

Forage Facts

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A Warm Welcome to a New PCBFA Staff Member!

By: *Monika Benoit & Liisa Vihvelin*

A note from Monika: Fall 2016 will bring some changes to the PCBFA Staff Team. I will be leaving PCBFA in November to start a new adventure. My husband, Mike and I are expecting our first baby and I will be going on maternity leave.

We have been working on hiring a new manager over the past few months, and we are very pleased to have hired Liisa Vihvelin.

Liisa started with the Association on September 26th, and will be working out of the Fairview office. Be sure to give her a call or stop by for a chat and get to know her!

Now, let's get to know a little more about Liisa...

"I was born and raised in southern New Brunswick. I grew up with horses, and worked at a zoo for many years. I have always loved animals, farms, and anything to do with the outdoors. I fell in love with agriculture while attending the



Veterinary Technology program at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, and immediately transferred into their agriculture degree program. In 2010, I obtained my Bachelor

of Science in Agriculture, with a major in Animal Science and a minor in Ag Business. After graduation, I began working in accounting, and taking accounting courses to further my education.

I have spent the past six years working in accounting and managerial roles in automotive, heavy truck, and farm equipment dealerships, as well as completed the majority of the CPA PREP program. I have recently relocated to Grande Prairie, and I am extremely excited to be joining the PCBFA and becoming actively involved in agriculture in Alberta! I look forward to getting to know all of our members and becoming familiar with your operations."



A PCBFA Farewell...

On September 23rd, PCBFA said farewell to our Extension Coordinator, Kaitlin McLachlan. PCBFA wishes her well in her future endeavors!
If you were dealing with Kaitlin previously or have any questions regarding PCBFA's extension activities, please direct your inquiries to Jen Allen.

By: Kaitlin McLachlan

Winter is upon us, and that means we'll soon be starting up the tractor or turning cattle out into fall and winter grazing. That also means that we have been receiving plenty of feed samples and returning the results to you! Now that you have the feed results, what does it all mean?

When reading your feed test, look at the "Dry Matter" values, these values have the moisture of the feed factored out, so you can compare feed types, from silage to hay to grain. A good target dry matter intake (DMI) is around 2.5% - 2.7% of a cow's body weight.

The most important numbers to look at on your feed test are the "Crude Protein -CP" and "Total Digestible Nutrients -TDN". These values will tell you the protein and energy level of your feed, respectively. Below is a handy table breaking out the needs of a pregnant cow at different points in the winter. Sticking close to these numbers for a pregnant cow should get you through the winter.

| Beef Ration Rules of Thumb | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Animal Type | Energy (TDN) | Protein (CP) |
| Cow— Mid gestation | 55% | 7% |
| Cow—Late Gestation | 60% | 9% |
| Cow—Lactating | 65% | 11% |

If you are backgrounding calves, CP and TDN needs as well as DMI change as calves are still growing. Dry matter intake for growing calves should be in the 2.5-3% of body weight. TDN values are also fluid depending on your target daily gain, as calves utilize energy to grow. The chart below outlines approximate CP and TDN needs of feeder calves.



| Feeder Calf Rules of Thumb | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Calf Weight | Crude Protein (CP) |
| 550-800lbs | 14% |
| 800-1050lbs | 12% |
| 1050lbs-Finish | 10% |
| Target Daily Gain | Energy (TDN) |
| 1.5 lbs/day | 63-66% |
| 2 lbs/day | 66-71% |
| 2.5 lbs/day | 73-78% |
| 3 lbs/day | 78-83% |

Another important aspect of your feed test is the Calcium to Phosphorus Ratio (C:P) and minerals like magnesium (Mg) and potassium (K) are also worth looking at. Your Ca:P ratio should be between 2:1 and 7:1. Ca:P and other mineral requirements can be addressed by using commercial mineral or with feed blends. For mature cows, it is recommended that they receive 0.1 lbs/day of supplement before calving and about 0.15 lbs/day post-partum. Feeder calves require around 0.1 lbs/day on average.

In general, a good rule of thumb to remember is for every degree drop below -20°C, a cow's energy requirements increase by 2%. Monitoring Body Condition during the winter

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Have Project or Workshop Ideas?

We are always looking for ideas! Give us a call!

PCBFA Member Perks

- Two Free Feed Tests/Year
- Ration Balancing Assistance
- Growing Forward 2 Assistance
- Environmental Farm Plans
- Scale & Tag Reader available for member use
- Soil & Livestock Water Quality Testing

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Interpreting Your Feed Test Results



months is very important, as with decreasing temperatures, and advancing pregnancy, the energy in the feed we provide can easily be used up by the cow to keep herself warm and by the growing calf. This can result in thin cows who may not cycle as quickly after calving because she is putting energy towards building condition instead of reproduction.

For more information on feed testing and developing a winter feeding program, contact us here at PCBFA and we would be happy to help you. Agri-Facts: Beef Ration Rules of Thumb from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry is another good resource for producers and the source used for this article.

Reminder: Get your Feed Samples in for Testing!



With a PCBFA membership, you are eligible for 2 free feed samples a year! Get your samples in at a PCBFA office today!

Director's Corner *with Nancy VanHerk*

Our farm is located on Hwy 730 northwest of Hines Creek. We purchased 8 quarters in 1981 as a grain farm, slowly converting to cattle; building a barn, hay shed, corrals and many miles of fences. We began with 40 head of Hereford heifers but now have a mixture of Angus, Simmental and Charolais. Over the years we have expanded our farm as older neighbors retired and sold out. We grow all our own hay, purchase grain from neighbors and have enough pasture for our herd. Our cattle have access to water year-round and spend winter in a sheltered field with abundant straw bedding, feasting on hay and rolled grain, provided daily. Our children think we are overly concerned with the well being and care of our cows: the cows seem to trump family they say! We calve in April and May confining the cows close to the barn and checking them 24/7 to ensure calving difficulties are dealt with promptly.

In 2013, when cattle prices tanked with BSE, I began marketing our beef directly to consumers. We have many loyal customers who simply cannot return to buying ground beef at the supermarket. In addition to being a helpmate to my husband, Pieter, mother to 6 grown children and "Baba" to 11 grandkids, I am also treasurer at our church, sat on the Ag Service Board for 9 years and presently am a member of the Hines Creek and District Rec Board.

This is my second year on the PCBFA Board, and I am enjoying my time serving on this board. Learning about production practices and having the ability to direct the focus of our organization is an honor. Expanding our focus from beef and forages to include crop production has increased the work load on our staff but makes our organization more beneficial to all farmers in the Peace. I'd like to encourage members to consider putting their name forward to serve on our board, the time commitment is minimal and the benefits are great!

Coming Soon: Temporary Part-Time Hours for High Prairie Office

Due to staff changes at PCBFA, the High Prairie Office will temporarily have posted part-time hours starting in November. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience, but we'll still be offering services out of this office. An update will be given in our November newsletter so stay tuned!



Upcoming Events

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Beavers in Our Landscape | October 11th 6:00pm registration | County of GP Community Services Bldg., Clairmont |
| Beavers in Our Landscape | October 12th 10:00am registration | High Prairie Agriplex |
| Young Agrarians Potluck & Social | October 21st | Webster Hall (North of Sexsmith) |
| Alberta Young Farmers & Ranchers Lead the Farm | November 5th | Grande Prairie Corn Maze |
| Dugout Workshop | November 24th 12:30pm registration | Grimshaw Legion |
| Peace Beef Cattle Day | November 30th | Fairview |
| Ration Balancing Workshops | November 2016 | Details TBA |
| GF2 & EFP Workshops | Fall 2016 Details TBA | Clear Hills County Big Lakes County |
| Farm Transition | December 1st & February 16th | Grande Prairie Details TBA |
| Agronomy Update | January 2017 Details TBA | DMI in Fairview |
| Winter Watering Systems Tour | January 21st | Saddle Hills County Details TBA |
| Holistic Management Course | Jan 26-28 & Feb 2-4 | Rycroft |

For more Information or to register for any of these great events, please call the Fairview office at 780-835-6799 or email Jen at jallen@gprc.ab.ca

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