

JANUARY 2011

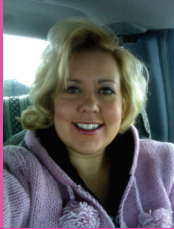
Volume 5, Issue 1

M.D. OF WAINWRIGHT HAS AVAILABLE FOR RENT:

- SKUNK TRAPS
- PORTABLE CATTLE SCALE
- MAGPIE TRAP DESIGN

Only a few copies left of the... 2011 M.D. OF WAINWRIGHT MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

Have an interesting topic you want discussed in the Newsletter / municipal meeting?  
 Assistant Agricultural Fieldman  
**Aimee Wonsik**  
 asb@mdwainwright.ca  
 or 780-842-4454



## Municipal District of Wainwright No.61

# The Municipal Agricultural Connection



Partners in  
 Rural  
 Conservation  
[www.mdwainwright.ca](http://www.mdwainwright.ca)



## Don't assume FUSARIUM can not come to the M.D. OF Wainwright

Even though Fusarium gramineum thrives in wet environmental conditions, such as regular rain showers or under irrigation situations; many local Wainwright, Irma, Edgerton and Chauvin wheat, barley and corn producers assume that the M.D. of Wainwright could never become contaminated with Fusarium. I know this because I have been out talking with farmers.

The wet weather that the M.D. of Wainwright experienced in 2010 during the critical stages of the growing season may be soon showing local farmers that we are indeed susceptible to this cereal disease. I truly hope, for our local farmers sustainability that I'm wrong.

Fusarium gramineum can affect wheat, barley and oats. Rye and triticale is also affected but farmers do not grow these crops regularly in the municipality. Fusarium gramineum also affects grass species (so think of the brome grasses that surround your field along fence lines). Once it gets in there, it will always be a carrier.

How many corn fields did you see this last year... cattle guys are loving this new grazing option; there are more and more growing acres of corn...and any guess as to what all that corn is also a host for? You guessed it, Fusarium gramineum (one of the largest hosts).

When I asked farmers what they knew of Fusarium gramineum, it was always answered back to me that "it is a southern Alberta irrigation problem." Indeed, the south part of the Province is contaminated, but where are most of the new varieties of wheat being bred and produced at? In the south.

What about taking your seed to a seed cleaning plant that only "sometimes" tests for Fusarium... What happens to the rest of the lots that do not get sampled and run through the facility? Potentially contaminating what you are taking there...

think about it. Both Wainwright and Edgerton seed cleaning plants have strict policies on Fusarium tests and unloads; and that is a good thing.

The assumption is that buying certified seed "must be good", well why must it? If you do not have a Fusarium gramineum (specifically ask for gramineum) test backing your seed lot, you are risking what you are seeding on your land.

There has been some strongly voiced opinions coming from the south of the Province to relax the Fusarium tolerance levels, so that the south can continue with contaminated seed sales and infested farming practices. I do not agree with allowing a tolerable limit for Fusarium and maintain the viewpoint that for the success of the farmers in the Northeast region of the Province (M.D. of Wainwright included) to be able to access malt barley markets, we must remain vigilant. Malt barley has a zero tolerance.

In March 2010, Phil Valteau, past ASB Chairman and current Councillor of the M.D. of Wainwright sent a letter to the Honorable Agriculture Minister Jack Hayden, on behalf of our local farmer's; supporting zero tolerance and remaining at a non-detectable level for Fusarium. In December 2010, Bob Barss, Reeve of the M.D. of Wainwright and President of Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties sent a letter to Mr. Hayden promoting support for local M.D. of Wainwright farmer's grain farming success and sustainability, realizing Fusarium's potential to obliterate Northeastern Alberta farmers malt barley access because of Canadian Grain Commission set zero tolerance levels to this pest, and ruining commercial seed premiums with contaminated grain.

Watch for an upcoming Letter-to-the-Editor by yours truly in the Western Producer, speaking out on behalf of Northeastern Alberta farmer's livelihood against Fusarium. Signed, Aimee Wonsik. Knowing and not assuming is the way to protect ourselves against Fusarium.

**GIVE SPACE HEATERS SPACE**

Keep portable heaters at least 3 feet (1 metre) away from things that burn – paper, bedding, furniture or curtains. Turn heaters off before going out or going to bed.

THE MARSHALLS FIRE SAFETY COUNCIL

**Test YOUR Smoke ALARMS**

Only a working smoke alarm can save your life!

THE MARSHALLS FIRE SAFETY COUNCIL

**CHECK YOUR CHIMNEY**

Remember to check your chimney regularly for signs of corrosion or deterioration.

Have all chimneys cleaned and inspected at least once a year.

THE MARSHALLS FIRE SAFETY COUNCIL



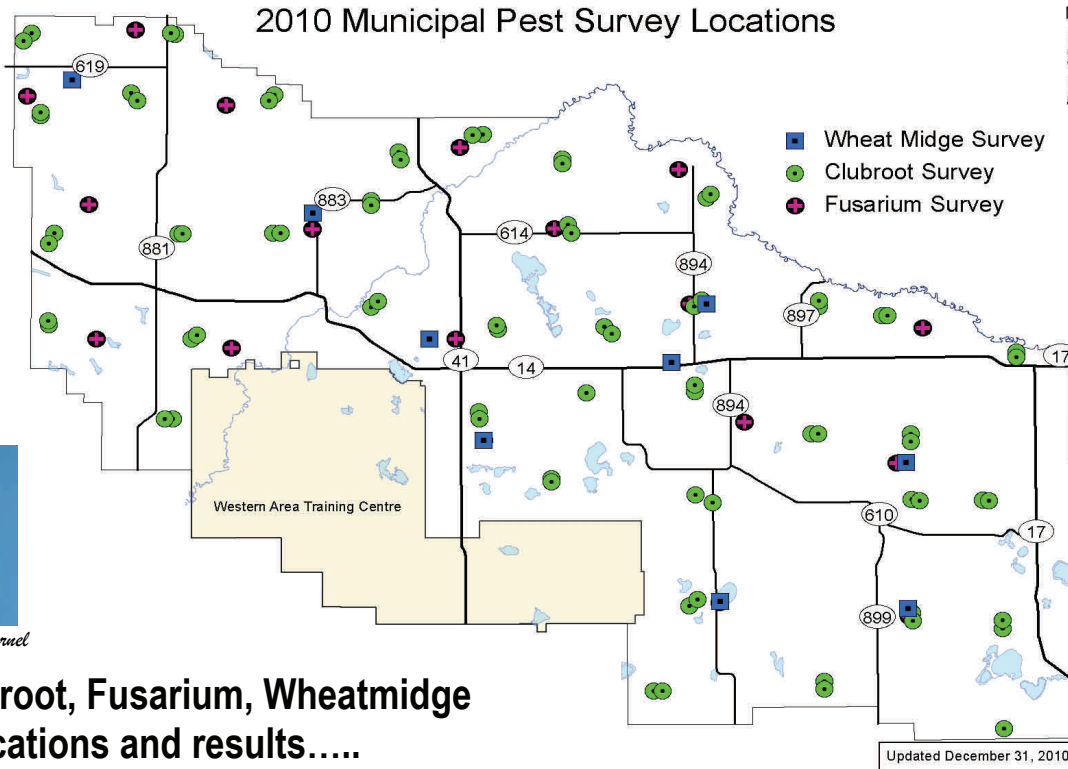
*Fusarium on Wheat*



*Clubroot affecting Canola*



*Wheat Midge on wheat kernel*



## 2010 Clubroot, Fusarium, Wheatmidge survey locations and results.....

In 2010, the M.D. of Wainwright Agricultural Fieldman James Schwindt, and his assistant Aimee Wonsik completed numerous provincial surveys. Three of these surveys are noteworthy for area farmers; Clubroot of Canola, Fusarium of Cereal Crops, and Wheatmidge of wheatfields within municipal boundaries.

**CLUBROOT**– In August, James Schwindt located and GPS'd 39 random canola locations across the municipality. All 39 locations had no visually detectable symptoms of Clubroot. Each location had 2 separate inspection points, for a better perspective of the field. The majority of the inspection points were at approaches or corners into the field entrance. The reason behind this strategy of utilizing entrance points is because Clubroot usually is noticed at field entrances where machinery enters into and comes in contact with the soil. Clubroot is spread by soil movement from machinery (from dirt traveling field to field) so therefore the entrance is a very high probability spot for

infection. It is to be noted that at every location, disposable footwear covers and high sanitary precautions were utilized to prevent the potential spread of infection.

**FUSARIUM** - In October, James Schwindt and Aimee Wonsik randomly located and GPS'd 18 wheat field sample locations. At each location, 100 samples of wheat stubble (bottom node to root ball) were dug up, dried and submitted for Fusarium testing. This method of testing evaluates the DNA of the plant for Fusarium infection (the same as wheat head sample or individual kernel samples) So far, the municipal office has not received sample result information (however this information will be available by the end January, look for results in March newsletter). This survey was part of a Provincial wide research, to see if the common infection areas have increased from previous years. Even though the M.D. of Wainwright is a dryer region and not

under irrigation, Fusarium still has the potential to infect our fields and contaminate our municipal farming practices. Continue to be vigilant when purchasing seed, always ask for a Fusarium test, always test your bin run seed for Fusarium; do not take chances when the outcome of potential future losses far out weighs the short term, cost cutting savings.

**WHEAT MIDGE** - In September, Aimee Wonsik randomly chose 9 wheat field stubble locations across the municipality. These locations were chosen based on predominate farmland areas, where wheat midge has been a problem in the past, or could potentially become a problem by wind travels from hot spots in Saskatchewan. The samples consisted of 10x 6" soil sample cores per field. The sample is submitted into the laboratory where the soil is washed away from the sample leaving the parasite larval cocoons (as well as the beneficial predatory parasitoid eggs) which

are viewed and counted. Out of the 9 sample locations across the M.D., 6 of those resulted in positive wheat midge populations occurring; with 3 of those 6 being concerning levels. Farmers in the township of 42-2w4 (extreme risk), township of 45-4w4 (moderate risk) and also township 44-2w4 (moderate risk) should be field scouting which will be critical as the wheat comes into head for next growing season. (There is no definitive way to know exactly the risk in any given field—it depends on environmental conditions, past history of rotation, current variety selection and planting date, plus how your neighbors are farming). The number of midge larvae found in these samples gives a general trend and that trend is for more midge next year. The results reflect a general increase in midge numbers across Alberta. The growing season of 2011 will have a higher risk of wheat midge than 2010.

Results from the M.D. of Wainwright surveys can be viewed on the Provincial website ..... [ropintheweb.ca](http://ropintheweb.ca)

**REMINDER** = watch your spruce trees that are on the south or southwest side of buildings ....

Ropintheweb.ca

# But Isn't He Cold?

"But isn't he cold?" As a horse owner, you've likely heard this question from non-horsey friends or family members. You smile and ensure the well-intentioned onlooker that your horse is fine, quite comfortable in the -20 winter day. The sun is shining, the frost is sparkling on the fence rails and Peanut is out enjoying a bit of winter grazing.

But when the temperature dives and the wind begins to blow, even the hardiest of us can be tempted to turn on the heat in the barn or blanket our "babies". Question is: when is it necessary, when is it kind and when is it actually counter-productive? The horse's first and most obvious protection from winter's chill is his heavy winter coat. Their hair is not only long, but has the ability to "fluff", trapping warm air close to the body, much like a down jacket. The oil in the coat assists in shedding moisture, keeping the coat functioning as it's supposed to. The metabolism of the horse will slow down in cold weather, allowing him to store fatty tissue just under the skin, adding a layer of insulation. Internally, the horse's digestive system is also at work keeping him warm. As the gut digests the fiber in the diet, heat is generated, contributing to the horse's body warmth. One of the best ways to help

keep a horse warm in the winter is to allow him plenty of access to good quality forage, whether in the form of pasture or hay.

If the horse gets cold, the blood vessels in his skin constrict to minimize heat loss and, if he continues to be cold, he starts to shiver. The rapid contracting and relaxing of the muscles quickly raises his metabolism rate and the amount of fuel burned in the muscles. With such large blocks of muscles, the horse can shiver much more readily and comfortably than a human. Since most of this muscle action is being converted to heat, this is a very effective way to warm the body. However, it takes a great deal of energy to shiver for a prolonged period, using up energy stores that will require increased



Cimaron (left) and Peanut (right)

feed intake or result in a loss of body condition. So do blankets help or hinder the horse's efforts to stay warm? In truth, a normal winter hair coat is much more insulating than most horse blankets. Adding a heavy blanket or piling on several light blankets, can actually make a horse colder be-

cause it flattens the hair, removing its ability to fluff and insulate as it was designed to do. In some cases however, a blanket may be necessary, as in the case of a clipped horse, one recently moved from a warmer climate or one with poor body condition.

And what about indoor stabling during storms or cold weather? Does he need a barn? The biggest threats to a horse's comfort are wind and wet, both impacting the winter coats ability to do its job. Some form of protection from the wind is paramount with outdoor horses. Whether it's a thick stand of trees, a wind fence, a building or a run-in shed, horses need shelter from the wind. A shelter with a roof will keep them out of the wind and will also do a better job at keeping them dry. A wet horse loses body heat up to 20x faster than a dry horse due to the loss of the coat's insulating effect when wet. Even in the nastiest of weather conditions, in most cases, stabling indoors falls in the "kind" versus the "necessary" category, and is probably as beneficial to your ability to get a good night's sleep as it is to your horse's health. Exceptions might be in the case of a very young, very old, ill or otherwise compromised animal. If you are stabling indoors, make sure your building has adequate ventilation and dust is kept to a minimum.

**A few tips to keep your horses a little more comfortable this winter....**

- Provide access to good quality forage in the form of pasture or hay and increase when the temperatures drop.
- Provide free access to lukewarm water. If your horse is drinking frigid water or eating snow he will use energy to re-warm himself after drinking and will also be inclined to drink less.
- Provide shelter from the wind, enough for all horses in the pasture. Less dominant horses can be pushed out of shelters that are not large enough to house the whole herd.
- Blanket only if the horse does not have an adequate winter coat or body condition, and choose a waterproof, wind-proof turnout blanket with the right amount of insulation. Always watch for looseness so horse does not become entangled.
- If possible, feed in a area sheltered from the wind. This will help your horses conserve heat and reduce the amount you need to feed, try to feed with horses back to the wind.
- Provide a turnout area large enough for horses to run and play to warm themselves.
- Brush out the horse's coat if it becomes matted from manure or other moisture.
- You don't want a fat horse, but allowing your horse to move from a body condition of 5 to a 6 or 7 for the winter will help him stay warm.



Left to right, Clemantine, Mocha & Tabasco

## What is an ASB, and what does it do?

The Municipal District of Wainwright Agricultural Service Board (ASB) promotes and coordinate programs and services in the areas of weeds, pests, soil and water conservation, various rural interests, and related environmental issues. Agricultural producers, rural acreage owners and industry work together to maintain a vibrant and sustainable rural community. Strong policies, adequate funding and innovative programming ensure the board's continued success.

The Agricultural Service Board consists of members that have strong community bonds and agricultural interests, who dedicate themselves to serving a 2-3 year term. They provide direction during regularly held meetings, for the Agricultural Service Board staff consisting of the Agricultural Fieldman, the Assistant Agricultural Fieldman, the Pest Control Officer, and also the 3 ASB Seasonal Staff. The ASB provide sound recommendations to Council for input into effective policies and government influence.

### Guiding Principles

- Assist, advise and direct legislative requirements as set in the following Governing Acts: - Agricultural Service Board Act - Weed Control Act - Livestock Diseases Act - Soil Conservation Act - Agricultural Pests Act

- Direction and mandates to and from the M.D. of Wainwright Council.
- Seek out and voice the needs of rural residents, acreage owners and local industry to ensure a healthy, sustainable environment.

### 2010 Agricultural Service Board Members:

Ted Wilkinson, Chairman of ASB, Councillor  
 Myron Zajic, Councillor  
 Chris Oracheski, Farm Member  
 Harold Gulbraa, Farm Member  
 Grant Aykroyd, Farm Member

Contact any of the ASB Members about agricultural concerns or ideas that can be brought to next ASB meeting for discussion; which helps YOU to initiating change. Your voice can be heard, and action can take place.

Click on [mdwainwright.ca](http://mdwainwright.ca) for the past meetings minutes and discussion.



### DID YOU KNOW:

The Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF), as an ongoing tribute to active or retired AAAF members who have passed away, and in the spirit of continuing education valued by our Association, created the **AAAF Memorial Bursary**.

This bursary is intended for students initiating or continuing their education at a College or University; enrolled in an **agricultural or environmental** science program. One \$500 bursary is available in each calendar year for the Northeast region of Alberta (M.D. of Wainwright agriculture and environment students are eligible) of the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen.

An Agricultural Fieldman in good standing with the AAAF (such as James Schwindt or Aimee Wonsik of the M.D. of Wainwright) must receive your application with all supporting documentation by **September 1st** of each year ([aaaf.ab.ca](http://aaaf.ab.ca)). Print off now and submit so you don't forget...extra student \$\$ always comes in handy.....

*....for winter injury from excessive warming from the sun, and freezing. Consider covering.*

# Changes to Municipal Development near Abandoned Oil & Gas Wells

Alberta Municipal Affairs intends to amend the Subdivision and Development Regulations of the Municipal Government Act by March 31, 2011.

The objective of these amendments is to provide certainty to builders, owners and occupiers of buildings and homes that abandoned wells have been identified and appropriate setbacks provided.

The following are key components of the proposed amendments:

- There will be a requirement for an applicant to check with the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) for the existence of abandoned oil and gas wells as part of a subdivision or development application;
- The requirement to check for abandoned wells will apply to all subdivision applications as well as applications for a development permit that will result in a building greater than 47 square meters (500 square feet);
- Setbacks may be incorporated into

subdivision and development proposals through a number of different land uses (i.e. boulevards, road allowances, golf courses, parking lots, open storage areas, parks, open space and playing fields);

- Applicants will be required to provide for required setbacks and access provisions established in a new ERCB Directive, as will be referenced in the new Subdivision and Development Regulation, when abandoned oil or gas wells are identified;
- The ERCB is considering a setback consisting of a 20 metre by 35 metre work area surrounding the abandoned well. The setback boundaries should be established so that the well is no less than 10 metres from the setback boundary. An 8 metre access to this setback area is also needed;
- Setbacks are maintained to allow equipment access and the necessary work space to an abandoned well for maintenance (should it become necessary), to protect the well bore from damage, and

to avoid damage to any construction or excavation equipment that may be used in construction of buildings or utilities on the site and injury to equipment operators;

- Municipalities will be required to ensure applicants, such as developers have provided evidence that they have consulted with the ERCB for the presence of abandoned oil or gas wells and, where appropriate, apply the required setback and access provisions in approving the application; and
- Updated setback and access provisions may result in a non-conforming situation with existing buildings. In a non-conforming situation the existing development may remain, however additional development would be prohibited.

Please contact Jim Klassen, Development Officer at the M.D. of Wainwright with questions. 780-842-4454

## Chainsaw Safety and Maintenance

*A chainsaw is the most dangerous hand tool that can be purchased on the open market. It requires no license and no training to own or operate.*

The chain saw that you purchase should be of the correct size for the jobs that you intend to do. To use a chain saw with a 36"



bar for cutting 10" diameter trees is not appropriate. Conversely, a 10" bar is not appropriate for cutting 36" diameter trees. Many options must be considered before the purchase of a chain saw: horsepower, chain speed, bar length, weight, type of handle bar, type of bar, type of chain, etc...

Unfortunately, all chain saws are made for right-handed people. By using a "full wrap" handle bar, this will help out the left-handed operators to some extent. Your local chain saw dealer should have the ability to

let you know what is right for your needs. Explain to them what you will be using the chain saw for.

A dull saw chain is completely useless and dangerous as well. Keep the chain sharp at all times. You will be able to tell the difference between good clean chips versus

powder. When a chain becomes dulled, it will not cut straight - if at all. Keep it out of the dirt at all times. Avoid rocks, nails, wire, etc... and after every third hand filing, the chain should be sharpened on a grinder, to true up the cutters, rakers and gullets.

The following items should be used while operating a chain saw: A hard hat, protective leg chaps, gloves, eye protection, hearing protection and "above the ankle" leather boots. Other necessary tools and supplies should include wedges, ax, large

hatchet or maul, properly mixed fuel, bar oil, bar wrench, chain file with protective handle, small screwdriver with magnetic head, minor maintenance tools and a first aid kit, and a cell phone.

Always begin any chainsaw operation with the "size up" sequence. Look carefully at what is around you and have a clear picture as to what you intend to do. Regardless of the size of the tree, always keep asking yourself before every cut, "what will happen if..."

### Maintenance

1. For starters, check your chain. You'll be looking for wear and sharpness because a chain in bad condition can be a potential safety hazard.

2. Many users overlook the chainsaw's saw teeth. Unmaintained, saw teeth won't perform the job they are required to in the most efficient manner. This could lead to dangerous situations as the harder your machine has to work, the harder you do as well which means one of the biggest factors in chainsaw accidents, fatigue can set in. So make sure you clear your saw teeth of any saw dust and wood on a regular basis.

3. Proper adjustment in the chain is one thing but also check to see if the bar is

tight as well.

4. Your chainsaw's spark plug is a vital component... that goes without saying so it's a good idea to check it on a regular basis.

5. Pull chords should be in excellent order. This can be overlooked quite easily but maintaining them in good condition and not allowing them to become tattered is just simply good sense.

6. A quick check of other areas such as testing to see if the oiler is working as it should be should also be performed.

These are reasonably simple maintenance checks which can be performed by just about anyone with chainsaw user experience. If you run into major problems, then more expert guidance should be sought. Chainsaw accidents injure thousands of people every year and apart from unforeseen circumstances, you can cut down the chances of suffering an injury just by keeping your chainsaw in excellent working condition.

