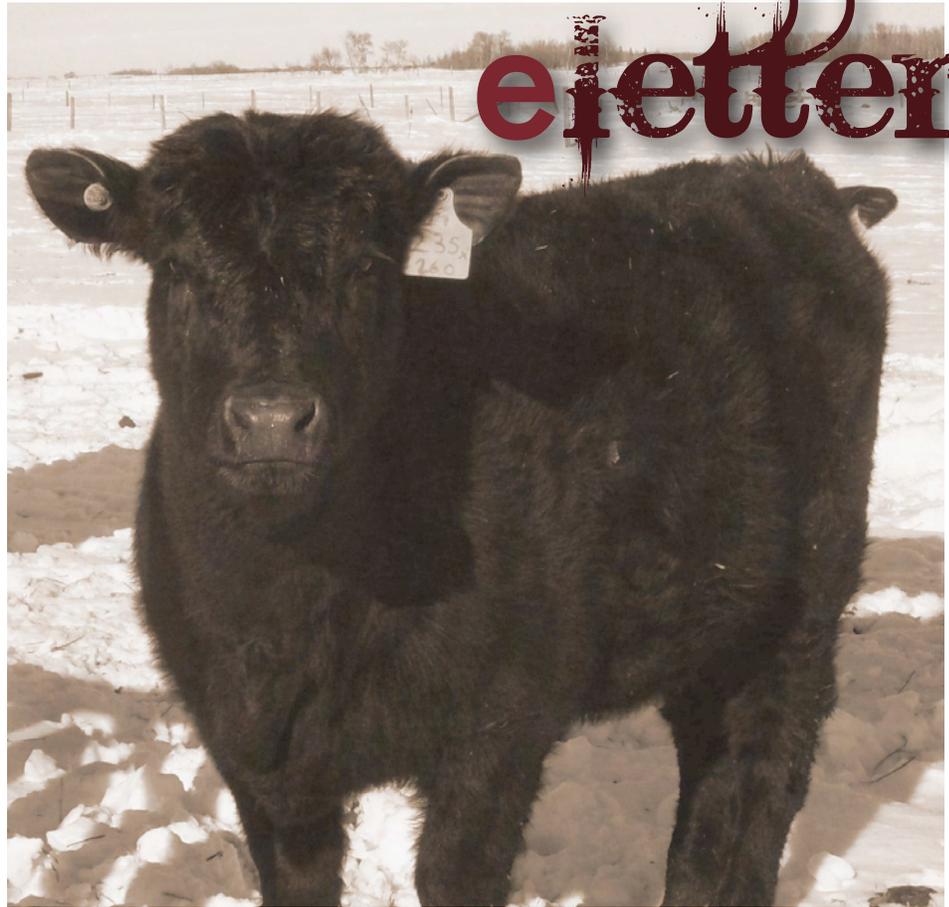


# Western Beef Development Centre

DIVISION  
OF PAMI

Spring 2011 - Volume 1 - Issue 4



Heifer Development Project, Photo credit: B. Lardner

## Save the Date - June 21

Western Beef is holding its annual Summer Field Day on Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Termuende Research Ranch located east of Lanigan on Hwy 761. The theme for this year's event is "Weather Issues: What is Your Strategy?"

Come at 9:30 am to grab a coffee and visit the tradeshow booths. Our invited guest speakers for the morning presentations are David Phillips, Senior Climatologist with Environment Canada and Michel Tremblay, Provincial Forage Specialist with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture.

Phillips is often referred to as Canada's unofficial weather guru. He is the mind behind *Canada's Weather Trivia Calendar* and releases [Canada's Top 10 Weather Stories](#) each year. His presentation - What's Up with Our Weather? - will talk about Canada's weather patterns, including long-range weather forecasting and how weather forecasting can serve as a tool for beef producers.

Tremblay has served as Saskatchewan's Provincial Forage Specialist since 1993. He has been asked to speak at the Field Day

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about reseeding forages. Excess moisture in 2010 drowned out pastures and hay fields forcing some producers to reseed. Tremblay will share important considerations related to reseeding into forage sod using direct seeding techniques. Remember, there is government assistance under the Saskatchewan Feed and Forage Program for producers who reseed from June 1, 2010 to August 1, 2011.

As always, a complimentary beef-on-a-bun luncheon will be followed by a field tour (weather permitting) featuring six stops this year. The day will be rounded off with a presentation on 2010 Cost of Production results and a steak supper (\$10/plate).

To download a full agenda from our website, [click here](#).

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## PDAP Assistance for Blizzard Losses

The last weekend of April a blizzard hit parts of Saskatchewan. For producers who spring calve in a field or pasture – which is pretty much standard practice – calf death losses have been estimated to be in the range of 10-15% for affected producers, and as high as 20% for those worst hit. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, the SK Ministry of Agriculture announced that livestock producers would be eligible for assistance under PDAP for any livestock losses as a result of this storm. For more details on the program, [click here](#) or call PDAP at 1-866-632-4033.

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## WBDC Research Update

- Heifer Development – Four groups of replacement heifers (Managed to 55% and 65% of mature BW either in drylot pens or field bale grazing) will be turned out for natural breeding in late May. This is a collaborative study between WBDC and Dr. Rick Funston at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Funding for this project is from ALMA and CMDF.
- Corn Grazing – Five hybrid corn varieties will be seeded this spring and grazed with beef cows in the fall. This will be a two-year study. Thanks to ADOPT for funding this project.
- Cost of Production – Farm visits are now complete and results are being aggregated for publication and official release at the WBDC Field Day on June 21.
- Application of Commercially-Available Marker Profiles – DNA samples will be collected from WBDC animals and evaluated using the IGENITY marker profile for selected traits. WBDC will be using marker profile information for parentage testing, maternal traits, feed efficiency and marker assisted selection. Thanks to the U of S College of Agriculture & Bioresources Beef Genomics Funding.



Be sure to watch our [YouTube](#) videos!

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## Record Keeping Software

From time to time, WBDC staff are asked about record keeping software programs to track production information.

In 2006, WBDC researched a number of software packages in its hunt for a record keeping program and made the decision to purchase [Cattlemax](#). Our record keeping is managed by Research Technician, Leah Pearce. Leah is pleased with the software and the technical phone support that comes with Cattlemax.

WBDC is not your typical cow-calf operation. As a research herd there are multiple projects going on with needs for multiple weight records, ultrasound measures, body condition scores, calf birth weights, etc. We are now testing a new product called [Archer](#), a hand-held

computer with a built-in RFID reader, which may be better suited to meet our research needs.

Below is a summary of some of the current software options available to cow-calf producers.

## Learning the Lingo: Sliders

I first heard the term “sliders” being used by SMA Cattle Analyst, Grant Zalinko. He was referring to mini burgers that have been popular in the US since 2007, but have only made their mark in Canada in the last year. The National Restaurant Association’s [Chef Survey: What’s Hot in 2011?](#), ranked mini burgers sixth in the top appetizer trends with one-third of chefs surveyed agreeing mini burgers will be a hot appetizer in 2011 while 56% already feeling mini burgers are “yesterday’s news”.



Where can you find “sliders”? Boston Pizza serves them up on their appetizer menu – a trio costs \$10.25. Superstore also carries a frozen option – PC Angus Sliders – which seem to be a hit for parents with small children according to reviews of the product on Superstore’s [website](#).

The driving force behind the slider was the recession. Chefs were looking for ways to keep restaurant patrons. Mini burgers “allowed chefs to sell a small bun and smaller wad of meat at a severely inflated price, a boon to restaurateurs during an economic downturn” ([www.slashfood.com](#), May 12, 2010).

Table 1. Cow-Calf Record Keeping Software Programs

Program	Cost	Features
	\$237 Cdn + tax	Developed by Saskatchewan farming family; Wide-ranging reporting options; Generates required file for CCIA age verification; <a href="#">Website</a>
Herd Books	\$100 Cdn + GST	Developed by an Albertan rancher; 22 preset info categories for cows; Maternal family tree and Calf page to track cow’s progeny; Syncs with CCIA for easy upload of age verification files; <a href="#">Website</a>
	\$80 US	Developed by NDSU Extension Service; Tracks all the standard performance data; Some report customization; <a href="#">Website</a>
	\$245 US	Tracks production records, pasture movements, medical records, performance/weight data, carcass data, semen inventory, custom reports; Exports to Excel; <a href="#">Website</a>

Upcoming Events	june	june/july	august
<p>If you would like to have your event featured in our e-newsletter, email <a href="mailto:info.wbdc@pami.ca">info.wbdc@pami.ca</a> with details.</p>	<p><b>5-7</b> SSGA 98th Convention &amp; AGM, Living Sky Casino, Swift Current <a href="#">Website</a></p>	<p><b>21</b> Western Beef Field Day <a href="#">Agenda</a></p>	<p><b>9-12</b> CCA Semi-Annual Meeting</p>
	<p><b>15-16</b> Saskatchewan Pasture School, Harvest Inn, Saskatoon <a href="#">Website</a></p>	<p><b>27</b> AAFC-SPARC, Southwest Forage Association Field Day, Swift Current</p>	<p><b>10</b> International Livestock Congress, Deer Foot Inn, Calgary, AB <a href="#">Website</a></p>
	<p><b>19-24</b> Breeding for Profit Bus Tour, to register call Ag Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377</p>	<p><b>july 26-29</b> 15th Annual Western Canadian Feedlot Management School, U of S <a href="#">Agenda</a></p>	<p><b>15</b> 6th Annual Cattlewomen for the Cure Golf Tourney, Medicine Hat, AB <a href="#">Website</a></p>

## Fact Sharing – Per Capita Beef Consumption

At the end of March, the 2010 food consumption statistics were released by Statistics Canada. For the third consecutive year beef consumption has declined in both Canada and the US. Beef consumption has hit a new low of 20.2 kg/capita, while pork is at an all-time low of 16.5 kg/capita and poultry is 31.1 kg/capita. Total meat consumption was down 2.7% to 75.2 kg/capita. Despite the overall decline in meat consumption, beef has maintained its market share at around 34%.

The take home message is that consumers are pinching their pennies, especially with the price of gas now edging close to \$1.40/L in parts of Saskatchewan.

Consumers only have a certain amount of disposable income, and as the prices for the “bundle of goods” that they purchase increases, they will have to make adjustments in the quantities of each good that they buy. As the statistics show, beef seems to be one of the goods being cut back for the last three years. How are we going to change that? With efforts from the Beef Information Center for domestic marketing and the Canada Beef Export Federation for international marketing.

Want to receive the WBDC e-newsletter?

Simply email us at [info.wbdc@pami.ca](mailto:info.wbdc@pami.ca)

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