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Municipal District of Wainwright No.61

The Municipal Agricultural Connection

BUSINESS WITH THE BASE

There are many opportunities available for local businesses to work with the Department of National Defence. There are various levels of involvement. If you would like to receive a monthly update from the WEDB office with opportunities available at CFB/ASU Wainwright, please email Carley Herbert at chebert@wainwright.ca or call her at 780-842-3384. www.merx.com

1. Procurement under $5,000

Under $1,000 – 1 quote
$1,000 - $2,500 – 2 quotes
$2,500 - $5,000 – 3 quotes

Once quotes have been received from suppliers for the identified requirement, the assigned Department of National Defence (DND) buyer will determine which quote provides the best value for the goods or services being procured. Price as well as the ability to provide the goods and services in a timely manner will be evaluated.

2. Procurement $5,000 to $25,000

DND provides, if possible, three quotes to Public Works and Government Services (PWGSC). PWGSC reviews the quotes and will award the contract to the supplier who satisfies the requirement while providing the best value for the government.

3. Procurement over $25,000

The MERX system is Canada's leading e-tendering service responsible for Government procurements over $25,000. MERX allows businesses to view and access procurement opportunities daily, order tender documents directly from the MERX web site and receive a notice of amendment or cancellation pertaining to documents that have been ordered. Bids are evaluated by PWGSC to ensure they meet the Statement of Requirement. The contract will then be awarded to the bidder that provides the best value.

Have an interesting topic you want discussed in the Newsletter?

Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Aimee Wonsik, *asb@mdwainwright.ca*

This past December Aimee Wonsik at the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen's In-Service training, receiving her 5 Years of Service Award.

Partners in Rural Conservation
www.mdwainwright.ca

Seed Treatment against Wainwright Fusarium

Right now, M.D. of Wainwright Grain Farmers are considering their options for the 2012 seeding season. One obvious, yet often overlooked choice is seed treatment options available to producers. Some farmers are diligent in always applying seed treatments to their cereals, however the number of local farmers that by-pass this step (to save a few dollars and time) would make most farmers upset and embarrassed.

This is the second year that the M.D. of Wainwright has been found to have positive Fusarium graminearum in a wheat field. Fusarium graminearum is a Pest under the Pest Act, and has the high potential to eliminate Alberta's access to premium grain markets. The importance of this is key to the livelihoods of our local farmers, yet most farmers are taking our zero tolerance for Fusarium for granted.

In 2011, 18 fields were sampled in the M.D. of Wainwright for Fusarium graminearum, and one of those fields was confirmed with a PCR test to be positive. The kernel incidence was low (one out of one hundred seeds tested was positive) however in any instance a positive is still a positive, and producers must be on high alert at this time.

Fusarium showing in a plate test

Why Should I Use a Seed Treatment?

Producers should consider seed treatments like an insurance policy for establishing the best crop possible given the growing conditions at the time. Seed treatments are a tool that producers can use to help them give their crop the opportunity to achieve the best yields possible.

Fusarium Head Blight—FHB can affect wheat, barley, oats, rye, **corn (major host)**, triticale, canary seed and some forage grasses. In Alberta, spring wheat, durum and barley are most affected by this disease. FHB is caused by several species of the fungal pathogen, Fusarium. **The most important species is Fusarium graminearum, since it can result in the most yield loss and is responsible for the production of toxin in the grain**. FHB results in a reduction in yield, grade and end-use quality. Further losses to producers have occurred because of restricted crop rotations, limited variety selection, cost of control measures, as well as reduced marketing opportunities. It is important that producers are familiar with this potentially damaging disease and incorporate management practices to reduce FHB development in their crops

Fusarium fungi can over-winter as spores or mycelium on seed and **crop residue.** Seed infected with the Fusarium fungi may have reduced vigour and become infected upon emergence, resulting in seedling blight. At our local seed cleaning plants in Wainwright and Edgerton, Fusarium tests are required before grain is unloaded for "seed cleaning", however "seed separations" do not require this test (something to think about how many producers were separating for ergot this past year).

The use of seed treatments will limit seedling blights caused by seed and soil-borne pathogens, including Fusarium species. Seed treatments, however, will not prevent FHB from developing later in the season from stubble-borne disease inoculum in regions where Fusarium species are already established. Transfer of this type could be a concern for farmers near corn fields, for example, since FHB can transfer with wind and moist air or rain.

"Keep the oven on until everyone in your family has been fed; stir the gravy worry free, as to have gravy is a blessing. "

Golf Course Horse Pasture

Horse paddocks and pastures are often like golf courses. The horses over graze some areas so that they are golf-green height while defecating in others, creating roughs of ungrazed plants. Over grazing, compaction and tearing of the ground by hoofs, forms a surface where only the hardiest of plants can survive. Horse owners often do not manage horse paddocks and pastures to maximize forage output due to a lack of awareness and, often, a lack of equipment. The persistence of a productive pasture is dependent on selecting the right seed mixture; establishing a good stand; proper fertilization and grazing management. Paddocks can be greatly improved by ***frost seeding***. Frost seeding requires that you spread a legume mixture onto the frozen ground in early spring. As the frost comes out of the ground, the ground opens and closes allowing the seed to be incorporated into the soil. Legumes such as red and white clover (not alsike) and alfalfa work better than grasses. (Don't use alsike clover due to a liver toxicity in horses.) Alfalfa seed will only germinate when little or no alfalfa exists (plants are greater than 1 meter apart). The cool, wet weather of spring will allow for germination and growth of the seed. You can expect a 20% improvement in forage production by this method. Do not graze these paddocks until later in the spring or summer to allow for plant establishment.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development ***invites you*** *to:*

Share your thoughts on …….

- **The best way to develop a robust local food system in Alberta**
- **Key strategies needed to develop a strong local food economy**
- **Who should be involved in setting the groundwork**

We need your knowledge of :
local food issues and successful approaches from all sectors of the food network including farmers, ranchers, processors, distributors, brokers, retailers and all areas of food service.

All Sessions are from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Includes catered local lunch

Select the date and location that suits you best and Register now as seating is limited.
Call the Registration line at 1 800 387-6030

- **Vermilion** on January **31**, 2012 in the Provincial Building

Deadline for registration is 2 weeks prior to session date.
Please visit http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/explore13594

Municipal Weed Inspector/ Public Works Employee

(see mdwainwright.ca for full job description listing)

The M.D. of Wainwright No. 61 has an opening for a fulltime position, shared between the Agricultural Services and Public Works Departments. The shared component of this position would be approximately 5-6 months with the Agricultural Services Department (May-Oct) and the remaining 6-7 months with the Public Works Department (Oct-May).

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Knowledge of or ability to learn how to identify local weed species and be familiar with modern agriculture production practices.
- The ability to obtain an Alberta Pesticide Applicators Certificate (Industrial and Agricultural designations) prior to May is a condition of employment. Ongoing training opportunities will be available through the Municipality to assist staff in maintaining the above licence.
- Having the willingness and ability to work flexible hours especially early mornings, is a significant requirement of the job.
- Valid Class 5 Alberta Driver's Licence and the ability and willingness to obtain a Class 3 or Class 1 Licence if required.

POSITION DUTIES:

- General roadside spraying and spot spraying of weeds.
- Weed inspection on private land.
- Working with agricultural producers and acreage owners to control Prohibited Noxious and Noxious weeds.
- Keeping up-to date records and completing reporting requirements.
- Tree planting, grass seeding, hauling of empty pesticide containers for recycling and various other manual duties as required.
- Various Public Works duties may include but not be limited to assisting with general shop and outdoor labour, parks and recreation, mowing, bridge maintenance, sign maintenance, and other various duties as assigned by supervisors.

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Tips for Turning Bins with a Grain Vac

Using a grain vac to condition a bin of stored grain, sucking from the bottom and putting grain back on top of the same bin will turn over the core of the bin, but it won't condition grain along the sides. The physics of grain bin unloading is that the top grain comes out first. Within minutes, you'll be cycling the same grain over and over again. You can confirm this by putting 300 bushels of just-dried grain into the top of a 4,000-bushel bin, and taking out a load to see if the rest of the bin was conditioned and in good shape. Within five minutes, the grain coming out the bottom will be the warm grain that you just put on the top. The grain vac is a great tool for conditioning grain, but the best plan is to take from one bin and dump into a separate bin.

GRAIN FARMERS—CHECK YOUR BINS FOR HOT SPOTS! Avoid a wreck!

Cow Herd Winter Feed Needs

In preparing for winter feed needs for the cow herd, beef producers need to consider cow nutrient needs; pros and cons of different feeding methods; and possible alternative (and cheaper) feeds to reduce costs to the cow/calf enterprise. By knowing what you have for feed in terms of quantity and quality tells you what you may need to purchase for additional feed for the winter-feeding. Taking inventory on quantity is easier than knowing quality, however a forage analysis is essential in determining winter-feed needs and making an informed purchase decision.

When hay was "cheaper" beef producers might have thought they were able to afford the luxury of over feeding cows. It wasn't true then and is less true now. If producers are going to expect cows to pay their own way, you may have a wreck on your hands if cows are underfed over winter. If cows lose too much weight and have less than BSC 5 at calving this can cause problems such as cows won't claim her calf; will produce less milk; and increase the chance of the cow turning up open next fall. There is not much profit to be gained with these results. Conversely, if you feed $150/ton alfalfa hay all winter because you have always hay to winter cows and will not consider alternatives, you might avoid the problems outlined above, but your lender or pocketbook will not be happy.

Is hay still our best cow feed? Is the "beef hay" our best buy? How can I reduce my winter-feed costs? The M.D. of Wainwright has a bale probe to take sample cores to send for feed analysis. It is free to use as well, 780-842-4454.

A few ideas to reduce winter-feed costs for your cow-herd: **Storage losses**: While it may be too late to reduce feed losses for this winter, you can makes plans for next winter. How hay is made or stored hay can vary significantly from the time the hay was harvested to when the hay is fed. The losses can be low as 2% are possible up to 30% or more at $100/ton this can result in loss of $2-30 per ton of hay. A storage facility may easily pay for itself in feed loss savings.

Feeding losses: Feeding a week's worth of hay bales in the pasture does not take much labour, but it can waste up to 50% of the hay. Invest hay feeders which reduce feed losses and limit the supply to three days or less to reducing waste to the single digits.

Feed to your cow's needs: Is your hay as good as you think it is? Maybe it's actually better! Spending $$ on a basic forage analysis can be a great investment to manage your hay to meet your cows' needs. The hay you harvest may be is such good quality that you may be over feeding. You can reduce the amount fed of high quality hay by mixing in some lower quality hay to stretch your hay supply while meeting the cows' needs. On the other hand, you may have lower quality hay, which may not meet your cows' needs for energy and/or protein and you may consider it feasible to supplement with distiller grains, silage or something else. Yes, these supplements may appear more costly on a per ton basis, but if you figure what the cost is per unit of protein and/or energy and it might be "cheaper" than cheap hay or purchasing a higher quality forage. Managing our herds and our feeds infers a certain level of control over these areas. It is impossible to manage if we do not measure, and a forage analysis is a key measurement that should be done yearly.

Bon Appetit! Bovine Feed Wastage Facts!

- Livestock trample, over consume, foul, and use for bedding 25 to 45 percent of the hay when it is fed free choice.
- Feed daily to reduce wastage. Provide only enough for a daily feeding as this will force livestock to eat feed that might otherwise be refused or trampled.
- Over consumption of feed is a form of wastage. A dry, pregnant cow will eat 20 to 30 percent more hay than is required to her meet nutritional requirements. Over a 200-day feeding period, a 1300-pound cow can consume 1560 extra pounds of feed.
- Proper feeder design reduces waste. A round bale feeder with a sloped entry bar design saves feed when cows back away from the feeder. A solid lower section in the feeder prevents feed from being pulled out of the bottom.
- When feeding large round bales, ensure adequate numbers of cattle are present to clean up the feed on a daily basis. All cattle should have space at the feeder at the same time. Too much or too little competition for feed increases waste.
- Feed outside , older hay first. Hay stored outside usually has more spoilage during storage and reduced palatability than covered feed. Cattle will waste a greater percentage of poor quality hay than of good quality hay.
- Feed using an electric fence to minimize access and trampling. This is particularly important during times when the ground is soft or wet. By exposing only a portion of the daily feed, cattle will reach under the electric wire and gather the hay by the mouthful. Wastage by trampling and soiling only occurs on that hay that they pull out from under the wire.

- When feeding on the ground, select clean areas daily to improve palatability of feed that has been trampled on.
- During the winter months, select feeding sites that are separate from the cow's resting area. Purposely select areas that are somewhat exposed to limit the amount of time cow's loiter in the feeding area. Typically cattle will come to feed and then return to more protected areas for resting.

- Depending on the market value of feed, the use of a tub grinder or hay processor may be feasible to reduce wastage and increase consumption of an otherwise unpalatable feed.

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN!

M.D. of Wainwright Supports Environmental Farm Plans!

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is a federal-provincial-territorial initiative designed to help producers identify environmental strengths and risk on their farming operation and develop a practical plan to reduce those risks.

During the EFP process, producers undertake a self-assessment of their operation while focusing on specific areas, including but not limited to:

- Soil and site characteristics
- Water sources (wells, rivers, sloughs, dugouts, creeks etc.)
- Energy efficiency
- Disposal of farm wastes
- Livestock yards
- Soil management
- Manure use and management
- Pasture management
- Cropping systems and inputs
- Trees, shelterbelts bush

The process to develop an Environmental Farm Plan is user friendly and proven. Producers can identify both short and long term action steps to achieve realistic environmental stewardship at a pace they're comfortable with.

Reasons to create an EFP

Maintain sustainable production: *Maintaining a healthy environment is essential to the success of Alberta's agricultural producers.*

Manage your risk: *The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) process helps you identify and address environmental risks and opportunities in your operation.*

Access markets: *Alberta's reputation for producing good food and in an environmentally sustainable way positions it to compete in world markets. It acts as a benchmark of quality assurance.*

Provide a healthy landscape for future generations: *Protecting water resources and air quality, preserving soil and biodiversity is the key to environmentally sustainable production of crops and livestock, and a healthy and productive landscape for the next generation.*

If you already have and Environmental Farm Plan, help is available to re-assess what steps you've completed and how you can modify the plan to work for you in the future.

To learn how creating or updating and EFP can add value to your operation, contact the M.D. of Wainwright office 780-842-4454 or learn more about EFP's visit www.

Malting barley players see rising focus on customer assurance

Albertaefp.com

It's no secret agri-food customers around the globe are increasingly focused on food safety and environmental stewardship. The malting barley area is no exception.

For Bob Sutton of Rahr Malting based in Alix, Alta., upholding high standards across the board has always been part of good business. The spotlight today on food safety and environmental attributes is more intense, but outfits such as Rahr are keeping pace by regularly monitoring developments and keeping their approaches up to date.

Having top standards for food safety is a no-brainer for anyone in today's malting and brewing business, says Sutton. "Food safety is a given these days. In our business you just can't offer our product without having a HAACP or ISO safety program in place. It's just simply a requirement by pretty much every brewer that I've dealt with, so that one is a given. Everyone has their own determination as to which program they're going to fall within. We've gone the ISO 22000 route and are fully certified in that." Environmental stewardship is an area where he agrees there is a lot more talk and rising expectations around the industry. "For our business, it's fair to say we're conscious of it and we do everything we can working with our suppliers to uphold good environmental practices. While the environment is an area where there has been a lot of discussions, we have yet to see much in the way of specific commitments out of those discussions. It's an area we monitor like everyone else." A big market for Rahr is export to Japan, he says. "We promote that Canada is a clean environment with fresh water and good production practices. We're conscious that's an image we need to do our best to uphold in all our relationships."