
July 2, 2013
Humboldt, SK
Immediate Release

Field Day Attracts Over 130 Producers, Industry Insiders

LANIGAN, SK - The rain stayed away, but the people did not. The Western Beef Development Centre (WBDC) hosted another successful Summer Field Day at the Termuende Research Ranch near Lanigan on June 25.

A full slate of researchers speaking on a wide range of topics under the banner of “Riding Technology into the Future” attracted over 130 producers and industry insiders to the ranch for the 15th annual WBDC Summer Field Day.

Donna Harpauer, MLA for Humboldt and Minister of Crown Investments, helped open the day, appearing on behalf of Minister of Agriculture Lyle Stewart who was unable to attend.

“Last fall, our government announced our growth plan for Saskatchewan, and a key component of that is agriculture,” she stated. The province is investing a record \$27 million in agricultural research this year, and Harpauer assured those at the field day that the provincial government will continue to support the WBDC and the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI), of which the WBDC is a division.

The work done by the WBDC is extremely important to the industry, Harpauer indicated, as the centre provides research and technology that producers can utilize.

“It’s our pleasure to have the opportunity to show off what we do here,” Tim Oleksyn, chair of the WBDC’s Strategic Advisory Committee told the crowd gathered for the morning’s sessions.

“Encouraging” was how Paul Jefferson, WBDC vice-president, described the day at the ranch. Though attendance was down from last year, he accredited that to the recent stormy weather, uncertainty in the field, and farmers still trying to catch up from the late spring.

Those who did attend the day told him the sessions were very informative and the topics chosen were important to producers. Being able to get out into the field so producers could see the WBDC forage projects was great, he added, and dovetailed nicely with a recent announcement about the creation of a forage research chair at the University of Saskatchewan.

The Field Day featured addresses by guests like Dr. Colin Palmer of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, who delivered the keynote on “Tools for Raising Successful Replacements.” Palmer is a cattle breeder himself, and he hoped producers would walk away from his session with things to think about to get their heifers into the best shape possible, including how age, body weight, genetics, and possible season of birth and bull exposure can influence the onset of puberty in heifers.

Three other technical speakers addressed the morning session of the field day; Colby Elford and Travis Peardon of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture focused on “Producers’ Challenges in Breeding Heifers and Young Cows,” and Dr. Bruce Coulman of the University of Saskatchewan spoke about “Dryland Grass Breeding in Saskatchewan.”

The focus then switched to WBDC research projects during afternoon field tours. Stockpiled perennial forage grazing, growing sainfoin (a bloat-safe legume) with alfalfa for bypass protein and digestive efficiency, radio frequency identification (RFID) tag testing, results from the solid state anaerobic digester, a post-mortem discussion on the 2012-13 winter feeding season, and absinthe control in pasture were all explored during those sessions.

A session on painful procedures and the Beef Code of Practice by Dr. John Campbell wrapped up the day's sessions.

Producers in attendance were impressed by the information they received throughout the day, whether it was hearing about the importance of nutrition and proper development programs for replacement heifers, how technology can be used to improve the genetics of a cattle herd, how to extend the grazing season using stockpiled forages, or the importance of knowing the quality of forage crops in order to properly supplement cattle. The update on how the bloat-safe legume sainfoin is performing at Lanigan, as compared to other sites in Saskatchewan and Alberta, was also appreciated by producers.

Dave Smith of Lockwood was one of the producers attending the field day. He's been in the cattle business all his life, and has been attending WBDC field days for years.

"I like to come and visit, and find out what's new and up to date," he said. "I've always been interested in research, and they always have good speakers." Though he has 54 years of experience on the farm, "There's always something to learn, something to take away," he said. "And sometimes, you see what you're doing is the right thing, and that's good," he smiled.

The WBDC is currently looking into holding a winter field day in December.

Cutlines for photos:

6185: Dr. Colin Palmer of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine delivers his keynote address on "Tools for Raising Successful Replacement Heifers."

6212: Murray Feist of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture provides a post-mortem on the winter feeding season of 2012-13 while on one of the afternoon field tours.

6300: Dr. Paul Jefferson (right) addresses the crowd looking at the plots of sainfoin and alfalfa during one of the field tours.

6325: Dr. Bart Lardner shows off one of the varieties of grasses which were stockpiled for grazing last winter during a field tour about stockpiled perennial forage grazing.

6367: Nadia Mori of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture discusses absinthe control in pastures during one of the field tours.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Dr. Bart Lardner,
Senior Research Scientist,
Western Beef Development Centre
Ph: 306.220-9179 Cell: 306-220-9179

Keri Dalman
Communications Coordinator
PAMI/WBDC
Ph: 306.682.5033 Ext. 102

It is WBDC's policy to acknowledge funding agencies and partners in all news releases. Your cooperation in ensuring that this happens in any published releases is appreciated.