



April 2012

- If you have a project in mind, give me a call!
- Well Decommissioning
- Fencing
- Riparian Buffers
- Grass Seeding
- Water Systems
- Windbreaks
- Calf Shelters
- And many, many more!!!
- Rachel:(306) 549 4060

Saskatchewan Pasture School Event: June 13 & 14 2012

**University of Saskatchewan
Case Study of a Working Ranch**

- Tame Pasture
- Native Pasture
- Managing Restorations
- Pasture Pipelines
- Brush Encroachment
- Pasture Rejuvenation
- Fencing Methods
- Cattle Handling
- Forage Quality
- Grazing Plans
- Profitability

PLUS

- Ranch Roping
- Cowboy Poetry

Contact Saskatchewan Forage Council

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Email: office@saskforage.ca

The Economics of Grazing Management

Leanne Thomson: Saskatchewan Forage Council

Does it “pay” to pay attention to grazing management? This is a basic question that producers often grapple with. The Forage Industry Analysis project that the Saskatchewan Forage Council was recently working on has provided information to help answer these types of questions. The final report resulting from this project is available. The example provided below is based on the pasture valuation section of this report.

Good grazing management is all about maintaining productivity of your grass stands at the best possible level. If you are able to maintain grass stands in excellent condition, the carrying capacity of the stand is at its highest. On the other hand, grass stands in poor or fair condition have a reduced carrying capacity. Carrying capacity of the stand will have a direct effect on the number of livestock you can graze and the performance of animals grazing on the forage.

To demonstrate the economics of this idea, you can apply recommended stocking rates and custom grazing rates to look at the effect on economic returns. Recommended stocking rates are set based on the pasture condition as follows (% of good



condition pasture):

Excellent – 133%

Good – 100%

Fair – 66%

Poor – 33%

In a recent survey of grazing rates, it was determined that custom grazing rates in Saskatchewan were in the \$0.75 per pair per day range (approximately \$22.50/AUM) for forage only (i.e. no other services included). This means that if the recommended stocking rate for your pasture in good condition is 1.3 AUM/acre, the stocking rate can be increased to 1.7 AUM/acre if it is in excellent condition. This will translate into another \$9/acre (based on the \$22.50 AUM rate) for pasture in excellent condition.

On the flip side, pasture in poor condition will have a reduced stocking rate of 0.4 AUM/acre and pasture in fair condition a stocking rate of

0.9 AUM/acre. These stocking rates will translate into a loss of \$20.25/acre for poor pasture and \$9/acre for fair pasture (compared to good condition).

Good grazing management that aims to maintain or improve pasture condition will clearly translate into economic returns for the grazier.

Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve Community Farmers Market:

When:

Saturday, June 9

Saturday, July 7

Saturday, August 18

Saturday, September 8

Saturday, October 6

Location: Hafford Ukrainian National Hall

Time: 10:00am—5:00pm

For more information or to set up a table call (306) 549 4060



**Ducks Unlimited
Canada
GOT FORAGE?**

Benefits of well managed forage:

- Sustainable feed source for livestock
- Protection from soil erosion from both wind and water
- Diversity in crop rotations
- Improved water infiltration in soil
- Enhanced soil fertility
- Habitat for nesting waterfowl and other birds

*Viterra and DUC's are teaming up to offer a **Forage Incentive Program** to growers in DUC target areas. Producers in the target areas are eligible for \$20/acre to establish forage. Producers can "double up" with 50% cost-shared funding from the Canada-Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program.*

DUC's is also looking to restore drained wetlands. You may be eligible for up to \$500/acre.



*Contact DUC's:
Dave O'Bertos—(306) 445 2575
Richard McBride—(306) 665 7152*

Range Health means the ability of rangeland to perform certain key functions. Healthy pastures produce more pounds per acre of forage than unhealthy pastures. Healthy pastures reduce erosion, store more water and are better at cycling nutrients.

How do we measure the health of our pasture? The government of Alberta has a handy workbook: *Rangeland Health Assessment*, for you to carry around when you're out in the field to assess your tame pasture health. Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP) has developed similar workbooks to use on native pastures, wetlands, sloughs, creeks and rivers.

What do we measure?

- 1)Plant Composition: Are the plants growing the plants that were seeded? Get to know your grasses. Different grasses produce different quantities and qualities of forage. Sometimes a tame pasture can become modified and the grass and legume species present are not those that were seeded. This can be the result of many different factors such as but not limited to establishment problems, weed infestation or overgrazing.
- 2)Are The Expected Layers Present: Different forages respond to different grazing regimes. For example Kentucky Blue Grass, a medium height grass, may out compete taller more productive grasses under increased grazing pressure, yet KBG will not produce the quantity of forage a taller grass would produce.
- 3)Does The Site Retain Moisture: Is the expected amount of plant litter present? Litter slows runoff and creates a pathway for water to percolate and be retained into the soil. Healthy pastures should have at least 450 lbs/acre litter present.
- 4)Is The Site Subject To Accelerated Erosion: Is there human caused bare ground? Look for rill and gully erosion, pedestalling, compaction and hoof shearing. Early detection of erosion indicates the immediate need for a change in management.
- 5)Are Noxious Weeds Present On the Site: These weeds often establish where a disturbance has increased bare ground. Under increased grazing pressure, weeds will outcompete and displace valuable forage.

When all the information is gathered, and graded, you will come up with a health score: Healthy, Healthy with Problems, or Unhealthy. Management decisions can be made, based on the data collection. Measuring means that you can compare. Go back to the site and monitor, make decisions and watch your pasture improve. If your pastures are healthy, measuring and monitoring means you can be proactive, and aware.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP A GRAZING MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR YOUR FARM, LEARN MORE ABOUT HEALTH ASSESSMENTS AND STOCKING RATES CONTACT RLW AEGP 549 4060

*Canada Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program
(CSFSP) End: March 2013*

The CSFSP delivered by Provincial Council of Agriculture Development and Diversification Boards (PCAB) as a part of the Growing Forward is scheduled to close **March 31 2013.**

What do you need to know?

- 1) Projects must be completed by December 31, 2012

- 2) Claims must be received in office by January 31, 2013
- 3) There will be no extensions granted

If you are considering applying for Relocation of Livestock Confinement Facilities, Improved Stream and Creek Crossings, Farmyard Runoff

Control, or Modifying and Revegetating Waterways, the applications must be received in PCAB office by June 30, 2012.

RLW AEGP will accept and work with you on your applications until approximately mid September!