging the suckering of new young aspen shoots. Leaving a few mature aspen will provide cover for safety and shelter for sleeping."

Shenfield points out that just leaving trees for nature to handle doesn't necessarily benefit wildlife.

"Whenever we do anything, things are going to change. However, if we do nothing, it is still going to change on us. Nothing ever stays the same in nature," says Shenfield.

He says there might be a time when a woodlot owner wishes he or she had done something five years ago to have more wildlife today.

The ideal for some wildlife species is a mixture of grasses and young aspen, combined with thicker bush and trees for shelter. For a greater diversity of all wildlife, it helps to have a

greater variety of tree ages and vegetation types.

If you have a stream with fish, be extra careful. Trees should be left standing along the water body as a buffer, to avoid erosion of the banks and sedimentation of the stream.

The temperature of the water is another important issue. Buffer trees are needed for shade. Removing too many trees from the buffer makes the

water too warm for fish. On the other hand, too much shelter will make the creek colder every year. The ideal is to leave a buffer of trees that includes a few openings for the sun to reach in.

"You want to get a balance," says Shenfield.

He suggests that a woodlot owner develop a good plan before doing anything major on the property. "Think about what you want for your land five and more years from now - because if you make an 'Oops' somewhere, you will have to live with it for many years."

Shenfield suggests talking to all the available resource people, contacting forestry officers at Sustainable Resource Development, and perhaps have a consultant come out and provide advice.

For harvesting trees, he suggests wintertime as the season when the activity will cause the least damage on your land. However, if you have a dry lot, harvesting after August 1 when most bird species have flown the nest could be just fine.

He discourages harvesting in early spring, when many birds and wildlife have their young ones.

A good harvesting plan will leave some old and half-dead trees that play an important habitat protection role for some wildlife. "Woodpeckers like old and deteriorating trees with lots of bugs to eat," says Shenfield. "Owls like old trees with no leaves or needles as they provide a good view of the ground where they catch their food."

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Butch Shenfield

The ideal for many wildlife species is a mixture of grasses and young aspen, combined with thicker bush and trees for shelter.

Software aids landowners

Digital map system helps owners make decisions about their land

By **REBECCA DIBBELT**

Daishowa-Marubeni International's new software applications will help reinvent northern Alberta's private woodlot industry.

Some say necessity is the Mother of Invention, and in Juri Agapow's case, they are right. As one of DMI's forest resource supervisors, Agapow oversees the Peace River mill's private timber purchases - which represent 25-30 per cent of its total fibre volume.

Dealing with some 400 landowners and between 650-700 quarters of private land, Agapow had his hands full making resource assessments and drafting harvesting plans and maps for privately-owned land.

"For us this private land fibre represents approximately half a million cubic metres for 2005 alone," he said.

Agapow works with woodlots from the B.C. border to Red Earth, south to the Little Smoky and up to Fort Vermilion.

Traditionally, a number of software programs were used to help with the task, and there was significant duplication of data and time, he said.

"We needed a program that could bring together the functions of all these different programs and streamline the process for us," Agapow said. The 'Ultimate Planning Tool' he helped create is now able to produce a digital operating plan and a map as well as maintain a database using only two software applications.

The process is simple: An operating map for each woodlot is easily produced by digitizing findings from the

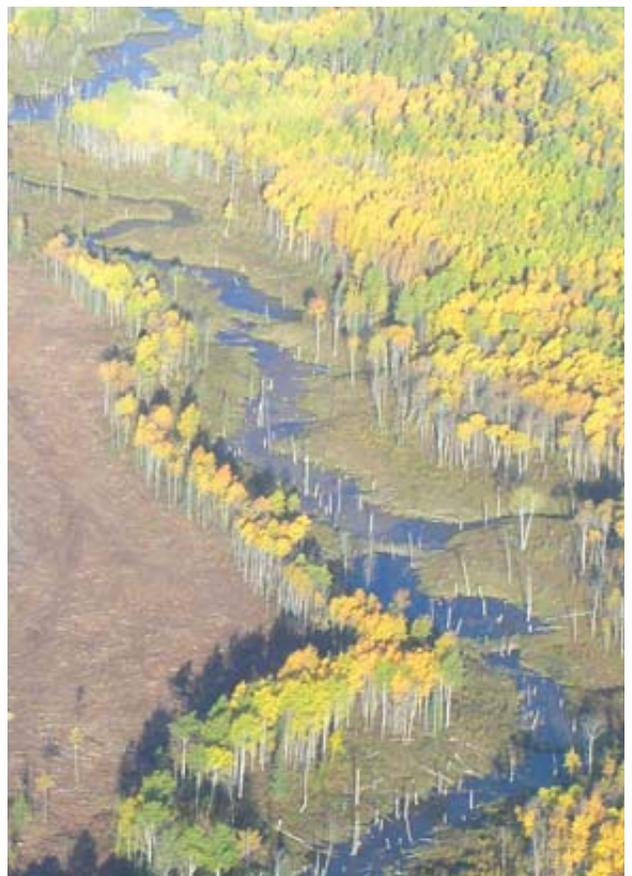
photo interpretation and on-site reconnaissance, identifying merchantable and unmerchantable timber, marginal areas, water courses, and unique features such as raptor nests or wildlife dens, Agapow explains.

"We enter all the data including landowner information, land location, areas and stands from the photo interpretation

as well as a preliminary map into a main screen, which we transfer to a PDA (personal digital assistant)," explains Agapow. Out in the field, data from the timber cruise (inventory, transects, prism sweeps, environmental concerns, etc.) are entered into the PDA and combined with the existing data. At the same time, a Bluetooth GPS device enables DMI to collect specifics such as waypoints or fencelines, access roads and retention/block boundaries into the PDA that is later downloaded to create a final digital operating map.

All the information can then be transferred back to the initial program to automatically generate total volume (tonnes and m³), volume/ha, merchantability ratings at different diameters, average tree size, total areas and even the final landowner pay rate, said Agapow.

"This product is very user friendly for operators and potentially would have the capability of being downloaded as a digital map into the GPS system of a feller-buncher," he said.



Trees at Voth creek left as riparian buffer.

"We care about water course protection, migratory birds and soil conservation – not just getting the trees off."

The information is so comprehensive, it affords opportunities for sustainable management activities.

The software really adds transparency to the planning process and ensures the landowner's input is recorded, said Agapow. "It's a big step toward more sustainable forestry. In the past, the partnership between landowner and harvester generally ended with the signing of the logging contract."

It also meshes well with DMI's policy of exercising the same care and due diligence required on public lands, he said.

"It's company policy. We care about water course protection, migratory birds and soil conservation – not just getting the trees off." DMI is also proud to have received its ISO 14001 and ForestCare certification.

Dennis Keyte from Forest Pro Consulting and summer student Doug Wolgram, as well as DMI's resource information department helped bring the idea to fruition, Agapow said.

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