Crocuses are Spring’s way of saying, LET’S PARTY!

I am renewed with the coming of spring. I am sure somebody said that somewhere. I couldn’t seem to find it on the internet, so I guess it is my quote now. Seriously, I think Robyn Williams said it best with his quote “Spring is nature’s way of saying, “Let’s Party!”

All indications are that we are going to have a dry spring, I sure hope that the predictions prove to be wrong. Some timely showers after seeding would sure reduce some of the stress that you folks deal with. I have always said “farmers have the best sense of humour in any industry” because you keep coming back year after year.

Speaking of coming back every year, I see the gophers are out in full force. Now is a good time to offer poison baits as there is no green forage for them to chose over the baits. Page 2 has an announcement regarding 2% Liquid Strychnine concentrate for gopher control. There is also an announcement on page 2 for roadside spraying. Please remember that “No Spray Zone” agreements must be renewed yearly.

If you have some bare areas from gopher damage or just need to seed some forage, page 3 mentions that Lethbridge County has a Brillion Drill to rent. This is a great forage drill for seeding small areas to forages. The drill seeds the forage at a determined rate. This can be a great way to help control weeds, if you can get a stand established before the weeds start popping.

Crop diseases are part of farming however, there are some that can be devastating to our agricultural industry. Clubroot is one of those diseases that we must remain vigilant for. Complacency will ruin our canola industry. There is an article from Autumn Barnes from the Canola Council of Canada on page 3 as well. Autumn talks about strategies that all of us can do to help us get a head of the disease to reduce/eliminate any occurrences happening here.

Pesticide applications are part of an integrated pest management program (IPM). On page 4, I have some information on the Crop Protection Blue Book for producers to use. For 2019, there are new products registered for foliar fungicides, seed treatments and insecticides. These newly registered pesticide products will provide producers more control options on a variety of crops when managing insects and diseases.

I mentioned that there are indications that we will have a dry spring. That does not help producers when they are grazing cows. Having a good water source is imperative to herd health and gains. On page 5, I have included some information and a contact for pasture pipeline systems. I think it is important to note that the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry CAP funding has some very good funding in place for pasture pipelines. Call me if you are interested.

Producers have a tough job trying to balance nutrients on their farm. On page 6, I have listed various nutrient management software to help you with your nutrient decisions. The Alberta Phosphorus Management Tool is one of my favourites to work with.

Soil nutrients and health can be enhanced when using cover crops. Page 7 has an informative article on Cover Crops from the Beef Cattle Research Council. It has some good points to consider if you are thinking of using cover crops in your rotations.

Last but not least on page 8, I have included some information on Rural Crime Watch. We all know what is going on out there and I think that this approach is a good one. “Picture Butte and District Rural Crime Watch is up and running! Check out the information and if you are not in that part of the County, you can still consider starting a Rural Crime Watch in your respective area.

Let’s remember the little ones that will be underfoot and please have a safe productive year.

Lethbridge County Agriculture Service Board

#100, 905-4th Avenue South Lethbridge, AB, T1J 4E4
Phone: 403-732-5333 Picture Butte Fax: 403-732-4328

Gary Secrist
Agriculture Fieldman

Dwayne Rogness
Rural Extension Specialist (RES)
403-380-1598

Kevin Virostek, Foreman/Weed Inspector
NOTICE FOR ALL AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS IN LETHBRIDGE COUNTY

STRYCHNINE FOR RICHARDSON GROUND SQUIRREL (GOPHER CONTROL)

2% Liquid Strychnine concentrate for gopher control is now available for agricultural producers only. Supply limited.

PICTURE BUTTE ADMINISTRATION SHOP
1/2 mile west and 1/4 mile south of Picture Butte
Open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays
Must phone 403-732-5333 in advance to ensure staff is available.

Price $12.00 / 250 ml container.

www.lethcounty.ca

ROADSIDE SPRAYING

The Lethbridge County Agricultural Service Roadside Spraying Program for weed control will commence any time after May 1, 2019.

ASB Spray Trucks are equipped with low drift nozzles to greatly reduce off target application and applicators are constantly monitoring wind speed and direction. Pre-emergent herbicide will be applied on some low use roads.

As per Policy Section 600 No. 629 “DO NOT SPRAY” signs are available by contacting the Lethbridge County ASB at 403-732-5333 or the Lethbridge Administration Building 403-328-5525.

Citizens obtaining “Do Not Spray” signs must enter into a “No Spray Zone” agreement which holds the landowner responsible for weed control within the signed area.

“NO SPRAY ZONE” AGREEMENTS MUST BE RENEWED YEARLY

Persons erecting “Do Not Spray” signs along their property must ensure they are clearly visible to allow the spray truck operator enough lead time to react and shut down the spray boom.

For further information please visit the Lethbridge County website or contact the Agricultural Service Boards Department at 403-732-5333.

lethcounty.ca
BRILLION SEEDER

The Brillion Seeder can be booked by calling the Agriculture Service Board at (403) 732-5333.

$5 Acre or $150 minimum whichever is larger.

CLUBROOT in Southern Alberta

By Autumn Barnes

When I first started as an Agronomy Specialist with the Canola Council of Canada in southern Alberta in 2013, nobody in my territory wanted to talk about clubroot. It was not relevant, not a risk, not close enough, our soil pH was too high to get it, we had ‘better rotations’ than our neighbours in central Alberta, et cetera. Six years ago, clubroot seemed like more of a ‘central Alberta’ problem to most.

Fast forward to 2019. Plasmodiophora brassica has been found as far south in Alberta as Medicine Hat. The County of Newell has had confirmed clubroot cases since 2008, and in 2018 Rocky View County confirmed four clubroot-infested fields south east of Calgary. The disease has been found across Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and it appears that no brassica-growing region is immune.

I have heard that finding out that you have clubroot initiates a grieving process for farmers. I can understand why. Clubroot is terrifying. We hear about cases in central Alberta where fields have billions of spores per gram of soil (about one teaspoon) and tight rotations are selecting for pathotypes that bypass our current clubroot resistance genes. We hear about equipment sanitation and wonder how we could have time for that in the crunch of seeding/spraying/harvest. Sometimes, preventing this disease seems like trying to stop the wind with your hands.

Lucky for us, farmers in the south have an advantage. If we find clubroot early, we have a real-
One of the most widely requested publications from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry is the Crop Protection publication, also known as the “Blue Book” in industry circles.

“An important part of the annual update includes newly registered pesticide products,” says Mark Cutts, co-editor of Crop Protection 2019 and crop specialist at the Alberta Ag-Info Centre. “This year’s edition includes new additions to the four main pesticide types: herbicides, insecticides, seed treatments and foliar fungicides. In addition to including new products, previously registered products are updated. Significant changes in some products, crops covered and usage instructions give producers more options than ever.”

“For 2019, there are new products registered for foliar fungicides, seed treatments and insecticides. These newly registered pesticide products will provide producers more control options on a variety of crops when managing insects and diseases.

“There are a couple of new herbicide products, but there are many more minor changes to existing registrations,” adds Harry Brook, co-editor of the Blue Book and crop specialist at the Alberta Ag-Info Centre. “The most significant change in herbicides this year is that quinclorac has an international maximum allowable residue level. It is in a number of products specifically to control cleavers in canola. Up until the fall of 2018, there was no recognized safe level and these herbicides could not be used in canola.”

When using pesticides, it is important to be aware of pesticide resistance. It is recommended that pesticide products be selected based on chemical group and active ingredient. All pesticide products presented in the Blue Book have their chemical group and active ingredient listed. By using this information, the risk of developing pesticide resistance can be reduced or at least delayed. Call 780-427-0391 for a copy.

The BlueBook app is the most comprehensive, up-to-date guide for the selection and application of chemicals to protect your crop. Easy-to-use write-ups for all product registrations make finding information fast and efficient. The BlueBook app features the most current information, easy-to-use charts and tables for all your crop protection needs. This app is a valued crop protection tool for Western Canadian farmers.
The endless cycle of summer grazing is about to begin again. Barry Irving with Pasture Pipeline has been working with Fieldmen in the Province to help producers supply water for their grazing systems. Barry mentions that “we installed about 12 miles (65,000 feet) of pasture pipeline in 2018 and look forward to offering this service again this year”. Pasture Pipeline is an economical method of delivering clean, clear, and consistent water to livestock, and it can be quite competitive financially if pipe is sourced wholesale. If you are interested in Pasture Pipeline I would direct you to their website: pasturepipeline.com where there are details of installation, expected benefits, and some costs. Pipe prices are not getting any cheaper, in fact they are on their way up, even wholesale.

There is great funding available from the Alberta Ag and Forestry CAP program. There is not enough room to list all of the program, but the Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change Producer Program has some very good funding for Year-Round/Summer Watering Systems. Call Dwayne Rogness for more information. This program offers both production and environmental benefits that make it attractive to livestock producers and environmental program administrators.

**Their Story**

Pasture Pipeline is a small team of individuals dedicated to providing Alberta beef producers an economic and reliable alternative form of watering their herds. Their background in Pasture Pipeline began in 2002 at the University of Alberta Kinsella Ranch when an extreme drought year (surface water disappeared) was followed with adequate rainfall to grow a good forage crop but inadequate runoff to fill those surface water sources. They installed about 6 miles of Pasture Pipeline in 2003 and brought clean and consistent water to about 3000 acres of land, all for a cost of digging one dugout.

Barry mentioned that since those early years they experimented with a variety of innovative stock water including solar systems, gravity fed water delivery, spring development, and of course dugouts. We have always trended back to pipelines because of reliability, ease of installation, consistent and clean water, and ease of maintenance.

Calves drinking tank water had weight gains up to 20 percent higher than those drinking from dugouts. Quality Water will Improve Cattle Weight Gain, Dr. Roy Lewis, Westlock Veterinary Clinic.

**Pasture Pipeline**

780-464-1813

**Bring Water to Cows**

Pasture Pipeline

780-464-1813
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

to Help You with the Hard Decisions

AFFIRM V2.0 Software - Alberta Farm Fertilizer Information and Recommendation Manager (AFFIRM). AFFIRM is an interactive user-friendly system that allows the user to create a customized nutrient management plan for their farming operation. The user selects a crop to be grown, identify the field's agro-climatic region, inputs soil, manure and crop management practices and enters soil test results from a laboratory report into the model. In addition, the model requires values for fertilizer costs and an expected crop value. AFFIRM can then provide fertility recommendations with an economic analysis. The tool will complete a whole farm nutrient optimization, allocating fertilizer applications based on greatest economic return and crop need.

MMP V0.310 Software – The Manure Management Planner (MMP) was originally developed by Purdue University for use throughout the United States. In collaboration with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, MMP has been adapted for use in Alberta. This software help producers make manure application decisions based on livestock operation, storage capacity, application equipment, land base, soil test results and crop selection.

Manure Transportation Calculator (MTC) – The Transportation Calculator can be used to determine the net impact of using (transporting and applying) manure or chemical fertilizer as a nutrient source in selected fields under different rotational systems.

Ammonia Emissions Estimator - The calculator is a simple tool for the producers to use to perform a quick ammonia losses calculation. Accurate ammonia loss estimates from manure are needed to improve nutrient management recommendations and test the value of techniques to reduce ammonia loss.

Ammonia Losses from Liquid Manure Applications Calculator - The purpose of this calculator is to estimate ammonia emissions due to liquid manure application to farm land. It also estimates the economic value of the ammonia volatilization loss based on fertilizer nitrogen cost.

Manure Composting Calculator - This calculator determines the amount of carbon source material and water needed to create a good compost mix. The calculator is primarily intended for manure composting, however it can be used for other materials as well.

Alberta Phosphorus Management Tool – The Alberta Phosphorus Management Tool (APMT) is a phosphorus loss risk assessment tool designed to help extension staff and producers assess the risk of phosphorus loss from an operation’s fields and facilities. The APMT takes users through a series of questions, risk is assigned based on responses to the questions. The tool identifies potential P loss from soil, manure, and fertilizer sources based on environmental and landscape transport factors such as flooding, run-on and runoff, as well as the management practices being completed at the site. It also assesses the risk of nutrient accumulation as a contributor to runoff risk potential. In addition, the tool explains why each question is being asked or what affect those factors have with respect to potential P loss. The tool provides users with beneficial management practice (BMP) suggestions, to reduce the risk of P loss, and assigns a relative economic and environmental effect on P loss to each BMP, to help users evaluate the potential practices. The APMT was developed by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and the Intensive Livestock Working Group, with input from extension staff from across the province.

I was one of the folks that worked on the APMT and I will say this, if I can work through this tool and come away with great information, all producers will find it very beneficial. At the moment it is hard to find this calculator on the Alberta Government website. If you are interested in it the best thing to do is call Trevor Wallace and he can get you set up. I have included his contact info at the end here.

Wallace, Trevor
Nutrient Management Specialist
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Cover crops typically diverse, annual crop mixtures planted with the intent to build and improve the soil. Cover crops may also include biennial or perennial species, depending on the end-use and goals of the producer. Cover crops may be grazed, baled, or used for silage, depending on the species that are seeded. Cover crops may also be used as a green manure or plough-down crop.

Cover crops, often called “cocktails,” consist of plants that will benefit the soil ecosystem and support a variety of soil microbes, fungi, and other biodiversity, such as earthworms. Cover crops can enable soils to have improved water infiltration, increased organic matter, and more efficient nutrient recycling. Some cocktail crop species may be useful in utilizing excess water in a field that would otherwise be water logged, while other species may be selected for their drought-tolerant qualities and their ability to make the most efficient use of existing moisture.

**Cover crop mixes**

A mixture of cover crop species is usually recommended and may include both cool season (i.e. C3) and warm season (i.e. C4) species, broad leaved species, legume species, Brassica , and grassy species. Using a mix of cover crop species maximizes photosynthesis, allowing solar energy to be captured at different heights and angles. Different cover crops will also have different rooting zones, therefore impacting soils at different depths.

Cover crops can be a valuable and quick-growing source of forage for livestock and provide grazing in the same year the crop is seeded. Cover crops also allow cropland and pastures to be more efficient with water and nutrient cycling, and less reliant on costly inputs such as fertilizer.

**Grazing cover crops**

From an animal standpoint, a forage cocktail also provides cattle with a diet that is nutritionally diverse. A mix may include species such as clover, a forage Brassica (i.e. turnip, radish), barley, or peas. Each plant species may reach maturity at slightly different times, therefore providing green forage continuously through the growing season. Using a combination of plants rather than a single forage species also helps to increase the overall yield potential of the crop. Producers will want to manage cover crops through grazing management practices, such as temporary fencing, that allow appropriate and timely grazing that matches the species and their stage of growth.

**Animal considerations**

If producers are planning on using cover crops for silage, greenfeed, grazing, or another controlled feeding methods, feed testing is required to identify any potential nutrient or anti-quality issues.

Depending on soil fertility conditions and species selection, some cover crop plants, such as Brassicas, can accumulate excess nitrates and sulfur so cattle producers should pay attention to their animals for those symptoms. Other species in a mix may cause grain overload if animals are allowed to selectively graze, so take steps to prevent that from occurring by only allowing a portion of the field to be accessed at a time.

Some species within a forage cocktail do not have a lot of fibre, particularly as species regrow following grazing. Cattle producers may want to include roughage in these grazing fields, even by providing straw bales or slough hay to slow down the passage of forage through the digestive system and increase the nutrient uptake.

Producers are urged to pay attention to their cattle when grazing or feeding cover crops. Use common management practices, such as the following, to avoid problems:

- **Turn cattle out onto new cover crops only when they are full (i.e. avoid early morning moves);**
- **Avoid moving cattle to a new cover crop during weather changes;**
- **Avoid moving cattle to a new cover crop following a major handling event (i.e. processing, preg-checking, following a long trailing event);**
- **Prevent animals from selectively grazing (i.e. choosing the “best, leaving the rest”) by allowing them to graze a portion of a field at a time and ensuring an appropriate stocking rate;**
- **Monitor animals for signs of reduced feed intake, incoordination, panting, or other signs of nutritional toxicity.**

**Cover crop considerations**

Producers may want to incorporate one or several legumes in their cocktail mix to build nitrogen in their soils. Different legumes can be selected to meet different grazing needs, whether you’re grazing in early spring, late fall or winter.

Seeding rates will vary according to the diversity of mix. Seeding rates also have a large impact on the cost, as does the number and variety of species. There are several seeding cost calculators available to producers, including this version available at: http://decision-tool.incovercrops.ca/

Seeding dates may be planned strategically. Some producers may opt to seed two crops in a season, where they silage the first crop and graze the second crop. Other producers sometimes seed fall or winter crops in the spring, for grazing later in the season and early in the next.

**Interested in using cover crops?**

- **Evaluate your goals for cover crops. What is your intended outcome and what specific issues are you trying to resolve? Do you need to build organic matter or improve water infiltration? Are you concerned about soil erosion? What is motivating you? How will this fit in with your current cropping and grazing management?**
- **Evaluate your existing infrastructure. What sort of water development, fencing, or other infrastructure may you need in order to graze cover crops? Do you have the seeding equipment necessary to plant a cocktail?**
- **Look for informational resources. Do you have experience seeding cover crops or grazing them? Do you have someone you can contact or resources available?**
- **Evaluate grazing conditions as the season progresses. Have you performed feed analyses? Are your cattle receiving all of the nutrients that they need to stay healthy? Do the nutrients match the stage and class that your cattle will be at during grazing?**
"Picture Butte and District Rural Crime Watch is up and running!

Let’s work together to be the eyes and ears of the community!!

The Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group Receives Government Approval for Pilot Project

Calgary, AB – Jan. 21, 2019 - The Department of Agriculture and Forestry has announced the government’s approval of the Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group’s (APRG) pilot program to recycle grain bags and twine along with $750,000 in funding.

“Making agriculture more efficient and environmentally sustainable is a win for everyone. Not only are we tackling the longstanding problem of wasted twine and agricultural plastics, we’re working with partners to find policy solutions that really work. This pilot program is shaping a move toward an environmentally sustainable future for our province,” Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

The APRG will now work to implement the three-year pilot project and will determine the next steps forward including the hiring of a program operator to collect and recycle the materials. As it’s rolled out, the plan will also announce opportunities for municipalities to host collection sites. The pilot includes market research for all types of agricultural plastics, a waste characterization study to determine plastic volumes and materials, surveys to producers, and education about the program. It is anticipated that the pilot will start in the Fall of 2019.

“We commend the government for their leadership in this area. We are thrilled to receive news of the pilot approval and know that we are now working toward viable solutions to collect and recycle grain bags and twine across the province,” stated APRG Chair, Al Kemmere. “Our group of over 20 stakeholders has been focused on gaining traction on agriculture plastics management for two years and we’re happy to be moving ahead.”

Municipalities and producers can expect to hear more details about the program from the APRG as plans are rolled out in the coming months.

About the Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group

The APRG is a group made up of over 20 stakeholder organizations from sectors across the province representing municipalities, producers, non-profits, recyclers and retailers among others. For a full list of members and more details please visit this link: http://albertaplasticsrecycling.com/resources-education/agricultural-plastics/

Contact
Al Kemmere APRG Chairman and RMA President
akemmere@rmalberta.com

Jan 21, 2019
Recycling pilot tackles agricultural waste

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry is helping fund a three-year pilot program that will recycle agricultural plastics.

The Alberta Beef Producers will use the $750,000 grant to coordinate the recycling program on behalf of the Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group – 20 stakeholder organizations ranging from commodity associations and rural municipalities to retailers.

The Alberta Agricultural Plastics Recycling Pilot Program is aimed at:
• recycling grain bags and twine
• researching markets for other agricultural plastics not included in the pilot program
• conducting a waste characterization study to determine agricultural plastic volumes
• surveying producers to get feedback
• educating producers on the program and how to recycle their plastics

“Making agriculture more efficient and environmentally sustainable is a win for everyone. Not only are we tackling the longstanding problem of wasted twine and agricultural plastics, we’re working with partners to find policy solutions that really work. This pilot program is shaping a move toward an environmentally sustainable future for our province.” Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

The pilot will determine the financials, logistics and operations of recycling agricultural plastics that could help inform a future policy solution to the issue.

“The Alberta government’s commitment to the pilot program is a welcome announcement. The APRG will explore an on-the-ground assessment of ag plastics on the provincial landscape to support the environmentally sound end use of these materials.” Al Kemmere, chairman, Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group

“We would like to thank the Alberta government for supporting the agricultural industry in our efforts to recycle our waste plastics. We are excited to start working out the details of the program and will send more information to producers as soon as possible.” Assar Grinde, director, Alberta Beef Producers, and executive member, Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group

“There is strong support for this program from the agriculture sectors in Alberta. We look forward to the rollout of this much-needed initiative and appreciate the speedy response and support from the Alberta government.” Neil Gorda, director, Region Four, Alberta Barley, and executive member, Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group

Quick facts
A Government of Alberta study in 2012 revealed that around 50 per cent of agricultural producers were burning their agricultural plastics on-farm. Sending plastics to a landfill was also a common method of disposing of agricultural plastics.

Saskatchewan ran a pilot program from 2011 to 2017, and is now operating the first regulated recycling program in Canada for grain bags. Alberta’s pilot program includes both grain bags and twine.

Media inquiries - media@gov.ab.ca, 780-422-4905
From: https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=623846 D45BB13-91FD-F5F1-B5E67DC77AAD50EC#media-contacts