Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence Field Day a Great Success

by: Shannon McArton, SFC Executive Director

The 21st of June was a busy day for the Saskatchewan Forage Council, as we joined a large crowd at the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence summer field day, presented by Canadian Western Agribition, in advance of our own annual general meeting.

On the day after a heavy rain, both the weather and visitor interest were on-side for Tuesday’s event. A strong agenda included featured speakers Phil Harder “The LFCE Weather and Climate story; unlocking the mystery of moisture” and Kathy Larson “Cattle Traits that Make a Difference in Price” as well as Metabolism Unit and University of Saskatchewan graduate student research posters.

The afternoon’s three concurrent tours offered: Forages, with Dr. Bill Biligetu, David MacTaggart and Karen Tonino; Feedlot with Rachel Carey, Tyen Paterson and guest speaker Brad Welter; and “Section Five” hosted presentations about better diagnostics for animal health by Anatoliy Trokhymchuk and an annual versus perennial forage systems project update led by Dr. Bart Lardner, Megan Wasden and guest speaker Blaine Hjertaas.

The field day was well-attended and smoothly executed and it was clear that people were enjoying the return to in-person learning and networking.

Saskatchewan Forage Council Introduces Board of Directors at its Annual General Meeting

by: Shannon McArton, SFC Executive Director

At the conclusion of the field day, the Saskatchewan Forage Council annual general meeting convened in the LFCE boardroom.
In addition to the requisite review of business operations over the past fiscal year (ended March 31, 2022), the agenda included an organizational update and the appointment of the board of directors.

Nominated to three-year terms were returning director Jeremy Brown, custom grazer and consultant from North Battleford, Cassandra Schroeder, Range Management Specialist with the Ministry of Agriculture, Kyle Hebert, a beef producer from Wolseley and Brooke Howat, Conservation Program Specialist with Ducks Unlimited out of North Battleford.

They now join Mark McNinch, Allan VanCaeseele, Holly Sparrow, Dr. Greg Penner, Dr. Bill Biligetu, David MacTaggart, Autumn Lynn, Paul Kernaleguen and Kevin Steinley to form the SFC board of directors.

Mervin-area rancher Mark McNinch was re-elected Saskatchewan Forage Council President and Jeremy Brown was re-elected Vice-President. Newly-appointed Finance Chair Autumn Lynn will join the President and Vice-President to form the SFC executive committee.

“It’s a pleasure to serve as President of the Saskatchewan Forage Council,” said McNinch. “This is a great group of people that I’m proud to work with. We are very thankful to our retiring directors, who have contributed a lot to this organization. I’m looking forward to getting to know and work with the new directors over the next year.”

Recognition was given to retiring directors Sarah Sommerfeld and Dr. Jillian Bainard. Jillian, a forage researcher with Swift Current Research and Development Centre now resides in British Columbia, and was unable to attend. Sarah Sommerfeld, who joined the board in 2013 and has been a wealth of expertise and corporate knowledge, accepted a presentation from President Mark McNinch.

Terry Kowalchuk, Provincial Forage Specialist, held an ex-officio position on the SFC board from 2014 until his retirement from the Ministry of Agriculture on May 31st. He was acknowledged for his service to this organization at a May retirement event.

In a review of the activities of the last year, management also outlined new ADOPT and ADF projects that are being administered by SFC. In-kind support is also being offered to a number of other projects, including the recently-launched Prairie Watersheds Climate Program (PWCP), a 40-million-dollar project that is being administered by Manitoba Association of Watersheds (MAW) and Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) and is funded by Agriculture & Agri Food Canada’s On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF).

A video presentation from Manitoba Forage & Grasslands Association spoke about its Aquancy Forecasting Tool project, funded by AAFC through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. This unique resource will provide forecasting technology to allow farmers and land managers along the Assiniboine River Basin to predict extreme weather events and make plans to reduce losses and lower risk exposure.

At the conclusion of the meeting, directors, members and guests enjoyed some networking time over supper. It was satisfying to see a well-attended, face-to-face meeting. Thanks to Scott Wright and his team at LFCE for inviting us to align with their field day, and providing us with meeting space.

*Image: President Mark McNinch presents to retiring director Sarah Sommerfeld*
Prairie Watersheds Climate Program Launched

Saskatchewan Forage Council is proud to sit on the steering committee for the Prairie Watersheds Climate Program (PWCP) which officially launched last week. The program, funded by AAFC On-Farm Climate Action Fund, is being administered by the Manitoba Association of Watersheds (MAW) and the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW). The program focuses on Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) uptake and awareness and eligible BMP focus on three categories: Rotational Grazing, Nitrogen Management and Cover Cropping.

For more information, read the press release here, and for program details here in Saskatchewan contact pwcp@saskwatersheds.ca or SAW.
SSGA Convention

by: Shannon McArton, SFC Executive Director

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) held its 109th Annual General Meeting & Convention on June 5-7th at the Prince of Wales Centre in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan. It was the organization’s first in-person meeting since June 2019, and was very well attended. The facility provided the perfect venue for the business meeting and convention, which was themed “The Power of Perseverance.” The Saskatchewan Forage Council attended with a booth in the sold-out trade show, which was well-situated in a space adjacent to the main meeting room.

Some highlights of the event were a strong convention agenda that focused on drought preparedness and released recent findings of a meat processing study co-funded by SSGA and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture to review opportunities and challenges for growing the province’s livestock processing sector.

Other presentations included time-sensitive, relevant information about irrigation, canola meal supplementation, national and global cattle market updates, current costs of production, activism and public perception and virtual fencing research. More information about any of the presentations can be obtained through the SSGA office.

Gerald and Patti Anhorn of Windy Ridge Ranch at Elrose, Saskatchewan were awarded The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA) at the evening banquet.

Tuesday’s agenda centred around the 109th annual general meeting, at which Garner Deobald from Hodgeville was elected as SSGA President, succeeding retiring President Kelcy Elford.

Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan Invest in Research on Carbon Sequestration in Pasture and Forage Lands

Government of Saskatchewan, May 30, 2022

Today, Canada’s Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau and Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit announced $3.2 million in funding for research on carbon sequestration in perennial forage and pastures.

The funding was approved under the Strategic Research Initiative (SRI) which advances research to address complex challenges faced by the agriculture and agri-food sectors.

“Carbon sequestration is important to help mitigate the effects of climate change,” said Bibeau. “This research will improve our understanding of the best practices for managing our grazing systems, and ensure producers will be well-positioned to further contribute to the sector’s long-term sustainability.”

The project, jointly undertaken by Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn of the University of Saskatchewan and Dr. Cameron Carlyle of the University of Alberta over the next five years, will examine soil carbon stocks in perennial forage systems across Saskatchewan, and investigate the link between producer management practices and carbon stores to identify practices that promote carbon sequestration. One of the outcomes of the project will be maps providing an accurate estimate of carbon in Saskatchewan’s pasture and rangelands.

Read more
Upcoming Events

SaskSoil and Regeneration Canada Producer Gathering
July 6, 2022
Minton, SK
Learn more and register here

Optimizing the Integration of Livestock: With or Without Ownership
Webinar by Sask Organics
July 14, 2022
Learn more and register here

Ag in Motion
July 19-21, 2022
Langham, SK
Visit the website to read more

Field Day at the Swift Current Research & Development Centre
July 28, 2022
Swift Current, SK
Learn more from Sask Organics

Research Farm field days 2022
July 13-August 31, 2022
Various locations, SK
Read more on the Sask Pulse website

Saskatchewan Pasture Tour
August 4, 2022
St Brieux, SK
Visit the SFC website for registration info

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