

## 2018 Saskatchewan Pasture Tour

By Lorraine Beaudette, Executive Director, SFC, August 20, 2018

The 2018 Saskatchewan Pasture Tour saw approximately 75 producers, industry reps and other stakeholders take part in a full day of information sharing and interaction on Wednesday August 8. This annual event takes place in different locations around the province and highlights new and upcoming trends in forage production, pasture and livestock management. The 2018 tour was based out of Macklin.

The first stop was the farmyard of Michelle and Byron Clarke. This progressive young farm family calve out 540 cows and use various grazing systems including corn grazing. They expect to get about 200-250 grazing days per acre and shared their experiences with exposing their herd to corn grazing over the last three years. The Clarks also spoke of a positive experience with immigrant labour on their farm, but pointed out the challenging paperwork and difficulties in dealing with language barriers. The tour checked out the Clarks' alfalfa pasture, learning about the daily rotations they are using and the natural rejuvenation on the land with intensive grazing management.

The tour proceeded to Primate area to Matt and Melanie Warkentin's winter watering system, partially funded through the Farm Ranch and Infrastructure Program. The system functions with the use of solar power. Just up the road from the watering system the Warkentin's tackled grass seeding into high salinity soils heavy with foxtail barley and were able to demonstrate success in establishing a forage crop and controlling foxtail by spraying with Kerb.

In the afternoon the group travelled north to the Senlac area to see a 15 year old stand of tame pasture on Pat McKinnon's land. McKinnon's impressive herd of heifers were running with a Wagyu Bull, and he shared information about the Wagyu meat market with the interested group of ranchers.

At this same stop Jeremy Brown of DUC displayed an artillery of electric fencing supplies and tools including cutout switches, Fence Alert warning light that hangs on the fence line, and fence volt/current meter and fault finders. Various posts, wires and grounding systems were also explored. A stop at two of McKinnon's fields, oats and triticale, both to be swath grazed this winter, gave Lorne Klein, with Ministry of Ag a chance to speak on timing of swathing and correlation of nutrient value of the feed and weight conversion. He noted not a lot of study has been done on triticale but research shows that oat swathing could be delayed past the dough stage for better feed results.

Another highlight included a stop at the Manitou Cattle Breeders Grazing Coop where smaller groups participated in native plant identification and discussion on native range health. The invasive weed stop in MD Wainwright checking out control of yellow toadflax and hoary alyssum, rated very high on the program evaluations as one of the best stops of the day.

The full day was wrapped up back at the Macklin Communiplex with a delicious roast beef supper and the awarding of door prizes. Many thanks got out to the sponsors of this great event, the host farmers and the organizing committee for all their hard work!