

2017

Volume 8, Issue 3



Lakeland Agricultural Research Association



The Verdant Element

TOUGH ENOUGH TO FARM

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Even on the best years, farming is hard work. It takes more than just physical strength, it takes determination, faith, perseverance and most of all the right mentality. When speaking to most farmers, they say that the industry is about passion. Passion for your land, your animals and passion for your family. It is a way of life. However the challenges can easily add up. The weather is never cooperative; big storms, drought, flood and everything in between can lead to challenges that are hard to cope with. The markets are volatile with prices changing, and pressures of marketing and even disease and yields fluctuating influencing your bottom line. And then there is the difficulty of higher land prices and the rising costs of everything else, from inputs (fertilizer, seed and pesticides), to labour and machinery. Long days in the fields and the physical strength needed to farm can put a toll on the body. But we rarely breathe a whisper about the mental strength needed to keep track of all that is happening on the farm, being away from family during the busy times, and dealing with the stress of unpredictable weather, breakdowns, marketing and managing your operations. It is easy to feel overwhelmed by all that needs to get done, while dealing with normal family life and all the uncontrollable factors in agriculture. It is easy and acceptable to talk about your aches and pains, but for some reason taboo to talk about mental health and well being. Why is there shame attached to talking about the isolation and despair that can come with agriculture? Why is depression dismissed as not being a serious illness? We all don't need to be "touchy feely" but we do need to listen when people are dealing in times of stress and take mental health as a serious issue. Suicide is now being seen as an epidemic. According to the Medical Examiners office as of July 31 in Alberta there have been 539 suicide deaths in Alberta since January. A large portion of those deaths were in the age range of 50-59, but also in the 20-30 range. Alberta also leads the country in the number of suicides. We, as an agricultural community

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Tough Enough...

need to listen, show understanding and be able to talk about depression, mental stress and recognize the signs of people who may be silently suffering.

LARA, in association with The Demeria Memorial Fund, will be hosting SAFETALK, which is to increase suicide alertness for everyone, in particular the agricultural community. It will be November 15th at the Mallaig Unity Hall. Lunch at 11:30 and the workshop to begin at noon.



safeTALK Suicide Alertness for Everyone

A half-day workshop to learn the signs and how to get help for someone at risk of suicide.

Learning objectives:

- Move beyond common tendencies to miss, dismiss, or avoid suicide
- Identify people who have thoughts of suicide
- Apply the TALK steps (Tell, Ask, Listen, and KeepSafe) to connect a person with thoughts of suicide to suicide first aid intervention caregivers



centre for
suicide prevention

Centre for Suicide Prevention
T 403 245 3900
csp@suicideinfo.ca

suicideinfo.ca
@cspyyyc

SAFETALK is November 15th from 11:30 to 4:00

Mallaig Unity Hall

Cost is \$20 to cover the workshop materials provided. Lunch included!

To register call the LARA office at 780-826-7260 or email: *sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca*



abinvasives.ca
info@abinvasives.ca



Last Updated January 2014

Field Scabious

Knautia arvensis Bachelor's buttons, Gipsy rose

Provincial Designation:
Noxious

Pest Watch



Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Overview:

Field scabious is native to Europe and was introduced as an ornamental plant. It is a tall perennial that favors grassy areas and develops a deep tap root. The flowers very closely resemble those of another ornamental perennial, Scabiosa (butterfly plant, pincushion flower) but each plant belongs to a different genus.

Habitat:

Prefers nutrient-rich and moderately dry soils, but can also establish in gravelly soils.

Identification:

Stems: Are erect, hairy, sparsely branched, and grow up to 1.5 m tall. There can be one or several stems per plant, with little or no branching in the upper stem.

Leaves: Are hairy and the degree of the lobes is highly variable. Young rosettes leaves tend to be lance-shaped, have pointed tips, and the margins can be entire or coarsely toothed – sometimes a few leaves will be

pinnately lobed. Stem leaves are opposite, pinnate (deeply lobed) and attached directly to the stem. Lower leaves are 10-25 cm long but become smaller higher on the plant.

Flowers: Are a composite of small, violet-blue to purple florets clustered into a head resembling a single flower up to 4 cm wide, and occur singly at the ends of stems. Occasionally flowering stems arise from leaf axils lower on the stem. Below the flower head is a ring of narrow green bracts. Flowers are hermaphroditic (having both male and female organs).

Seeds: Once flowering is complete the seed head is domed and covered with short, bristly hairs. The fruit is nut like, cylindrical and hairy, 5-6mm in size. Seeds fall around the parent plant. A single plant can produce up to 2000 seeds that remain viable for many years.

Prevention:

Field scabious can invade undisturbed plant communities, and once established is very difficult to control, but maintaining healthy cover can help to prevent against invasion.

Any field scabious infestation that has been allowed to go to seed a few times will require many years of diligent control work to eradicate. Since this plant favors grassy areas such as hayfields, it can be widely dispersed in baled forage.

Control:

Grazing: Field scabious is not palatable and seeds can be transported by animal movement. Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.

Cultivation: Discing before flowering is effective in crop land situations.

Mechanical: Mowing is effective to prevent seed production but would likely need to be repeated in the season because of re-sprouting. The deep tap root is difficult to remove in anything but loose soils; therefore hand pulling usually results in the stem breaking off at ground level and then re-sprouting occurs. However, any removal of seed is beneficial. Wear long sleeves and gloves as skin contact with the hairy plant causes considerable itching.

Chemical: Metsulfuron-methyl alone or in a product mix with Aminopyralid are registered for use on field scabious. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the target plant in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Always read and follow label directions. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

Biological: None researched to date.



Seedhead

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development



Stems

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

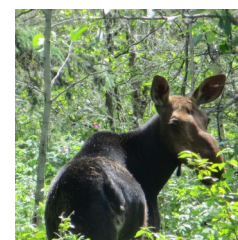
To report prohibited noxious weeds call the Alberta Pest Surveillance System at :

310-APSS (2777)



Rosettes

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development



ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

The environment is becoming a more prominent issue. It is a large factor in marketing agriculture and food products in today's global markets. Consumers are demanding more transparency and are demanding high quality and safe products. Reputation of food safety is critical to retain and gain access to domestic and international markets.

Environmental Farm Plans (EFP) provide a tool for producers to self analyze their operation and identify environmental risks, current standards, areas for improvement and also highlight what they are doing well.

Having a completed EFP allows producers to access different funding opportunities, such as the Growing Forward Stewardship Program. It is also useful in product branding that demonstrates specific environmental standards.

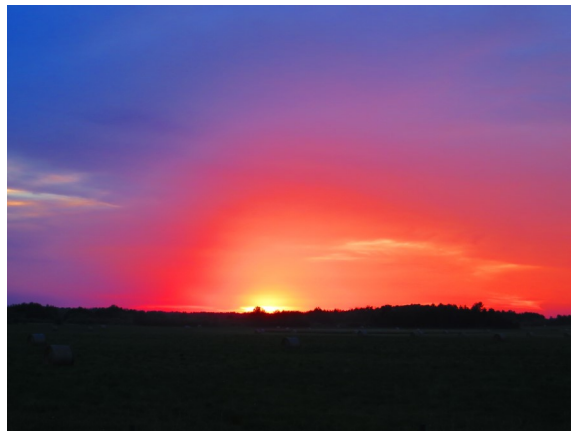
The EFP Process

An EFP can be completed through workshops, online or one-on-one session(s). The EFP first identifies the soil and farm site characteristics. Following this, the producer completes only the relevant chapters that apply to their operation; such as wintering sites, fertilizer, pesticides, crop management etc.

Upon completion the EFP is submitted to a Technical Assistant for review. Once reviewed the EFP will be returned along with a letter of completion.

The EFP is a living document and should be reviewed and updated periodically.

If you wish to complete an EFP or have any questions regarding EFP please contact Kellie at the LARA office at 780-826-7260



Riparian Health Assessment

The riparian zone is the interface between the upland and a water course. A healthy riparian area: traps and stores sediment; builds and maintains banks and shorelines; stores water; recharges aquifers; filters and buffers water; creates primary production and much more!

A riparian health assessment is a tool designed to evaluate the site and can provide a foundation to build an action plan and identify priorities.

If you would like a FREE Riparian Health Assessment conducted on your property or more information please call Kellie at 780-826-7260 or email sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca

Lakeland Agricultural Research Association

Working Well Workshop

Did you know that a poorly maintained water well can put your water supply at risk of contamination and reduce your well yield?

If you are one of 600,000 Albertans who use their water well for household purposes, the key to ensuring your water supply is safe and secure is knowing how groundwater works, learning about your well and understanding how to properly maintain it.

Proper water well siting, construction, maintenance and plugging will help protect your well from biofouling and contamination, save you costly repairs, and ensure your well water yields are sustained over many years.

If you'd like to find out if your groundwater is at risk and learn what you can do to protect your well, **attend a FREE water well management workshop** being hosted by Lakeland Agricultural Research Association, and presented by the Working Well Program, with technical expertise from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, and Alberta Environment and Parks on **November 9th, 2017 at Craigend Hall** starting at **10:30 AM** and lunch will be provided. This hands-on, informative workshop is designed to help water well owners better understand and manage their precious groundwater supplies.

Consider how your life would change if you lost your water supply!

During the workshop we will cover:

- **Groundwater - how it works**
- **Water Quality and Quantity Testing**
- **Well Protection - protecting your well from contamination**
- **Basic Well Maintenance**
- **Water Sampling - how to do it**

November 9, 2017

Craigend Hall

**Workshop from
10:30 AM - 2:30 PM**

**2 miles east of the
junction of Highway
36 and 55**

To attend the workshop,
please pre-register by calling
Kellie at the LARA Office at:
780-826-7260



Free Lunch Included! MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED by November 7th!

**WORKING
WELL**
Clean water.
Well protected.

LARA
LAKELAND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Pond Leveler and Exclusion Fencing

This year I was able to take part in a Cows and Fish Beaver Workshop. It was 2 days spent out in the field, in the cold rain, on September 13 and 14th helping to build an exclusion fence and a pond leveler (beaver deceiver). The cost of these tools is relatively inexpensive in comparison to the cost of cleaning out culverts, blowing dams and trying to control beavers. Instead it allows the current beaver colony to remain in place, while protecting infrastructure such as roads and culverts and maintaining water flows to prevent flooding. By also allowing the current colony to remain, the beavers naturally prevent new beavers from entering the area and cutting down larger trees to build new dams and lodges. These creatures, whether you love them or hate them, are an important part in maintaining and creating wetlands and are essential to healthy ecosystems and water quality. The first day was spent cleaning out a culvert and building the exclusion

fence. The fence allows passage of fish, and prevents the beavers from blocking the culvert. The second day was at a different location with a dam, where we built a pond leveler, which allows you to control the level of the water, and leaves the dam for the beavers to maintain. There is about a 90-95% success rate for both of these devices and can be built and installed in a day with 2-3 people. If you are interested in learning more about these tools or installing one, please contact me anytime at LARA at 780-826-7260 or sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca. [Photos of exclusion

fence page 6; pond leveler page 7]





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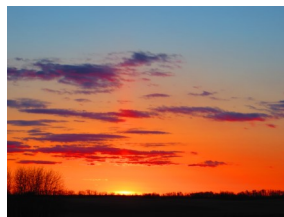
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Sustainable farming encompasses a wide range of practices and principles; combining environmental stewardship with profitability and ensuring that the family farm will be there for generations to come.



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Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lakeland-Agricultural-Research-Association/316266591732449>

HEALTHY SOILS HAVE RESILIENCE BY:

- * Able to hold onto and release nutrients and water
- * Have great structure
- * Being full of life
- * Protecting against pests and disease
- * Decomposing organic materials and detoxifying pollutants
- * Buffering against changeable climate
- * Being full of secondary metabolites, plant growth hormones and enzymes
- * Growing healthy, nutrient dense crops

What are you doing to make your soil healthier?

Food For Thought...

- * Beavers diet consists of roughly 53% wood of which: 86% is consumed in winter; 32% in spring; 16% in summer; and 60% in fall. The lower amount of wood consumed in spring in summer is primarily substituted for with cattails and rushes.
- * 80% of Alberta's wildlife require a riparian area for all or a portion of their lifecycle requirements.

WWW.LARAONLINE.CA

WESTERN CANADA
Conference on Soil Health



Western Canada Conference on
Soil Health & Grazing

**PROFIT ABOVE
WEALTH BELOW**

Edmonton, AB
December 5 - 7, 2017

<https://www.absoilgrazing.com>

