

2015 Extension Highlights

Newsletters

Nine editions of CARA's 'Grain, Grass and Growth' newsletters were mass-mailed to approximately 1700 producers.



Cooperator Appreciation Evening February 5, Cereal

CARA hosted projects cooperators, local funders and other supporters to a banquet on February in Cereal to show appreciation for contributors to our program during the past year. Guest speaker was Leona Dargis who provided a very inspiring presentation on dealing with adversity.

Farm Succession Planning Workshops January 12-15

Spondin, Oyen, Buffalo and Delia

85 east central producers took advantage of the opportunity to learn more about the succession process by attending one of four seminars with Reg Shandro, Farmacist Advisory Services Inc., during the week of January 12 – 15. Reg is a highly regarded succession coach and mediator. During his seminars, he shared real life examples to illustrate the necessary steps required to prepare a successful succession plan. He focused on the importance of communication amongst all family members as an exit plan is developed. Understanding everyone's perspective of the farm operation, the need to make decisions and fair may not mean equal were other key points in his discussion.

Ladies Calving Clinic February 23, Hanna

Dr. Tamara Quaschnick of Steadfast Veterinary Services (www.steadfastvet.com) instructed 120 ladies from east-central Alberta on the finer points of calving on Monday February 23rd at the Hanna



Legion Hall. This first-of-its-kind event for the area was

overwhelmingly supported by women from Hanna, Byemore, Veteran, Consort, Oyen, Pollockville, Brooks and everywhere in between. Dr. Quaschnick demonstrated techniques for dealing with various calving problems using very unique teaching tools — UFA's life size calving models named 'Lucy' & 'Lou'.



CARA's Annual Meeting & Project Review February 26, Cereal

CARA staff reviewed results of CARA's 2014 program and plans for the 2015 at the February 26 meeting. Sarah Weigum, Three Hills, led a discussion on grain marketing options.

This Business of Farming *March 2, Oyen*

Land Investments, Succession Planning, Marketing and What to Expect From the Weatherman were the topics of CARA's This Business of Farming Seminar on March 2nd in Oyen. 25 producers joined a discussion with farm business advisor Merle Good, who provided some guidelines on determining the level of land payments a farm can sustain. Merle also shared his tax management expertise regarding succession planning and land transfer. Storm Hunter Mark Robinson shared his insight into what to expect regarding weather patterns for east central Alberta in 2015. Mark is a severe weather expert based out of Toronto and is featured on the Weather Network. His passion for storm chasing and extreme weather events was very obvious in his presentation and a hurried exit to track a weather event destined for Ontario.



Neil Blue, ARD Marketing Specialist, explained why the cattle market is currently so strong and how these conditions contribute to maintaining strength for the cow/calf operator in the near future. Well known Crop Market Consultant Lee Melvill then provided a market forecast for several cereal, oilseed and pulse crops.

Crop Strategy Seminar *March 12, Provost*

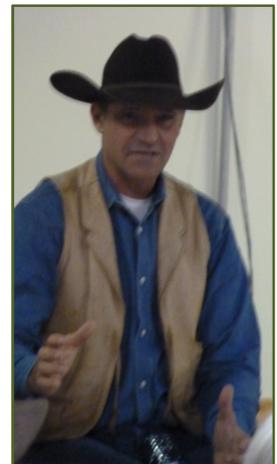
In collaboration with ARECA groups, the MD of Provost and several of the commodity commissions, CARA brought renown meteorologist, founder and president of World Weather Inc, Drew Lerner, from Kansas, USA to Provost on March 12th. Lerner's visit was part of a Crop Strategy Seminar which also included discussion of pest forecasts (Scott Meers, AF), grain market outlooks (Neil Blue, AF), seeding tips for a successful canola crop (Dan Orchard, CCC), managing pulses (Neil Whatley), soil health (Yamily Zavala) and a pulse producer panel to help farmers prepare for the quickly approaching crop year. Note: Lerner's presentation from the Crop Strategy Seminar in Provost is available on CARA's website (www.chinookappliedresearch.ca) for viewing.

Classroom Ag Program *March/April*

Dr. Yamily Zavala delivered an interactive soil health presentation to students at the Prairieview and Acadia Colonies and elementary students in Hanna, Oyen ARC., Warren Peers (Acadia Valley), Consort and Veteran schools.

Kurt Pate Cattle Handling Clinic *June 19, Big Stone*

In partnership with ARECA groups, CARA brought Kurt Pate from Montana to discuss and demonstrate principles of cattle handling to local cattlemen. Tim Andrews, Andrews Ranching, provided yearling heifers for the demonstration. Approximately 25 producers attended the event was held at the Big Stone Hall and rodeo grounds.



Soil Carbon Challenge Field Day *June 30, Chinook*

Peter Donovan led 20 producers in a discussion regarding the importance of soil carbon and his



work establishing bench mark sites in fields

across North America. He demonstrated how the sites are set up and what he is monitoring. Dr. Yamily Zavala also focused attention on the soil pit established in 2014 and characteristics of the soil profile.



Invasive Weed Control Field Day *July 9, Veno Ranches*

Approximately 20 producers joined Marj Veno, Murray MacArthur, CARA staff and Shawn Keyowski (Dow AgariSciences) to view a field demonstration of absinth control at Veno Ranches north of Richdale. They saw the effect of chemical and mowing treatments made in 2014 to control the invasive weed. Barry Yaremcio, AF, joined the group and led a discussion of meeting feed requirements during drought conditions.

Soil Health and Crop Field Day *July 24, Oyen*

Soil Health was the focus of a very interesting Field Day held at the CARA Center July 24th. Approximately 35 people participated in the day. Dr. Christine Jones, a highly regarded soil ecologist from Australia, was the keynote for the morning session. Her presentation provided an understanding of the fundamentals of soils, how fertile soil is a function of photosynthesis and microbial re-synthesis and the critical relationship



between a healthy soil and the quality of food it produces. CARA's Dr. Yamily Zavala added to the understanding of soil health by using a soil pit to illustrate soil features specific to this site next to the CARA Center. She also demonstrated differences in soil characteristics between samples from several sites within the Special Areas and MD of Acadia. A demonstration of cocktail cover crops was another highlight of the material she shared with producers. The Field Day also included brief presentations from Keith Gabert (Canola Council) on managing canola and Dr. Manjula Bandara (AF) on pulse options for annual crop rotations.

Crop Walks *July 21, Hanna and 28, Consort*

Farmers had the opportunity for one-on-one consultations with Crop Specialist Neil Whatley (AF) and Canola Agronomist Justine Cornelson (Canola Council) during a visit to CARA's crop trials at the Robinson site and adjacent fields of Blake's. Neil also met with farmers (and a future farmer) at CARA's Redel crop site and nearby lentil and pea fields.



Alberta Sheep Symposium *October 15, Red Deer*

Dianne Westerlund presented 'Surviving and Thriving in Next Year Country' to Alberta Sheep Breeders at their annual conference in Red Deer in October.

6th Annual Cattlemen's Clinic *November 17, Oyen*

Over 85 Cattlemen and women took part in several interesting discussions at the CARA's 6th Annual Cattlemen's Clinic in Oyen. Barry Yarencio, AF Beef and Feed Specialist, shared information on making suitable feed from the various feeds available for the coming winter. Dr. Cec Ruschkowski and her husband John led a discussion on cattle handling equipment. A



highlight of their presentation was a visit to their handling set-up near Oyen. Brenda Schoepp began the afternoon agenda with her thoughts on the top 10 beef industry game changers. Dr. Les Byers then explained what genomics means to a cow/calf operation.



Western Canada Conference on Soil Health *December 9-10, Edmonton*

With 2015 being declared the International Year of Soils (IYS), ARECA and its nine member associations across the province launched a soil health initiative to increase the awareness and understanding of the importance of soil for food security and essential ecosystem functions. Over the past year several workshops and activities focused on various aspects of soil health were held at points throughout Alberta, concluding with the very first Western Canada Conference on Soil Health.

The inaugural conference delivered an agenda packed full of a variety of speakers, including international researchers and provincial producers. The sold out crowd contained over 400 producers, students and industry representatives. CARA's Crop and Soil Health Management Specialist, Dr. Yamily Zavala, kicked off the conference with 'What is Soil Health?', setting the stage for understanding what a healthy soil is all about.



Winter Grazing Video Series

Local producers Calvin Bishell, James Madge, Colt Peterson and Ed Rosenau joined several other cattlemen in the province in hosting video-graphers and discussion with specialists in the development of videos addressing the risks associated with extending the grazing season. CARA staff are assisting in the editing of the videos which will be ready for circulation in 2016.

Green Certificate Testing

CARA hosted testing days for the Green Certificate Program at the CARA Center in March, May and December.

Environmental Farm Plans

CARA staff assisted producers with understanding and completing EFP's for their operations.

Growing Forward

Many producers were assisted with applications to various Growing forward programs during the year, including Grazing & Winter Feeding Water Management, Crop, Manure, Energy, Animal Welfare, Health and Biosecurity.

Feed, Seed and Soil Analysis

CARA continued to provide producers with information, use of bale sampling probes and/or facilitation of analysis of feed, seed, plant, soil and water samples in 2015.

Website, Facebook, Twitter and Email

CARA's website (www.chinookappliedresearch.ca) has received over 80,000 hits during the past three years. Information is also distributed to producers via Facebook, Twitter and email contact lists.

Twitter: @CARAresearch

Visit us on Facebook

Email: cara-1@telus.net