



# Western Stock Growers' Association

## Special AGM Edition Newsletter

March 2017



### PRESIDENT'S AGM ADDRESS

Well one thing that we have learned in the past year was to expect the unexpected. From the crops that are still not off to the bovine TB investigation in Alberta, it has definitely been a very taxing year.

On the TB investigation, it looks as though that we are nearing the end but there will be more testing to come later in the fall. So we are in hurry up and wait mode for now. On the Bill 6 file, the roundtable consultation sessions have concluded. As the recommendations are forwarded to government for consideration, we will keep on top of the developments as they go forward. Part of that is maintaining our participation in the AgCoalition. Of course, we remain involved in land use planning issues and property rights as they affect the lands owned and managed by our membership.

This year at ABIC, we offered a pre-conference workshop on Holistic Management presented by Blain Hjertaas. It was a trial this year and if it is successful, we will continue to offer the pre-conference workshop for years to come.

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At this year's AGM, history was made with our first appointment of a woman to the WSGA Board of Governors. After serving on the Board of Directors for 25 years and in the position of Honorary President, Eileen McElroy Clayton was named to the Board of Governors. Eileen's organizational knowledge of the WSGA is unparalleled and we are fortunate to have her become a governor.

I would like to thank the board for all their support and encouragement in the past year. I am honoured the board has elected me as president for the next year and look forward to what this upcoming year will bring us.

Respectfully,

Aaron Brower



## **2016 AGM Resolutions**

### **RESOLUTION #1**

WHEREAS the current instance of bovine tuberculosis in Alberta has cost the industry money and reputation and the taxpayer in funds and the source of infection has not yet been determined, and

WHEREAS molecular identification of the causative organism has determined that it is identical to an outbreak originating in Mexico and extending into the mid-western United States there has been no linkage established between the two outbreaks, and

WHEREAS the most likely origin of the Alberta outbreak is the previous one in the USA but the linkage between the two has not been established,

THEREFORE be it RESOLVED that WSGA encourage and assist the CFIA in uncovering the connection between the two outbreaks and the livestock which may still be infected and be a source of future outbreaks of the disease.

### **RESOLUTION #2**

WHEREAS the level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has been linked to climate change & global warming; and

WHEREAS all governments are concerned about climate change and global warming as was evident at the Paris conference on climate change in November 2015; and

WHEREAS the federal and provincial governments of Canada committed to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the Vancouver conference in March, 2016; and

WHEREAS increasing the organic matter in grass lands is the most promising way to practically and economically sequester carbon; and

WHEREAS Canada's large land base and its potential for carbon sequestration could provide a net cash benefit for the provinces & the country.

THEREFORE be it resolved that the Western Stock Growers' Association lobby the government of Alberta to implement a program that would pay agricultural producers for any measurable increase in carbon sequestration that occurs on their land.

FURTHER be it resolved that the Western Stock Growers' Association encourage the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Sustainable Roundtable on Beef to lobby the Federal Government to implement a program



## WSGA Board of Directors

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## WSGA Board of Directors Vacancies

There are a number of vacancies in the WSGA board of directors. We have spots open in Zone 6, Zone 8, Zone 9 and one Director at Large spot available. If you are interested in serving on our board, please contact Lindsye Dunbar, WSGA Manager at 4013-250-9121 or office@wsga.ca

## **Alberta Bovine TB Investigation—Recap**

What we know:

- The investigation involved one infected premise and 17 high-risk co-mingled premises. There are two risk factors that deem the 17 to be high risk and assumed infected — shared community pasture and a shared bull. This was what determined the eradication process going forward.
- There are essentially five categories for the investigation: infected premises, co-mingled premises, trace-out herds, low risk contact herds and trace-in herds. Trace-out herds are lower risk than the co-mingled herds but still of epidemiological concern.
- A full set of testing was done on the infected premises. Bovine TB was confirmed in five more animals and DNA testing confirmed it is the same strain as the initial positive. Animals that test negative on infected premises still need to be slaughtered but the negative result allows them to go into the meat system.
- Trace-out testing from the infected premise is performed, which is about determining and preventing the spread of the disease. All trace-outs have the skin test done, reactors to the skin test are processed with a post-mortem and lab cultures. Once the lab cultures results are determined negative, these herds can be released from quarantine. Thousands of tests were done and if the results from the 17 co-mingled premises come back negative, the trace-out will be considered complete.
- In the low-risk contact herds, many have already been released from quarantine following negative testing.
- In regards to the trace-in phase of the investigation, it is estimated that will include around 150 herds across Alberta and Saskatchewan. These represent the lowest risk group in the investigation. These ranchers will be contacted over the summer and have testing arranged for the fall. CFIA is expecting the trace-in testing will be less disruptive. There is no movement controls for these groups until testing and then it is expected to be a very short movement control period until results are determined. For the trace-in group, reactors to the skin test will get a blood test to determine if it is negative or positive. A negative blood test means it is free and clear.
- For the 18 premises that were depopulated, they undergo a cleaning and disinfecting regime determined by CFIA followed by a 45-day fallow period before they can begin restocking. CFIA requires two more rounds of testing after restocking. The first one, performed six months after restocking, is to ensure the ranch is restocked with TB-free cattle. The second round, performed 18 months after restocking, is to check that the cleaning and disinfecting was successful.
- The full lab results from the co-mingled premises are expected to be completed late March and it will probably be late June by the time the final sets of results come back. The trace-in cultures are projected to be complete in March 2018 and the final report from CFIA completed by Fall 2018. Total compensation paid out is estimated to be around \$36 million.
- To date, 10,500 animals have been destroyed and 19 herds (representing 7,000 animals) have been released from quarantine.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **AFAC Livestock Care Conference - Theme: 'Pushing the envelope'**

March 21 and 22, 2017, Leduc, AB. For more information got to: <http://www.afac.ab.ca/livestock-care-conference>

### **BC Cattlemen's Association 89th AGM—Theme: 'Back to the Future'**

May 25-17, 2017, Coast Kamloops Hotel and Convention Centre, Kamloops, BC

For more information go to: <http://www.cattlemen.bc.ca/agmsite.htm>

### **Canadian Beef Industry Conference—Theme: 'Sharing Common Ground'**

August 17-19, 2017, BMO Convention Centre, Calgary, AB

For more information go to: <http://canadianbeefindustryconference.com/wordpress>