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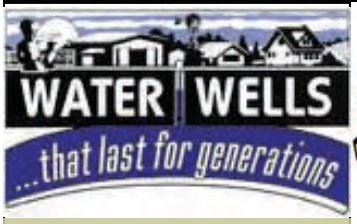
Municipal District of Wainwright No.61

The Municipal Agricultural Connection



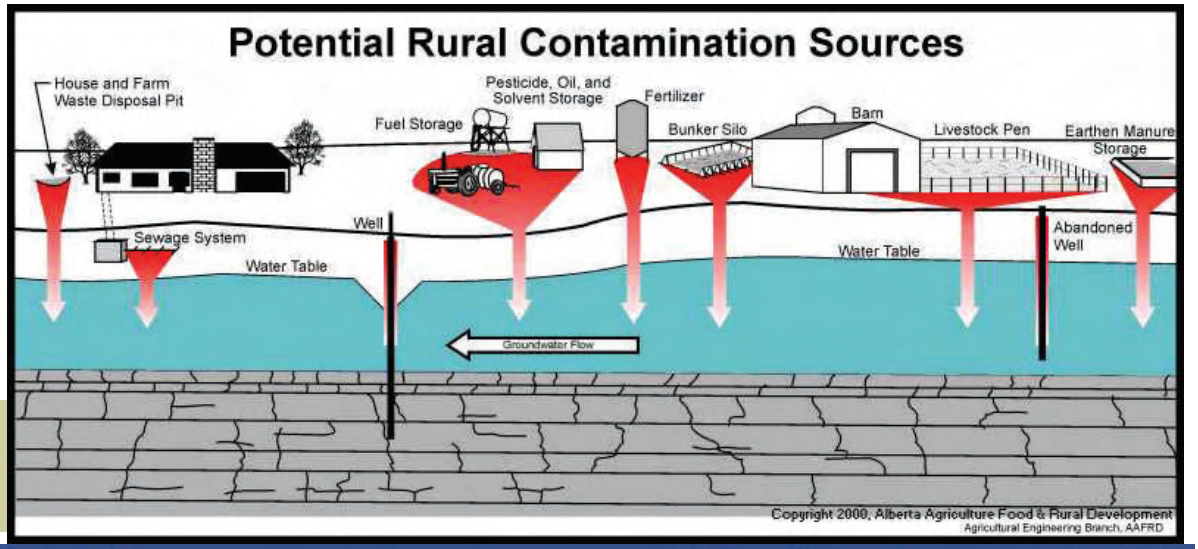
Attend the Water Well Workshop to receive your complementary copy of this awesome water well book!

Partners in Rural Conservation
www.mdwainwright.ca

UPCOMING WATERWELL WORKSHOP

The M.D. of Wainwright will be hosting an upcoming water well workshop on Wednesday, April 4th at 6:30 p.m. at the Wainwright Elk's Hall. This workshop offers well owners information on the basics of groundwater, well construction, common well problems, contamination risks, importance of well reclamation and best management practices. This is an important information session that has knowledge for both farmers and acreage owners, since the most important asset on your property is your water well. Unfortunately groundwater and water wells are often misunderstood and taken for granted. This lack of understanding increases the risk of contamination to the groundwater. Contamination can be a health risk to both people and livestock, which is why groundwater is such an important resource that needs to be protected. Contamination of groundwater is hard to detect in the early stages. By the time the problem is obvious, there is little that can be done to remove the contaminant from the system. It can take a very long time for contaminants to be flushed out, often decades or longer. Prevention of pollution is the only effective approach. Often the biggest contamination threats are things in your own backyard living on a rural property. Plan on attending this important workshop, please RSVP by March 28; your waterwell drilling reports will be put in a package for you at the meeting; 780-842-4454.

Have an interesting municipal topic you want discussed in the Newsletter?
Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Aimee Wonsik, *asb@mdwainwright.ca*



Water Wells ...that last ...for generations

The M.D. of Wainwright supports Ag Safety Week

Proper Care and maintenance of your well and groundwater are key to protecting your water supply.

9 Things you can do to Protect your well & Groundwater

1 **Install a properly designed and constructed water well - get rid of your well pit!** Select a reputable water well driller.

2 **Plug Old Wells & Holes.** While the driller is on your property drilling a new well it's a good idea to have him plug any old or unused wells. This is called decommissioning the water well. Surface water draining down through old wells can contaminate the aquifer tapped by your new well. Also make sure seismic shotholes on or around your property are properly plugged.

3 **Understand Your Drillers Report.** These reports contain important information needed to help you manage and protect your well. Make sure the driller gives you a copy.

4 **Do NOT Over-pump.** Over pumping is one of the biggest causes of well problems. Make sure the drilling contractor does a full pump test and provides a recommended pumping rate for your new well.

5 **Manage Activities on your land.** Manage land uses on your property to minimize seepage of contaminants into groundwater, especially if you have sandy or gravelly soils or a shallow well. Don't over apply manure, fertilizers and pesticides to your fields and gardens.

6 **Inspect Your Well.** You should regularly inspect your well and the area around your well to ensure that:
- The well cap is secure and the vents are not blocked.
- There are no open gaps around the outside of your well casing.
- There is no ground settling or water ponding around the well casing.
- The pressure tank and water treatment system are operating properly.
- Your septic system is working properly and is the recommended distance away from the well

7 **Test Your Well Water.** Water testing can tell you if there are problems with your water supply and whether you need to disinfect your well. Your regional health authority will test your well water. Test your well water twice a year (more frequently if your well is shallow) and a routine water chemistry test every two years.

8 **Disinfect Your Well.** If your well water tests positive for coliform bacteria your health authority will advise you on a course of action, which may include disinfecting your well by shock chlorination.

9 **Keep Records.** It is important to keep records of your drillers reports, well inspections, water tests and treatments.

Watch for up upcoming decommissioning workshops. Call Aimee Wonsik, Assistant Agriculture Fieldman, M.D. of Wainwright at 842-4454

"The most important asset on your property is your water." AW

FARM SAFETY, WHATS IMPORTANT TO YOU?!

Wainwright Seed Cleaning Plant having a discussion with a local farmer.

- Always be on the lookout for fallen or sagging wires, especially after storms. Stay away from downed power lines. Never approach or touch any wire with your hand or any other object, under any circumstance. If you notice a damaged facility, notify your electrical service provider and keep everyone away from the area.
- Never stack hay or pile grain near power lines, as these also can be inviting for kids who may climb too close to a power line.
- Use care when doing field work around power poles and guy wires. Watch for broken or dislodged guy wires. Report broken or damaged guy wires to your electrical service provider immediately.
- Always lower high equipment like augers and grain boxes before moving them.
- Never place bulk fuel tanks or granaries near power lines.
- **Know the height of any new equipment you purchase.**

- Please be reminded that current regulations state, that anything over 4.15 metres (13.6 feet), in height that will be traveling down a highway or public road, requires a permit from Alberta Transportation.

Never spray water hoses at power lines. Under no circumstances should anyone but trained power line utility staff attempt to lift or measure power lines. When using machinery to dig, a clearance distance of one metre (3.2 feet) has to be maintained from any underground electrical cable. If you must work closer, contact your electrical service provider.

Call Fortis at 310-WIRE (9473)

Alberta One Call (Digging) 1800-242-3447

Pre-Treatment Time (FOR FUSARIUM!)

The Spring 2012 seeding season for M.D. grain farmers is right around the corner!

Using a seed treatment fungicide that protects against both seed and soil borne Fusarium (and a host of other seed and seedling diseases) is what most farmers should be on the look out for this spring. Fusarium graminearium has been found in wheat for the second consecutive year within municipal boundaries; and farmers are being urged to protect their livelihood against this crop pest!

Most seed choices have been already made based on crop rotations, however now is the time for pre-treatment fungal application choices for those cereal grains as well. "To Treat or Not To Treat", that is the question! Pre-treating of grain is protecting the harvest before the seed is even sown into the ground!

Members of the Edgerton Seed Cleaning Plant discuss inspection points.

Build a Blue Bird Trail

The M.D. of Wainwright has a few active blue-bird trails in the country; one of them is located along highway 41 just north of Wainwright (some of the blue bird houses can still be seen along the fenceline on the west side of the highway). However over the years, the trail has almost been forgotten. Setting up a trail of your own is quite simple, and the added enjoyment and natural benefit is well worth it! Bluebirds arrive in our area in early June for return migration. They depart once again in September-October. You should place your bird boxes in open pastures, short grass areas with stony or sandy soil, with some tree area near by. Face the box away from prevailing wind conditions and 1.2-2m off the ground (which is why along fencelines can be the perfect location for boxes!)

The Wainwright Wildlife Society has information on setting up your own Blue Bird Trail and is always looking for new members! Also, nest boxes can be purchased from the Society. **Contact Laurence at the Wainwright Wildlife Society 842-2399 for more information!**

March 15, 2012 Application Deadline for Prairie Shelterbelt Program!

WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GROW TREES!?

There is some talk around the M.D. of Wainwright that it is difficult to grow trees because of the soil conditions, specifically SAND. When the soil around your home is less than ideal, you can continue to fight it by planting trees and shrubs that aren't well adapted to the site...or you can select plants that do well in the conditions your landscape provides.

Sandy sites pose a big problem because the water drains through it rapidly, so it's quick to dry in the spring, but it doesn't hold enough moisture for most plants in hot, dry weather during the summer months. Sandy soil can be improved by adding large quantities of organic material year after year, but this is usually practical only for small areas, such as flower or vegetable gardens. For larger areas such as shelterbelt tree lines, it makes more sense to plant trees and shrubs that usually grow in sand or tolerate sandy conditions.

At the M.D. office you can pick up a free shelterbelt package that can advise you on tree selections. The Prairie Shelterbelt Program offers free seedlings to people who own 5+ acres of land.

Through the program there are a couple types of trees that have a "low" moisture requirements: Deciduous trees such as Bur Oak and Peachleaf Willow are both rated at low with less than 300mm of water required per year. Also shrubs such as Caragana, Hawthorn, Hedge Rose, Sea Buckthorn, Silver Buffaloberry, and Snowberry are also in the low category.

Very smart and healthy looking Colorado Spruce, which is more tolerant to dry drought conditions verses white spruce. Notice the "mulch" ground cover to help significantly reduce weed pressure.

In the "medium" category (300-400mm/year) opens up more variety for selection, such as Green Ash, Manitoba Maple, Pincherry, Siberian Crabapple, Scots Pine and Colorado Spruce. Flowering crabapples (not offered by the PSP) tolerate sandy soils and offer a wide range of sizes (6 to 25 feet), shapes (upright to spreading to pendulous), and flower and fruit colors. Choose disease-resistant cultivars and plant in full sun.

Colorado Spruce will tolerate sandy soils if adequate moisture is available. It is a better choice over white spruce for our area, since it is more drought tolerant.

Planting a beautiful Ponderosa Pine. Notice how planting into existing sod can be achieved by first having the grass "sprayed out" with a non-residual glyphosate product to assist in weed control and increase chances of survival.

Scots Pine grows on well-drained sites; with best growth occurring on light to medium textured soils in full sun. Scots pine is moderately drought tolerant once established. You can also expect faster growth compared to spruce.

At the municipal shelterbelt meeting that was held a few weeks ago, Don George from the Agro-forestry office commented that most pine species do well on sandy sites, since pine trees have a long, tap root (instead of a root ball) that can search down deep for moisture reserves. This shows in nature as well, where most poorer soil sites can support a stand of gnarled jackpine.

Sandy soil and the dry conditions that accompany it need not be an obstacle to a well landscaped, attractive yard. Choosing plants that are well adapted to dry conditions is the key. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't include other plants. But it's good to remind yourself that extra site preparation and time spent watering and fertilizing might be the price you pay. Planting species and cultivars that need special care together and preparing the site by incorporating organic matter for a year or two before planting will reduce the effort needed to establish and maintain these plants.

One Earth Farms, in Northeast Alberta

Statistics quoted from the Western Producer, February 16, 2012. Comments quoted by Lee Hart at Grainnews, March 19, 2009

One Earth Farms created a splash in 2009 when it announced plans to partner with First Nations with the eventual goal of operating on one million leased acres.

One Earth Farms worked 96,000 acres of cropland and 14,000 acres of grassland (for its cattle business) in 2011. Larry Rudd, president of One Earth Farms, said that crop operations have grown from 13,000 acres in 2009 to the 90,000 acre mark in 2011. The company's cattle operations, first launched in 2010, grew and has targets of 8,300 cows and 4,300 yearlings and bulls for 2012.

25% of the company's operations are in northeastern Alberta, 15% in northeastern Saskatchewan, and 20% in eastern SK. The other 40% is in southern Alberta where a good portion is under irrigation. "We continue to expand our geography," Rudd said.

Chief Financial Officer Stephen Yuzpe told investors the company remains committed to transforming farming—"reversing the current model of buying retail and selling wholesale" - and will begin a new project this year that could see it enter into yet another business.

Lee Hart, commentator for the Grainnews, " Mega Global Farms is on your doorstep and you either have to sell out or be squeezed out by this corporate giant. It is so big it can buy Roundup for $1 per litre, has a fleet of 400 combines, 800 80-foot wide Morris air drills, and recently bought a subsidiary company known as CP Rail. It operates at such an economy of scale that it can make a nice profit on $5 canola. I have this vision of a company that buys up entire counties in Alberta and a bunch of rural municipalities in Saskatchewan and Manitoba as it begins its march of corporate farming across Western Canada.

One Earth Farms may be the best thing to happen to Canadian agriculture, but only time will tell. With the world population expected to double over the next 30 years or so, and with that an increasing demand for food, any projects that can bring good arable farm land into food production is a good thing."

CONGRATULATIONS!

Wainwright
Communities in Bloom
Collectivités en fleurs
ALBERTA
2011 Provincial Champions

M.D. of Wainwright

NO SPRAY & ROADSIDE HAYING AGREEMENTS

Deadline is May 1st !

If you are interested in participating in the 2012 program, please stop in at the M.D. office to fill out an application form. Forms are also available online at mdwainwright.ca

FARM EMERGENCY PLANNING

Planning is key to any emergency plan, but relatively few people have one!

Having a Farm Emergency Plan (and sharing that plan with the people living with you!) has the potential to keep you a few steps ahead if there was a grass fire, a power outage, a wind storm, or other emergency situation.

It only takes 10 minutes to walk around your farm yard. Take a look and have a mental picture of what's important to you. Have an idea in the event of a disaster or emergency situation what would need to be done first for the priority areas. (First and foremost you and your family's safety is priority!) After that, farm assets of livestock, equipment and buildings can be sorted out. Take note of all the hazards that are indirectly related to your farm. Power lines, railroad tracks, highways and oilfield lease sites can all be sources or risks. Think about how things may change in an emergency situation (will the roads be open, will you have the ability to utilize everyday things if danger is imminent?) Do you have an evacuation plan for your family and is it possible to have an evacuation plan for your animals? (Do you keep feed for your livestock in more than one place, to ensure that if something happened there is a chance to be prepared.) Depending on the nature of the emergency, can your livestock be turned out into a larger area with access to food and water and a chance at survival ….because there may not be enough time to hook on to the stock trailer, catch animals and load them.

Notice the height of the fence posts with drifted snow.

LIVESTOCK ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN AN EMERGENCY

www.getprepared.ca, Agriculture Canada. Make a checklist to refer to in event of an emergency

Common sense for practicality goes along way when you are in a calm state of thinking. Think about how you would manage a farm disaster with your livestock if there was danger on your place.

Stock may be best left at home if pasture has:

- No overhead power lines or poles, or debris of sources to blow around.
- No barbed-wire fence (within reason, consider a panicked animal's behaviour and space).
- At least one acre of open space (depending on the amount of animals) Livestock may not be able to avoid blowing debris in smaller spaces.

If you are moving livestock in an emergency:

- Work within your community to establish safe shelters, such as your neighbours place, a local fairground, or other compound.
- Ensure sufficient feed and medical supplies are available at the destination.
- Be ready to leave as soon as an evacuation is ordered. It may not be possible to evacuate heavy loads safely in high winds. Roads may be restricted to emergency service vehicles and not open to traffic.
- You will need access to trucks, trailers and other vehicles suitable for livestock. You may need a portable loading ramp or panels near by.
- Make sure animals have sufficient identification.
- Have adequate fencing or pens to separate and group animals appropriately.
- Monitor the health of animals daily.

Checklist when evacuating livestock from danger areas:

- Keep a list of all animals, including location and records of feeding, vaccinations and tests.
- Assemble handling equipment such as halters, ropes, cages, blankets appropriate tools. Include bolt cutters to quickly free animals in an emergency from tangled wire.
- Collect water, feed and buckets as well as other tools and supplies for sanitation (and animal first aid administering).