



## Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives eNewsletter – January 14, 2020

### A look back at 2019

Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives (MBFI) continues to build on the core pillars of Partnership, Research & Demonstration, and Communication. Following MBFI's Annual General Meeting we welcomed Tracy Gilson as our new President, Larry Wegner as our Vice-President, and new MBP Director Tyler Fulton as Treasurer in addition to Darren Chapman, Kristine Tapley, Don McIntyre, and Lawrence Knockaert representing the MBFI Board. We also recognized the service and dedication of our outgoing President Ramona Blyth and wish her all the best in 'just' farming!

MBFI welcomed two new full-time staff in April 2019, Jordan Dickson and Clayton Robins. The 2019 summer student cohort was fantastic, and we look forward to seeing how their careers take shape through their education programs.

MBFI continues to work toward its mission of being a centre of innovation founded in a scientific approach to improve producer profitability, ecosystem health, and increase social awareness of the beef and forage sector. 2019 was a busy and exciting year at MBFI with 25 active projects over the three MBFI farm stations representing 8 academic studies carried out by university researchers and 17 demonstration projects.

The 2019 season marks the first year for MBFI staff led on farm trials. In addition to facilitating academic and extension specialist led studies, MBFI was proud to advance and lead producer inspired innovation.

MBFI looks forward to new research opportunities and collaboration to align with the Manitoba Protein Advantage strategy goals of increased grassland productivity and reduced carbon intensity per lb of beef. Over the coming months I will be working with staff reviewing and incorporating survey feedback from the 2019 MBP district meetings into ongoing or developing new project proposals.



The Fall of 2019 saw the Brookdale Farm handling facility enclosed for more comfortable year-round livestock handling conditions. Renovations were also completed in the workshop creating a clean research work space. We are in the planning and design phase for integrating an elevated deck viewing over the livestock handling area to enhance educational opportunities.

A hum of extension activity has kept us on our toes with over 800 visitors, including 178 students, using the newly unveiled Brookdale Learning Centre and or also touring field sites. Activities involved MBFI and partner led events, facility rentals for industry led workshops and meetings, and site tours by private and industry groups.

One highlight was a site visit coordinated through MBP and Jill Harvie with Canadian Cattlemen's Association, bringing climate change activist Steven Lee to Brookdale Farm. Steven was genuinely interested in beef production and it was a wonderful opportunity to throw open the doors to walk through what a cow-calf operation looks like on the ground.

Looking forward to 2020 MBFI is eager to continue engaging with the public through Ag in the Classroom opportunities, Open Farm Day, Community Colleges, Universities, and connecting directly with regional elementary and high schools.

Mary-Jane Orr  
General Manager



### Project Spotlight:

#### Keep Grazing- Exploring cattle grazing as a riparian management tool

With lead researcher **Dr. Alex Koiter of Brandon University**

Riparian areas are a key part of many strategies to limit phosphorous (P) loss from agricultural land to surface waterways. The loss of P is typically high during the spring snowmelt, as the vegetation from previous years acts as a source of P and the infiltration of runoff into the frozen soil is limited. While little can be done to promote infiltration of P during this period, the amount of vegetation remaining on the soil surface can be controlled through removal during the previous autumn. Cattle grazing in the riparian area is a potential management tool that can be used to accomplish this. In addition, the high soil moisture in riparian areas produces abundant forage making them a potentially important part of a ranch in times of drought. The goal of this research project is to investigate whether cattle can be used as a management tool to reduce the potential P losses in riparian areas during the spring snowmelt without compromising other riparian functions (e.g., soil compaction). To accomplish this, four treatments are being compared: 1) high density grazing; 2) low density grazing; 3) mowing; and 4) control (do nothing).

#### BU Student Research Team:

- Hannah Ziegler-Blair
- Adriana Avila
- Maria Luna

#### Project Funder:

Lake Winnipeg Basin Program

#### Project Partners:

Manitoba Beef Producers

Brandon University

Manitoba Conservation Districts Association

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada

Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives

Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District



Alex Koiter, Field sampling 2019

### Upcoming Events:

#### MBFI Presents Guardians of the Grasslands screening at Manitoba Ag Days

January 22, 2020

5:00pm – 8:00pm

Location: The Dome Building, Brandon, MB

To RSVP [www.mbf.ca/registration](http://www.mbf.ca/registration) for free

#### DUC Grazing Club - Steve Kenyon

March 12, 2020

Location: MBFI Learning Centre

Please text Nelson at 204-212-1253 by March 1 to reserve your spot.

#### DUC Grazing Club

March 17, 2020

Location: MBFI Learning Centre

*Stay tuned to our social media and website calendar ([www.mbf.events](http://www.mbf.events)) for more information about upcoming events!*

#### In development 2020:

Early June Johnson Farm Research Feature

Late June First Street Pasture Feature

Late July Brookdale Soil Health Benchmarking

September Open Farm Day



### Recap of Past MBFI Feature Events:

#### MBFI Field Day August 10, 2019

A full day of speakers and field tour focusing on cover crops, livestock integration and intercropping. Jillian Bainard presented about her work with cover crop species blends. Scott Beaton, Brett McRae and Clayton Robins spoke to their experience with annual forage livestock integration, intercropping and energy dense forages. In the field, attendees had an in field view of cover crop and intercrop work and equipment at MBFI.

**Thank you to the event sponsors:** P. Quinatine & Son Ltd. and Total Farm Supply (also a door prize sponsor), coffee break sponsor Heartland Livestock Services (Brandon), and door prize sponsor K.K. Penner Tire Centre (Brandon).

#### Manitoba Open Farm Day September 15, 2019

MBFI was once again a host site as a part of Manitoba Open Farm Day and we loved seeing all the new faces stop in for visit! There were kids' activities and field tours running throughout the afternoon highlighting some of the ongoing projects at MBFI and bringing awareness to the Manitoba beef industry. These learning opportunities followed a beef on the bun lunch.

**Thank you to the event sponsors:** Manitoba Beef Producers, Xplornet Communications and Allen Leigh Communication/Precision Cam.



#### Learning Centre Rentals

The MBFI Learning Centre is available for groups to rent for agriculturally related events, workshops and meetings.

Please contact Jordan at [jordan.d@mbfi.ca](mailto:jordan.d@mbfi.ca) or 204-761-3300 for inquiries and bookings.