

Bob & Charlene Siemens
Recipients of the
2008 Saskatchewan Forage Council
Forage Industry Innovation Award

Bob and Charlene were on the cutting edge of technology in the grain farming business, with an air-seeder in the late 80's and they were one of the first to try chem -fallow.

1988 was a very dry year. They watched as their land started to blow and soil erosion was happening. Grain farming had left them disillusioned and they started searching for something better for the land.

In 1989 they took a Holistic Resource Management course and started on a grain to grass conversion. This was a bold step with the neighbours wondering about the logic behind this move. It was a totally new way of thinking for this area. The Siemens started to seed grain land to grassland, making the big fields into smaller paddocks with the use of electric fence. They rotated the herd thru the paddocks by letting them graze for a limited amount of time and then moving them to the next paddock. Each paddock received adequate time to rest and recover. Monitoring what was happening was essential.

Now their livelihood was based on grass and planned grazing. There were challenges along the way but good results were starting to show up. Wind and water erosion had stopped and the grass and legumes reduced saline patches. The health of the land was improving and so was Bob & Charlene's attitude towards their farming decision. They felt closer to the land by growing forages and working with cattle.

They shared their experience openly with others and became mentors to many people in the area. They would gladly show you their farm or come to your place to discuss new ways of making decisions not just about grazing, but about the people involved and their goals. They believed that farming had to be profitable.

While Bob & Charlene were involved in doing the conversion they ran a Bed & Breakfast on their farm. This allowed them to talk to guests about

what they were doing and where their food was coming from. They are major contributors to their community and church.

Bob was an R.M. councillor for Pleasant Valley, a Sask. Wheat Pool delegate, Chairman of Prairie Center Credit Union, board member of Earth Care Connection and is involved with Heifer International. He is presently a member of a Holistic Management group, the Herschel Grazing Club and is on the board at the Rosetown Co-op.

Bob has been asked to speak about the new management practices that they have adopted to a variety of organizations, one being the Saskatchewan Pasture School. Bob & Charlene were runners up for a TESA award, which is an Environmental Stewardship Award.



Presentation of the first annual Forage Industry Innovation Award by SFC Past President Barry Marquette to Bob Siemens at the 2008 SFC Annual Meeting in Herschel, SK.

