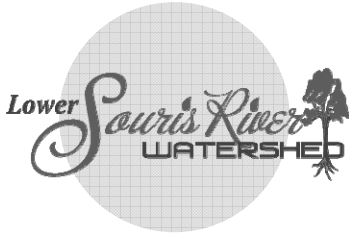


Winter 2008

Lower Souris Watershed Committee Inc.

An Update from your Watershed Committee

(306) 452-3292



"balancing the economic, environmental, and social values to sustain and improve the watershed for future generations"

Lower Souris Watershed Committee Inc.

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Merry Christmas from the Lower Souris Watershed Committee



With all the media these days centered on the latest crises, it may be easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the demands of everyday life. We sometimes get so busy worrying about getting to all the social events of the season, or having that new outfit to wear to a function, or the price of heating fuel, or even if we will make enough money just to get through the holiday season, that we may lose sight of the things which are really important.

As the holiday season nears, perhaps we all need to take time for the friendly hellos, that card sent to a friend, or that phone call to a relative from miles away. Let's take the time to welcome neighbors, friends, and family into our hearts and homes.

On behalf of the board of directors and staff of the Lower Souris Watershed Advisory committee, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone love and laughter this holiday season and all the best in 2009!

Best wishes,
John Van Eaton

National Sustainable Grazing Mentorship Program Update

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Greencover Canada program has recently approved another year of funding for the National Grazing Mentorship Program (SGMP). With the Canadian Cattlemen's Association administering this national project, the Saskatchewan Forage Council is pleased to continue as provincial partner for program delivery.

Through this program, a respected producer peer (mentor) with extensive knowledge and experience with grazing management visits a ranch or farm to discuss grazing resources, opportunities and challenges and provide peer support and continued communication to aid in decision making and implementation of grazing management practices.

Contact the Saskatchewan Forage Council's Grazing Mentorship Program Coordinator, Leanne Thompson at 306.454.2777 or visit www.saskforage.ca for more details.

INSIDE:

- ~ Read about the Fairlight Grazing Demonstration
- ~ Meet the recipients of the Pipestone Watershed Stewardship Committee Award
- ~ Learn about environmentally friendly cleaning options
- ~ Read about the Pasture Rejuvenation and Watering System Tour



Coming Events

January 6, 2009

Put Profit Into the
Cattle Industry -
Changing the Status
Quo (Kit Pharo)
Redvers Legion, 10:00
a.m.

February 10, 2009

Moose Mountain Ag
Days

Prairie Place, Arcola, 9:00
(contact Vicki East - 634-
7074 for more
information)

February 12, 2009

Thinking Outside the
Corral - Low Cost
Winter Feeding
Strategies

Estevan
(contact Lorne Klein -
848-2382 for more
information)

•Check out the events
calendar on the Lower
Souris Watershed
website•

Fairlight Grazing Project

By Angela Bethune, SWA

A research farm in southeast Saskatchewan near Fairlight is using a demonstration project to showcase grazing techniques and the use of non-bloating legumes and native grass.

South East Research Farm manager Garth Johnston says the Fairlight Grazing Project demonstrates the impact of overgrazing on stand production and pasture production. A herd of 30 cow-calf pairs and a bull are used for the demonstration. The area is fenced into two 30 acre paddocks and one 60 acre paddock.

Johnston describes the site. "Half the site is grazed hard and half is grazed lightly to show the long-term impacts of grazing techniques. There are four paddocks on the east side and each is about 12 to 15 acres. The two farthest east are the heaviest grazed. Our intention for the overgrazed side would be four times a summer, with the initial grazing and final grazing on the overgrazed side. The regular grazed side gets half as much, with total grazing between 90 and 120 days." The side-by-side comparison shows how forage productivity declines over the long-term with overstocking.

The west side just looks like an average alfalfa field, according to Johnston. "It's a good chunk of farmland. In 2007 and 2008 we took forages off it, and then we fall grazed it in 2008. So, this past year was our second year of grazing and third year of planting into forages."

But grazing isn't the only demonstration. The project also uses a solar watering system and solar fencing. The solar watering allows for remote watering which promotes healthy riparian areas.

"We're also showing the use of different legumes and native grasses," Johnston says. There are three different blends of legumes being used. Each of the three seed mixes has a heavily and moderately grazed portion.

One blend is alfalfa with a mixture of native grasses. "The native grass isn't as aggressive as the alfalfa. We seeded Green Needle Grass, Western Wheat Grass, Northern Wheat Grass and Little Bluestem. We want to take a look at how native grass can be grazed, but we're a long way from getting those species established," says Johnston.

The other two blends include Meadow Brome Grass and AC Grazeland alfalfa, one mixed with Cicer Milk Vetch and the other with Sainfoin. Both of these legumes are low-bloat alternatives to alfalfa which may reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"Alternative legumes are longer lasting because they take longer to establish. By incorporating these legumes, the grass will grow first and you'll be able to graze them easier with less concern with bloat, and get more of a hay cut. This should give you a few more years with a more consistent grazing stand," says Johnston.

The project is a well known demonstration site near Fairlight. "It's in a familiar location, right on the highway, so it gets lots of public attention and awareness in the surrounding communities."

The SouthEast Research Farm Inc. near Redvers is a non-profit research institute part of a research farm management network called Agri-Arm (Agriculture-Applied Research Management).

The demonstration project is supported by District ADD Board #5 (owners of the land), the Canada-Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Husky Oil, Solar West, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association under the national Greenhouse Mitigation Program for Canadian Agriculture, and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.

SPONSORS

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R.M. of Wawken #93
R.M. of Hazelwood #94
R.M. of Moosomin #121
R.M. of Martin #122
R.M. of Silverwood #123
R.M. of Kingsley #124
R.M. of Chester #125
Village of Carievale
Village of Gainsborough
Village of Kennedy
Village of Maryfield
Village of Storthoaks
Town of Moosomin
Town of Redvers

2008 Pipestone Watershed Stewardship Award Presented to Wes and Val Pranke

Congratulations to Wes and Val Pranke, the recipients of the 2008 Pipestone Watershed Stewardship Award. This award was presented to them by Pipestone Watershed Awards committee member Wes Kemp at the Pipestone Watershed Appreciation supper held October 28 in Moosomin.

The Pranke's operate a feedlot and a cow/calf operation northeast of Wapella, alongside a seasonal creek which flows into the Pipestone Creek. Currently their feedlot has capacity for 1,200 head with room to expand to about 2,300 head. They also have 200 beef cattle and run a custom feeding operation.

In March 2007, the Pranke's completed an Environmental Farm Plan and decided to implement some practices to control runoff from their feedlot pens and improve their holding ponds. They had their feedlot surveyed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – PFRA, and worked with an engineer from the Ministry of Agriculture to design a runoff control project. Berms were then constructed to direct runoff from the feedlot to an evaporation pond north of the pens.

This new system ensures no uncontrolled runoff from the feedlot will enter the creek. This runoff may transport nutrients and other potentially hazardous products to surface and groundwater supplies. The Pranke's work will help keep nearby surface water safe from being impacted during spring snowmelt and heavy rainfall.



Environmentally Friendly Cleaning Options

Environmental responsibility, cost, and health issues are great reasons to try natural alternatives to commercial cleaning products. Phosphate-based cleaners can act as a fertilizer when your waste water meets waterways. Once in the waterways, phosphates can lead to algae growth, which in turns depletes oxygen supplies in the water which our fish and other aquatic organisms need to survive.

Nearly every cleaning task at home can be done with baking soda, vinegar, and olive oil. If you miss the flowery scent available in commercial cleaners, add a few drops of an essential oil. Try out the following recipes for household cleaners:

All-Purpose Cleaner

1 Tbsp. Borax
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 c. hot water

Mix in a spray bottle. Use for cleaning bathroom and kitchen surfaces. Discard leftover cleaner and make a fresh batch next time.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

1 c. vinegar
½ c. baking soda

Pour the vinegar into the toilet bowl and let stand for 30 minutes. Sprinkle baking soda onto the toilet brush and scrub.

Furniture Polish

¼ c. olive oil
¼ c. vinegar
2 tsp. lemon juice

Mix in a spray bottle. Spray onto wood surface and wipe dry.

Drain Opener

1 ½ c. vinegar
2 Tbsp. baking soda

Pour into the clogged drain. Wait 5 minutes and rinse with hot water. Repeat as needed

Glass Cleaner

1 part vinegar
1 part alcohol
1 part water

Mix in a spray bottle and use to clean windows and other glass, chrome, stainless steel surfaces, and tile.



Pasture Rejuvenation and Watering System Tour held in the Lower Souris Watershed

Producers came from throughout the Lower Souris and Upper Souris Watersheds for the Pasture Rejuvenation and Watering System Tour held in the Kennedy area on October 10. This event was co-sponsored by the Lower Souris Watershed Agri-Environmental Group Plan and the Provincial Council of ADD Boards. About 25 people met for this educational tour of local ranches to see methods of rejuvenating older tame pasture and to see a variety of solar watering systems.

The first stop was at Kevin and Kim Dorrance's farm. They have seeded alfalfa into an almost 30 year old stand of meadow brome grass. Using an air drill and just scratching the soil surface, he applied anywhere from 2.5 to 5 lbs/acre of alfalfa into this stand last year. He is seeing a lot more alfalfa plants this year and the rows are clearly visible. He feels most of the 425 acres he did this on worked really well, however wishes he had incorporated other legumes as well. The group also looked at a site where he simply broadcast alfalfa seed onto a previously cropped field. The results were amazing as we stood in alfalfa up to our knees.

Kevin also showed the group his Kelln winter solar watering system he has been using. This system involves trenching water from his dugout to a false well. When the cows come to drink, a motion detector signals the pump to fill the perforated trough sitting on the false well. When the cows leave, the water drains back into the well, but does not re-enter the dugout. Kevin is happy with this system and waters anywhere from 50 to 300 head on it.

Is fertilizing pastures with commercial fertilizer economically feasible? Lorne Klein with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture in Weyburn reported that based on trials at the Brandon Research Centre using fertilized and unfertilized grass pastures and fertilized and unfertilized grass/alfalfa pastures, the only one with positive net revenue was the unfertilized grass/alfalfa pasture. Why not try to incorporate legumes into these pasture stands instead of using commercial fertilizer. Alfalfa fixes 50 lbs of nitrogen for every 2000 lbs of standing alfalfa dry matter, equivalent to applying 150 lbs of commercial nitrogen (at 33% efficiency). For producers who are worried about potential bloat risks with alfalfa, other legumes such as sainfoin or cicer milk vetch could be incorporated as well.

At George and Colleen McNeely's farm, the group examined his Kelln drainback solar watering system which he uses year round. He has been very happy with the system and the service which he has received from Kelln. George has also done pasture rejuvenation where he broadcast cicer milk vetch into an existing pasture. The cattle grazed this site for two days to trample the seed into the soil. The group saw quite a few cicer milk vetch plants while they toured this pasture.

The final stop was to a Solar West watering system at Tim Daku's farm south of Kennedy. This system is set up for both winter and summer use. It involves trenching a line from the dugout to a false well and includes a trough which drains back to the well to prevent freezing. Tim has provided a separate trough for the cows to use in the summer months. He has also installed a wind generator with this system which works to charge the batteries during extended periods of cloudy days. He has been happy with this system thus far.

Thank you to Jill Debenham, Farm Stewardship and Watershed Awareness Advisor with PCAB, and Etienne Soulodre, Range Agrologist with Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, for their hard work in planning this event. It was well attended and sparked a lot of interest and questions. Also, thank you to the producers who attended the tour and to our hosts who were willing to show us the work that they have done to provide alternative watering systems and improve their pasture quality. For more information about this and other events in the Lower Souris Watershed, please contact the Group Plan Advisor at 452-3292.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

