Forage Facts

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Energy Efficiency

By: Codie lee Yasieniuk

With winter right around the corner, many of us are worrying about the approaching season. Besides the difficult weather, increases in energy bills can often weigh on our minds. Many different agriculture practices, and types of equipment, can act as 'energy drains', and cause your bills to go through the roof! Heres a couple ways to prepare your operation for the winter, and to make sure you get the best bang for your buck.

Watering Systems

When running a livestock operation, watering systems are incredible important to the health of your animals. Cold winter temperatures, and wind, can cause trouble when trying to keep a system running properly. Utilizing an automatic waterer, or water tank, and protecting the system from wind is advantageous. Consistently maintaining the float functionality is also very important– filling, or draining at the proper time can stop overflow, or having too little water in the bowl. Both situations cause freezing, and undesirable conditions.

Machinery

Idling in the winter may keep your fingers warm for a bit longer, but it may not be worth the wear and tear on the machine.

Also, the slight increase in fuel usage from idling may seem worth it, but that 'little bit of extra fuel' can really add up by the end of the winter!

Regular maintenance can make a huge difference. Malfunctions in the machine can cause unnecessary energy use, and fixing a bad part means you have to stay out in the cold longer! Its just a plain good idea to keep an eye on your equipment.

Heating

Keeping new calves warm in the winter is worth the time and effort. However, by keeping an entire barn or hold facility warm through the entire winter, you may be wasting large amounts of energy. To save energy, holding calves in a smaller area may be the way to go. As long as the calves, and mother cow, are comfortable and healthy, considering a smaller area to heat can save you a lot of energy. Use of 'indoor and outdoor safe' space heaters can be used to heat a smaller area as well.

Insulating farm buildings is also worth the investment. It is recommended to use greater than R20 insulation on outer walls, and greater than R30 in the rafters or ceiling.

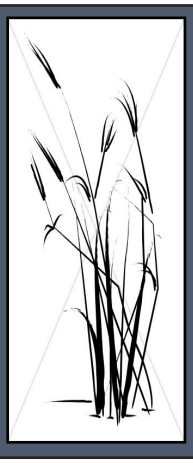
Energy an be tricky to monitor. Watch your fuel use, energy bills etc. for any spikes or unreasonably high amounts of usage.

It sure pays to pay attention!

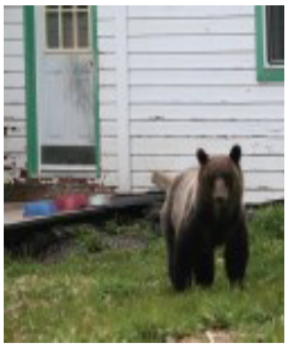
A Ranchers Poem

Plenty of clean air is what I need.
Plenty of clean water is what I want.
Plenty of green grass is what I ask.
To complete my ranching task.

Garry Gurtler



Be BearSmart!



During the fall season, bears are in constant search for food to gain the necessary weight to survive winter. They can eat upwards of 25,000 calories a day! While their preferred source of food is natural vegetation, they are opportunistic feeders and will eat anything from juice boxes to livestock. Because of this, we need to take extra precautions to prevent human-bear encounters when being outdoors this time of year.

Tips for Avoiding Bear Encounters while Working, Living, and Recreating in Bear Country:

- Clean your BBQ after each use and store it inside a garage or shed
- Aerate your compost frequently and cover it with soil or lime to reduce odours
- Only use bird feeders during winter when bears are least active
- Store pet food inside or keep it in bear-proof containers. Same goes for garbage, recycling, or dead livestock!
- Pick up any fallen fruit from fruit trees or berry bushes
- Use electric fencing around bee colonies or high-value crops
- Keep dogs on a leash to prevent unwanted negative bear encounters
- Bears are more active at dusk and dawn. Take precaution during these times and make noise and carry bear spray
- Have a safety plan for children – make sure they know what to do if they see a bear and practice "bear safety drills!"
- Always watch for signs of bear activity – tracks, scat, broken berry bushes, scratched logs and trees, or upturned earth. If you see any of these signs, stay alert, be calm and cautious and leave the area IMMEDIATELY
- If a bear continues to return to your yard or community, or if it poses a public safety concern, call your Fish and Wildlife Office (310-000 toll-free), or the 24-hour Report A Poacher line at 1-800-642-3800

DID YOU KNOW?
Simple changes in your behaviour can reduce human-bear encounters and prevent potentially dangerous situations.

Most bear encounters can be prevented. It's up to us to decide how we will keep ourselves safe, and keep wild bears from becoming habituated, problem bears.
For more information on bears and Alberta BearSmart, visit: http://aep.alberta.ca/recreation-public-use/alberta-bear-smart/default.aspx

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

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Director's Corner *with Preston Basnett*

With the haying done and straw to finish baling, crops to get off yet, it is such a busy time of the year! Cows coming home from pasture, bulls to sort off and calves to wean; its always an… interesting time for most of us, rushing into an uncertain winter that may or may not be brutal with the winds and cold.

Here at home, we swath graze our herd until mid November and then feed haylage and oat silage bales with dry alfalfa/brome mix processed daily. Generally we ship calves November/December or do the gamble and feed them until February/March and ship them then.

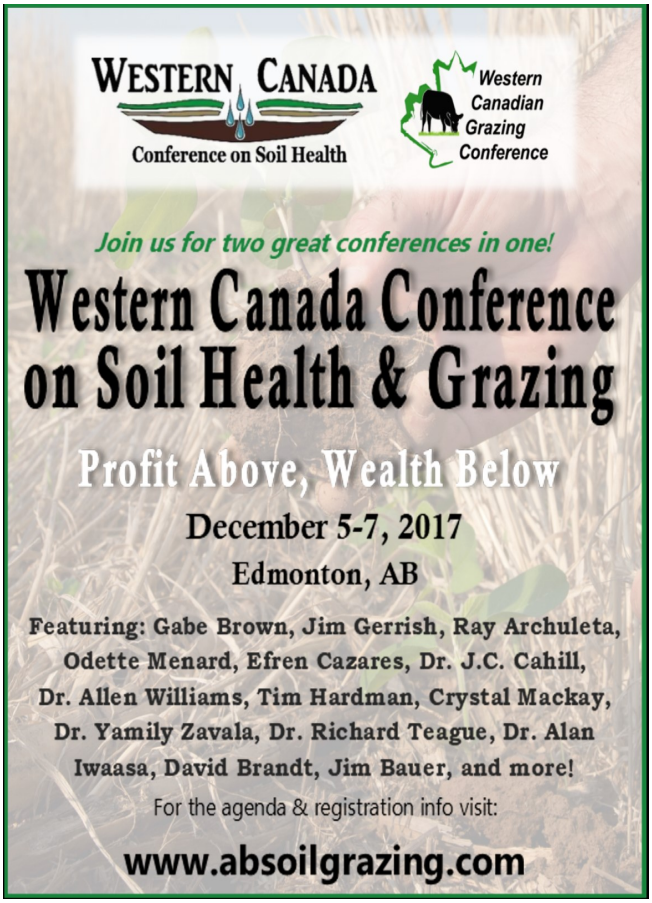
Remember to take in your feed samples to the PCBFA office to be tested, so going into winter, you can adjust your feeding as needed. The results can surprise you whether for the good or bad, but with a feed test you know exactly what you have so you are not over or underfeeding

Also, there is always PCBFA Events happening around the Peace Country that would be of interest to you, so keep watch for our newsletter or on the website and phone the office to register 780-835-6799 or e-mail info@pcbfa.ca

Good luck going into winter, here's hoping for a good long fall, to get all on the to-do list, completed!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY WINTER CHECKLIST

- □ Install dimmers, and motion sensors, on barn lights
- □ Check doors, and windows, for a tight seal against the cold
- □ Insulate water bowls, water pipes and farm buildings
- □ Follow recommended maintenance schedule for equipment
- □ Install timers on water heaters
- □ Monitor thermostats
- □ Reduce heating in areas not being used
- □ Reduce idling in equipment
- □ Create an efficient feeding system, and schedule
- □ Install solar electric charger for electric fencing
- □ Conduct an energy audit



Upcoming Events

'Tools To Build Your Herd' Workshop	October 31st	Valleyview
'Tools To Build Your Herd' Workshop	November 1st	Rycroft
New Zealand Ag. Study Tour	November 23rd—December 12th	New Zealand
Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing	December 5th—7th	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

Thank you to all attendees and supporters of our past events!

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Contact Us

Liisa Vihvelin
Manager
Fairview, AB
780-835-6799
780-523-0443
liisa@pcbfa.ca

Akim Omokanye
Research Coordinator
Fairview, AB
780-835-6799
780-835-1112
akim@pcbfa.ca

Lekshmi Sreekumar
Research Technician
Fairview, AB
780-835-6799
780-536-7373
lekshmi@pcbfa.ca

Codie lee Yasieniuk
Environmental and Communications Coordinator
Fairview, AB
780-835-6799
780-772-0277
codielee@pcbfa.ca

High Prairie Office
High Prairie, AB
780-523-4033
info@pcbfa.ca