

InFARMation



Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

Summer 2003

Volume 16 Issue 2

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Moossage From the Agriculture Branch

Ohh it's dry. Very dry!! At the time of publishing this newsletter there has been very little moisture for over 2 months. Also temperatures this spring have been on the cool side. Let's hope things shape up over the remainder of the summer. So much for the weather let's move on.

The Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA) held it's annual meeting at the end of March, 2003 and elected a new slate of Directors. Congratulations to Doug Craig who is now the new YAA president. For years the YAA has been the umbrella farm organization in the territory and have truly been instrumental in enhancing the development of the industry. I am sure this will continue under the new leadership of the organization. On this note, I compliment the YAA on the innovative Bulk Fertilizer Storage project which was established this spring. This project has the potential to save Yukon farmers substantial savings in terms of reduced transportation costs. If you need more information on this project contact the YAA office at 668-6864.

The Agriculture Policy Framework (APF) agreement is a done deal. The Implementation Agreement has also now signed and funds from the federal government can start to flow. More information is provided on the APF in this newsletter or contact the Agriculture Branch for more details.

On a final note I am pleased to report that we are proceeding with consultation and revision to our agriculture Policy. On June 19, 2003 Archie Lang, the Minister of EMR announced the process and timelines for revisions. There are some things that need to be changed in our existing agriculture policy and we look forward to your input. It is hoped that a revised policy can be in place early 2004 following extensive consultation with the industry over the coming summer and fall and Cabinet approval in late 2003.

Good luck for the coming summer and growing season. Also remember that our office is now located at Room 320, on the third floor of the Elijah Smith Building, 300 Main Street in Whitehorse.

Dave Beckman
Director

*The new 2003 Agriculture Products Directory is out!
Copies are available from our office.*

Abattoir Use Study

Local consultants Barbara Drury and Malcolm Taggart recently had a look at the Partridge Creek abattoir to investigate scenarios that might help improve use by southern Yukon red meat producers. In their investigation, through interviews with the Buerge's and local producers a number of scenarios were developed comparing the cost of on-farm slaughter for farm gate sales and using the abattoir, which would allow access to retail meat sales through restaurants and stores. Here's a sample of what they found out:

- The current abattoir cost to slaughter beef is \$90 per animal, plus GST
- The daily slaughter capacity of the abattoir is 10 animals
- The total hanging capacity is 20 animals
- Cooler refrigeration costs are additional, at up to \$30 per day
- Five animals minimum are required to justify starting up the plant
- The ownership of the hide and organs is negotiable between the owner and the abattoir
- The abattoir requires sufficient notice of a shipment to ensure the inspector is present
- The abattoir is currently not interested in buying animals on the hoof
- The abattoir is unlikely to be operational between November and April in the near future

Investigations found that a primary obstacle to use by southern Yukon cattle producers is the logistics of shipping live animals to the abattoir and the need to ship meat back to the Whitehorse market. The consultants looked at many factors including truck and trailer costs, fuel, producers time, (wages) slaughter and cooler costs at the abattoir and back-haul service, to develop scenarios on a cost per pound basis. Starting at the plant minimum, (5 animals) full cost scenarios ranged from \$0.66/lb. to \$0.25/lb. for 20 animals, the plant capacity. The investigation also looked at the economics of beef producers Co-op to further take advantage of efficiencies of scale for using the abattoir. Although the operators of the abattoir do not have plans to build handling facilities for elk at this point, the consultants looked at the economics of abattoir use for producers of these animals as well. The final report will be available soon at the Agriculture branch office.



Agriculture Policy Framework (APF) Agreement Update

As many of you are aware the Yukon signed the APF agreement in July 2002. This agreement brings up to \$321,000/year over the period April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2008. Any federal funds obtained must be matched by the Yukon on a 60(federal)/40(territory) basis.

By the time you are reading this newsletter the Yukon will have signed the Implementation Agreement which enables the APF money to flow. This is an exciting and historical period of time for our agriculture industry. This level of funding by both the federal and territory governments will truly enhance industry growth and development.

Also as some of you are aware a meeting was held on June 19, 2003 in Whitehorse to provide an update on APF implementation progress as well as establish a joint government/industry committee to help provide direction and ideas on how to deliver APF programs. The Government of Yukon is committed to working closely with the industry in order to maximize program development and responsible expenditures of APF funds for the agriculture industry in the territory.

The Agriculture Branch is also pursuing discussions with Newfoundland on APF programming and implementation mechanisms. The Province of Newfoundland has several years experience with joint programs and funding which the Yukon can draw on for delivery of our programs. We are also working closely with Alberta on a risk management program that will suit the needs of Yukon forage producers. Branch staff will be working with Alberta crop insurance staff and Yukon producers throughout the summer to develop crop history and harvest data for the Territory.

Circumpolar Update

Plans are still underway for Sweden to host the 2004 Circumpolar Agriculture Conference in Umea, (Northern Sweden). A regional Circumpolar Agriculture Association meeting was held in Whitehorse on November 3, 2002. The minutes, comments and results of the meeting were forwarded to Conference Planners in Umea in order to provide ideas for conference structure and theme. Dave Beckman Circumpolar Director at large) met with Otto Goulding (Circumpolar Director for North America) and Evelyn Coleman (NWT) in mid June to discuss Circumpolar activities as well as the possibility for a Canada Regional Circumpolar Conference sometime in the next 12 months and before the Umea Conference.

We will keep you posted on any upcoming Circumpolar activities. Also please start thinking about papers/ presentations that could be presented at the Umea conference. The Yukon needs to be well represented at the 2004 Conference – which is the fifth conference since this concept was initiated in Whitehorse, September 1992.

Research and Demonstration Field Day

We would like to invite everyone out to our research and demonstration site on July 29th for a tour of the research currently being undertaken by the Agriculture Branch.

We are in the second year of a nutrient optimization trial using dataloggers and drip irrigation to closely monitor and distribute nutrients.

We will be there from 10am to 4pm. At 12:30pm we will be holding a detailed talk on site research, but stop by anytime and we will be happy to answer questions. The site is located at the Takhini Forestry Farm, the entrance is on your left just before the Takhini Corner. Please come and join us. As it will be late July, there will be strawberries to enjoy!



Master Gardener News

Two meetings were held earlier this spring to see if the time was right for Yukon Master Gardener Grads to form an Association. The first meeting held at Whitehorse Public Library consisted of six or seven people who discussed the reasons for forming an association, the goals and objectives of the group and the activities that the association could become involved in. The activities list was pretty big.

The second meeting was held at Adorna Garden Center and included a tour of the greenhouse by owners John and Rhea Vanderkley. Although attendance was low, the group decided to meet informally through the summer to participate in garden tours and exchanges of ideas and try to get together again on a more formal basis after the summer when other Master Gardeners might be less busy.

A pruning workshop was held at Yukon College on the evening of May 13. Tony Hill led participants around the grounds demonstrating techniques on a number of trees and shrubs that needed attention. When the grounds crew arrived the next day they may have been surprised to find heaps of branches cleanly cut and piled throughout the gardens. Next time maybe we should tell them we're coming... Anyone wanting to participate in future Master Gardener meetings should contact Tony Hill at tony.hill@gov.yk.ca or Kerry Hubert at dkhuebert@hotmail.com We are trying to get an e-mail distribution list together so if you have an e-mail address and would like to stay informed please let us know.

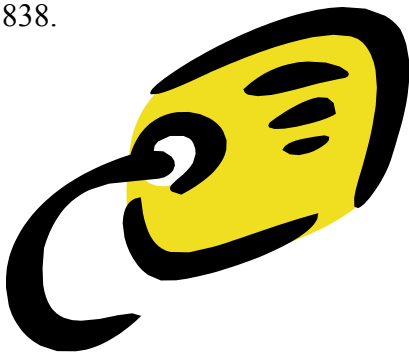


Cattle ID Program

In an earlier newsletter, the Branch provided information on the Canadian Cattle Identification Program. This Industry led initiative traceability program was designed to help the Canadian Food Inspection Agency trace and eliminate the sources of disease and food safety problems that threaten public health and safety.

With BSE discovered in a single cow from Northern Alberta, we see first hand how and why this traceability system is vital to the cattle industry. The losses to Canadian Cattle farmers will be measured in the “tens” if not “hundreds” of millions of dollars from lost sales and reduced consumer confidence even after this disease has been beaten. The ability of Government Inspectors to quickly trace back animals to their herd of origin is vital when dealing with diseases that affect public health and safety.

As was seen shortly after the news broke confirming the presence of this disease, exports of Canadian cattle and beef products virtually stopped. Restoring those markets will depend on how quickly the uncertainties about the origins of this disease can be answered. Although in this particular case the system was of limited help to trace the history of this cow, the merits of implementing a National Identification Program have been recognized by both Federal Inspectors and International Observers. For more information on the Canadian Cattle Identification Program, call the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency at 1-877-909-BEEF or visit their web-site at not the wrong address - - !! www.canadiad.com. We also have copies of the information on how and where to order ear-tags at the Agriculture branch and maintain files on the latest program information. Interested persons should call Kevin at 667-5838.



BSE Disease Information

What is Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy?

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, or BSE, is a progressive, fatal disease of the nervous system of cattle. It is known as a Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE). Other TSEs include Scrapie in sheep, Chronic Wasting Disease in deer and elk, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in humans.

What causes BSE?

Although the exact cause of BSE is unknown, it is associated with the accumulation in the brain of an abnormal form of protein called a prion. There is no treatment or vaccine currently available for the disease.

Can BSE pass from my cow to her calf?

Although BSE prions can pass from a cow to her calf, this method of transmission is considered insignificant in the epidemiology of BSE. Consumption of feed contaminated with BSE prions is the main mode of transmission.

When I visit different farms, can I possibly spread BSE between operations?

No. BSE cannot be spread from farm to farm by mechanical vectors such as manure on boots or from touching an animal on one farm and then touching another. However, there are diseases that can be spread this way and adequate biosecurity measures must be practiced to avoid spreading disease between farms.

Is this the first case of BSE in Alberta?

No. The only other case of BSE diagnosed in Alberta was found in 1993 in a beef cow that had been imported from Britain in 1987. The animal carcass and the herd it came from were destroyed and additional measures were taken immediately by the federal government to deal with any risk that cattle might have been affected. BSE has been a reportable disease in Canada since 1990.

Is BSE present in other countries?

Other countries known to have cases of BSE include: United Kingdom, Germany, France, Portugal, Denmark, Spain and Italy.

There have been no other BSE cases in Canada until the recently detected cow.

Farm Safety

Harvest Reminders

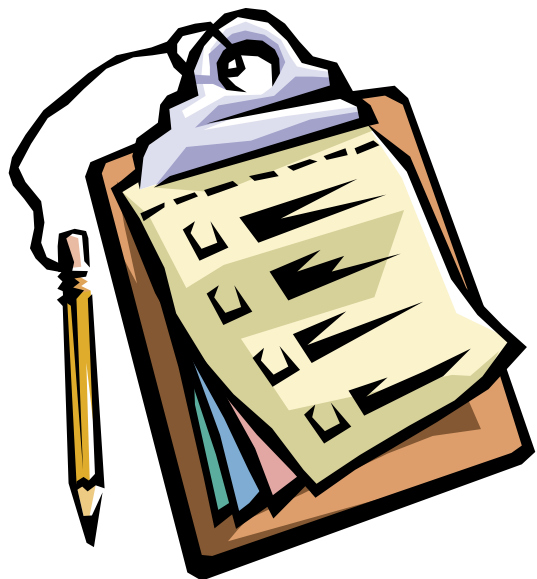
At harvest time fatigue, drowsiness and illness can lead to mishaps. A few reminders:

- Periodic breaks are a must! They relieve the monotony of machine operation. Machine operators should learn to recognize when they have “had enough”.
- If you’re going to eat in the field, at least climb down from the equipment and relax for 20 minutes or so. Walk around the tractor a few times.
- Appropriate safety gear should be worn where noise or dust poses hazards.

Basic Precautions

- Routine maintenance should be carried out on schedule. Regular fuel fill-ups and lubrication help prepare the equipment for the next day.
- Hydraulically-raised equipment should be securely blocked before anyone works around or under it.
- Never try to clear plugged equipment by hand. The brain cannot give the message to let go of crop material quick enough if the machine suddenly clears. Develop the habit of shutting off the power before leaving the drivers seat.
- Fire is a hazard in the field during harvest. Every piece of equipment should carry a fire extinguisher.
- Kids and machines don’t mix. Far too many tragedies occur when the children end up in their path of equipment from which the operators view is restricted.

Source: Ontario Farm Safety Association



Tips for Good Machinery Maintenance

1. Follow suggestions in your owners manual.
2. Perform daily (5 & 10 hour) maintenance before using the machine.
3. Check the machine for damage and potential failures before starting it.
4. Run the engine until it is warm before putting it under load.
5. Let a hot engine run a few minutes without load so that it cools before shutting it off.
6. Keep bolts nuts tight.
7. Watch the instrument panel.
8. Keep the machine properly serviced.
9. Operate at safe speeds.

Don't

1. Jump on the machine, start it and take off with a cold engine.
2. Start the engine and turn it off before it has warmed up.
3. Jam the transmission into gear.
4. Snap or pop the clutch.
5. Spin the tires.
6. Overload the capacity of the machine.
7. Let the engine idle for long periods of time.
8. Store the machine without properly preparing it for storage.
9. Neglect to perform periodic maintenance on schedule.
10. Remove safety shields.

Update on the EIA Survey

The Equine Infectious Anemia survey is complete and a summary will be available from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics in early July. Over 200 people answered the survey and the results were all over the board. The survey demonstrates that there is concern of EIA transmission, especially at events such as a rodeo. Some respondents felt that a yearly mandatory test should be used to assure that Yukon horses are EIA free. For a detailed analysis of the survey please pick up a copy of the summary.

Focus on Pest Control: Cabbage Maggot

(Hylemya brassicae)

Description: Adult is an ash-grey fly about ¼ inch long with black stripes on thorax and black bristles over body, resembling a small house fly. White eggs are laid at the base of the plants at soil line. Larvae are white, about ¼ inch long, blunt at the rear end and pointed at front.

Host Plants: Cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts, radish, turnip

Symptoms: Flies lay eggs; the eggs hatch into larvae, which eat and tunnel into the roots, causing the plant to wilt and develop bacterial and fungus diseases.

Life Cycle: Larvae will feed for three to four weeks before pupating, then hibernate in the soil as pupae. Adults emerge from pupae and lay eggs that hatch into larvae. Cabbage maggots overwinter as pupae in the soil.

Predators and Parasites: Rove beetles prey on maggot eggs and young larvae; the larvae of the beetles also parasitize the pupal stage of the maggot. Ground beetles also feed on the larval stage of the maggot. Higher organic matter levels in the soil attract these beneficial beetles.

Other Controls: Use big healthy transplants and cover them with a floating row cover throughout the month of June until they are well established. Put little 6" collars around the base of the transplants and keep them free of soil so maggot flies can't lay their eggs close to them. Pull up and remove infected plants. Remove wild mustard weeds – they can harbour cabbage maggot flies.



Why did the Chicken cross the road??
To show the gophers it could be done!

Hang Mosquitoes Out to Dry

Mosquitoes are carriers of West Nile virus. The best way for you to avoid infection is to avoid mosquito bites. Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water, and they don't tend to travel far from where they hatch, so it makes sense to get rid of hatching sites by eliminating standing water around your house and yard.

Here is a checklist to help keep mosquitoes at bay:

- outdoor flowerpots or other containers fill with rainwater and give mosquitoes a great place to lay their eggs. Cover any kind of container, including buckets, tin cans garbage cans and recycling boxes. You could also move these containers into the garage or shed, or just make sure you dump the water out weekly. Consider drilling holes in the bottoms of plastic or wooden containers that don't need to hold water so they can drain by themselves
- get rid of junk piles or old machinery. Mosquitoes don't need much water to lay eggs, and junk often collects enough water for them to do so
- old tires are notorious as mosquito hatching grounds. Store them in a garage or shed, cover them so they don't collect rainwater, or take scrap tires to the local recycling center or landfill; empty water from children's plastic wading pools when not in use and turn them over - or store them in a garage or shed
- check storm drains and window wells for standing water. If you fix leaky outdoor faucets, you reduce mosquito hatching sites and conserve water at the same time
- you don't need to worry about swimming pools if they are kept clean and chlorinated. You do need to be careful about ornamental pools or ponds. They can beautify a garden, but can be perfect hatching sites. Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish
- check your swimming pool cover, car covers or any other tarps on your property - water tends to collect in them if they sag
- people who want to attract bird life to their yards should be careful with birdbaths; they are an attractive spot for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. Empty and refill birdbaths weekly
- leaves can collect in the eaves troughs and downspouts on houses. These leaves can create shallow pools when it rains, so clean them out
- fill in potholes in your driveway where standing

water can collect; consider landscaping your property to eliminate low spots. Just like in eaves troughs, small piles of leaves can hold just the right amount of water where mosquitoes eggs can hatch

- keep mosquitoes out of your house by fixing broken window or door screens and attic vents so mosquitoes can't get in.

Source: Agri-News June 2, 2003

Yukon Agricultural Association Develops Bulk Fertilizer Buying Cooperative

The Yukon Agricultural Association recently purchased bins for bulk fertilizer storage in the territory. There are six sites where bulk shipments of fertilizer are stored: In Watson Lake at Dalyce Stubenburg's farm, on the Alaska highway west of Whitehorse at Dave & Tracy Andrew's farm, the Drury's and at Laprairie's Bison Ranch, at the Grove's farm on the Takhini River road and at Steve MacKenzie's place just off the Mayo Road on Policeman's Point. Contributions toward the project came from both the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Canada-Yukon, Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund.

The idea behind the cooperative is to buy fertilizer in bulk, usually in the fall when prices are lowest and the bring a number of full truck-loads to the bulk storage sites. Members of the buying group will then be able to go to the site nearest their farm in the spring and have mini-bulk bags loaded with either a forage or grain blend of fertilizer. Savings to the individual producer can be as much as \$90 per tonne of fertilizer by using the purchasing power of the association.

The bins are the property of the Yukon Agriculture Association and those wanting to participate in this program are required to become members. The site holders have all made contributions towards the cost of the scales and equipment required to load fertilizer in exchange for the site being located on their farms. If you would like to participate in the cooperative or require more information contact Dave or Tracy Andrew at 667- 7844. Tracy mentioned that both the Drury's and Steve MacKenzie may have some fertilizer left this year if anyone is a little short or planning to seed later this summer.

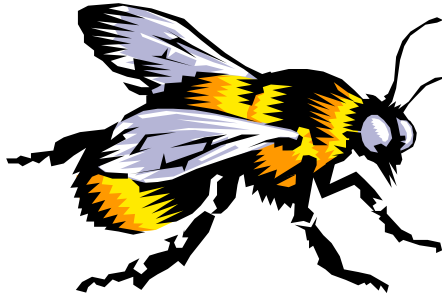


Campfire Recipes

Dough Boys

2 cups flour
 4 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 3 tablespoons shortening
 7/8 cup milk

Mix and sift dry ingredient. With two knives or pastry blender, cut in shortening. Add milk and mix with a fork to form a soft dough. Peel a one to two cm diameter stick seven cm down from the top; grease stick. Wrap biscuit dough around the stick and bake slowly over coals. Turn stick so dough cooks evenly. When the dough is baked, it pulls off the stick easily. Fill the hole with butter and jam.



Llamas looking for a home

We have too many llamas and are giving some away for free to good homes. If you're interested call Tom and Patty Hirsch at 867.393.3636.

Beekeepers!

To control mosquito populations and the threat they pose in transmitting diseases such as West Nile, pesticides (ie malathion) that may impact your colonies are being applied. We need to keep a list of beekeepers up to date so pesticide applicators know to contact you about pesticides being applied around your area. If you have not already done so, please contact Janine Kostelnik at 867.667.5456 to inform her of your operation.

*Our new location is in the Elijah
 Smith Building room 320.*

InFARMatIon is...

A Yukon government newsletter published by the Agriculture Branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. If you would like to add your name to the newsletter mailing list, comment on an article or contribute a story, then please write to:

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If you would like to speak with someone in person please contact Tony Hill at 867-667-3417, outside of Whitehorse at 1-800-661-0408 local 3417, or stop by the Agriculture Branch. We will be at our new location on the 3rd Floor Elijah Smith Building.

Web site: www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture

Joke of the Month

At a testimonial dinner, an ol' Yukon rancher, the guest of honor, said, "When I came to the Yukon, I had only one suit on my back, one pair of shoes on my feet and everything I owned was wrapped in a red handkerchief I carried on my shoulder. Now I own ranches, houses, cars, and 10,000 head of cattle. Which proves this is a great territory and anybody who works hard can make it."

One young man asked, "What did you have in the red handkerchief?"

The ol' rancher answered, "About \$500,000 in cash, a million in diamonds, and a few thousand in bonds."