

Forage Facts

Published by the Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

October 2019, Volume 15, Issue 177



Warm Welcome to Our New Interim Manager!

By: Chelsey Hostettler

community. We moved to Fairview and established a family farm partnership then soon followed our two young girls (Rosa, 3 yrs and Heidi, 1 yr).



Seeing what it takes to be a farmer in the 21st century I've come to realize that your knowledge base is as wide as ever. The 'millennial' farmer must now utilize technology in ways that adapt farming practices to ensure the consumer can trust products found in the market. Yes, I am a millennial! But I'm the type of person that will work tirelessly in representing PCBFA. I see my passion for growing food for our family, environmental awareness and rural community, as principles that embodies the PCBFA.

Please feel free to say hi and share a story or two. I'm always interested in hearing about weather frustrations, harvest woes or flawless haying operations.

Hello! I'm excited to jump into my new role of interim manager at PCBFA. There will be a transition period as I try to fill the shoes of Liisa Jeffrey while she starts her maternity leave in November. I am truly looking forward to stepping up to the challenges that are coming my way. It's exciting to be part of an association that has established deep roots in the Peace Country. Working for PCBFA really reflects my personal goal and vision to be part of a team that is passionate about building innovative practices for farmers and ranchers, an integral way of life for our rural communities.

I grew up on a seed farm near New Norway, Alberta where I was responsible for maintaining several hundred laying hens and all other associated farm chores (too many to list here). I believe it's a true sense of pride when you can say you were raised on a farm. And now I want my family to have those special farm experiences I had when I was a child.

Following high school, I attended the University of Alberta to receive my Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering. I worked in the oil and gas industry for nearly 5 years across Alberta and decided with my husband, Thomas, that we would love to raise our family in a small town surrounded by a supportive

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DID YOU KNOW?

The hide from one cow can make:
144 baseballs,
20 footballs, or
12 basketballs

Rules of Thumb for Interpreting Your Feed Test Results

By Katie McLachlan

Winter is coming, and that means we'll soon be starting up the tractor or turning cattle out into winter grazing. That also means that we have been very busy in the office processing and shipping feed samples!

Once you get your feed test results, you may be wondering - what the heck does this all mean?



Photo from: grainnews.ca

When reading your feed test, look at the "Dry Matter" values, these values have the moisture of the feed factored out, so you can compare feed types for nutritional quality, from silage to hay to grain. Dry matter is what actually fills a cow up and satisfies her hunger. A good target dry matter intake (DMI) is around 2.5% - 2.7% of a cow's body weight.

The most important numbers to look at on your feed test when feeding beef cattle are Crude Protein (CP) and Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN). These values will tell you the protein and energy levels of your feed, respectively. Following is a handy table breaking out

the needs of a pregnant cow at different points through gestation. Sticking close to these numbers for a pregnant cow should get you through the winter.

Beef Ration Rules of Thumb		
Animal Type	Energy (TDN)	Protein (CP)
Cow—Mid gestation	55%	7%
Cow—Late Gestation	60%	9%
Cow—Lactating	65%	11%

If you are backgrounding or feeding calves, CP, TDN, and DMI needs change, as calves are still growing. Dry matter intake for growing calves should be in the 2.5-3% of body weight range. Crude protein needs fluctuate with how close to maturity calves are as they utilize protein to grow, and TDN values are also fluid depending on your target daily gain. The chart below outlines approximate crude protein and energy requirements of feeder calves.

Feeder Calf Rules of Thumb	
Calf Weight	Crude Protein (CP)
550-800lbs	14%
800-1050lbs	12%
1050lbs-Finish	10%
Target Daily Gain	Energy (TDN)
1.5 lbs/day	63-66%
2 lbs/day	66-71%
2.5 lbs/day	73-78%
3 lbs/day	78-83%

Another important aspect of your feed test is the Calcium to Phosphorus Ratio (Ca:P) and minerals like magnesium (Mg) and potassium (K) are also worth looking at. Your Ca:P ratio should be between 2:1 and 7:1. Ca:P and other

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Do You Have Project or Workshop Ideas?

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

PCBFA Member Perks:

- Two Free Feed Tests Per Year
- Ration Balancing Assistance
- CAP Application Assistance
- Environmental Farm Plans
- Scale & Tag Reader Available for Member Use
- Soil & Livestock Water Quality Testing

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mineral requirements can be addressed by using commercial mineral packages or by blending feed. For mature cows, it is recommended that they receive approximately 0.1 lbs/day of supplement before calving and about 0.15 lbs/day postpartum. Feeder calves require approximately 0.1 lbs/day on average.

Weather conditions can also affect an animal's feed requirements. Monitoring body condition during the winter months is very important, with decreasing temperatures, and advancing pregnancy, the energy in the feed we provide is used up first by the cow to keep herself warm, then by

the growing calf, and finally into her body condition. In general, a good rule of thumb to remember is for every degree drop below -20°C , a cow's energy requirements increase by 2%. For example, for a cow in mid gestation during a week of -25°C , she will require not the recommended 55% TDN, but 65% TDN to maintain body condition.

Reminder that with your membership to PCBFA, you get 2 free feed samples! We will send out tests over and above your free samples at a cost of \$30/hay & \$40/silage sample. We have feed probes available for member use as well, give us a call at your nearest office to book a feed probe!

The Third Principle of Soil Health

By Marianne Krahn

The foundation of soil health consists of five principles which are: soil armor, minimizing soil disturbance, plant diversity, continual live plant/root, and livestock integration. This month we will discuss the third principle, plant diversity.

The Journals of Lewis and Clark describe the northern plains landscape as having abundant plant diversity. Numerous species were observed, working together as a plant community to provide forage for large herbivore populations. Our soils were built over geological time in this environment.

However, settlement of the plains brought agriculture, which resulted in the polyculture perennial landscape being replaced by a monoculture annual landscape. Where the soil food web used to receive carbon exudates (food) from a diversity of perennial plants by harvesting sunlight and carbon dioxide, it now receives carbon exudates from only one annual plant at a time.

We can start to mimic the original plant community by using crop rotations which include all four crop types. Diverse crop rotations provide more biodiversity, benefiting the soil food web, which in turn

improves rainfall infiltration and nutrient cycling, while reducing diseases and pests. Crop rotations can also be designed to include the following factors: high water users, low water users, tap root, fibrous root, high carbon, low carbon, legumes, and non-legumes to name a few.

The following lists the seven crop types with a few common examples of each:

- Cool Season Grass: barley, oats, wheat, fall rye
- Warm Season Grass: sorghum sudan grass, millet, corn
- Cool Season Broadleaf: flax, forage brassica, canola
- Warm Season Broadleaf: sunflower, tame buckwheat, plantain
- Cool Season Legume: peas, hairy vetch, crimson clover
- Warm Season Legume: soybean, chickpeas, faba beans
- Forb: Phacelia

Diverse crop rotations mimic our original plant diversity landscapes. They are important to the long term sustainability of our soil resource and food security.



Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Location
East Peace Beef Cattle Evening	October 16th 6-9pm	Memorial Hall, Valleyview
Alternative Energy Workshop	October 23rd 9:30am Registration 10am Start	Triangle Hall, High Prairie
Alternative Energy Workshop	October 24th 9:30am Registration 10am Start	Gordondale Hall
Beef Nutrition Webinar with Barry Yaremci	November 5th	Everywhere Online! Get the link by calling the office or visiting our event page: peacecountrybeef.ca/nutrition
Soil Health & Carbon Workshop with Dr. Kris Nichols	November 14th	Triangle Hall, High Prairie
Soil Health & Carbon Workshop with Dr. Kris Nichols	November 15th	Rycroft Ag Society Hall
Extended Grazing & Watering Tour	November 23rd	Fairview

**For More Information or to Register for any of these Events,
Visit peacecountrybeef.ca/upcoming-events
Email info@pcbfa.ca or Call 780-835-6799 ext. 3**

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