



## For Immediate Release

### **Busy Summer Ahead for Grassland Carbon Research in Manitoba**

*National CFGA Project Utilizes Six Manitoba Fields to Determine Greenhouse Gas Reduction*

**Winnipeg, Mb (July 16, 2019)** - Researchers will be digging down on six Manitoba fields this summer as part of a national project to look at the role of forages and grasslands in reducing Greenhouse Gases in Canada.

*“High Performance Management Systems To Reduce Greenhouse Gases in Canada’s Forages and Grasslands”* is being led nationally by the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) after a successful application to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Greenhouse Gas Program last year.

“Grasslands around the world warrant significant attention when discussing GHGs due to their sheer size, whether they are serving as a source, sink, or reservoir,” said Cedric McLeod, CFGA executive director. “The Canadian Forage and Grasslands sector is the single largest land use component of Canadian agriculture, covering over 70-million acres of cropland, with 36-million acres devoted to native rangeland and the remaining 34-million acres dedicated to the production of annual and perennial tame forages. CFGA saw a real need to lead our project and paint a national picture as to how impactful these areas are in reducing greenhouse gases in Canada.”

Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association (MFGA) is fully supportive of the CFGA project and helped identify the five producer fields as well as the sixth at Manitoba Beef and Forages Initiatives (MBFI) research and demonstration Brookdale farm near Brandon, MB as project sites. Dr. Terence McGonigle of Brandon University will lead the research team in sampling the nominated fields.

Manitoba’s grasslands cover approximately six million acres of total farm land in the province, positioning Manitoba as one of Canada’s grassland and forage powerhouses on a national scale. Although many groups view the grasslands as a highly valuable and yet increasingly at-risk ecosystem, there remains a lack of commitment to ensure sustainable use, as well as avoided conversion to annual cropping or other land uses.

While MBFI was selected for the research-history and capacity of the Brookdale Farm (located on the site formerly occupied by the Zero-Till Management Research Farm), measuring the carbon holding capacity of the other five Manitoba fields will help showcase the best management practices that the producers utilize.

“Quite frankly, the five producers that we selected represent a growing number of what we feel are a rapidly increasing number of really informed, really keen livestock and grass producers in our province,” said Duncan Morrison, MFGA executive director. “We want to showcase the results from the way these families are farming and the management systems they are utilizing. It’s time to add the carbon equation to the decision mix and bolster the biodiversity, water management and soil health platforms

of grassland retention, forage and livestock production and producer profitability. It's another feather in our collective farming caps as we tell our producers' stories around the good they do for our province and country, this time via research anticipated to confirm greenhouse gas reduction on their fields."

**The five Manitoba producers are:**

- 1) Located in the upper valley of the Assiniboine River near Miniota, the farm of **Ryan Canart** employs intensified rotational grazing. The study field has been put to rotational grazing for 15 years, following conversion from annual crops in 2004.
- 2) East of Miniota at Hamiota, the farm of **Dr. Allan Preston** uses balanced fertility. The study field is 30 ac. More details are being gathered and provided.
- 3) Between Brandon and the approach to Riding Mountain National Park, the farm of **Clayton Robins** uses annual crop integration. Two fields are being studied, with annual crops added from 2011 and 2018, respectively to rest perennials in the critical acclimation period. The cereal or cereal-fababean crop is undersown to a late-season forage mix, with grazing in strips across the field from September. The crop is baled, with feeding at the site formed.
- 4) At the south-west of the province, the farm of **Matt Van Steelandt** near Melita is utilizing adaptive multi-paddock grazing and extensive livestock wintering to build soil health. Various historic bale grazing events are evident across the site. Bale grazing is from December to April. Two selected event sites are from January 2015 and January 2017.
- 5) Directly east of Winnipeg, the farm of **Jonathan Bouw** near Anola utilizes intensive rotational grazing and bale grazing. Bale grazing proceeds from November to May. Animals for bale grazing are heifers and steers at 1.5 years of age at the start of bale grazing. Outside of the bale grazing period, rotational grazing is for 60 developing bulls on 3 ac for 2-3 days. Using the January date, paddocks to be studied correspond to bale grazing in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. Samples are to be taken on-bale and off-bale.

The research aspects of the project wrap up next year. CFGA General Managers will be at MBFI in late July for their annual national meeting which will include updates on MFGA-CFGA AGGP results. MFGA will also feature the project on their website at [mfga.net](http://mfga.net) and look to profile the producers and research at the MFGA Regenerative Ag Days November 19-20, 2019.