



## Forage and Livestock eNews

*Updates and information from across the industry*

Volume 17 Issue 4, April 16, 2024

### **Best Management Practices for High Quality Silage Production: What Does the Research Say?**

#### **Dairy Farmers of Canada Research Project**

##### *Project overview*

Successful milk production in Canada relies on high-quality forage, which is often stored as silage. The objectives of this project were to identify silage management practices that were associated with producing high quality silage, and to examine annual costs and gross margins across different silage systems across Canada.

##### *Principal Investigators*

Nancy McLean, Dalhousie University

Linda Jewell, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (St-John's)

##### *What did the research team do?*

Over 240 silage samples from three silage systems (bunker, conventional tower, and wrapped round bales) were compared to assess differences in quality parameters, fungal species and mycotoxin presence. An economic analysis was conducted to determine annual costs and gross margins for each of the three silage systems.

Visit the [\*\*Dairy Farmers of Canada to website\*\*](#) to read more about this project, including links to videos, webinar, podcasts and publications to share research knowledge.

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## Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Water Blitz

A water testing blitz is happening in Saskatchewan!

Water testing for livestock water sources will be provided free of charge by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture. Label your water samples with your name, contact information, RM number, and land location and nickname for the water source and bring them to the listed location where a Livestock and Feed Extension Specialist will pick them up for testing.

Locations and dates are listed on the [Agriculture Events Calendar](#). The Water Blitz dates begin in May and run until October 2024.

[SK Agriculture Events Calendar](#)



## Small square bale technology on the rise

by: Mike Rankin, Managing Editor, Hay & Forage Grower Magazine, March 19, 2024

It's typically large square and round bales that dominate the countryside, and for many years, major machinery manufacturers weren't motivated to invest large resources into small square bale production. This trend may be changing, according to Kevin Shinnars, emeritus agricultural engineer with the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In a recent Forage Focus article from the Midwest Forage Association, Shinnars notes, "We are now seeing the introduction of exciting new baler equipment and cutting-edge technology aimed at significantly enhancing baling productivity."

Historically, small square balers have lagged in baling efficiency compared to large-package balers. Still, there remains a strong demand for small square bales in the equine, small animal, and export markets.

[Read more](#)

## Build a Prairie Game from the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS)

The prairie is one of North America's great ecosystems and a vital habitat for many plants and animals. Over 98% of the prairie has been lost in the past 150 years—but some people are trying to bring it back, hectare by hectare. Restoring a prairie is a great challenge, requiring knowledge of biology, ecology, climatology, and even economics.

[Are you up for the challenge? Check out the game here.](#)

## Weeds and Pastures

Weeds in pasture are an ongoing issue and present some unique challenges compared to weeds in annual crops. Weeds can be an indication of pasture and soil health and can even be a feed source when used with caution. We hope you'll enjoy this collection of articles that look at different aspects of weeds in pastures:

[Control of Select Weeds on Pasture and Haylands in Saskatchewan](#) from Saskatchewan Agriculture looks at common pasture weeds and methods to prevent and control weed infestations.

[The role of grazing in integrated weed management](#) by Jack Arterburn of Progressive Cattle discusses adding grazing as a tool to pasture weed management using a targeted and planned approach.

[I've Got This Weed in My Pasture. What Does it Tell Me About My Soil?](#) by Kathy Voth of On Pasture reviews weeds as indicators of past management decisions, including compacted soils, overgrazed plants and more.

[Forage value of pasture weeds](#) is a 2010 study from Oregon State University that quantified forage quality of fourteen pasture weed species common to southwestern Oregon. Although not all these weed species are found in Saskatchewan, the recommendations will be of interest to Saskatchewan grazers dealing with pasture weeds.

[Stock-poisoning plants of Western Canada](#) (2008 revision) updates the 1983 version in a series of such manuals produced by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. This manual describes the plants that most frequently cause poisoning and injury to livestock in Western Canada, as well as a number of plants that are potentially dangerous. Plants listed include those found in native rangelands and cultivated croplands.



### Animated video: Understanding fungal spoilage and mycotoxins in silage

The Dairy Farmers of Canada research project: Best Management Practices for High Quality Silage Production examined silage production systems across Canada and has produced valuable resources that can help optimize silage production. This video discusses results from Linda Jewell's work examining fungi in silage across Canada

Visit the [project website](#) or [Watch the video on YouTube](#)



# Upcoming Events

**Native Prairie Speaker Series: scale-dependent relationships between habitat, insects and birds in native grasslands**

April 30, 2024

via Webinar

[Learn more here](#)

**Saskatchewan Agri-Value Forum & Networking 2024**

April 30, 2024

Saskatoon, SK

[Learn more and register here](#)

**Native Prairie Speaker Series: Annual brome invasion and indaziflam**

May 23, 2024

via Webinar

[Learn more here](#)

**Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence Field Day**

**Saskatchewan Forage Council AGM to follow**

June 18, 2024

Clavet, SK

Save the date! More information coming soon.

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