

UNIVERSITY NEWS

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U of S led report places focus on the economics of feed costs within the cow/calf sector

The Western Canadian Feed Innovation Network (WCFIN) at the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Forage Council (SFC) are pleased to release their report entitled: *An Economic Assessment of Feed Costs within the Cow/calf Sector*.

The report examines the cost structures for cow/calf enterprises in Western Canada with an emphasis on feed type and forage management strategies. Overall, the report found that cow/calf enterprises in Western Canada are extremely diverse. Profitability varies greatly depending on the environment, cost management, production and resource management on each farm.

Key recommendations in the report include:

- The need for more accurate and standardized economic analysis of research projects on feeding and grazing systems within Western Canada.
- The development of standardized economic analysis tools for cow/calf producers across Western Canada.
- Research dollars should be targeted towards the assessment of innovative feeds, forages and feeding and grazing systems with a specific focus on the economic implications of these feedstuffs and systems.
- Resources should be increased and allocated to the recruitment and education of future professionals in the field of applied forage and beef economics.
- A forum should be created to encourage ongoing dialogue between stakeholders, facilitate systems-level discussions on economic analysis, direct future research priorities and foster partnerships.
- Engagement and networking must be increased to improve competitiveness of the cow/calf sector.

“Tremendous opportunities exist within the cow/calf sector, if we understand the economic implications of our management decisions. Forage and grazing resources are an extremely valuable tool and, with increased knowledge, managers will be better positioned to be make the best management decisions to attain their full financial success”, says Janice Bruynooghe, SFC Executive Director.

“The cow/calf sector is a commodity business where pressures on profits are difficult to pass along,” stated Colleen Christensen, Executive Director, U of S Feeds Innovation Institute. “Competitiveness is about the management practices utilized to deliver feeds as well as targeted nutrition and less expensive feed stuffs. Furthering research on economic analysis in this sector will aid in benchmarking and decision making power for Western Canadian producers.”

The report *An Economic Assessment of Feed Costs within the Cow/calf Sector* is located at <http://www.wcfin.ca/FeedResources/WhitePapers.aspx> and www.saskforage.ca.

About the WCFIN

The Western Canadian Feed Innovation Network mandate is to be the facilitators of the Feed Value Chain in Western Canada. WCFIN exists to encourage collaboration, find connections and maximize the feed resources that exist in Western Canada. WCFIN is a research facilitation service developed by the Feeds Innovation Institute, a commercialization entity located within the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan.

About the SFC

With a mandate to enhance the province's forage and grassland industry, the Saskatchewan Forage Council (SFC) strives to partner with all sectors of the industry. Formed in 1988, SFC objectives are focused on the development and dissemination of information related to the production and utilization of all forage resources, prioritization of forage research, and collaboration with governments and all stakeholders to develop and implement effective policies and programs as they relate to forage production and marketing.

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