

# Forage Facts

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## Soil Health & Carbon Sequestration

By: Anna Duke

The topic of carbon sequestration regarding soil health is crucial, especially in regards to future climate change concerns. It is essential to first understand how exactly agriculture is related to the release of carbon, and what can be done to reduce or limit emissions yet promote sequestration and storage. Cultivation and tillage activities release carbon dioxide from the soil into the atmosphere. As well, force-fed oats and hay in large livestock operations (when compared to the grasses animals would naturally forage if allowed free-range), causes greater methane emissions. Another example can be seen in the production and use of fertilizers - when applied to soil, they limit the plants' natural abilities to process and refine atmospheric carbon, which ultimately reduces soil building. The overarching idea here is that much of the carbon that was stored in the earth's soil has been released over time through farming and industry endeavors. Soil is the second largest carbon sink on earth, and only second to our oceans. The

balance between emission and sequestration is vital for the future health of not only our soils, but the planet as a whole. That leads us to the pertinent question of how can we reduce emissions and pull carbon back from the atmosphere and into the soil where it should be? Of course the answer is not simple, but definitely manageable. One solution is found through regenerative farming - using photosynthesis and plants to harness that atmospheric carbon and store it in our soils. We can also look to ideas of crop residues and how they help with problems of soil degradation. By increasing soil organic matter contents (through leaving annual crop residues), we can effectively increase aggregation and promote healthier soil and increased carbon sequestration. Through the improvement of soil structure and aggregate stability, along with better nutrient cycling, we can create a much more suitable and ideal habitat for many soil organisms, and increase overall biological activity. This healthier, more improved soil will in turn provide more efficient yields and ultimately increase profitability for farmers.

(Schlesinger, 1999)



## A PCBFA Farewell...

On July 10th, PCBFA said farewell to our Agri-Environmental Coordinator, Jen Allen... *"I have learned so much while working for PCBFA and am incredibly grateful to have been a part of such a great organization and network, and for the people I have had the pleasure to meet and work with along the way."*

We will miss her dearly and wish her well in her future endeavors!

If you were dealing with Jen previously or have any questions, please direct your inquiries to Liisa Vihvelin.



# Helping Make Energy Efficiency Achievable

By: Kale Scarff and Vern Steinborn

## Growing Forward 2

A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

The Government of Alberta, through Growing Forward 2 (GF2) a federal, provincial, territorial initiative, offers two incentive-based programs aimed at helping Alberta farmers and ranchers reduce energy consumption and associated costs.

The GF2 On-Farm Energy Management Program (OFEMP) and the GF2 On-Farm Solar Photovoltaic (OFSPV) Program offer farmers and ranchers the opportunity to become energy efficient by sharing the cost to purchase energy efficient or renewable technologies. These initiatives are intended to make energy efficient technology as affordable as current technology, making the environmentally friendly choice also the economically sensible choice.

There are many technologies and practices farmers and ranchers can implement on their operations to reduce their energy footprint and protect (and possibly even increase) profit margins. Carbon emission reduction and energy sustainability can both be practiced while also running an economically sustainable farm.

Eligible projects of OFEMP include:

- Construction projects that install high-efficiency equipment from the program's Funding List;
- Retrofit projects that improve operation energy usage per unit of production; and
- Installation of sub-metres to monitor on-farm electricity and/or natural gas usage.

Eligible OFSPV systems must be:

- Grid-tied, not off-grid;
- Approved under Alberta's Micro-Generation Legislation;

- Positioned to optimize sunshine and minimize shading;
- Have manufacturer-warranties on: Solar modules, Racking, Inverters and/or Micro-inverters; and
- Producing power that is used in the production of a primary commodity.

The Government has partnered with three grass-roots organizations staffed with Energy Outreach Officers whose role is to promote the OFEMP and the OFSPV Program to Alberta communities. Energy Outreach Officers are available to attend community events, talk about energy efficient technologies, answer questions about the OFEMP and OFSPV Program, and explain the benefits of these programs. The Outreach Officers are also more than happy to meet one-on-one with you to help you find potential energy efficiency solutions for your operation.

If you would like more information on these programs and how you can access funding, you can visit [www.growingforward.alberta.ca](http://www.growingforward.alberta.ca) and subscribe for updates, or contact your regional Energy Outreach Officer.

Regional Contact Information:  
Energy Outreach Officer – Kale Scarff  
Phone: (780) 307-7849  
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### Thank you to the PCBFA Board of Directors

Jordan Barnfield  
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Robbie Hale

### 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

### Thank-You to our Municipal Partners

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Big Lakes County  
County of Grande Prairie  
Northern Sunrise County

Good Day Everyone,

We are now well into our summer and I hope that everyone has taken some time to just stop and enjoy it for awhile.

PCBFA has had a very good spring and summer to date. Our staff and our board should all be very proud of themselves and of each other, for what they have accomplished as a team so far this year. Our great staff have been busy putting on some really good field days & workshops, planting and maintaining what seems to be an endless amount of plots, keeping up on all of the trials and research that goes along with so many of them, and with all of the other on going projects that PCBFA is involved in and working on. They have faced some challenges along the way so far this year, and have taken on whatever has come at them and done very well. The PCBFA Board has been very engaged this year - with things like board governance training, hosting workshops, work bees at the research farm, helping out the staff when needed, and having more regular meetings. It is a great group of passionate producers that we have on the board. With our board and our staff it has been a good team effort that has produced a very successful spring and start to this summer. It has been great to see us all come together to look at and work towards PCBFA's bright future. We have been working on things like succession planning, board member orientation, involving and educating our local youth, providing for our members, projects and field days, and so much more. We see big things to come with PCBFA and it has been a fun start to this year. Good job all!

Well, with our short summer season remember to take that time to stop and enjoy it. Do be sure to take your hay and soil samples this year and make good use of your PCBFA membership. Come on out to any field days and workshops that you are interested in - member involvement is a big part of their success. Do not hesitate to contact our staff with any questions or ideas that you may have. And I encourage anyone that is interested to check out all of the plots and trials at the research farm, and also the demo plots in Rycroft and Valleyview. Our staff love to answer any questions that you might have on them.

Here's to a great rest of the summer and this up coming fall. And I would like to send out our good luck and best wishes to Jen Allen, who has gone on a new adventure back down east. Good luck Jen and thank you for everything that you did for us.

Cheers,

Jordan Barnfield





# Upcoming Events

**ACIDF Pasture Rejuvenation  
Field Days**

August 23rd  
1:00pm-4:00pm

Rycroft

**ACIDF Pasture Rejuvenation  
Field Days**

August 24th  
1:00pm-4:00pm

Grovedale

**Cows, Crops, Culverts & Fish  
Projects Tour**

Heart River Watershed Restoration Plan Update

August 2017  
Details TBA

Northern Sunrise  
County

**Stockmanship School  
with Dylan Biggs**

September 16th  
9:00am-5:00pm

Gordondale Hall

**New Zealand Ag Study Tour**

Nov 23rd-Dec 12th

New Zealand

**Western Canada Conference on  
Soil Health & Grazing**

December 5th-7th  
[www.absoilgrazing.com](http://www.absoilgrazing.com)

Radisson Hotel  
Edmonton

For more information or to register for any of these great events, please visit our website or call the Fairview office at 780-835-6799 or email [info@pcbfa.ca](mailto:info@pcbfa.ca)

## Contact Us

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