

# - The Dirt -

*Issues Facing MD of Bighorn Landowners  
- From Barnyard to Backyard -*

## A New Name and A Broader Message

by Dwight Tannas

**Change** – It happens all the time! “Up the Creek”, as this publication was originally known, was a fitting title when we started out, but six years later, our Agricultural Services and Environmental Advisory Board (ASEAB) felt a change in the title of this publication might help to create a better understanding amongst all our residents that this information is for everyone; whether you live in a Hamlet or on a Ranch.

When we started “Up the Creek” water was the big issue: and while it still is today, there is a more holistic approach to the environment. There is no part of the environment more important than another and it is all inter-related.

Another reason for the change is that our fellow members of the Red - Bow Regional Watershed Alliance decided to take a more collective approach to article writing and sharing, and each partner in the Alliance will contribute their expertise on a variety of topical issues and editing and layout will be the responsibility of each municipality.

Our thanks go to Natalie Germann, Executive Assistant at the MD of Bighorn for coming up with excellent title and catch phrase: it was the unanimous winner.

## Bighorn Happenings

**The Ranching Opportunities Workshop** that the MD of Bighorn, (along with five of our neighboring municipalities and Olds College) hosts every year was again a great success. Around 145 people attended, with half being students and the rest of the audience a mix of producers and industry people. The Shelterbelt and Woodlot presentation and the Winter Feeding Costs session were very popular, as were the ones on Pasture Sprayer Calibration and the new Farmer Pesticide Course. It will be a challenge to improve on this year’s event.

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*The Dirt is published approximately  
three times per year to specifically  
address issues of the natural  
environment and rural life  
throughout our municipality.*

*If you have an issue you’d like us  
to tackle, please email Dwight  
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or give him a call at either:  
403-673-3611 or 403-233-7678.*

*We encourage your suggestions and  
feedback.*

### *Bighorn Events Cont'd...*

"*Living in the Natural Environment 2009*" was on Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>. This annual event is held to bring together the diverse rural community to share in education and discussion around a number of topical issues.

There were about 90 people in attendance and we received many good comments from those that attended. Kim Good from the Miistakis Institute discussed Conservation Easements, which is a topic of great interest in the rural portions of our municipality.

Dianne Wittner of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation made a presentation on Living with Wildlife, trying to find balance and avoiding conflict: this presentation had a broad appeal. Regardless of where you live in the MD, wildlife is a part of our daily human life and one of the reasons we've chosen to live here.

Reeve Dene Copper did an excellent job of both hosting the event and bringing perspective to the MD of Bighorn as he refers to it as "The Green Jewel." Thanks also to Emily Smith for her excellent work as the event coordinator and all the ASEAB members for their support. Thanks to Lafarge Canada, Shell Canada, Trans Canada Pipelines, Cochrane Environmental Action Committee (CEAC), UFA, Wild Buffalo Ranching, The Town of Cochrane and the MD of Rocky View for their financial support and to Water Valley Hardware and Westlands Books for selling our tickets.

## **Dandelions – We All Grow Them, Might As Well Eat Them!**

### **Dandelion Salad with Cooked Dressing**

4 slices bacon, cut in small pieces and fried  
2 cup (approximately) chopped new dandelion leaves

2 hard boiled eggs, sliced or chopped

2 tbsp. chopped onion

1/4 cup butter

1/2 cup cream or milk

1 egg, beaten

1/2 tsp. saltsp.

dash of pepper

1/4 cup cider vinegar

2 tbsp. sugar

1 tbsp. flour

Toss together chopped dandelion, chopped onion and fried bacon pieces. Set aside.

In skillet warm butter and cream until butter melts. Beat egg and then add salt, pepper, vinegar, sugar and flour. Blend the egg mixture into the slightly warm cream mixture. Increase heat and cook, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens. Pour hot dressing over the greens and toss gently. Add eggs before tossing. Serve at once.

Gather the dandelion leaves early in the spring before the plants flower or they will be bitter. It is considered a delicacy in Europe.



## **Do You Own a Horse, Llama, Goat, Sheep, Chicken or Almost Any Other Animal?**

### **Even If You Only Board Them You Now Need A Premises Identification Number!**

The new Animal Health Act that came into force as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 requires you to have a Premise Identification Number. This number is not required for household pets like dogs and cats but is required for recreational horses and even facilities with stocked fish ponds. Why is it required? It all has to do with tracking of the location of animals in case of animal disease occurrence, public health related emergencies or natural disaster emergencies affecting animals and people. You have to register your home quarter section to start the process but will have to register other premises you own as well. Forms and additional information are available at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca/premises](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/premises) or by calling the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM (3276)

# Livestock News

## Livestock Insurance Program Coming For Alberta Beef Producers

*First-in-Canada program will help protect producers against market risks*

Edmonton... A livestock insurance program, the first of its kind in Canada, will soon be offered to Alberta beef producers to help protect their operations from fluctuating market prices.

The Cattle Price Insurance Program (CPIP) will be offered by Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) in addition to its suite of crop insurance programs. Alberta's beef producers will be the first of the province's livestock industries to be able to access the insurance program.

CPIP is an Alberta-made livestock insurance product tailored to provide price protection for Alberta cattle producers. The program was developed through a partnership with the federal government, the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Beef Producers.

"This type of insurance doesn't currently exist in Canada and will be another tool our producers can use to help protect them from fluctuating cattle prices," said George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Livestock insurance will help support the livestock industry over the long term. The Cattle Price Insurance Program is one of the key initiatives highlighted in the Alberta Livestock and Meat Strategy."

The Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) was instrumental in supporting this initiative and will be working closely with AFSC and the livestock industry over the next two years to increase awareness of the program.

CPIP will provide protection against drops in Alberta beef prices over a defined time period.

Premiums would vary according to policy length and coverage desired. The insurance will be a voluntary, producer-funded program and will provide timely claim payments.

AFSC is targeting mid-2009 for launching a price insurance product for fed cattle and is in the design stages of a program for calves and yearlings.

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## Livestock Identification And Commerce Act Comes Into Force

Edmonton... Following extensive consultations with the agriculture industry, regulations under the *Livestock Identification and Commerce Act*, or LICA, have been developed. The Act and

regulations that will come into effect on January 1, 2009 will help the day-to-day commerce of the livestock industry operate in a more consistent and efficient manner.

The LICA consolidates, streamlines and modernizes three existing acts - the *Brand Act*, the *Livestock Identification and Brand Inspection Act* and the *Livestock and Livestock Products Act*. LICA received Royal Assent on May 24, 2006. The livestock industry will see changes such as mandatory livestock security interest disclosures, greater protection for personal property in livestock, and standardized documentation. The LICA



*Have you registered my premises yet?*

### *Livestock Identification Cont'd*

clarifies and adds detail regarding brands, livestock transportation, livestock inspection, livestock security interest disclosure, payment for the sale of livestock and licensing of livestock dealers. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and Livestock Identification Services (LIS) jointly developed the *Livestock Identification and Commerce Act* and the *LICA General Regulation*. LIS is a not-for-profit company established in 1998 as the delegated authority for provincial livestock identification and inspection legislation. LIS is governed by a board of directors comprised of livestock industry representatives from various Alberta cattle and horse associations.

## **Animal Health Act, Disease Control Regulations Come Into Force January 1st**

### ***New legislation reflects current needs of livestock industry***

*Edmonton...* The *Animal Health Act* (AHA), Alberta's primary animal disease control legislation, will come into effect on January 1, 2009, along with three new regulations.

The AHA reflects the needs of today's livestock industry, Alberta's reliance on access to international markets and the need for animal disease control and surveillance.

It replaces the *Livestock Diseases Act*, which was established in 1946. The AHA provides for a rapid and effective response to an animal disease outbreak, and enhances market access, public health and food safety through rigorous disease control measures.

The three new AHA regulations being enacted on January 1, 2009, are:

- Traceability Livestock Identification Regulation;
- Traceability Premises Identification Regulation; and,
- Reportable and Notifiable Diseases Regulation.

The Traceability Livestock Identification and Traceability Premises Identification regulations provide a method for tracking the current and historical location of an animal or group of animals from one point in the supply chain to another. The regulations, which also address mandatory age verification for cattle born on or after January 1, 2009, are designed to ensure an appropriate response to an animal health emergency.

Reportable diseases are those that may pose a significant public or animal health risk and require immediate action to control or eradicate. Diseases designated as notifiable are monitored for trade purposes or to understand their cause and control.

For a list of reportable and notifiable animal diseases and additional information on the *Animal Health Act*, visit Ropin' the Web at [www.agric.gov.ab.ca](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca) and click on Alberta's Reportable and Notifiable Diseases under Livestock and Meat Industry.

## Websites of Interest

### Alberta

#### Invasive Plant Council

*Pictures and fact sheets of weeds!*

[www.invasiveplants.ab.ca](http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca)

#### Alberta Agriculture

[www.agric.gov.ab.ca](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca)

#### Alberta Stewardship Network

[www.stewardshipcanada.ca](http://www.stewardshipcanada.ca)

#### Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company

[www.albertaefp.com](http://www.albertaefp.com)

#### Alberta Conservation Association

[www.ab-conservation.com](http://www.ab-conservation.com)

#### Alberta Environment

[www.environment.gov.ab.ca](http://www.environment.gov.ab.ca)

#### Sustainable Resource Development

[www.srd.gov.ab.ca](http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca)

## FOR ALBERTA ACTS AND REGULATIONS

The Queens Printer

[www.gov.ab.ca/qp](http://www.gov.ab.ca/qp)

780 427- 4952

### AFSC

Agricultural Financial Services  
Corporation

[www.afsc.ca](http://www.afsc.ca)

403 948- 8543

### Livestock Inspection Service

[www.lis-alberta.com](http://www.lis-alberta.com)

### Brand Inspector

403 934 2544

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Environmental Fieldman

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## Time to Order Trees!

Seems early to think about ordering trees for spring planting but now is time to do just that. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Prairie Shelterbelt Program accepts applications for their free shelterbelt trees from June 1st to March 15<sup>th</sup> every year for delivery in May. Ordering early assures that they will receive the species you desire. Who may order these trees? Eligibility for tree seedlings and technical assistance through the Prairie Shelterbelt Program (PSP) is based on the land owned.

Eligible landowners include:

- Private landowners in the PFRA mandate region (SK, MB, AB and Peace River Region of British Columbia):
  - where taxes are paid to a rural municipality,
  - or where the land is zoned agricultural,
  - and if the holdings exceed 2 hectares (5 acres) in size
- Public land managers:
  - of municipal, provincial or federal departments or authorities
  - of land that has tax-exempt status or rights held by the Crown
- First Nations band councils or individuals
  - for planting on reservation land

Private businesses including golf courses, resorts, campsites, or urban developers are not eligible for trees through the Prairie Shelterbelt Program. Individuals owning property in urban municipalities (i.e. cities, towns) are not eligible.

Forms and information are available on the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada website [www.agr.gc.ca/shelterbelt](http://www.agr.gc.ca/shelterbelt) or by contacting : PFRA Shelterbelt Centre, Box 940, Indian Head, Saskatchewan S0G 2K0 Phone: 1-866-766-2284 Fax: 306-695-2568 E-mail: [pfratree@agr.gc.ca](mailto:pfratree@agr.gc.ca)

If you do not qualify for the free Alberta Shelterbelt Trees you probably are eligible for trees at a small cost from Alberta Nurseries. Those eligible for these trees are farms, acreages, commercial enterprises, municipalities, golf courses, resort areas, woodlots and urban landowners. These Farmstead Trees are available by ordering on their website. <http://www.marketland.net> Email [altatree@telus.net](mailto:altatree@telus.net): ALBERTA NURSERIES. Box 446, Bowden, AB T0M 0K0 - PHONE (403) 224-3544 – FAX 403 224-2455

Bighorn has a limited number of order forms for these trees in the office.

*Information provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (PFRA) and Alberta Nurseries.*

# Connecting Bighorn

Bighorn is a rural municipality comprising 263,187 Hectares of land (650,326 acres) and most of that forested or partly tree covered. Our major industries are oil and gas, ranching, forestry and rock products. Two watersheds, the Bow River and the Red Deer River, drain our lands almost equally. We have five hamlets and surround two Summer Villages.

While there are many things that make us distinct from our urban neighbours, there are some things that as Albertans we all share and we need to keep in mind wherever we live.

Whether you live in a hamlet, village, town or city, everyone must comply with the Weed Control Act, the Soil Conservation Act and the Agricultural Pest Act.

Under the Agricultural Pest Act the rat must be controlled. The Act applies to all of us not just the agricultural industry. Rats are carriers of many diseases and destroy produce and other things vital to human well being. Cities like Calgary and Edmonton have Bylaw Officers that are dedicated to controlling Rats.

The same goes for Weeds. Noxious weeds are ones like the Oxeye Daisy that can displace up to 60% of our native plants that wildlife rely on for food and shelter. Oxeye Daisy is often found growing wild along roadways in Hamlets and even in gardens.

Restricted weeds are those that are even worse and must be dealt with immediately. The restricted weed Spotted Knapweed will actually kill and displace all plant life around it, therefore no native plants remain.

Weeds like Dandelion are considered as nuisance weeds and there is no law about controlling them. The control of these weeds is considered cosmetic and as you are probably aware many communities are discouraging the use of pesticides on these weeds. Weeds are a threat to our native plants and animals as well as to our agricultural community.

## Toadflax

Brought from Europe over 100 years ago as an ornamental plant, Common toadflax has escaped and has now become a serious problem to rangeland and mountain meadows all over North America. This perennial plant makes seed, but reproduction is primarily by sprouting from its extensive, creeping root system (rhizomes) – 2-3 week old seedlings can produce creeping roots.



The ability of this plant to form large colonies allows it to crowd out other vegetation. Toadflax is a noxious weed.

Common toadflax is easily confused with Leafy spurge before flowering, but toadflax stems do not contain the milky latex that spurge does. Also known as Yellow toadflax, Butter-and-Eggs, or Spurred Snapdragon.

### Prevention:

Spurred snapdragon, another common name for this plant, often appears in wildflower seed mixes. Do not purchase seed mixes which don't list their contents.

### Control:

Once present, it establishes dense patches that are extremely difficult to control, let alone eradicate. Multiple control methods and several years of commitment provide the best success.

**Grazing:** Pasture invasions flourish because the plant is not palatable to livestock.

**Cultivation:** Repeated cultivation can effectively destroy the root system. Equipment should be thoroughly cleaned after.

**Mechanical:** Thorough hand-pulling can be effective in soft soils where the roots can be removed easily. Repetition is required to deplete the seed bank and all root pieces. Mowing can assist by starving the roots.

**Chemical:**<sup>1</sup> Some herbicides have been helpful in managing this invasive plant, but chemical control alone will not eliminate toadflax. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

**Biological:** Several biological control agents have been imported to control Common toadflax. So far, climatic factors have limited successful establishment in Alberta.

*1 Always follow the product labels. The use of pesticides in any manner not published on the label or registered under the Minor Use of Pesticides*



[www.invasiveplants.ab.ca](http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca)  
Phone: (403) 317-2286