

Western Farm & Forest

Sustainable Land Management Opportunities

FALL 2007

Woodlot owner follows
nature's example

"Growing forward" with APF II

Area-based farm insurance to be
tailored by producers



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Including:
BiBusiness
Special Section Inside

Get paid for seismic operations on your land

By **JANET PATRIQUIN**

The Farmers' Advocate Office (FAO) has recently been involved with some issues dealing with seismic operations and landowners. There have been concerns coming in to our office from three areas of the province in which landowners are not being paid in the normal 90-day period following entry on their land for seismic activity.

Our office has been working with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD), the department that sets out the permitting regulations, the Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors, the industry association for seismic operations, and the individual companies along with the associated energy companies that eventually use the seismic data to facilitate their business. We believe payments have started to flow to landowners in these three areas. However, if anyone has any outstanding concerns, you are encouraged to give the FAO a call.

It should be noted that the Surface Rights Board does not get involved in seismic operations. A recent question in the Legislative Assembly added some clarification, as the Minister of ASRD responded to the Member for Little Bow stating "it is often thought that the Surface Rights Board might be able to help in this matter. In fact, the Surface Rights Board does not get involved in seismic exploration or agreements. The Surface Rights Board only deals with oil and gas developments after the Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) has approved some sort of drilling or pipeline development."

Access agreements for seismic operations are a private contract between the landowner and the seismic company. The FAO can try to mediate the dispute if the landowner would like. Should that fail, the landowner may be faced with seeking legal counsel as their only other alternative.



David Holehouse

A landowner can grant or deny access to seismic exploration on their land

What can landowners do to protect themselves? Jim Kiss, Farmers' Advocate stresses that, "A landowner has the absolute right to grant or deny access to seismic exploration on their land. This gives you some strong negotiating rights and one idea may be that you request partial or full payment upfront prior to granting entry." Our office is available to assist you if you have questions. Please feel free to call us at 780-427-2433, for toll free dial 310-0000 first. Also, our website is available 24 hours a day at www.farmersadvocate.gov.ab.ca.



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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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Government lingo is nothing more than same old thing, new hairdo

I am writing this newsletter on the 25th of July on yet another blistering hot day. What looked like a bumper crop for me a month ago is now hanging on by a thread. Some sporadic rain this week has helped some folks but, for the most part, the Alberta crop is deteriorating on a daily basis. I'm always reminded, during these type of conditions, that the production of food is not easy and should never be taken for granted. I hope by the time that this document gets read by our members that we have received a nice shot of moisture!

Language Lesson

There is one thing that Prime Minister Harper definitely accomplished in his first year of office. He must have

hired a pretty effective brand manager. "Canada's New Government" is now "Growing Forward" with "Agri-Invest", "Agri-Insurance", "Agri-Recovery" and "Agri-Stability". We are about to celebrate "Barley Freedom Day" as a result of farmers being granted "Marketing Choice". Although one almost needs an interpreter to understand the lingo, it is mostly the same old thing – new hairdo.

More on page 5.



**Bill Dobson,
Wild Rose
Agricultural
Producers**

Evolving to match changing trends

Our unique magazine provides a broad range of informative articles to landowners and sustainable resource management practitioners in Western Canada.

This is largely due to our broad base of support, including government, industry and members of the Wild Rose Agriculture Producers Association and the Woodlot Association of Alberta.

Looking back a few years, it is obvious that the magazine has evolved quite a bit. We held a workshop in August to again brainstorm the future direction of the magazine, and by the

time you read this issue we should have some new ideas and initiatives that hopefully match the rapidly changing social and environmental trends that affect our readers.

If you have any suggestions that would help guide us, send them along and we will be delighted to consider them.



**Dennis
Quintilio,
WAA**

**Cover: Birds find rest in nest boxes across Alberta.
(Toso Bozic, Woodlot Extension Program)**

PFRA updates Prairie Shelterbelt Program

By DAVID HOLEHOUSE

Program access and other benefits to landowners will increase thanks to some recent changes in the AAFC-PFRA Prairie Shelterbelt Program.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's shelterbelt program offers tree and shrub seedlings to rural landowners in the prairies of western Canada. The aim is to encourage adoption of tree planting and management practices that will benefit the agricultural sector and the rural environment. The service is administered by the PFRA and based at the Shelterbelt Centre in Indian Head, Saskatchewan.

AAFC-PFRA

Changes put Alberta residents on an equal footing with other western provinces in gaining access to the program. Program changes will help consolidate the selection of species offered, align seedling supply more with departmental objectives and enhance benefits to the tree nursery industry.

The minimum property size for landowners applying to the program will now be two ha (five acres) regardless of which western province they call home. Under the previous rules, the minimum in Alberta was 16 ha (40 acres) and 0.4 ha (one acre) for residents of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The new minimum property size represents the smallest acreage required to achieve benefits from recommended agroforestry practices such as shelterbelts and to achieve significant environmental benefits. The area requirement also reflects the need to prioritize projects reflecting the department's mandate and not infringe on the suburban/acreage landscaping industry.

Eligible program applicants are no longer approved on a first-come, first-served basis. Each application will be rated and ranked according to the potential agricultural and environmental value of the project. New application forms ask the applicant to indicate the type of

planting proposed in order to assist in rating the application. Access to species will no longer depend on "client type" or other various criteria. An applicant is deemed to be either eligible or ineligible. Ineligible applicants will be encouraged to contact commercial nurseries for shelterbelt material.

Program clients will receive prairie hardy seedlings as common stock or varietal blends adapted to their regions. In the case of poplars, individually named clones will no longer be available; a mix of the best clones produced by the PFRA's Tree Improvement Program will be shipped. Landowners wishing to plant a single, specific clone of poplar should contact local nurseries for such trees.

New information regarding the shelterbelt program is posted on AAFC's website at www.agr.gc.ca in the Land Managers section. The new application form can also be accessed from the Shelterbelt Centre website at www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/shelterbelt_e.htm.

Contact:
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Submitted

Changes to the shelterbelt program give Albertans equal access to seedlings

A listing of nurseries serving Alberta can be found at the Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association website: <http://www.landscape-alberta.com/main.html> or Google Search "Alberta nurseries".

Update on APF II

Having completed all three rounds of planned consultations, Ministers of Agriculture from across the country met in Whistler on June 29, 2007, and came to an agreement in principle for the development of Growing Forward, the basis for governments to work toward a new agriculture policy framework (APF II).

Growing Forward will guide governments with a common vision – a vision of a profitable and innovative industry that seizes opportunities in responding to market demands and contributes to the health and well-being of Canadians. Current programs will continue to operate until March 2008. No decisions have been made yet on the

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy or specific programming.

Three common policy outcomes will be pursued in developing a policy framework. The policy outcomes are:

- A Competitive and Innovative Sector
- A Sector that Contributes to Society's Priorities
- A Sector that is Proactive in Managing Risks

To achieve a profitable and vibrant future for the sector they agreed, through Growing Forward, to work together on policies and programs that:

- Encourage an approach to innovation that encompasses the full continuum from mind to market, and uses the best ideas from other sectors and other countries.
- Include a new suite of business risk management programs that better respond to the needs of producers.
- Generate benefits for the sector and all Canadians by contributing to their priorities ranging from food safety to environmental sustainability to health and wellness.
- Enable provincial-territorial flexibility, consistent with national objectives, so that



Alberta Agriculture and Food, with permission

A new agriculture policy framework is in the works

provinces and territories can adapt programming to local needs.

- Modernize and implement innovative regulations and standards in a way that ensures society's needs are met and contributes to the sector's competitiveness.
- Ensure streamlined, transparent and efficient service delivery for all programs.

Next Steps

Federal, provincial and territorial officials will continue close consultations with industry. Decisions will be made on initiatives and programs to be introduced, retained, modified, or ended, with transition plans to be put in place over the coming months. No time-frames or deadlines have yet to be communicated.

New suite of BRM programs

A new suite of programs to help producers manage the risks of doing business was agreed upon at the Whistler meeting. The new suite replaces the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program. With the exception of AgriRecovery, which remains to be determined, programs will be cost-shared on the basis of traditional arrangements. The new suite includes:

- AgriInvest – savings accounts for producers that provide flexible coverage for small income declines and support investments that help mitigate risks or improve market income.

Ministers agreed on the need to implement AgriInvest as soon as possible, in a simple and efficient manner, while recognizing that further program work needs to be done for review at the next ministers' meeting in September.

- AgriStability – a margin-based program that provides income support when a producer experiences larger income losses.
- AgriInsurance – includes existing production insurance and other insurance products, and will expand to include other commodities.
- AgriRecovery – a disaster relief framework, to provide rapid assistance when small-sized disasters hit producers, to fill gaps not covered by existing government programming. Ministers agreed on the need for this framework and tasked officials to develop greater clarity on the definitions of small and large disasters as well as to provide options for funding for ministers to consider at their September meeting.

A web site/page about the four new programs has been created. Further detail on these programs will be provided in the fall.

Next meeting

The next meeting of Agriculture Ministers will be in September and the next annual conference will be held in Quebec City in July 2008.

"Growing forward" with AFP II

Canada's agricultural ministers met in Whistler during the last week of June where they agreed in principle to a new agricultural framework.

Although there is a considerable amount of work to do on details, the commitment has been made to move forward with a new suite of business-risk management programs and other agricultural initiatives. The basic policy objectives of the agreement are: A Competitive and Innovative Sector, A Sector that Contributes to Society's

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bill Dobson



Priorities and A Sector That is Proactive in Managing Risk. These three themes are quite similar to the proposal of the Canadian Farm Bill that was promoted by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Wild Rose Agricultural Producers. Overall, I am quite pleased



Ron McMullin, courtesy of the North American Farm and Environmental Safety Centre

with the consultation process that was undertaken by the federal and provincial governments regarding APF II. It was a massive undertaking and there was strong participation by people from all segments of agriculture. The real test will be if there is adequate financial commitment from both levels of government. Ideas are fine but without money to execute they are just fluff.

Business Risk Management

There will be four components in the BRM segment of "Growing Forward". "Agri-Insurance" is production insurance that may be expanded to commodities other than grain. "Agri-Invest" will be a contribution type of program that will be similar to NISA and will cover the top 15% of margin losses. CFA asked for this mainly to create something tangible for lenders. This will actually be an account where the money will be in a producer's name. It is also a way for the government to expend money in a year that would not otherwise be triggered. (It is a long

time since we have seen that situation.) "Agri-Stability" is CAIS minus the top 15% of losses. "Agri-Recovery" is the disaster assistance program that has been hinted at for the past year. Definitions of disasters may take a while. There were no surprises with these programs but no disappointments either. I'm sure it will all lead to more "Agri-Vation"!

Marketing Choice

On August 1, "Barley Freedom Day" arrived. In other words, barley went completely on the open market. There is a fair bit of confusion as to how malting barley will be marketed but it appears that will have to be sorted out very quickly. There is a legal challenge by the Canadian Wheat Board and the Friends of the CWB on the process that the government used to make these changes. There is no doubt that Minister Strahl took a pretty direct route to accomplish his goal so it is understandable that the government is vulnerable to a legal challenge. We all will be



watching for the results of this legal interpretation. I'm confident that we will be having this discussion regarding wheat very soon into the next crop year.

Summer Council Meeting

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers held their summer meeting in Camrose on June 25 and 26. Thanks to Bernie Von Tettenborn, Humphrey Banack and Terry Banack for their work in setting up the event. It is always good to get around the province and have the chance to meet with producers. As well as the regular policy review, a workshop was held on the future of a general farm organization in Alberta. Brooks Dailey, membership director of the National Farmers Union of the United States, spoke on the American experience. Although it was certainly agreed that

there remains a significant need for a strong farm voice, accomplishing that will be a huge challenge. We are committed to press on and build on what we already have in place. Although Alberta is the only province to not have some type of assured funding for a general farm organization, it appears hopeless to ever convince our government of the need. It appears that they don't want a strong voice for farmers. It is probably time to really bear down and run a major membership drive. This fall, the board will be discussing a strategy for membership development.

WTO Discussions

On July 17, negotiators received a draft text for a WTO agreement. This is probably a last-ditch effort to revive discussions. Although there is a long way to go, Steve Verheul, is cautiously

optimistic that there could be progress made. Mr. Verheul is Canada's chief negotiator at the Geneva WTO talks.

Finally

As we head into our busiest time of the year, I wish everyone an abundant and uneventful harvest. The board and regional directors of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers are prepared to work for a stronger industry and we welcome your comments at any time.





All traffic laws apply to horse-drawn farm equipment as well as motorized machinery

Minimize loss through injury prevention

The bottom line for any business is profitability. An important part of maximizing profits is minimizing losses- and that includes losses due to injury, illness or death of the farmer, farm family or farm workers.

Broadly speaking, two out of three farm fatalities (60.2 per cent) tend to be the owner-operator. The remaining farm fatalities tend to be: a child of the owner-operator (15.0 per cent); a hired worker (11.6 per cent); a relative- perhaps a brother or parent (8.2 per cent) or the owner-operators spouse (2.9 per cent), with the remaining (2.1 per cent) being other visitors. This data is according to the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program.

Through provincial workmen's compensation programs and private insurance you can partially protect your business from losses incurred from injuries, illness and death. Although it varies from province to province, most provincial workmen's compensation boards require that employees be covered for benefits that include medical aid payments for lost time, rehabilita-

tion, permanent disability awards, pensions to dependents, and funeral benefits. An employer's claim history is also a factor in the rate he or she pays in premium with higher claims demanding higher premiums.

However, farm owner-operators and their related workers (children, sib-

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

lings and parents) do not necessarily require coverage under WCB in all provinces.

This is significant considering that in Canada, 61 per cent of farms are owned and operated by one person. Twenty seven percent are partnerships, ten percent are family corporations, and only two percent of farms are non-family corporations (this data is according to Statistics Canada).

Unfortunately, this has led to many farmers and their families being grossly underinsured when an incident occurs as some farmers and their families chose to insure privately, and others decided not

to insure at all. High premiums are often cited as the reason for not insuring.

From a business perspective, it is important to make an informed decision about what exactly farm related incidents could cost your business, and then have a plan on how the situation could be handled. Keep in mind that it is estimated that for every dollar of insured costs there will be five dollars of uninsured costs. Whether it is an insured employee or an uninsured family member, some of the hidden costs of injuries may include:

- Cost of wages paid to the injured worker not covered by WCB and lost time wages on the day of injury.
- Cost of wages paid to uninjured workers who stopped to watch or assist the injured, or who depend on the output of the injured worker to complete their task.
- Cost of damage to product, property or equipment. If these are insured, a deductible

Safety is an attitude

Safety is not something you can take or leave alone.

It is not an activity to be engaged in only when one is being watched or supervised.

Safety is not strictly a poster, a slogan or a rule; nor is it a once-in-a-while movie, meeting, investigation or inspection.

Safety is an attitude, a frame of mind.

It is the awareness of one's environment and actions all day and every day.

Safety is knowing what is going on, knowing what can injure or damage, knowing how to prevent the injury or damage and acting to prevent it.

All it requires is intelligence and a reasonable amount of natural ability to see, hear, smell, and think.

To do things safely and correctly is the mark of a wise, not a timid person

To ignore safe practices is not an indication of bravery, but of stupidity.

-Unknown

- may apply.
- Costs associated with instructing, training, and repositioning workers, or in some cases hiring new employees
- Cost of wages paid to the person caring for the injured worker, including stabilizing the scene and waiting for emergency medical services or taking the worker to the hospital, filling out forms and incident reports.
- Cost of lost production while retraining a replacement, or when the worker returns to work.
- Cost of an ambulance if the worker needs to be rushed to a

- hospital
- Cost of investigation, processing of claims and related paperwork, telephone calls and follow-up

If you calculated the costs of each of these considerations- including the number of people and hours multiplied by the hourly wage rate- what would the total uninsured cost be?

Now consider this-if your business runs on profit margin of five percent and if the total uninsured costs were 5,000 dollars, then your business will have to generate 100,000 dollars in sales to pay for this incident. Likewise, if your business runs on a two percent profit margin, then your business will have to generate 250,000 dollars in sales to pay

for this incident.

As you can see, it makes good business sense to minimize losses through injury prevention. This can be achieved by doing a safety audit on your farm, keeping all machinery in good repair with safe guards in place, having adequate accident insurance coverage, training your workers in safe practices, leading by example, and making safety a priority on your farm.

Woodlot operator follows nature's example

By SARAH SEINEN

Sustainability means long-term management, especially when you want to build a healthy future forest, says one woodlot owner and forest consultant.

"You may be content with what you have now, but your woodlot is not static," Byron Grundberg says. "The trees will eventually become old and die—what's your plan for introducing new ones?"

As a director with Alberta's Woodlot Extension Program and an active member of the Woodlot Association of Alberta, Grundberg is a firm believer in sustainable woodlot management plans.

His woodlot includes 200 acres near Beaver Ranch north of Fort Vermilion,

Forest Planning

160 acres near High Level, three quarter sections east of Nampa and two quarter sections near La Corey north of Bonnyville.

In an effort to achieve woodlot sustainability, Grundberg has made a commitment to maintain the land as forested land and to reforest if and when harvesting occurs. He has also thought about ecological fit and what kind of forest he wants in the future, taking into account age class and species distribution, and the size and pattern of forest openings.

His woodlot is full of mature deciduous trees, most of which will be har-

vested within the next 20 years.

On one of Grundberg's quarter sections near La Corey, all of the trees are 50 years old. He believes the even-aged aspen stands are evidence of a large-scale fire that originated the forest.

"If I were to do selective logging there, which doesn't work very well in aspen anyway, I'd be creating tiny openings in the forest and thus introducing a new pattern unfamiliar to the landscape," he says.

Following nature's example, Grundberg plans to log each half of the quarter section in subsequent harvests. Just as fire skips some patches, he plans to retain two to three per cent of the mature trees, reserving them from harvest and allowing them to become over-mature and eventually die.

Harvesting patterns on private land can differ greatly from those on a Forest Management Agreement area. One of the measures of forest sustainability that is commonly applied to Crown land is that there is more or less an equal harvest each year—that is, the Annual Allowable Cut remains relatively constant. This approach provides socio-economic benefits to the forest industry and resource-based communities. On a woodlot, however, this method is not always practical.

"If you have 100 acres and all your trees are mature, it doesn't make much sense to harvest only one acre each year," says Grundberg. "Many of the trees won't survive until you get around to harvesting them and in the meantime you create a pattern of small openings that don't fit the landscape pattern you inherited."



Byron Grundberg explains his woodlot management techniques during a Woodlot Extension Program tour in 2005

He says a periodic harvest captures more value and creates a landscape pattern that is closer to the natural disturbance regime that preceded human intervention.

"Don't confuse sustainability with having the same amount of harvest on an annual basis," he adds.

Well-planned forests contribute to sustainability in many ways: continuous timber supply, carbon sequestration, forest cycle maintenance, reduced susceptibility to disease, better air quality, better water quality, and habitat for fish and wildlife species.

"Healthy forests on private land enhance what we have on public land," says Darrell Hemery, a forester with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development's Value Added Section.

In the past 25 years, Alberta's population has grown to 3.4 million from 2.3 million—an increase of nearly 50 per cent. If this growth continues, there could be upwards of five million people living in Alberta 25 years from now.

That means more people working, living and playing in forested areas, enhancing the need for good forest management planning on both public and private land.

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Sustainable practices help ensure a future forest

How to attract wildlife to your woodlot

BY GEN HANDLEY

If you want to attract wildlife to your woodlot or other tract of land, don't keep it simple.

"The more diverse your woodlot is, the more habitat or places for animals to eat and live you will provide," says David DeRosa, a fisheries biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Division of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Woodlots that support a complex mix of plants, animals and micro-organisms are less vulnerable to insect infestations and disease, he explains.

Fish and Wildlife

Keith Ebbs, manager of the Woodlot Extension Program (see sidebar), says there are three things landowners need to keep in mind if they want wildlife on their property: shelter, food and "confidence cover" (shrubbery or other features that provide a sense of safety). "Confidence cover is key because then wildlife are comfortable within their habitat and not stressed," he says.

An example of confidence cover is a thick growth of clover or brush along the woodlot edge for deer fawn to hide during the day as the doe feeds. At night, they will retreat into the bush. For shelter, good examples are heavy brush, lower vegetation or a swampy area inside the woodlot. These heavy covers not only provide visual protection but also a thermal protective area for the animals. Ebbs says these areas are often the "deer's bedroom." By using the confidence cover as a corridor, the deer can safely move into the feeding areas.

"If you have a diverse landscape that has all three of those features (food, shelter and confidence cover), then you're going to guarantee the presence of wildlife," Ebbs says.

He also suggests you keep neighbouring properties in mind when you plan your land. This will help ensure that features such as travel corridors are linked to provide for safe movement of a variety of wildlife.

Dave Stepnisky, senior wildlife biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Division in Grande Prairie, notes that old structures such as snags (dead trees) make great homes for cavity nesters such as woodpeckers and flying squir-

rels. Young trees attract large wildlife such as deer or moose.

Both Stepnisky and DeRosa say that major components of a vibrant woodlot are water and "riparian" areas – areas that surround bodies of water. "Water is your driving force," DeRosa says. "Your plants are different near water. Your ecosystems and areas around your water have the greatest diversity and are the most productive spots on your land."

Industry is required by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to provide vegetative buffers adjacent to streams, rivers and lakes. Although buffers are not required for private woodlots, DeRosa encourages landowners to strive for as much buffer as they can, leaving trees such as willows to protect the water.

"Riparian areas are absolutely vital if we want to maintain a diverse rural landscape," Ebbs says. "If we want to promote wildlife habitat and maintain



Habitat diversity means species diversity

different species, then we need to preserve and enhance our woodlots in Alberta."

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What is a woodlot?

The term "woodlot" means different things to different people. Some people refer to any stand of trees on private land as a woodlot. This is the definition followed by the Woodlot Association of Alberta. Others use the term to refer to tracts of private land where trees are grown for profit.

The Alberta government's Woodlot Extension Program defines woodlots as tracts of land of any size and shape where trees grow naturally or by planting, and that support shrubs, grasses, wetlands and associated riparian (shoreline) areas. About four per cent of forested land in Alberta, or 1.5 million hectares, is classified as woodlots.

In addition to their economic value for timber harvesting, woodlots provide valuable habitat for wildlife, protection for watersheds and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The Woodlot Extension Program provides information and training for landowners in sustainable woodlot management. For more information, visit the Alberta Agriculture and Food website www.agric.gov.ab.ca and click on Programs and Services/Land Stewardship.

Alberta plans tough approach to invasive alien species

By SARAH SEINEN

Animals, plants and micro-organisms identified as “invasive alien species” are not welcome in Alberta.

That’s the message as Alberta moves forward to develop new ways to tackle this serious challenge, which is estimated to cost the provincial economy up to \$1 billion a year.

Alien species are “non-native” animals, plants and micro-organisms introduced from their natural habitat in countries outside of North America or even from other ecosystems within Canada, says Mike Undershultz, forest health officer with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Forest Protection

Some of these species gain a foothold when they are brought in from other areas through contaminated gear or other means. For example, *Didymo* (commonly known as “rock snot”) is a freshwater algae that inhabits cool-water river and stream systems, and can completely carpet river beds with underwater growths. Invasive species can also be introduced by “bucket biologists” who move small numbers of species from one place to another without realizing the harm they cause.

Not all alien species are able to survive, establish and cause harm to the environment, economy or society. Some species may become established temporarily but eventually die from the cold or other environmental conditions.

Other invasive alien species, however, become established and flourish. Usually such species are difficult to eradicate as they have no natural enemies to limit their reproduction and spread.

Based on comparison with estimates for the United States, the economic impact of invasive alien species is estimated to be about \$1 billion a year across the entire provincial economy. These could include losses to for-

age yield and quality, increased production costs for agricultural crops, losses to forestry and diminished fishery health.

A new management framework for dealing with invasive alien species is expected to be presented to the Alberta Biodiversity Steering Committee, a cross-government committee, for the official “go-ahead” before the end of the year, Undershultz says. Early detection and rapid response are key goals of Alberta’s new approach. The proposed management framework consists of four components: identify new and potential invasives (with the help of industry and private landowners); use a risk assessment tool to quantify the impact and invasiveness of alien species; apply appropriate responses for the identified risk; and communicate widely with a focus on education and outreach to support all stages of the framework.

Although no date has been set to implement the components, plans are for the risk assessment tool developed for the new framework to be available online for all Albertans to use. “A woodlot owner could use the tool to rank invasive species in an area of concern, considering their specific land use or management targets,” says Undershultz.

The province’s geographic location and climate do provide some protection from invasive species, Undershultz notes. For example, Alberta does not have a major port such as Vancouver, most of Alberta’s



Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum L.*) infestation along Lynx Creek, south of the Crowsnest Pass in the Castle multiple use area

rivers originate within the province, and the Rocky Mountains can act as a barrier. Still, some invasive alien species such as spotted knapweed and white pine blister rust have managed to gain a foothold.

Invasive alien forest insects such as the gypsy moth are not established in Alberta at any level that warrants management other than monitoring. Some invasive plant infestations, such as purple loosestrife, are monitored as well as controlled.

A warming climate, however, could allow invasive species to proliferate in areas where they couldn’t establish before, Undershultz says. Increased trade also increases the potential for more species to be introduced.

“Our future forests could face serious challenges from invasive alien species when you think about issues such as climate change and increased global trade,” he says.

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Natural Resources Canada

Mature gypsy moth larva

Land-use Framework development continues

From off-highway vehicle use and urban sprawl to property rights, a wide range of subjects and viewpoints emerged during the public phase of the Land-use Framework consultations. Public information and input sessions that took place in 15 locations across the province May 15-31 attracted over 780 Albertans interested in how the province's land is used in the long term. More than 3,100 Albertans provided their input through a workbook/questionnaire developed to guide the framework's discussion and development.

Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management

The Land-use Framework will provide a vision for land use in Alberta and overall policy direction needed to manage growth and activities on Alberta's landscape into the future. The framework is intended to provide an approach to govern and manage both public and private lands as well as our natural resources. It will help the province achieve its long-term social and economic goals based on a foundation of sound environmental management.

The current phase of the framework's development began June 5 with four stakeholder working groups concentrating on the areas of:

- Growth and Resource Management: ensuring land and resource management contributes to environmentally responsible growth in the natural resource sector
- Planning and Decision-making: ensuring government policies and planning processes are current, timely and effective in guiding land-use decisions
- Conservation and Stewardship: enhancing opportunities for Albertans to contribute to the stewardship/conservation of land and natural resources; and
- Monitoring and Evaluation: establishment and monitoring of land-use and natural resource indicators.

The working groups are tasked with delivering proposed strategies and actions for government to consider in developing the Land-use



More than 3,100 Albertans provided input

Framework.

Addressing the kickoff for the Stakeholder Working Groups, Ted Morton, Minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, said the Land-use Framework was not only an Alberta government priority and a departmental priority, but also a personal one. "I came here to make a living, but I stayed here to make a life," he said.

He urged the Stakeholder Working Groups to proceed "in the spirit of collaboration," recognizing that no single group using the landscape will get 100 per cent of what it wants: "It's a question of balance."

The working groups are building on the information gathered through the consultations to date, including the stakeholder focus groups in spring 2006, the cross-sector forum in fall 2006 and the public information and input sessions in spring 2007.

Working group summaries will be completed in October and posted on the Land-use Framework website.

The government's goal is to have a draft Land-use Framework by the end of December 2007.

Contact:
Land-use Framework
www.landuse.gov.ab.ca



A government employee talks with a participant in Grande Prairie

Mountain Pine Beetle

Dendroctonus ponderosae



The mountain pine beetle is a very destructive insect that lives under the bark of pine trees. It is a serious threat to mature pine trees in Alberta. Early detection is critical for control of this insect.

What are the signs?

Clusters of red trees are often a good starting point for identifying beetle damage.



Boring dust collects in bark crevices and around the base of trees from beetles boring under the bark.

Woodpecker activity (holes, flaked off bark) is often an indication of beetle presence.



Cream colored resin, which looks like crystallized honey, mixed with boring dust oozes out of entry holes in the trunk.

These are called pitch tubes. The tree's natural defense against beetles is to "pitch" them out.



Sapwood turns a grayish blue color because beetles carry spores of blue-stain fungus that stains the wood.

What you don't see...

J-shaped galleries in which eggs are deposited begin above the entrance holes and run along the grain of the wood.



Larvae bore galleries that run horizontally and eventually girdle the tree.

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Aussi disponible en français.

For copies of this poster, please contact:
Government of Alberta: 780-310-BUGS (2847)
Natural Resources Canada: www.bookstore.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca
Alberta Forest Products Association: 780-452-2841

Please report mountain pine beetle activity:
Government of Alberta
780-310-BUGS (2847)

For more information, please visit:
www.srd.gov.ab.ca/forests/health
www.pc.gc.ca/dpp-mpb
www.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca
www.albertaforestproducts.ca

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Bi Business

and Innovation in Renewable Resources

September 2007

BioBusiness news

Alberta's vision

A research agenda

Bob Jost, bioproduct researcher at the Alberta Research Council, works with materials such as hemp pulp in the search for new chemical and wellness agents.

connections to a sustainable future



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- Sustainable production of biomass

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Contact information

BioProducts Alberta
Suite 1720 Phipps McKinnon Building
10020 101 A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3G2

Tel: (780) 409-9270

E-mail: info@bioproducts.com



Two presidents and CEOs, John McDougall of the ARC and Ian de la Roche of FPInnovations, sign on the dotted line with some strawboard behind them

Alberta Research Council, FPInnovations re-energize a fruitful R&D alliance

By DAVID HOLEHOUSE

A renewed partnership between the Alberta Research Council (ARC) and FPInnovations promises new thinking and new technologies to help the forest sector move forward into the future.

FPInnovations includes Forintek, and the new partnership takes over where a previous ARC-Forintek alliance left off. The last collaboration yielded research worth \$90 million in cost savings to the industry over the last 10 years, and hopes are high the new relationship will provide even greater benefits.

This one embraces biorefining and the life sciences, with a focus on the four areas of oriented strandboard, pulping technologies, biorefining to produce energy, chemicals and other bioproducts, and topical issues such as mountain pine beetle.

"This partnership comes at a key time for the forest products sector," said Ian de la Roche, president and CEO of FPInnovations. "New ways of thinking and new technologies are key to the future success of this industry."

MLA LeRoy Johnson, chair of the ARC and vice chair of the Alberta Science

and Research Authority, said the ARC succeeds because it develops research that industry can use. Automated panelboard production control systems, the bleaching of mountain pine beetle-attacked wood, the production of polymers from forest fibre to support the oil and gas industry are all examples of profitable projects developed by the ARC and its partners.

Doug Horner, Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, said the new alliance reaches beyond the forest borders. Alberta's new Fibre Road Map shows some of the future energy supply could come from renewable farm and forest resources. Agricultural fibre research could change the materials used in construction, introducing strawboard to building sites. Hemp and triticale, along with wood fibre, could produce the polymers of the future to create biodegradable plastics, thickeners for paints, and delivery agents for pharmaceuticals.

For more information visit www.arc.ab.ca, or www.fpinnoations.ca.

Fibre Roadmap points the way

By GEN HANDLEY

A new roadmap envisions a future in which Alberta derives 30 per cent of its energy from renewable agricultural and forest resources, along with a host of novel high-value products.

Produced after consultation with more than 200 industry, academic and government representatives, the Alberta Fibre Roadmap identifies ways to make the most of the province's lignocellulosic resources – the strong fibres that give plants and trees their strength.

"We went into this because we saw an opportunity in the agriculture and forestry sectors to think of our biomass a little differently," said Daphne Cheel, executive director of the Alberta Life Sciences Branch. "Particularly with the ligno-cellulosic resource, we wanted to provide a vision and a framework to take advantage of opportunities in the emerging bioeconomy."

The vision includes goals for renewable energy, as well as rural self-sufficiency in heat and power, strong use of wood and new composites in construction, and growing employment in small and medium sized enterprises connected to non-food products made from crops or forest resources.

Strategies to achieve the vision are contained in the roadmap, which was produced with the help of the Alberta Research Council and FPInnovations. They are:

- Build biorefineries where feedstocks are processed into products, within integrated economic clusters.
- Transform and sustain the pulp and paper, and wood products industries.
- Sustain and enhance forestry and agricultural communities.
- Develop more biocomposite, biomaterial and bioproduct companies.

Implementation needs will include advances in market development, technology and innovation, along with leadership and collaboration among industry, academia and government.

The complete Alberta Fibre Roadmap can be seen at: http://www.technology.gov.ab.ca/en/Fibre_Roadmap.cfm.

Ready for launch . . .



IMUS plant near Vegreville produces high-value biogas from manure

Bioresources ready to give Alberta economy a boost, leaders say

By GEN HANDLEY

Alberta is starting to see results from a concerted provincial effort to build a launchpad for the bioeconomy of the future.

The base is an ever-growing foundation of government strategies, funding mechanisms and research bodies all focused on future products and processes that are not even on the drawing boards yet for many Alberta manufacturers. However, other parts of the world are already reaping the rewards of a visionary re-engineering of traditional commodity thinking to generate new products, new profits, new jobs and new community sustainability.

"I think the seed has been sown for Alberta's bioeconomy – and now it's starting to germinate," said Dr Rob Rennie, co-chair of the Alberta Life Sciences Institute. Dr Rennie acknowledges Alberta – and Canada – have to play catch-up in a world that is already moving towards a bio future. But the province has some unique strengths that will help it accelerate towards that objective.

"Alberta can move into the bio-economy by drawing upon the experience, strengths and international recognition

that we already have in the oil and gas business," Rennie said. The talent and technology generated by decades of petro-development provide a base that is ideally suited to adapting existing industries to bioproducts manufacturing.

Rennie's vision for the future bioeconomy in Alberta is wide ranging. "We would like to diversify our economy, bring in a bioeconomy that will add value economically to the province, and more important, add to the quality of life in Alberta," he says

Possibilities include bioproducts that lead to healthy foods and pharmaceuticals, biodegradable plastics, new construction materials, renewable energy and more. The current debate about possible negative effects the emerging bioeconomy might have on the human food supply are countered by the fact that non-food crops such as triticale or switch grass can be easily grown in Alberta for industrial bioproduction, Rennie says.

The Life Sciences Institute and its parent, the Alberta Science and Research

Authority, provide guidance to provincial research institutes facilitating agriculture, forestry and energy innovation.

Art Froehlich, co-chair of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, said triticale and flax are two potential "new" crops that could be used very effectively in the bioeconomy, providing a base for chemicals,

fibre and nutritional/health products. While corn and soy are major crops in other parts of the world, Alberta will do best to focus instead on other crops that offer potential, Froehlich says "For us to get involved in research on those two crops wouldn't make any sense at all," he says. "We have got to grow crops that have some competitive advantage to being produced



Bill Hunter

in Canada."

At the Alberta Forestry Research Institute, co-chair Bill Hunter is pumped about the future bioeconomy. "We are on the 'TSN turning point' of all heck breaking loose," he says. "The bioindustry could be the silver lining in the mountain pine beetle epidemic – as just one example

of a societal challenge that research and innovation could address." The beetle will mean large amounts of wood fibre being available over and above normal harvest flows, and an industry that is already challenged by low market prices for commodities such as lumber will have to be open to making novel bioproducts to survive, in Hunter's opinion.

"The possibilities are endless as to what can be produced from cellulose," Hunter says. "New materials can be made from this material that are just as durable, if not stronger, than petroleum-based plastics and composites. They are more resilient, lighter, stronger, often bio-degradable . . . it's essential that our industry be open to adapting and including some of these possibilities in their plans and operations."

Leaders within the agricultural and forest research sectors all see potential for composite fibres, as well as binders and resins, made from processes that first break down fibre into its cellular and molecular components and then reassemble it with other materials to create totally new compounds and materials.

A key approach will be for industry to diversify and add value to any new products that emerge, Froehlich and Hunter agree. For instance, new materials might be brought together with new production and prefabrication systems to create the "made-to-order" home of the future. It will be fully wired, fully insulated and fully finished, will be strong and safe, and will have a minimal lifecycle footprint.

"I think that some of the commodity markets are going to drive us to look at diversification," Hunter says. "We want to be ready for them, so that when the shoe falls we have a brand new pair of boots to jump into. When you have all your eggs in one (commodity production) basket, you end up with a hard, hard bust and a lot of people go broke.

"We need to refortify the cellulose industry, which is agriculture and forestry; we need to prop up the petrochemical industry by making syngas from woody biomass and agricultural residues; we can strengthen the other sectors as well and create complementary fuels and materials that take the pressure off



Tom Facklam

the hard-core hydrocarbon or energy sector."

There are some challenges, Rennie acknowledges: One is to ensure Alberta has the academic and scientific capability to break down the ligno-cellulosic compounds found in wood and agricultural fibre; another is to create a pilot biorefinery plant accessible to large and small companies alike, to test and demonstrate new processes and products.

In addition, there's a need to attract investors to the bioeconomy, generate funding for start-up companies, and attract business leadership. The AVAC is a good example - providing \$38 million since 1997 to research and innovation in the renewable resources sector.

Tom Facklam, CEO of the Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences Alberta (IFASA), an alliance of university, provincial and federal partners, sees rich potential for the future. He believes Alberta has an ideal "platform" for the bioeconomy with high-quality bio resources and a comprehensive petrochemical community with expertise and infrastructure to support new economic directions.

Other parts of the world are already using the biorefinery to produce consumer goods. Agricultural resources are being used to make polymers for clothing and furnishings, as well as plastics for vehicle parts, biodegradable materi-



Liyan Zhao, forest products researcher at the ARC, studies polymers

als for water bottles and much more.

"However, Alberta has one unique attribute that virtually nobody else has - we have a full-grown petrochemical industry. If we can get this sector used to utilizing our feedstocks as a sustainable resource, we can do things that nobody else can," Facklam says.

"We need to realize that this is going to happen. The question is do we merely become consumers of other peoples' commercial activities and products, or do we actively participate and take a leadership role in Canada and North America?"

Resources

- <http://www.technology.gov.ab.ca/en/alsi.cfm>
- <http://www.technology.gov.ab.ca/en/afri.cfm>
- <http://www.aari.ab.ca/>
- <http://www.ifasa.afhe.ualberta.ca/index2.php>



There's more to Jerusalem Artichoke than meets the eye

Alberta Research Council makes sure there's **science** to back up bioeconomy's sizzle

BY GEN HANDLEY

Shawn Gervais's windows at the Alberta Research Council reach from floor to ceiling, but his vision for Alberta's bioeconomy goes much further than even they will allow.

The ARC's vice-president of Life Sciences envisions a future in which Alberta's landscape is dotted with biorefineries fueled by renewable agricultural and forest feedstocks alongside oil and gas plants. He sees clothing made from new multi-product crops grown in Alberta, electricity facilities powered by biomass, and enzymes converting local fibres into an endless array of chemical, consumer and pharmaceutical goods.

Higher market values for novel products will greatly improve the cashflow for those who grow and process agricultural and forest material. Rural economies will be strengthened, small-scale energy self sufficiency will be a reality, and factors contributing to climate change will be held firmly in check.

"It won't happen overnight," Gervais says of the future bioeconomy. "But if we take the initiative, if we're innovative and we keep trying, it will happen."

The bioeconomy is a concept based on using natural, renewable resources to make many of the products now fashioned from petrochemicals. While there's no suggestion that the bioeconomy will replace traditional commodity lumber and petro

products, proponents say it will do much to augment dwindling fossil fuel supplies, while helping build a greener and stronger economy.

The new era, Gervais says, will be ushered in by relatively small, locally-based bioenergy plants producing power and heat from crop and forestry residues.

Start-up of such a plant would act like a magnet, using its affordable power and various byproducts to attract a cluster of companion industries that will share and add value to local resources such as grains, oils and the lignocellulose found in plant and tree fibre. "Other producers will follow and soon a whole range of new products will be coming out of the region," says Gervais. The great thing about biomass opportunity is that there's often a secondary product. Whether it's in clothing or biodegradable plastics or dietary components, there's almost always another opportunity."

One result, he believes, will be a profusion of economic hubs scattered throughout the province rather than the current concentration in a small number of cities. These hubs in turn will source natural materials from their immediate region, creating diversification and spin-off ben-

efits to even smaller communities.

Gervais especially likes the fact that the required biomass can be grown as and where needed. There's a lot of flexibility in our choices," he says. "You can design your planting according to whether it's for energy, for food, or for clothing."

One feedstock that excites Gervais is Jerusalem Artichoke. In addition to the fuels that could be produced from its biomass, Jerusalem Artichoke can also produce inulin, a food additive for digestion – 20 to 40 per cent cheaper than anyone else is doing today. An inulin facility is another venture that, once established, could attract investment in neighbor facilities producing food components and other high-value products.

Gervais also sees a role for the general public in encouraging the bioeconomy.

"If your community wants to take a risk with a new bio-initiative, support it," he says. "Buy local, buy the bioproducts out there right now but don't buy them just because they're green. Buy them because they make sense for you as a consumer, as well as for all the other reasons."



Shawn Gervais

For more information see the ARC website at www.arc.ab.ca.



News Briefs from the Biosphere

Calgary hosts one of the largest biotechnology conferences in the world this month.

Over 40 international speakers and up to 800 registrants will discuss a wide range of biotechnology and agricultural issues at the 2007 International AgBiotech Conference from September 23 to 26.

"Among the outcomes we're expecting is collaboration on the research side and also partnerships on the business side," said Ryan Radke, president of BioAlberta, which is helping organize the event. "What we're trying to create is a forum for people to get together, share ideas and hopefully at the end of the event, come out with some action items they can move forward with."

The four-day event will attract industry leaders, policymakers and bioindustry specialists interested in the global agricultural bioeconomy.

Among the speakers will be Dr. Florence Wambugu, CEO of Africa Harvest Biotech Foundation International in Kenya, addressing the role of biotechnology in African development, and Dr. Maurice Moloney from SemBioSys Genetics in Calgary, addressing the use of plant material to create pharmaceuticals.

This will be the first time Alberta the conference is held in Alberta. The theme is *Harnessing Science for the Evolving Consumer: The Fit of Agricultural Biotechnology*. Next year's conference will be in Ireland.

For more information on the conference, check the website www.abic.ca/abic2007.

Alberta Pacific Forest Industries of Athabasca announced in July that it became North America's first pulp mill to achieve carbon neutrality in 2006.

The company's manufacturing operations reduced direct mill greenhouse gas emissions from 187,236 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) in 1994 to 99,973 tonnes CO₂e in 2006, a decrease of 47 per cent since the first year of operation. During the same period, the company's

pulp production increased 33 per cent to a 1,802 tonnes per day average. For each tonne of pulp produced, direct emissions declined from 0.40 tonnes CO₂e in 1994 to 0.16 tonnes CO₂e in 2006.

These direct emissions, among the lowest for any pulp mill, were offset by the carbon sequestered through the company's poplar plantations and its programs to avoid industrial forest clearing.

The mill boasts electrical power self-sufficiency and the ability to export excess power at peak times to the Alberta electric system. Power is produced by burning lignin from the pulping process and wood waste products such as bark and sawdust. Avoiding the need to produce electricity from fossil fuels reduces greenhouse gas emissions by about 40,000 tonnes of CO₂e per year.

For more information contact ken.plourde@alpac.ca.

The ability to see what Alberta's landscape might look like in the next 10 to 100 years has been made easier with the release of a new land-use visualization tool. The Alberta Research Council (ARC) and its partner Golder Associates have developed MapNow, a software tool that creates spatial maps of various potential landscape changes resulting from all types of human land use. MapNow produces realistic maps of future landscapes based on outputs from ALCES, an Alberta developed land-use simulation model.

With increasing population growth and the intensity of industrial development across the province, Albertans are concerned about cumulative effects of development on the environment and what that may mean for future generations. MapNow is a tool that can help resource managers further understand the consequences of landuse options and obtain meaningful public input to address these concerns.

For more information contact valerie.golka@arc.ab.ca.

COMING UP...

2007 Alberta Life Technologies Investor Forum

This investor event showcases the emerging and developing Life Technology Companies from North America.

Edmonton, Alberta
September 19, 2007
(780) 965-3776
applications@altif.ca

BioPort Atlantic 2007

The conference will host industry and business leaders, scientists, investors, government representatives and service providers interested in Atlantic Canada's growing life sciences industry.

September 26 – 27, 2007
Halifax, Nova Scotia
info@bionova.ns.ca

Banff Venture Forum 2007

The Banff Venture Forum is one of the top finance forums for technology entrepreneurs in Canada and will showcase approximately 45 of the best and brightest early and growth stage companies in two streams – Information Technology and Energy Technology.

October 4 – 5, 2007
Banff, Alberta
www.banffventureforum.org

The Impacts of the Boom on Fort McMurray

The University of Alberta's Community Service-Learning Program and the Parkland Institute host a five-week speaker series exploring the impacts of the oil industry on Alberta communities.

October 5, 2007
University of Alberta
www.arts.ualberta.ca/csl

One Origin, One Race, One Earth Conference 2007

The conference will address legal and ethical issues around genetics and what it is to be human.

November 15 – 17, 2007
University of Calgary
Contact: (403) 220-2505
www.aclrc.com/OneOrigin/

NRC-CNRC

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The NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP) provides a range of both technical and business oriented advisory services along with potential financial support to innovative Canadian small- and medium-sized enterprises.

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To reach an advisor
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1-877-994-4727

or visit our website at:

irap-pari.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca



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Not just a walk in the woods

Woodlot management planning in action

By **MARTINE BOLINGER**

Since January 2007, Doug Macaulay and Toso Bozic, the provincial agroforestry/woodlot specialists, have been travelling the province meeting forestland owners. It's part of a pilot program to provide one-to-one woodlot management planning. The sessions involve a half-day site visit where the owner and the specialist tour the forest.

Woodlot Extension Program

They share a wealth of information. The farmer/rancher gives the history of the property and shares his or her values and goals for the land. The specialist observes signs of insects and diseases and the overall condition of the woodlot including age and health of the trees. An increment borer is used to gauge the age of the forest by measuring the annual ring count on a small core taken from the tree at chest height.

The specialist follows up a written management plan with an inventory of the type of forest and species. The plan also recommends management practices to help the forest flourish and

the landowners learn more and achieve their goals.

One landowner's experience

Debby Gregorash and her husband Frank own a woodlot in the very southwestern corner of Alberta on the American border and east of Waterton Park. She was thrilled with her woodlot visit.

"One the best things about Toso's visit was it reinforced how much I already knew and what I was already doing right," said Debby. "New to me was the technique of releasing spruce trees from the surrounding aspens to get them to shoot up and grow bigger."

With management goals for recreation and wildlife, the Gregorash woodlot is a special place for relaxation and enjoyment. They built an extensive system of trails for horseback riding in their 240 acre woodlot. "Frank can ride for almost three hours now on the trails we have created," says Debby.

"When I am in the woods, I am listening to things, I really tune in," continues Debby. "I can hear a loon or the wind blowing half a mile way. All my senses are open. The trembling



Woodlot Extension Program

Woodlot provides many recreational opportunities

aspens are so wonderful, they whisper when the wind passes through them."

What is a woodlot? "It is a forest owned by an individual who wants to do something with it," says Debby. "I like to see my handprint and intent on the landscape." The legacy of the Gregorash's handprint includes the riding trails, the careful placement of buildings and dugouts and the removal of trees in certain areas to improve sight lines and the view. The trees are then used for firewood to heat her cabin in winter.

Debby knows having visitors come to your property helps the owner see their operation with fresh eyes. The same thing can happen with a visit from the woodlot specialist. Ultimately it can change a person's mindset about their forest and their management goals.

To see a video vignette of Toso Bozic at Debby's property visit Farm TV online at <http://www.farm.tv/news>. View woodlot management clips part 1 and 2.

For answers to your questions about your forest contact a Woodlot/Agroforestry Specialist directly. For the Peace Region, call Doug Macaulay (780) 624-6425, elsewhere in the province, call Toso Bozic (780) 415-2681.

To read more about woodlots online type <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify> into your web browser and follow the Agri Fibre and Agri Forestry--AF Woodlot Extension Program link.



Fall colours brighten a stand of aspen trees in an Alberta woodlot

Beetle committee tours hard-hit B.C. interior

By GEN HANDLEY

Alberta and its neighbour to the west continue their joint stand against the mountain pine beetle.

On May 24 and 25, Alberta's Mountain Pine Beetle Advisory Committee (MPBAC) attended a conference in 100 Mile House hosted by its B.C. counterpart, the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition (CCBAC).

"The group in B.C. has been very helpful," says Dr. John Irwin, chair of MPBAC and mayor of Crowsnest Pass. "They've been extremely open by showing us the things that weren't effective and the things that worked well. Collaboration between the provinces is essential."

CCBAC manager Keith Dufresne says there is definitely an opportunity to learn, especially about the social and economic implications of the beetle.

"Our coalition is less about the beetles and trees and more about the

Mountain Pine Beetle

communities and the people," Dufresne says. "The only difference between our area and Alberta is that we can no longer do anything to control the beetle."

Irwin says it's a priority to prevent the beetle from reaching the boreal forest, through which the beetle could spread across Canada.



Darwin Alexis, left, John Spence and Gary Sergent inspect a tree during the Mountain Pine Beetle Advisory Committee's tour to B.C.

"I'm wary," he says. "I think it can be done, but we have to stay a step ahead and we have to be adaptable."

During the two-day conference, members of MPBAC flew over beetle-infested forests and heard a variety of presentations. Speakers included Ray Schultz, B.C.'s assistant deputy minister for pine beetle emergency response, members of the local social development working group, and bioenergy director Janice Larson, who talked about using fibre left for energy production.

Conference organizer Bob Clark

agrees the Alberta committee can learn a lot from the B.C. group.

"Alberta's forest is very similar to B.C.'s, but at a smaller scale," Clark says, who used to be the B.C. "Beetle Boss" and is now an advisor to Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. "Because we're in two different stages of the battle, the B.C. folks can tell us what worked and what kinds of things they wished could have done differently."

Irwin says he was particularly impressed by a new machine that's very effective at harvesting and mulching infected trees as opposed to the cutting and burning method.

MPBAC was formed in May of 2006 and includes representatives from municipal governments, First Nations, industry, environmental groups, federal government and members of the public. The committee advises Sustainable Resource Development on how to minimize pine beetle threats.

As of April 2007, the province estimates there are about three million Alberta trees infested with the beetle.

To report any infested trees or for more information, call 310 - BUGS (2847)



Cliff Henderson surveys a cutblock cleared of beetle-infested trees

Natural protection against pine beetle

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

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

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

Pherotech International has been working on the mountain pine beetle pheromone with researchers from the United States for over 20 years. In 2006, No Vacancy was registered for use in Canada and was used extensively in the Kelowna

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

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

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

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

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

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

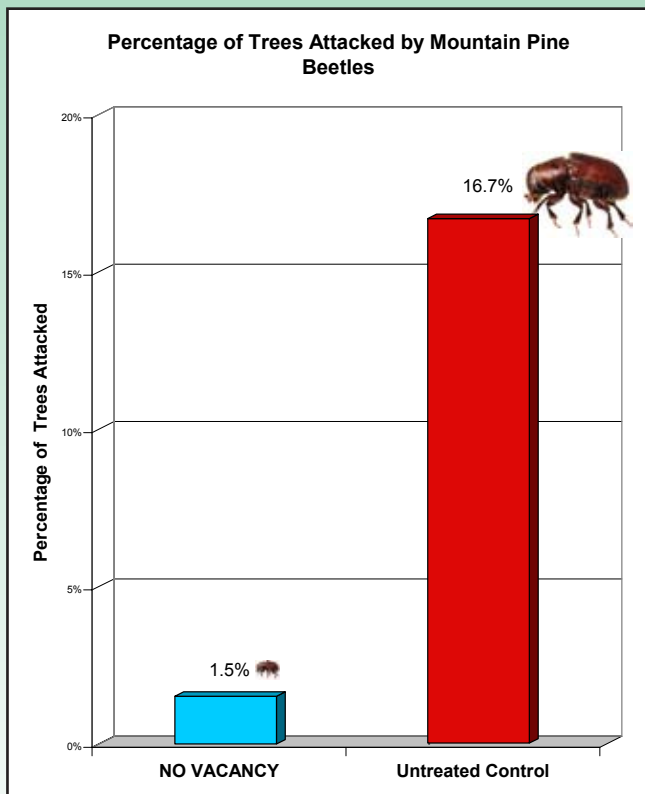
Contact:

Pherotech
604-940-9944

www.pherotech.com

Tech Mist Spray Solutions
877-746-3284

www.techmist.com



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



Proper placement of the No Vacancy pouch



Ken Glover
Chief Administrator
WAA

Civic elections

...time for woodlot owners to take action

On October 15, 2007, Albertans will go to the polls and vote for their municipal leaders. From now until the election, it will be a time for promises and campaigns. Now is the time for Alberta woodlot owners to express their views with respect to municipal (property) taxation and environmental goods and services.

Call for fair property tax assessment for woodlots

For years woodlot owners have had to endure unfair property tax assessment treatment. Assessment of woodlots experience significant inconsistencies across Alberta, and are largely higher than all other forms of land use. A woodlot on its own merit is usually assessed at market value and or as recreation property where the rates are much higher than any agriculture assessment. Hence, there is absolutely no incentive to maintain forestlands if almost all other alternative land uses result in lower property taxes. In fact this very situation has resulted in the liquidation of hundreds of thousands of private forestlands across Alberta. There are two primary problems contributing to this inequity. First, the term woodlot is not considered within the definition of a farming operation, which largely guides municipal property assessment. Secondly, woodlots differ from conventional agriculture activities in that they do not necessarily generate annual revenue, and in the instance of a conservation-managed woodlot may never generate revenue (for the owner). Woodlot owners need to engage their municipal candidates in this debate, and seek their



Landowners who demonstrate strong woodlot stewardship also contribute to natural capital and environmental goods and services

support for changes to the Property Assessment Regulations, in particular, the inclusion of woodlots within the definition of a farming operation.

Call for tax incentives and / or payment for demonstrated woodlot stewardship

Landowners who can demonstrate strong woodlot stewardship contributing to natural capital or providing environmental goods and services to others should be compensated (rewarded). Under an approved woodlot manage-

ment plan that entails conservation, protection or enhancement initiatives, a woodlot owner should be entitled to tax and/or financial support. Currently the choice to conserve or sustainably manage a woodlot comes at a net loss/cost to the owner. Clearing the woodlot and developing the land creates maximum disturbance and impact to the natural capital and much better financial returns. If municipal leaders feel strongly about healthy environmental attributes then support must be extended to those who are in a position and willing to sustain and enhance these attributes.

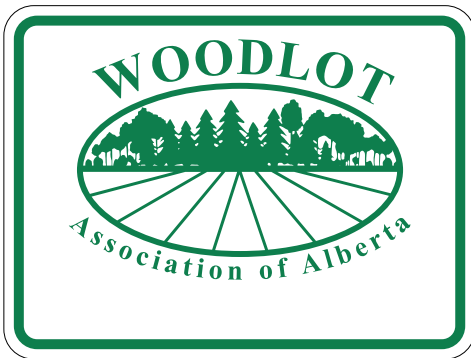
2006-2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The Board of Directors for the Woodlot Association of Alberta:

Top row (l to r): Dan Reesor, Louise Horstman (secretary), Juri Agapow, Conn Brown, Peter Mills (president), Gordon Kerr (past president).
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Support woodlot management with a gate sign

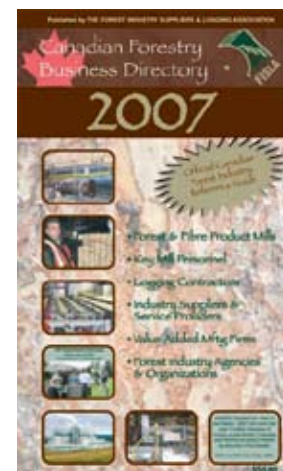
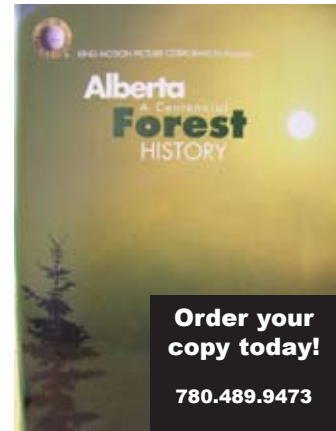


Here's how to order. . .

Each Woodlot Association member (in good standing) is eligible for one free Woodlot Gate sign. The sign can be picked up at the Association's office at no charge. Woodlot Association members wanting additional signs may purchase them at \$25.00 for each additional sign. The Woodlot Association initiated the new gate sign to recognize members of the Woodlot Association of Alberta and give greater profile for the Association. The Gate Sign is high gauge aluminum and 24" W x 18" H with reflective lettering and logo. To receive your gate sign complete the Woodlot Association of Alberta Membership & Materials Order Form (in this magazine) and fax, mail or e-mail this form to the Woodlot Association. If you want the gate sign mailed direct there will be a \$17.50 postage and shipping fee. We encourage members to make arrangements to pick up their signs from the office or at Association events.

WAA AGM just around the corner

Mark your calendars! The Woodlot Association of Alberta's Annual General Meeting will be October 19 and 20, 2007 at the Providence Inn in Edmonton, Alberta. Members will be provided with more information.



2007 Canadian Forestry Business Directory now available. Special WAA rate by using the order form on the next page



Woodlot Association of Alberta

Membership & Materials Order Form



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E-mail Address: _____

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



Doug Macaulay

A female bluebird takes a break from her busy day

In woodlots around Alberta



Tree hugger Martine Bolinger demonstrates her method of measuring the age of a tree during a woodlot visit this summer



Doug Macaulay

A pitch tube, a sign of mountain pine beetle infestation, on a pine tree in a woodlot near Fairview

New farm insurance product to be tailored by producers

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) received funding from Private Sector Risk Management Partnerships (PSRMP), a division of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, to design an area-based insurance plan that can be “tailored” by agricultural producers to their own farm situation. PSRMP provides funding under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) for producer-defined research projects focused on strengthening or filling in gaps in the risk protection offered under existing government programs.

The project, called “Individualized Area-Based Insurance,” started in October 2006, and will produce an effective tool to complement and enhance existing government-sponsored multi-peril production insurance programs (MPPI). WRAP, the primary producer association championing this project, is supported in this initiative by the Alberta Canola Producers Commission, the Alberta Pulse Growers and the Canadian Hay Association.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to design an interactive “internet insurance tool” that allows producers and even processors of agriculture commodities to tailor a weather and/or area-yield based insurance product specifically to their own crop and farm needs. The web-tool is designed to be accessed

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

directly by the user or through an insurance agent who can assist the user in developing the insurance product. However, funding for the project is limited to the design of the insurance product and not to developing the administration and delivery components. The administration and delivery details would have to be finalized by a private insurance/reinsurance firm, the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) or a producer organization. A variety of firms have been approached to assess their interest in delivering the insurance product once it



Sarah Seinen

A web-tool will help producers “tailor-make” their insurance products

is developed. While no arrangements are complete at this stage, there is a growing interest by potential delivery agents.

Product Design

The web-tool is designed to guide the user through a series of interactive computer screens to tailor-make an insurance product. The user starts by entering the farm location by township, meridian and range as well as the crops and acreage to be insured and the dollar coverage sought. There are three insurance design options from which to choose. Once selected, the web-tool automatically guides the user through the chosen insurance option.

Insurance Options

1. Weather-Based

This option allows the user to develop an insurance policy based on as many as three of the 111 weather stations in the eligible provincial network that record daily precipitation and temperature. Users can build an insurance policy with combinations of up to five weather perils that include: excess moisture, too little moisture, excess heat, freezing temperatures or insufficient growing degree days. For each

peril chosen, the user can select the time period for the insured event as well as the nature of the event (the trigger point and full payment point).

For example, let’s say the user wants to insure against three perils: excess moisture at seeding, too much heat during crop flowering and excess moisture at harvest. The user can identify a time window for seeding, say the last two weeks in May, and define that too much moisture is anything above 1.5 inches (trigger point) of rainfall during that period. They can also select the full payment point to be 3.0 inches of rainfall during the period. They can then define too much heat during flowering as temperatures above 28 degrees Celsius during a selected time window of three weeks, say mid-June to the end of the first week in July. Full payment here might represent a cumulative total of 15 degrees C above the trigger of 28 degrees C during the three week period. Finally, for excess moisture at harvest, the user might select the first 12 days in September and any rain above 1.5 inches during that time period with a full payment if rainfall hits 3.5 inches.

Since there are three perils in this policy (seeding, growing season and harvest), the dollar coverage chosen at the outset is distributed among the cho-

The simulation process allows users to tailor-make an insurance product, see what it will cost and make alterations prior to a purchase decision. Once they are satisfied with their choice, the web-tool can provide direct contact to the insurance provider allowing the user to make an insurance purchase on-line.

sen perils and any one peril that triggers starts an insurance payment. The payment increases in a linear fashion from the trigger point to the full payment point. So, in this example, if the user chose \$150 coverage and it rained 3.0 inches during the last two weeks of May, never reached 28 degrees Celsius in June or July and rained an inch in the first 12 days of September, the user would receive a full-payment on one-third of the insurance policy (\$50) if they had assigned an equal weighting of dollar coverage across all three perils.

2. Area-Yield Based

The area-yield based insurance option allows the user to tailor an insurance design based on the production results of three major crops (wheat, barley and canola) in their local area, not on their own farm. The production results are based on the accumulation of the individual production records of producers insuring under the multi-peril production insurance program (MPPI) provided by AFSC in Alberta. To respect producer privacy, there needs to be at least five MPPI insured producers to define the size of the local area for this insurance option. Users can choose up to three of the major crops on which to base their insurance policy.

The web-tool model defines the minimum local area as a township, but it is as large as required to access at least five MPPI insured producers for each crop included in the area-based user's insurance policy. In addition to choosing

which major crop(s) to use for the insurance policy, the user also defines the level of coverage (the insurance trigger point from 50 to 90 percent in ten percent increments) at which the insurance losses of insured MPPI policyholders for wheat, barley, and canola in their local area will be calculated for the purpose of the tailored policy. While MPPI-insured producers may have purchased their insurance at a different level of coverage, the user's choice of coverage in the area-based web-tool makes a claim calculation as if all MPPI producers had bought their insurance policies at the user-selected coverage level.

For example, let's say the user wants to include wheat and canola in their area-yield insurance design. They choose to have their insurance policy based on 75 percent wheat and 25 percent canola. There may be enough wheat production in their area to have the local area for wheat be a township surrounding the user's farm.

However, a three-by-three township block (with the user's farm in the centre township) may be required to access the minimum of five insured canola producers. Once the five-producer minimum is reached, all MPPI insuring farmers in the area are included in the cumulative production result. The production for insured MPPI producers in the current crop year is compared to their insurance coverage and the average claim rate for the insured producers under MPPI is used to determine the claim for the area-yield based insurance option.

3. Combination

The combination insurance option allows the user to combine the two previous insurance options into one insurance policy. In this case, the user can assign a percentage of the insurance coverage to the weather-based option and the remainder to the area-yield based option. There are really two key differences between the two insurance options to remember. In the weather-based option, the user can define very specific time windows of concern but the perils are rainfall or temperature dependent. On the other hand, the area-yield based insurance option considers the production results from the entire growing season but includes all the perils covered under the MPPI program. These insurance option contrasts make the combination insurance option appealing in some instances and allows considerable flexibility in the design of a tailored insurance product.

Summary

The "individualized area-based insurance" product allows users to design and test their insurance product by simulating results from the past. Actual premium costs are provided for each insurance option. Fifty years of daily precipitation and temperature weather data allows users to see how a weather-based insurance option would have performed over that time period. MPPI records dating back to the mid-70s allow users to select a particular year of interest to simulate results from that option. The simulation process allows users to tailor-make an insurance product, see what it will cost and make alterations prior to a purchase decision. Once they are satisfied with their choice, the web-tool can provide direct contact to the insurance provider allowing the user to make an insurance purchase on-line. This capability has to be incorporated into any delivery agent processes.

The web-tool product is well underway with a project completion date of December 2007. Input was received from producers in early March and information sessions are being planned for late fall. A full-scale product launch is anticipated in 2009 pending the successful partnering with a delivery agent.

Contact:
WRAP
1.888.616.6530
wrap@planet.eon.net

U.S. subsidies distort competitiveness of producers

Here's a little experiment you can try. Get a tarp. Stretch it out tight, suspended between some wooden stakes. Throw some tennis balls on there. They'll roll around on the tarp a bit, but they won't weigh it down. Now drop a bowling ball in the middle of the tarp. See how the bowling ball pulls down the tarp. See how all the little tennis balls roll down into the distortion.

What you have just witnessed is a metaphor for the effect of U.S. agricultural subsidies. The tarp is the market – the prices we get for our commodities. The tennis balls are us, Canadian farmers and other farmers around the world. When the bowling ball – the U.S. subsidies – hits the tarp, prices go down, and we go down with them.

That is what is being debated at the WTO – how much countries like the U.S. can distort world trade and pit U.S. treasuries against the pocketbooks of Canadian farmers. It is imperative that Canada achieves real reductions in U.S. subsidies at the WTO. Through their trade distorting Loan Deficiency Payments, counter-cyclical and target

COMMENTARY

*Bob Friesen
President, CFA*



price programs for grains and oilseeds, the U.S. has created massive overproduction of crop commodities and suppressed world prices. Its benefits include stability and income support for crop producers but also reduced prices and an implicit cross-subsidization of livestock producers, meat industries,



Alberta Agriculture and Food, with permission

Agricultural subsidies south of the border affect Canadian producers in the marketplace for grains and livestock

ethanol and other value-added industries. In its last submission to the WTO, the U.S. reported \$72 billion US in total domestic support, equivalent to 36 per cent of its total value of production. In contrast, Canada's support totaled \$3 billion CDN or 14 per cent of its value of production.

The U.S. Farm Bill payments distort the competitiveness of all sectors within North America and, as Canada's largest trading partner, significantly affect Canadian producers' ability to be competitive and earn a fair income from the marketplace.

Currently at the WTO, the negotiation for domestic support is developing a formula for reductions where the larger subsidized nations must make the largest cuts. The problem is the cuts come to what countries are "allowed" to spend, not what they are actually spending. The latest negotiating position of the U.S. was a 60 per cent cut from overall trade distorting support limits. While this may seem large, according to projections from the USDA and calculations from the Government of Canada, current U.S. overall distorting support limit is \$48 billion/year and even a 60 per cent cut in allowable spending would not cut into current

trade distorting spending in the U.S. Basically the US promises not to drop another bowling ball on the tarp. But they won't take away the first one.

As things stand right now, what do the current WTO negotiations in domestic support mean for Canadian producers? Despite already significantly reducing our programs since the Uruguay Round, the Doha Round will mean more reductions in real spending for Canadian farmers. However, U.S. farmers will face

no real changes in their spending. On June 20, U.S. politicians in the House of Representatives agriculture subcommittee voted unanimously to extend U.S. Farm Bill subsidies for another five years. This means the trade distortions affecting Canadian producers in the marketplace for grains and livestock will continue, and possibly even get worse.

The Doha Round of the WTO must achieve real cuts in trade distorting domestic support. Canadian producers deserve a fair and level marketplace.

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

**Contact:
Canadian Federation
of Agriculture
613.236.3633
info@cfaca.ca**

Alberta farmers weather another hail season

Alberta farmers and crop adjusters braced for another hail season - hoping this summer wasn't a repeat of last year, when a record number of hail storms pelted crops across most of the province.

Environment Canada recorded 83 severe hail storms in Alberta in 2006, compared to 39 in an average year. "It was the highest occurrence of severe hail (stones at least 20 mm in diameter) in Alberta in more than 20 years," says Dan Kulak, warning preparedness meteorologist for Environment Canada in Edmonton. He points out Alberta is one of the 'hail capitals of the world' due mainly to its location on the down-wind side of the Rockies, combined with cold air masses that move in from the north, and warm air that drifts up from the Gulf of Mexico. "If you wanted to manufacture a hail-producing area, you couldn't do much better."

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

Crop damage climbed to near-record levels last summer. Farmers across the province filed more than 2,200 hail claims through the Straight Hail program with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), the provincial Crown corporation that provides the majority of hail insurance to Alberta farmers.

"We paid out more than \$26-million in claims through our Straight Hail program, making it one of the worst years in our 70-year history," says Wes Jones, Adjusting Manager for AFSC. "Another big thing about last year was many of the hail storms hit around the same time, just as harvest was beginning. The claims were piling up and we were getting really backed up."

So far, a series of early hail storms have occurred throughout Alberta since late May, but with crops still at an early stage, damage has been minimal with a good to excellent chance of recovery, says Jones.

No matter what Mother Nature



Media Message Inc.

As another hail season rolls into Alberta, Wes Jones, adjusting manager with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, says the public insurer needs the help of farmers to ensure claims get processed quickly

has in store this summer, he says AFSC's 150 adjusters are ready. They are now equipped with hand-held computers that calculate claims immediately in the field - saving two or three hours of paper work and a return trip the next day for the farmer's signature. "It all happens right then and there. We'll be able to process a lot more claims in a day."

AFSC is also asking farmers for their help in making things run more smoothly this year. "We need producers to inspect their crops for damage before filing a claim, and to accompany the adjuster to the field," explains Jones.

"We know farmers are busy. Farms are getting bigger, and many producers have off-farm jobs. But if they check their fields before calling us, we can avoid the scenario where the adjuster goes out alone and inspects 17 fields, but only finds damage in two or three. And with the farmer or even a family member or their crop consultant present for the adjuster's inspection, they can see what's happening and ask questions right there, instead of the adjuster making a sec-

ond visit," says Jones. "It means claims will get processed faster and farmers will get paid more quickly. Time is so critical for producers and our adjusters during the growing season."

Regardless of the risk zone they're in, farmers can access Straight Hail coverage at anytime throughout the summer, says Jones. "That's our mandate as a public insurer - to provide full hail protection in every region of the province, even the hardest hit areas. We've built up reserves to cover off the bad years like 2006. And most years, there is enough of a surplus that we're able to issue premium rebates to farmers."

Jones says once a policy is written, coverage takes effect at noon the following day. "But of course, when you see the storm clouds rolling in, it's too late." For more details about hail insurance, producers can contact their local AFSC office or hail agent.

Contact:
AFSC Call Centre
1-888-786-7475

WILD ROSE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS DIRECTORY OF OFFICIALS 2007

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I, Sarah Seinen, Western Farm & Forest's writer, am leaving for greener pastures in southern Alberta. Thank you for all your contributions, stories and photos! Keep 'em coming!

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