



Grain, Grass & Growth January 2024

Board Members Sign Up for New CARA Executive

The January 11th meeting of the CARA Board included an election of CARA's 2024 Executive. Marie Cowan, ratepayer representative from the MD of Acadia, takes over the President's role. Dan Grudecki, also a ratepayer rep from the MD, accepted the Vice-President nomination. Gloria Nelson, Director at Large from Special Area 4 moved into the Past-President position. Landon Olsen resumed his position as Financial Supervisor. A new Executive position included nomination of Barry Redel, director at large, as CARA's representative to the Board of the Agricultural Research and Executive Council of Alberta (ARECA). Olivia Sederberg will be Barry's alternate. The Executive, remaining Board and Staff look forward to moving ahead on carrying out an effective program of applied research and knowledge sharing activities during the coming year.

A huge thank you is extended to Gloria Nelson who has held the President's position for CARA for several years. She has played a key role in helping guide CARA through several initiatives and some challenging times. Development of CARA's Soil Health Lab and increasing core funding for producer associations are just 2 examples of important projects which Gloria has been a part of. She has represented CARA at several provincial meetings and can be counted on to attend CARA's local events, tours, workshops and field days. Your time and dedication is much appreciated!



The CARA Board and Staff would like to thank the following who have contributed cash donations, provided product as well as expertise for CARA's Soil Health Lab renovation/expansion project. Phil Bourque, Jed Jansen, Norman Storch, Barry Redel, Double N Farms, Daryl Yake and Mile West Farms.

Thanks also to Yamily and other CARA Staff members for their help with planning, insulating, painting, etc.!

Visitors are welcome to stop in once new lab equipment is installed and operational which is expected to be complete in late February.

2024 Blue Book Available

" The partners collaborating on this important resource are Alberta Grains, Alberta Canola, and Alberta Pulse Growers. The commissions are proud to produce this valuable and widely used resource. It's one more way check-off dollars are put to work for farmers and assist them to thrive agronomically and economically.

Selecting the right chemical treatment requires specific knowledge of a farmer's cropping system and intended market. The Blue Book compliments the chemical label to give farmers the information they need to make the right choice of chemistry to provide protection from pests without risking profit. The Blue Book is reviewed and updated annually to include the latest information on pesticide application products, along with new product additions. Updates provided by crop protection companies give farmers access to the most current product information available.

Pickup a copy of the Blue Book at the CARA Office or visit www.albertabluebook.com to order or download the 2024 Blue Book. "

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN WORKSHOP

February 21, 2024

1 - 4 pm

Special Areas Office
Youngstown

Join the EFP Workshop for assistance on starting, completing, or to learn more about the benefits of completing an EFP!



Please Pre-Register to Attend:

(403) 664-3777

cara-3@telus.net

Free to attend - please bring your laptop or tablet

CARA GRAZING CLUBS

February 2024 Meetings:

“GRAZING & PASTURE MANAGEMENT”

**FEBRUARY 7TH - OYEN
OYEN CANALTA HOTEL MEETING ROOM
6-9 PM**

KARIN LINDQUIST - "GRAZING PRINCIPLES"
DR. GREG PENNER - "COW EFFICIENCY CALCULATOR"
RAFTER 00 PRODUCER HIGHLIGHT
BARON RANCHING PRODUCER HIGHLIGHT

**FEBRUARY 15TH - POLLOCKVILLE
HARDGRASS HUB COMMUNITY CENTRE
6-9 PM**

MARCEL BUSZ - "MATTHESIS RANCH GRAZING OVERVIEW"
DR. KAREN WICKERSON - "GOPHER CONTROL METHODS"
JIM GERRISH - "GRAZING MANAGEMENT FOR DROUGHT
RECOVERY"

**FEBRUARY 28TH - CONSORT
50TH AND MAIN RESTAURANT
6-9 PM**

JOE HARRINGTON - "WATER DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY"
NOLAN BALL - "GRAZING THE SPECIAL AREAS COMMUNITY PASTURES"
TBA



\$20/Ticket
Must pre-register by calling 403-
664-3777 or emailing
cara-3@telus.net



Producer Highlights - Over the Fenceline

In the next few editions of the Grain, Grass and Growth newsletters, we are planning to feature one or two producers who have incorporated some innovative technologies into their operations. A very effective method of accessing information is learning from our neighbours or others in the community who have tried a new practice and perhaps even modified it to fit our local environment. Those who are trying something new don't necessarily adopt new practices with the intention of hosting a field day or making a presentation on their experience, but we certainly appreciate those who do.

There is a lot of messaging in the agricultural sector that good recordkeeping equates to good farming practices but what does this entail and how do paper records turn into valuable field operations? Byrne Huston of Clarbyrn Farms Ltd., located north of Sibbald, has been keeping detailed records of the farms production for informed decision making since 1976. Originally, records for the cattle and grain were done by hand in journal books and as technology advanced the farm records were moved onto computers. Today, Byrne has a large master spreadsheet on Google Sheets to keep Clarbyrn Farms organized. Byrne emphasises that having detailed records of livestock, crop production, inputs, and equipment has improved decision-making and provided financial insight to the operation.

The records Byrne keeps for the crop production enterprise of the farm include the crop rotation, fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide applications, seeding and harvesting dates, grain prices, and the yield. This information can provide insight to the cost of production on a per acre basis. After calculating per acre costs Clarbyrn Farms can determine the profitability of each crop sown and use that information in the next

growing season to make improvements or eliminate management practices that were not beneficial. Byrne also records the cow herd production by noting calving dates and recording the maternal lineage of the herd using tag numbers to maintain the amount of docile, high fertility, easy-calving, and low maintenance cows on the farm.

Recordkeeping can be apart of pasture management by recording the dates and amount of cattle that are turned out and removed from different pastures to determine the amount of grazing available in each pasture to use for a grazing plan or to determine if there has been a decline in forage production. Byrne and her family are even able to update the master spreadsheet while they're out in the field using their smartphones, this prevents any information from being missed.

Byrne also keeps records on land titles, payments, income, and equipment value. By summarizing all of the financial aspects of the farm on a single spreadsheet she can quickly audit the farm without any expensive surprises. The Huston's can make informed decisions specifically for their operation by looking back on the last 15 years of information as a guide on how to move forward.



Riparian areas are the zone in between the creeks, streams, rivers, or wetlands and surrounding upland pasture. Riparian areas are developed as a result of the presence of water which effects the soils water holding capacity and the vegetation present. Erica and Rick Hadwin of Hawdin Cattle Co. have collaborated with CARA, Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association (CFGGA), Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society of Alberta (AWES), and the Consort 4H Club to improve the grazing and riparian area management of their pasture located SE of Consort.

In October 2022, members of the Consort 4H Club, Erica, and CARA staff planted four different types of native trees and shrubs along the banks of Monitor Creek that intersects the pasture to improve bank stabilization and the vegetation cover in the riparian area. AWES educated the 4H Club members and the landowners on the selection of shrubs and trees they provided for the project and the importance of creating healthy riparian areas. As part of improving the riparian health of the Monitor Creek the Hadwin's purchased a RangeWard Power Grazer with a grant from the CFGGA On-Farm Climate Action Fund to segment the pasture into 4 paddocks that prevented cattle from grazing the riparian areas. Dividing the 400 acre pasture into four smaller paddocks improves the grazing distribution and forage utilization as it forces cattle to graze more densely in a smaller space so they will graze more uniformly rather than

selectively grazing only some areas in the pasture that can lead to overgrazing and a decline in favourable grass species. Creating paddocks with the portable electric fencing system will improve the planned rest and recovery of forages as cattle are excluded from re-grazing forages that are beginning to regrow. By restricting access to the riparian areas it allows for natural revegetation, protection for the new trees and shrubs, minimizes mechanical disturbance from cattle walking into the creek or down the banks, and increases the water holding capacity of the creek. A portable offsite-watering system was used to prevent any access to the creek for drinking water. The Power Grazer and offsite watering systems will allow the Hadwin's to conserve grass and water while improving the riparian area health of Monitor Creek simultaneously.





Join Us!

SHELTERBELT WORKSHOP

MARCH 28, 2024 4-8PM

YOUNGSTOWN SCHOOL & GREENHOUSE

Guest Speaker Toso Bozic

CHOOSING THE PERFECT
TREE FOR SPECIAL AREAS

WEED CONTROL OPTIONS

LEARN ABOUT AVAILABLE FREE
FUNDING FOR FARM TREES!



DROUGHT MANAGEMENT
OF FARM SHELTERBELTS

SET YOURSELF UP FOR
SUCCESS WITH TREE
MAINTENANCE & PLANTING
TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

REGISTER TO SAVE YOUR SPOT:

CONTACT CARA AT (403) 664-3777 OR CARA-3@TELUS.NET OR
[HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/E/SHELTERBELT-WORKSHOP-TICKETS-80007251597](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/shelterbelt-workshop-tickets-80007251597)

FREE SUPPER COURTESY OF HANNA AG SOCIETY



Projects to Watch for in 2024

Perennial Cereal Grain Trial – The perennial crops seeded in the spring of 2023 got off to a rough start due to the drought. While establishment of the entire trial was not great, the ACE-1 perennial rye was notable better than the Kernza perennial wheat. Emergence of the companion legumes was extremely poor. All plots will be monitored for spring growth through to maturity. Hopefully the site will receive lots more snow cover before spring to provide much needed early season moisture.

Verification of Management on Soil Health – Field sites across Alberta that were included in the Alberta Soil Health Benchmark Study will be revisited in 2024 for collection of soil and infield testing of compaction and infiltration. The soil collected will be analyzed at the CARA Soil Health Lab for several physical, chemical and biological parameters. The management at each site during the past 3 years will be documented. Correlations between changes in soil health parameters and specific field practices will be determined. 10 of Alberta’s applied research and forage associations are partnering on this project.

Evaluation of Humalite – CARA is partnering with WestMet Ag to evaluate the use of humalite in both annual and perennial crops.

MASH (Management Alternatives for Soil Health) – Dr. Zavala will work with producers to monitor the impact of various field scale management practices on identified soil restraints. The project will include training producers to identify and track changes in specific soil issues. Controlling Kochia in Field Peas – Residual and in-crop herbicides will be evaluated for control of kochia within field peas (pending funding approval)

Pasture Rejuvenation – Forage production and quality will be evaluated from nitrogen applications, soil disturbance, sod-seeding legumes and biological soil amendments treatments applied to an aged grass stand. (pending funding approval)
Propagation of Local Native Grass Seed – develop strategies for improving the supply of local seed for use in restoring native soils (pending funding approval)

Watch for more information as plans become finalized.

Western Canadian Grazing Conference

DOUBLE TREE by Hilton

A Path to Resilience
Healthy Soil, Plants, Economics and People

SAVE THE DATE
DECEMBER 10-12
2024

WESTERN CANADA
Conference on Soil Health

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
West Edmonton

LANDVIEW

Drone Spraying Clinic

- Intro to product application by drone
- Spray quality & drift
- Regulatory issues in aviation & pesticides
- Multispectral mapping for prescriptions
- Pesticide safety
- Flight planning & mission planning
- Calibration of application parameters
- Hands-on practice designing and executing spraying/spreading missions

Registration of \$590 includes lunches
register at landview.com
or call us at (780) 448-7445
for more information
Use discount code
CARA for \$100 off
Registration is free/reimbursed with
purchase of any Agras drone

Oyen, Crossroads Centre - March 18 & 19



Don't miss an opportunity to expand your agricultural knowledge! Apply to join the CARA Team this summer and gain experience in applied research, crop and forage production, soil health and much more!



The Chinook Applied Research Association is accepting applications for
2024 SUMMER RESEARCH TECHNICIANS

Responsibilities will include:

Assisting with the establishment, maintenance, harvest and data collection from various applied research and demonstration projects
 Assisting with tours, field days and other extension events

Qualifications include:

- Student of an agricultural, environmental, science or other educational program
- Valid driver's license
- Good communication skills
- Self-motivated and organized
- Working knowledge of word and excel computer programs
- Ability to work both independently and in a team atmosphere

Please submit resumes to
cara-dw@telus.net or to
 Box 690, Oyen, Alberta T0J 2J0
 Contact Dianne Westerlund
 for more information
 (403-664-3777 or cara-dw@telus.net)



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