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Have an interesting topic you want discussed in the Newsletter or municipal meeting? Send suggestions to Asst. Agricultural Fieldman Tanis Ponath, asb@mdwainwright.ca or 780-842-4454

Municipal District of Wainwright No.61

The Municipal Agricultural Connection

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry



Partners in Rural Conservation www.mdwainwright.ca



A Reminder to All Residents

Please remember to update your alarm company with your new rural address. This will help with response time from first responders especially in areas where there is more than one dwelling on the property.

FarmTech 2017 is from January 30-February 2.

Featured keynote speakers include:

- Romeo Dallaire
- Andre Coyne
- Pamela Ronald
- Brian Mulroney

Other featured presentations include herbicide resistant weeds, succession planning, advocacy, crop disease update, sustainability and farm safety plans. If you would like more information or to register please visit farmtechconference.com

Come in to the M.D. office and pick up your 2017 calendar before they are gone!



Remember to get your Fire Permits before you Burn

The M.D. of Wainwright would like to remind any rural residents who are planning on burning this winter to make sure you get a fire permit before you burn. Fire permits can be picked up at the M.D. office and by calling your councillor or fire chief. If your unable to make it into town you can call the office and we can email or fax the permit to you. Remember any requests for a fire permit to burn a standing building should be referred to the fire chief in that area.

Here are a few key reminder while burning:

- Burn when winds are less than 15km/hr
- An adult must be in attendance
- Ensure fireguards are in place
- Any burning within one-half mile of a highway contact Carillion to post smoke signs before burning, 842-7774
- Make sure any burn is completely extinguished by mechanical manipulation or other means to ensure all fuels are completely consumed or extinguished so as to prevent re-ignition (i.e. brush piles)



Let's Keep Alberta Rat Free

Alberta is considered 'Rat Free' which means there are no established populations of Norway Rats. Alberta's rat control zone consists of the M.D. of Bonnyville, County of Vermilion River, M.D. of Wainwright, M.D. of Provost, Special Areas, and Cypress County. These areas employ a designated Pest Control Officer who works along the Saskatchewan border to prevent the establishment of Norway Rats. If a rat call comes in they are the first to respond and identify if a rat species is present. If that is the case they will work with land owners to destroy the pest. You can call your local municipal office or 310-RATS to report a potential sighting. Rod Gabrielson is the Pest Control Officer for the M.D. of Wainwright, he can be contacted at 842-7285. Rod will be busy doing 374 rat checks in Alberta and 278 in Saskatchewan this winter.



Wild Boar Showcase

Wild boar are becoming a problem across B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Initially they were introduced as part of a program to diversify livestock across the prairies and to be used on hunt farms. Throughout the years, escapees, have been establishing populations in each province. Alberta's wild boar populations are more in the north, while Manitoba's are established in the south and Saskatchewan have populations across the province. They are increasing their range due to their high ability to adapt to a variety of conditions and the lack of natural predators. They cause irreversible damage on crops, wildlife habitat and sensitive areas. The uprooting of vegetation, removal of roots, tubers, large seeds, and the destruction of seedlings alters plant community structure. Soil disturbance contributes to erosion and siltation of streams. Wild Boar harass livestock and carry highly infectious diseases that can be passed on to other livestock and humans.

Adult pigs can weigh anywhere from 45kg to over 150kg, and can reach 0.9m at the shoulder. Females reach maturity at 10-12 months and males 5-7 months. Females have litters of 6-10 piglets twice a year. Females form groups called sounders which include the latest litters and sub-adults from peripheral groups. Adult males live in solitary. Their sense of hearing and smell are very well developed and they are highly intelligent. Wild boar are nocturnal which makes hunting them very difficult.

Wild boar are declared a pest under the Agricultural Pest Act. Please report any sighting to your local municipal office. Some municipalities take part in the Wild Boar at Large Ear Bounty Program in areas where they have established populations. If you raise wild boar for personal use please contact you local municipality and they will get you in contact with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. You must register with them and follow the minimum containment standards that were set up in 2014 to prevent the establishment of wild boar in the wild.



Have you Heard of Verified Beef Plus?

We have all heard the term "Social License", it can be very confusing to understand and it often leaves producers asking "why". Why, should producers who provide the necessities of food be forced to prove to consumers that they are sustainable? Why, should producers invest more money to market their product when prices for our commodities are lower than ever? Cities are growing and people are becoming farther removed from the once widely understood family farm dynamics.

"Social license can be defined as the ongoing level of acceptance, approval and trust of consumers regarding how food is produced and generally includes the following themes and issues which are presented in no particular order: economics and affordability, environment, labour, health, biotechnology, and animal welfare" - Canadian Federation of Agriculture

The cattle industry is widely criticized for affects on the environment, its animal welfare practices and the extensively publicized "raised without the use of hormones or antibiotics". Verified Beef Plus (VBP+) is a way for producers to validate and document their own farm practices since we are already adopting innovation and keep records as a matter of business. It shows transparency which in turn with competence and confidence leads to trust which gives you your social license. VBP+ is part of the On-Farm Food Safety Program and works with the Canadian Round Table for Sustainable Beef, this connects producers to the conversation surrounding sustainability today. Sustainable beef is defined as "A socially responsible, environmentally sound and environmentally viable product that prioritizes planet, animals and progress".

To become apart of the program, VBP+ has set up various educational media to familiarize yourself with the program. Second, is implementing the program, review your practices, update your records where necessary and complete the self-assessment, making changes where and if necessary. Lastly, complete the voluntary verification audit, this involves a trained auditor who is involved with the beef industry and takes approximately 3.5 hours to complete. Producers who complete all of the above steps will receive a certificate and can market themselves as VBP+ registered.

Winter....A Good Time to Start or Finish your EFP

Gingerbread Pancakes

Tanis Ponath, Assistant Agricultural Fieldman and EFP Technical Assistant, can get you started or help you finish an EFP (Environmental Farm Plan) workbook. She offers help working through the first and second chapters (the most difficult, where most producers give up). Also, once the workbook is completed she can get your workbook reviewed (which is the final step of the EFP process, in order to become involved with the Growing Forward Program.) Growing Forward is the Federal/Provincial initiative that can assist farmers with projects that are designed to support progressive thinking toward health conscious and environmentally aware agri-food sectors.

Tanis also works with older EFP workbooks that are partially complete, that require the extra nudge to finish up. 780-842-4454

The EFP binder has 24 chapters that cover all environmental risk situations on farm (fuel tanks, chemical use and storage, silage storage, cattle operations/management—grain and cattle productions) all in relation to water sources on farm (location to water wells, distance to run off/potential risk for groundwater and surface water). The workbook is straight forward, no right or wrong answer just answer what you are currently doing on farm. Depending on your farm operation the book can take up to 8 hours to complete. Once finished, you return your binder back to me for review (to insure its complete and consistent). A review may take up to a couple of weeks, depending on timeline. If your workbook passes review, you will receive a completion letter plus a reference letter of information that your workbook showed could be helpful. The workbook/program is easy to access through the M.D. of Wainwright, plus it is a step to enter into some programs through Growing Forward 2 grants. Overall, it is a very good environmental awareness tool for a farmer. If you have any questions and would like to contact me you can call the office at 842-4454 or shoot me an email at asb@mdwainwright.ca.

Ingredients

- 1.5 cups of all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground dried ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1egg
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1.5 cups water



Instructions:

1. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, and cinnamon in a bowl, set aside. Beat the egg in a separate bowl with the vanilla and molasses until smooth. Whisk in the water until completely incorporated. Stir the flour mixture into the molasses mixture until just combined (a few lumps are okay)
2. Heat a lightly oiled pan over medium-high heat. Drop batter by large spoonfuls onto the pan. Cook until golden brown on either side.
3. Serve with maple syrup.

If you are planning to plant trees or seedling in the spring start planning now! Most nurseries start taking orders in late January. Don't miss out on selection by getting your application in early. If you would like some information stop by the M.D. office and pick up a Tree Information Package. Packages include information on:

- A variety of nurseries to order trees from
- Shelterbelt pest resources
- List of recommended species for prairie shelterbelts
- Care of seedlings
- Applying plastic mulch



This year the Irma Agricultural Society nominated Kent and Tausha Erickson for the BMO Northlands Farm Family Award. They farm with Kent's parents, Mel and Laurie Erickson on the homestead where Kent's great grandfather began farming 108 years ago. They run a mixed grain and cattle operation south of Irma, AB with 4500 acres of cropland and 70 cow/calf pairs. The Erickson's are heavily involved in the Irma community, being apart of the Irma 4-H Beef Club, Sharon Lutheran Church, and Irma Minor Hockey and Ball. Kent has sat on the Alberta Wheat Commission and the FarmTech Conference committee. On behalf of the M.D. of Wainwright we would like to congratulate the Erickson Family on a well deserved award.

Update on Fusarium

This year there is good chance a large majority of producers are going to be dealing with Fusarium due to the amount of moisture we received this year. Fusarium infected grain carries the toxin vomitoxin, which in high concentrations are toxic to animals. Determining what to do with your Fusarium infected grain can be tough on a good year. If you have infected grain there are a options for marketing it.

1. Check Insurance Options: Consult with your crop insurance agent asap.
2. Sample and Test: Take samples at the bin level so you know what your options are going to be.
3. Clean it up: You can clean out Fusarium infected grain by using gravity tables and colour sorted, but it can be time consuming and costly.
4. Store it as a Last Resort: You can store grain in hopes of blending it with next years crop.
5. Don't Give Up: Producers should make every effort to try and get rid of severely infected grain. Destroying grain should be used as a last resort.

Not only does Fusarium affect your pocket book but it can also be hazardous to your health. The dust of damaged grain can carry more toxins than the grain itself. Concentrations of vomitoxins can be 10 to 100 times higher than that in grain kernels. If exposed to Fusarium infected grain dust symptoms include asthma, pneumonia or flu, including fever and chills, a dry cough or rapid heart rate. Avoid dust clouds and always work in well ventilated areas, change the filter in your cab in severely infected fields, always wear personal protection equipment when handling infected grain and wash your hands to avoid accidental exposure on bare skin. These are just a few precautionary steps to take to avoid getting sick.

Both Wainwright and Edgerton seed cleaning plants offer grain testing. Their 2016 prices are:

Wainwright

- Germination \$28.00
- Fusarium \$57.00
- Vigor \$45.00
- Germination & Fusarium \$68.00
- Germination, Fusarium & Vigor \$107.00

Wainwright plant will clean infected grain if producers apply a seed treatment.

Edgerton

- Germination \$24.00
- Fusarium \$47.00
- Vigor \$46.00
- Germination & Fusarium \$62.00
- Germination, Fusarium & Vigor \$102.00

Edgerton will not clean Fusarium infected grain.

Insect Survey Results 2016

The berth armyworm traps were very interesting this year, most are well below warning levels however, one trap was high enough that the area should be monitored to determine if we are seeing the start of a build-up. Traps will be set up next year to get good coverage so we can determine what the trend is.

Diamondback moths continue to be low in the municipality. Traps are mainly used as a early warning system.

Cabbage seedpod weevil were found in one field this year, there is no risk at this time but we will continue to monitor the insect over the next several years. Pea leaf weevil counts are low in our area but they are definitely established, keep your eye out for them in the next coming years.

Wheat midge is building up in the M.D. of Wainwright specifically around the Irma area. Numbers were very high in some areas that would result in yield loss and represent a serious risk for next year. If conditions are wet and wheat is seeded late defiantly keep an eye on your crops. Stay tuned for a wheat midge pest showcase in the spring!

The results from the Alberta Agriculture swede midge survey showed the insect occurs much more in Alberta than previously thought. In 2017 they will be following up with a much larger survey in the north east region of the province to determine the insects full range.



Wheat Midge



Bertha Army Worm



Swede Midge