

THE MUNICIPAL CONNECTION

April 2023

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GOPHER CONTROL INFO ON PAGE 2!

OPEN HOUSE

Ratepayers of the M.D. of Wainwright are invited to an open house at the Administration Office in Wainwright (717 14th Ave) on Tuesday, April 18, from 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Council and staff will be in attendance and refreshments will be served.

The Financial Statements, and future plans will be available.

Hope to see you there!

HAVE YOU HEARD?

The M.D. of Wainwright helps fund the Wainwright, Chauvin, Edgerton, and Irma Libraries.

The M.D. is a member of the Wainwright Waste to Energy Authority.

Have you heard that the M.D. sells ownership maps updated quarterly.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN & LAND USE BYLAW INFORMATION SESSION

Ratepayers of the M.D. of Wainwright are invited to attend an information meeting on Wednesday, April 26th at the Wainwright Elks Hall (1401 1st Ave Wainwright) from 6:00pm – 8:00pm.

There will be a 20 minute presentation by Municipal Planning Services with a Q and A session to follow. This is an open floor forum for any questions from the public.

For more information, please call the administration office at 780-842-4454 or email Kim at development@mdwainwright.ca



SUSTAINABLE CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP (S-CAP) OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS!

Funding can be the make or break factor when it comes to on farm projects. Take advantage of this \$2.5 billion cost share funding agreement which will be in effect from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2028 (replacing the former CAP program). There are several programs available for utilization by farmers and ranchers, such as the Farm Technology Program and Efficient Grain Handling Program. Visit alberta.ca/sustainable-cap.aspx to learn what you are eligible to apply for!

THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT!

The Agricultural Services Department would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who has attended workshops so far this year! Five events have taken place between January and March with 321 attendees between them. We are fortunate to have had many wonderful presenters join us and would like to thank them for their contributions to these educational days. Keep an eye on the M.D. Facebook page, website, or your mailbox for announcements about upcoming programs and workshops. We look forward to seeing YOU out at future events!

RICHARDSON'S GROUND SQUIRREL (RGS) CONTROL

Everyone's favorite pesky rodent has emerged for the season and there is simply no time to lose when it comes to effective chemical control. Timing is a critical factor when it comes to the efficacy of a poisoning program and can not be overlooked.

Knowing a bit about the RGS life cycle and behavior can help to make informed decisions for control. Some points that are important to note is that males emerge approximately two weeks before females. During this time they do not eat much and live primarily off winter body fat as they are occupied with fighting for territory. When females emerge from hibernation they breed immediately and also do not consume much. Two weeks post emergence is when females begin to feed heavily. **This is the most effective time to initiate any poisoning activities** as adults are actively seeking out high energy food sources, new litters have not yet arrived, and ideally green up has not yet occurred, making bait an appealing food source. Determining this window of opportunity can be done by actively monitoring for emergence. Once the first RGS's have been spotted, four to six weeks later is a favorable time to commence control.



Chemical Options: though strychnine is no longer an option available to producers, there are still several effective products available for the control of RGS. A very promising, and price competitive option is Burrow Oat Bait. The active ingredient is zinc phosphide, an acute toxin with similar toxicity to 2% liquid strychnine. This has become the go to product for RGS control in Manitoba over the past four years as strychnine was made unavailable there in 2018. Another benefit is that there is a very limited risk of secondary poisonings due to the mode of action of this rodenticide. P & H in Wainwright and CORE Ag Inputs in Irma have indicated that they intend to carry Burrow Oat Bait. Otherwise, it may be procured through Johnston's Grain Ltd in Saskatchewan or Viceroy Distributors in Manitoba who both ship to Alberta. A limiting factor with this particular product may prove to be availability as there is a limited manufacturing capacity at this time. If you are interested in trying zinc phosphide products, contact your local retailer and inquire.

Other options include anticoagulant products such as Rozol RTU, a commercially available toxicant containing the active ingredient chlorophacinone. Similarly, Ramik Green is also an anticoagulant with the active ingredient diphacinone. These products are effective when used correctly, they simply work differently than what producers are used to with acute toxicants. The product needs to be consumed multiple times, so either baiting holes two to three times or ensuring an appropriate bait station remains well supplied is necessary. Results of baiting will be seen in ten to twelve days with multi feeding products.

See the chart below depicting an economic analysis of some chemical control options gathered in a collaborative 2022 study between different stakeholder in Saskatchewan and Alberta, provided by Dr. James Tansey with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture.

Non Chemical Options: non chemical controls are an excellent way to supplement a chemical program. No matter how thorough one is with baiting, it is nearly impossible to eliminate all RGS's this way. Aside from shooting, trapping or encouraging predation, an option many may not be familiar with is the use of RoCon. RoCon is poison free, environmentally friendly and highly effective (+/- 95% control when used according to label directions). It is a foaming agent that displaces the air inside a burrow, forcing the RGS's to inhale the foam, causing them to quickly asphyxiate. Learn more about RoCon on their website roconrodentcontrol.ca or on YouTube. There is a video titled 'Choking Out Gophers With Poison-Free Rodenticide' by RealAgriculture which gives an excellent overview of the product.

Note: always read and follow the label directions when working with pesticides.

Product	\$ per acre
2% Liquid Strychnine Concentrate	12.97
Burrow Oat Bait	4.54
ZP Rodent Oat Bait AG	8.80
Rozol RTU Field Rodent Bait	14.73
Ramik Green	10.60

Note: this depicts cost per application, anticoagulants will require multiple applications



HAVE YOU SEEN SIGNS OF WILD BOAR?

Wild boar, when at large, are a declared pest in Alberta. They are a hugely destructive species and pose a serious threat to agriculture. They are known to cause crop and pasture destruction, and to be a vector for disease which threatens the pork industry. Such as in the case African swine fever, a positive case has the potential to close the countries borders to pork exports. Visit the Alberta Invasive Species Council website at abinvasives.ca to learn the signs of wild boar and how to report them. Any signs and sightings can also be

reported to Assistant Fieldman Shelby, at soracheski@mdwainwright.ca or by calling 780-842-4454. The M.D. works with the Province in conjunction with Alberta Pork to support a whole sounder (group of pigs) trapping and eradication program in an effort to protect Alberta's agriculture industry from this invasive species. This program relies on reports from the public, so you can truly make a difference by Squealing on Pigs.



SPOTLIGHT Highlighting rural entrepreneurs and businesses in the M.D. of Wainwright

Stepping into a greenhouse is always a treat for the senses, the earthy scents and warm humid air are a recipe for serotonin. Someone who shares this sentiment is Sharon Larson of Off The Beaten Path Greenhouse northwest of Irma.

Sharon has always had a love of flowers and gardening, but it was when she spent a brief period working at another local greenhouse in 2013 that she realized it was truly a passion for her. So when the opportunity presented itself, Sharon and husband Glen Lingley (pictured to the right) took the leap of faith purchased three greenhouses and Off The Beaten Path was born in 2017. Since its inception Off The Beaten Path has seen expansion nearly every year and is now home to eight greenhouses, all constructed by Glen, totaling 16,000 square feet of growing space. This steady expansion has allowed them to move from a single full time employee through the first two years to four dedicated and knowledgeable staff members for 2023. This has taken a significant amount of work and the two are grateful for the countless hours their staff and family have contributed to ensuring the success of the business. Sharon also considers herself very fortunate in that although she has a full time job, she has the flexibility to take three months of the year to focus solely on the greenhouse. The heaters are fired up in the beginning of March and it is all hands on deck working countless hours until the greenhouse closes for the season in June.

One of the catalysts for growth the greenhouse has seen has been securing fundraising projects for local community groups. The Battle River 4-H Club was the first to come on board and the greenhouse now supplies over 2,000 items annually for five different organizations including a diversity of hanging baskets and planters. These projects alone occupy a large amount of the space in four greenhouses and help generate financial support for these groups.

There are of course challenges in the greenhouse business, one of which is deciding on what to order year to year. There are many hours of advance planning required in this area as some varieties need to be ordered as early as August for the following year. Knowing what species, colors and quantities to order is at best an educated guess and there are a lot of logistics involved in getting the new plants into the greenhouses. Plants are sourced from across Canada from BC to New Brunswick, as well as parts of the US, arriving by plane and by ground transport, leading to many miles on the road for pickups. Another common challenge is competing with the big box stores. What sets shopping at a local greenhouse apart is the quality of the plants. An immense amount of care and attention goes into each plant to ensure they are robust and healthy. Another advantage is the knowledgeable staff who work to advise buyers on what species will be the best fit for whatever project they have in mind. And as with all businesses, dealing with the current state of the economy is challenging; Sharon strives to remain cost competitive but of course expenses are always rising. More specific to Off The Beaten Path is the challenge of location. As they are not located within town or on a major highway it does take a deliberate effort for customers to visit. However, this year the greenhouse will be trying something new. On Saturdays and Sundays the greenhouse will be setting up a mobile shop in Wainwright, manned by Glen. Keep an eye on their social media to see where you can find them.

Sharon finds a lot of enjoyment in her work and has many favorite activities. She finds the time getting her hands dirty in the soil to be therapeutic, loves designing custom planters, and the interactions she has with customers. Off The Beaten Path is gaining quite a following and Sharon sees many returning customers year after year. When asked what her favorite flower is, with a moment of thought she lands on salvia. Salvia is not only beautiful but is a big attractant for hummingbirds. It is not uncommon to see the small birds darting around inside the greenhouses visiting the plethora of flowers. When contemplating the future of the business, Sharon feels comfortable with the current size of the operation. She strives for quality over quantity and does not want that to suffer by becoming too large of an operation. However, she is inspired by and dreams of someday incorporating hydroponically grown vegetables within the current infrastructure. This would allow her to grow fresh veggies year round and provide a subscription service for the produce.

The greenhouse opens for business on May 1st and will remain open seven days a week into June or until stock runs out (business hours are available on social media). If you are searching for quality and top notch service, don't be afraid to go Off The Beaten Path.



Off The Beaten Path Greenhouse

Online Platforms:



offthebeatenpathgreenhouse

PRAIRIE STAPLES Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*)

Many may recognize fireweed as the floral emblem of the Yukon. This widespread and hardy perennial can be spotted in a broad range of habitats such as along roadsides, river banks and clearings, and is often the first species to appear following a forest fire. This early colonization via rhizomes and seed production performs the valuable function of stabilizing the soil and preventing erosion following a disturbance. Fireweed's bright magenta blossoms are easy to spot and bloom for long periods, making it a valuable food source for native pollinators (not to mention it makes for wonderful honey). Fireweed is a historically significant species and was utilized in a myriad of ways by First Nations people and is still valued today for its medicinal properties. People used fireweed as a fresh or cooked vegetable, as a tobacco substitute, as a poultice to draw out infections, stem fibers were used for thread, and it is still to this day widely utilized as a tea. Fireweed is rich in vitamins A and C and has been shown to have strong anti inflammatory properties.



ATTENTION POULTRY OWNERS:

Experts are anticipating an increase in cases of Avian Influenza (HPAI) in conjunction with spring migration. It is recommended for backyard flock owners to register with the Premise Identification Program (PID) through the Government of Alberta website to directly receive updates that may impact your flock. HPAI is a reportable disease, so if you suspect or confirm a case in your flock, you must report it to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) phone: 403-338-5225



COMPLETE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN (EFP) TODAY

A current EFP is a requirement for the majority of the famer/rancher S-CAP programs, this was true of the previous CAP program as well. EFP's are entirely free, confidential, valid for ten years, and only take an average of four hours to complete. Visit albertaefp.com or contact Assistant Fieldman Shelby at soracheski@mdwainwright.ca or 780-842-4454 to get started today.

NO SPRAY AGREEMENTS DUE MAY 1

If a landowner within the M.D. of Wainwright does not want the Municipal right-of-way's adjacent to property they own sprayed as part of the regular vegetation management program, they must complete a No Spray Agreement on an annual basis. Agreements are due no later than May 1st, and will be honored for a period of one year only. There are responsibilities that must be met by a landowner should they enter into an agreement, all of which are outlined on the application. The application can be picked up at the administration office, or downloaded from the M.D. website.

ELECTRONICS /PAINT & HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE ROUNDUP

Bring your old computers, TV's, small appliances, paint, used tires, used oil and filters, and household hazardous waste to the Wainwright Regional Landfill (1201 4th Ave South) on Saturday, May 6th 10:00am to 2:00pm for safe and FREE disposal.

NO COMMERCIAL ITEMS
WILL BE ACCEPTED

For more information call
Carol at 780-842-4051



FACTS ON FARMING IN ALBERTA

- Alberta's rich land, extensive days of sunshine, and large irrigation network make it an ideal place to farm. (Invest Alberta)
- Alberta beekeepers account for 40 per cent of all the honeybee colonies in Canada. Additionally, honeybees added \$497 million in gross economic benefits in Alberta through pollination. (Alberta Beekeepers Commission)
- 20 per cent of Alberta's cleantech ventures are in the agriculture tech sector. (Foresight)
- Agricultural labour demand in Alberta is expected to grow by 1.1 percent per year between now and 2025, compared to 0.5 percent nationwide. (AgriLMI)
- Carbon sequestration is a significant benefit provided by farming in Alberta, as more than 39 per cent of the province's farmland is perennial forage that creates a carbon sink. (ARECA)