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Municipal District of Wainwright No.61

The Municipal Agricultural Connection

Have an interesting municipal topic you want discussed in the Newsletter?
Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Aimee Wonsik, *asb@mdwainwright.ca*
On February 18-21, 2013 Aimee participated in an Environmental Farm Plan Training update Olds, Alberta. Here she is with her group drawing a brain map of EFP future projections.

Partners in Rural Conservation
www.mdwainwright.ca

MAGPIES ON NEWBORN CALVES

If you are a livestock producer in the M.D. of Wainwright, you probably find it very frustrating when the wiley magpie starts coming into calving pens, picking on newborn calves.

Magpies can do a lot of damage to newborn calves, picking on feet, fresh umbilical cords, pecking out the eyes and even killing calves. Magpies have a tendency to smell open wounds and blood and are attracted to it. They are a serious farm yard pest.

The M.D. of Wainwright Agricultural Service Board has available on a loan out basis several magpie traps. These traps are available to any rural person that would like to borrow them for a 2 week period. Traps are easy to set up and use, call 842-4024.

If you are interested in building your own magpie trap instructions are found at: http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3496

"I was taking the rural real estate course in Edmonton, and was asked if I had an Environmental Farm Plan for my place. I wonder if you can give me more information?"

ALBERTA EFP
ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

M.D. OF WAINWRIGHT has available for farmers, Environmental Farm Plan Workbooks (EFP). EFP's are free, and are completed by the farmer. Aimee Wonsik, trained EFP technician, can help farmers navigate through chapters. If you are interested in more info, or have an older booklet you would like to complete, contact Aimee at 842-4454 or email.

"What kind of info would you like? Yes, the MD of Wainwright does offer EFP workbooks. It is a binder with approx 20 chapters that cover all environmental risk situations on farm (fuel tanks, chemical use and storage, silage storage, cattle operations\management~ grain and cattle production) all basically in relation to water sources on the farm (location to water wells, or distance to run off\ potential risk for groundwater and also surface water). The workbook is straight forward in questions (just answer what you are currently doing on farm) no right or wrong answer. Some guys find it takes long\large binder but if you take a couple afternoons it can be completed (approx 8hrs, depending on farm operation). Once finished, you return binder back to me, I take it for review (to insure its complete and for consistency). To schedule review can take a few weeks, depending on timeline. If your workbook passes review, you receive "completion letter" plus a reference letter (of info that your workbook showed could be helpful ie. Phone numbers for scrap metal recycling depot). Anyways, workbook\ program is easy to access through MD Wain, plus it is a step to enter into some programs for Growing Forward grants. Overall, it is a very good environmental awareness tool for a farmer. I've put info on EFPs in our municipal newsletter and on radio, as it is straight forward environment\ ag- operations procedures that usually is already being done on farm (double wall fuel tanks, protect with containment). (I always like to showcase that to general public, to promote Farmers as being ultimate land stewards as they always have been)...I can help you with whatever info you would like!" Aimee Wonsik asb@mdwainwright.ca

SEED TREATMENT TIME, FOR FUSARIUM RISK

The M.D. of Wainwright has experienced the right weather conditions over the past few growing seasons conducive for Fusarium graminearium infection in wheat and barley fields.

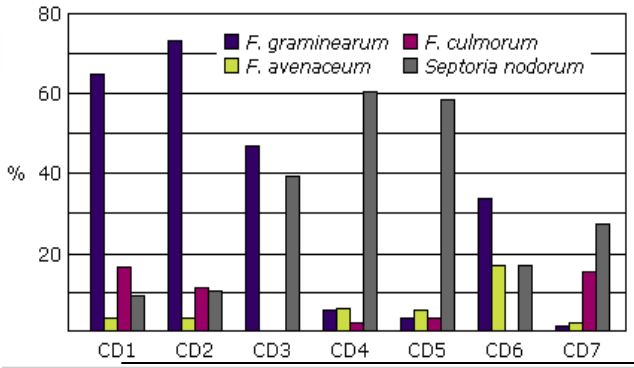
Fusarium graminearium infected plant stems can re-infect new years crop of fresh growing seedlings, as the stems of previous season's crop act as a contamination source. The "nodes" of previous seasons crop contain infection, and do not decompose enough over the winter. Zero tillage farming practices does not break up the stubble and straw enough on the soil surface.

One way Wainwright area grain farmers can protect the 2013 cereal crop is by pre-treating with a registered seed treatment fungicide. It is a very economical and easy process, however it is surprising how many local farmers do not do this step. This in turn increases the risk for neighbouring farmers to have fields at risk for fusarium.

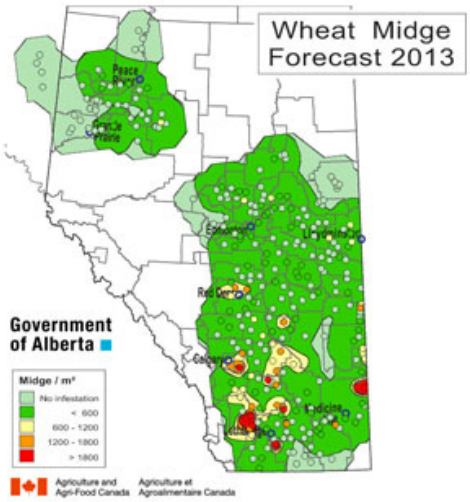
Consider all the pro's when making the decision to treat your grain for the upcoming farming season; to provide increased vigour for your seedlings and disease protection. A farmer should always test his grain for fusarium.

Map showing the crop districts in Alberta

2008 – Percentage of species infecting FDK in Alberta crop districts



WHEATMIDGE TOLERANT WHEAT, LESS FUSARIUM PROTECTION



Farmers in the M.D. of Wainwright have encountered some wheat midge yield loss on wheat crops, even though our local pest count numbers are not as high as some hot spots in Saskatachewan grain fields.

Seed companies have been busy breeding new midge-tolerant wheat varieties for western Canadian farmers to access since 2010, with more choices slated for market release in 2013.

But farmers cropping acres with high fusarium head blight risk may want to be cautious about growing midge-tolerant wheat varieties because of less fusarium protection.

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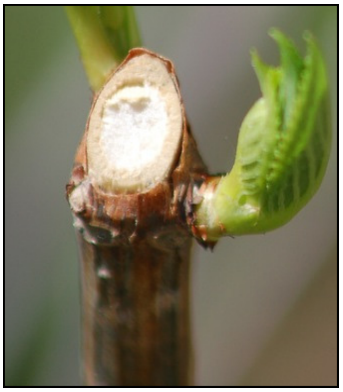
Fusarium tolerance ratings may be improved with new CPS wheat varieties and midge-tolerant varietal blends, however the CPS class as a whole doesn't have as strong a fusarium tolerance relative to some of the CWRS varieties that have been developed more recently. There is no wheat class or variety that is totally fusarium resistant.

Farmers are encouraged to be aware of seed disease ratings for varietal choices as well as pest protection combo market launches.

MAKE YOUR OWN TREES FROM POPLAR/WILLOW CUTTINGS do.it.yourself.

Since this is the final year for the shelterbelt program, (and for the most part tree choices are ordered out), it might be a good idea to re-visit the simple way to make your own tree cuttings.

Poplar and willow cuttings should be collected from healthy trees while they are dormant, early spring before the buds break. Cuttings should be taken from the ends of the branches (previous summers' growth) and should be made approximately 15 cm to 25 cm long and should include at least 4 or 5 buds. Cuttings can be stored in sealed plastic bags and placed in a



snowbank on the north side of a building until they are planted in the spring. Another method is to store them in a refrigerator at 5 ° C until the ground thaws and the cuttings can be planted.

The cuttings seem to take root much quicker if they are soaked in water for 3 days prior to planting in the soil. Do not leave them in water for more than 3 days or small roots will form on the cuttings which will be ripped off when the cutting is pushed into the soil. When soaking the cuttings, be sure the cuttings are fully immersed in the water and are not floating on top. The best way to do this is to wrap a bundle of them with an elastic band and put a weight on top of the bundle.

The cuttings can now be planted into the garden plot. They should be pushed in straight up and down by hand so that the majority of the cutting is below ground. Be sure to plant the cuttings with the buds facing upward. Plant the cuttings about 30 cm apart so that they can be dug up and moved to a permanent location at a later date if you wish. They can be planted to their permanent location right away, but it is usually easier to look after them for the first year in a garden plot where they can be watered and kept free of weeds.

Once the cuttings have been pushed into the soil, pack the soil firmly around the cuttings and water them immediately. They will need water whenever the soil gets dry, but do not overwater them. A water-logged soil has no aeration and the cuttings could die.

The cuttings will form a great deal of roots in one year under ideal conditions and so if they have been planted temporarily in a garden plot, they must be moved after one growing season or it will be difficult to move without damaging a lot of the roots. Plan to transplant the rooted cuttings to their new location in the early spring before the seedling starts to grow.

This hardwood cutting technique works for willow, poplar and also red dogwoods. If you have a neighbour that has a specimen tree, ask if they would like to share a cutting with you!

"i.. h.e.a.r.t.. c.o.m.m.u.n.i.t.y!"

The demise of knowing your neighbours, in a rural area, seems to be an insurmountable feat. Everyone is busy with their own lives, and no one has any time anymore to stop and share with their community.

The funny part is, that we rural people do enjoy living outside the confines of "the bright lights of town", however that should not also mean that we forget about our community.

Why not get involved with a local community group; if you are not sure where to locate one, look in the front of the phone book for a listing of community organizations. You can also open your heart the next time you hear something that sounds interesting and say, "I'd like to help out, tell me how to get involved!" Sure that is going to require you to get out of your comfort zone, but think of the bigger picture how it helps your community with your helping hands. Maybe you have a great idea that does not have a group, but you could get one started, it just takes a little extra push to put it "out there". H.e.a.r.t. your community!

2% LIQUID STRYCHNINE CONCENTRATE AVAILABLE FOR 2013

The M.D. of Wainwright will be selling 2% liquid strychnine concentrate in bottles for the 2013 season. This concentrate is for farmer's use only, to mix with their own grain; to thereby have fresh product on hand for the control of Richardson Ground Squirrels.

Call the M.D. Office (842-4454) for more information. Sales dates will start April 2, 2013, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the M.D. of Wainwright Rec Shop (located west of Wainalta motors). 2% LSC will be priced the same as last year, $7.00 per bottle. (1 bottle treats 2.2 lbs of grain). There is a 4 case maximum order per farmer.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG with BALE or SWATH GRAZING

There is lots of information that explain the benefits of bale and swath grazing, which can be a useful option for livestock producers. Bale and Swath grazing can offer increased productivity, however what happens if we get a winter with hard crust, deep snow?

- Allowing livestock to obtain all or part of their feed through swath grazing extends the grazing season and reduces winter feed costs. Savings can be as high as 40% compared to traditional feeding methods. Potential environmental benefits such as residue and manure management exist by reducing the cost of corral cleaning and manure spreading. Swath grazing reduces the cost and time needed for harvesting forage and machinery use for handling feed and manure.
- For swath grazing to be successful, good management is needed in keeping cattle healthy and in good condition. Feed, fencing, water and shelter are important elements that need to be carefully planned when developing a swath grazing program. Caution is required when swath grazing calves, young cows, thin cows and cows with calves, as they need higher levels of energy and management than mature dry cows. If swath grazing these types of animals, consider providing supplemental feed and shelter.
- Select a field with protection from the wind, where you can provide extra feed to the animals on cold windy days, where you can easily monitor animal condition, where a water system is nearby if snow is unavailable, and where access to windrows is not limited due to severe snow drifting.
- The swath should lay on top of the stubble and be as narrow and deep as possible.
- Use electric fencing to force animals to clean up the feed that they have been given access to. If cattle are not controlled they will trample the swaths, and mix snow with the swath which then freezes. This makes it impossible for the cows to clean up the swaths during the winter.
- Cows can graze through two feet of soft snow. Wind-swept or severely crusted snow makes grazing difficult or impossible. If the snow is too hard or crystallized, the animal's nose becomes tender and lower leg hair can be rubbed off. If this happens, remove the herd from the swaths and feed regular feed to give the cows a rest.
- If the snow becomes too hard or too deep, it may be physically impossible for the herd to access the swath. To open up the swath in times of heavy snow, drive a tractor down the swath or blade snow off the swath. Placing the electric wire across the swaths helps to expose the ends of the swath which enables the cows to see the continuation of the swath after each fence move.
- Proper grounding is critical to making an electric fence work because of the high insulating factor of snow and frost to deliver a shock to the livestock. To overcome this, build a two-wire fence where one wire is electrified and one is grounded.

TROUBLE SHOOTING FROZEN WATERBOWL PROBLEMS

Of course, your stock waterer will never give you problems until either the weather turns brutal cold, or its time for your animals to rely on it as a water source! The convenience of liquid water (verses the solid form of ice) is what makes this water source a challenge in our municipality because of our obvious winter climate that can reach 40 below or colder. This article may help if you are experiencing problems, however, consult your local plumber tradesman as different systems will have different challenges.

The tools you may need include an axe, shovel, pipe wrench, flat head screwdriver, hack saw, a couple adjustable pipe clamps, flashlight, plumbers tape, duct tape, flex hose and plastic fittings, heat gun or blow dryer. Dress warmly, as it is frustrating trying to fix your frozen waterbowl, when hands are in water and cold.

Know your limits and be safe; be aware of the water supply and shut off if necessary (so you don't have a flood), and also the electrical supply (so you don't get electrocuted) while working on the problem.

The inner components of a waterer must be accessible, and are probably surrounded with ice and snow, (this is where you may need to use an axe and shovel to remove ice, be careful as to not damage outside unit walls.) Depending on what the emergency is, you will either have to remove the top to check on if a potential float problem (once you locate float, try moving it, is it frozen? Does it need to be adjusted if water flowing over bowl?) If no water is getting to the bowl , remove the side cover of your unit to see if there is frozen pipe underneath. This is where you might have larger problems, maybe a frozen fitting or potential heat tape problem. If there is an electrical outlet underneath, is it working? (plug in your blow dryer to make sure there is power). All heat tapes will eventually fail. Since replacement of the heat tape is inevitable, it is important to install the tape so that it can be replaced easily. One way to facilitate replacement is to use a section of plastic pipe, at least one size larger than the riser pipe, as a sleeve. Slit the entire sleeve pipe lengthwise, coil the heat tape around the slit pipe sleeve and slip the assembly over the riser. When the heat tape has to be replaced, simply pull up both the sleeve and the heat tape in one motion. The heat tape should have 3 turns of tape per foot of pipe. The spacing between the spiral turns must not be less than 1/2 inch. Heat tape must never cross itself, contact the soil or be exposed to sunlight. Hopefully some of this information was handy, as a working water source is important for your livestock needs during the winter.