

# Western Beef Development Centre

DIVISION  
OF PAMI

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## SK Cowherd gains ground

Statistics Canada released its Jan 1 Cattle Inventory report on Feb 17. While the cowherd continues to decline, Saskatchewan has actually slightly increased its share of the national herd.

The latest release shows that the Canadian beef cow herd declined another 2.7% since Jan 1, 2010 to sit at 4.27 million head. Saskatchewan reported 1.3 million beef cows (down 1.5% from Jan 1, 2010). Media have focused on the overall decline in numbers, but the data show a different trend when each province's numbers are expressed as a percentage of the

national herd. Alberta continues to have about 40% of the herd. The Saskatchewan herd percentage has grown from 28% in 2004 to slightly more than 30% in 2011 (see Figure 1 on next page) while the BC's share of the national herd declined. The Eastern provinces collectively held steady at about 14% of the national herd.

These percentages mean that Saskatchewan's cow herd has declined less than the rate of decline in the national herd. Undoubtedly, Saskatchewan's forage, feed and cost of production advantages contributed to this trend.

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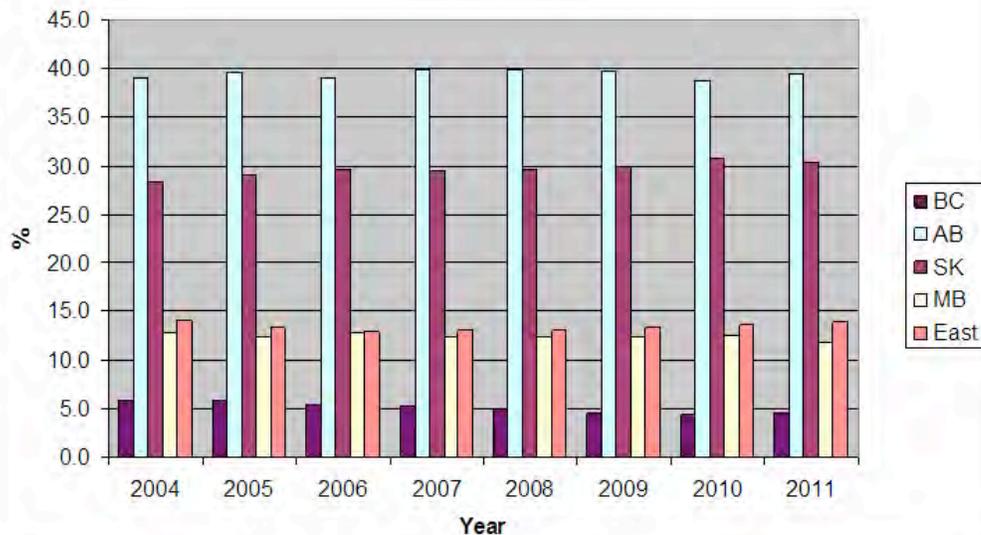


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Figure 1. Percentage of national herd, by province (2004-2011)



Source: [Statistics Canada, Cattle Inventory report.](#)

## Technology Transfer Efforts Recognized by BCRC

At January's Saskatchewan Beef & Forage Symposium the Beef Cattle Research Council's (BCRC) Reynold Bergen commended Western Beef on its technology transfer efforts. We are humbled by the recognition. While we try our best to communicate research results, we are not experts and we are always striving to improve the ways we communicate with cow-calf producers.



## Baby News

We would like to offer some explanation as to why there has been a delay in getting the third issue of the E-Newsletter out. The E-Newsletter is put together by WBDC's beef economist - Kathy Larson - with input and feedback from all WBDC staff. On September 24, 2010 Kathy and her husband Christian welcomed a son named Spencer Wayne Larson. A surprise breech, Spencer entered this world via c-section weighing 10 lbs 8 ounces. Kathy took a brief maternity leave from October thru December and resumed her work duties on January 1, 2011.



Find us on YouTube at

<http://>

[www.youtube.com/user/](http://www.youtube.com/user/WSTRNBEEF)

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## 2010 Cost of Production Study Underway

Western Beef has been working with producers to calculate cow-calf cost of production since the late 1990s. Individual results are aggregated and reported as benchmarks in annual Fact Sheets. The 2010 study is currently underway. Larson will be meeting with up to 30 producers from February through April 2011. Final results should be ready for release at our annual Field Day (June 21).

We are always looking for new study participants. With calving season just starting to get underway for many producers it would be a perfect time to start tracking the details needed for participation in the 2011 study. For further details on the COP program, visit WBDC's [website](#).

## Crop Residue Grazing Cows – The Costs

With two out of three years completed on the crop residue grazing research project, we are ready to share some preliminary economic findings. This research project compares feeding pregnant beef cows on oat crop residue, pea crop residue and drylot (or pen) feeding.

To determine the costs of each treatment, the crop production expenses (inputs and custom rates for field work) were totaled. The actual prices paid for ration supplements (DDGS and canola meal) were used while hay was valued at \$100/ton (which is less than what WBDC paid for hay that year). Charges for equipment, manure removal, repairs were based on results from similar studies

in the past. Labour was valued at \$15/hour.

The dry matter (DM) yield of each crop was divided by the total crop expenses to determine cost per lb of DM. This worked out to 1.4 cents per lb of DM for pea crop and 1.1 cents per lb for the oat crop. Using this valuation, oat residue grazing costed \$1.05 per cow per day and pea residue costed \$1.32 per cow per day.

However, the whole point of growing a crop is to sell the seed produced. Therefore, the revenue from the sale of the crop can be backed off from the crop production expenses. For Year 1 of this study, the oats yielded 110 bu/ac at a value of \$113/MT and the peas yielded 20 bu/ac at a value of \$7.00/bu. The revenue from the seed sales covered the crop

production expenses – resulting in the crop residue being “free”.

With “free” crop residue the cost per cow per day worked out to: \$0.81 for the oats, \$1.08 for peas and \$2.77 for drylot. (See Table 1)

The high price of hay is what drove up the drylot costs. If hay was \$60/ton the drylot cost would drop to \$1.92 per cow per day. If hay was \$35/ton – as per some areas of Saskatchewan in 2010 – the cost would drop even further to \$1.39 per cow per day.

The project lead is Dr. Bart Lardner and the U of S Animal Science graduate student working on this project is Ashley Krause (MSc Candidate). Economist, Kathy Larson, worked with Ashley Krause to generate economic analysis for this project.

Table 1. Crop Residue Grazing Costs per Cow per Day, Winter 2009/10 (Year 1)

	Oat St/Chaff (\$/hd/d)	Pea St/Chaff (\$/hd/d)	Drylot (\$/hd/d)
Crop Costs (\$/acre)	\$124	\$122	n/a
Crop Revenue (\$/acre)	\$193	\$140	n/a
Total Costs (\$/hd/d)	\$0.81	\$1.08	\$2.77
If hay \$60/ton			\$1.92
If hay \$35/ton			\$1.39

Upcoming Events	march	april	may/june
	<p><b>2</b> WBDC Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting</p> <p><b>1-3, 8 &amp; 9</b> Cow-Calf Economics 2011: Strategies Moving Forward <a href="#">Further details</a></p> <p><b>7-11</b> Canadian Cattlemen's Association Annual General Meeting <a href="#">Website</a></p> <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>15</b> ADF Letter of Intent Submission Deadline <a href="#">Website</a></p> <p><b>Have a great 2011 calving season!</b></p>	<p><b>june 15-16</b> SK Pasture School, Harvest Inn, Saskatoon <a href="#">Website</a></p> <p><b>june 21</b> Western Beef Field Day <a href="#">Website</a></p>

## Saskatchewan Feed & Forage Program

In Issue #2 of the E-Newsletter we discussed how the wet haying season impacted many producers across Saskatchewan in 2010.

With programs in place in [Manitoba](#) and [Alberta](#), it is great to be able to say that [Saskatchewan](#) also has a program in place to assist producers who were effected by excess moisture.

The Saskatchewan Feed and Forage Program provides:

- transportation assistance for producers who are short of pasture and/or feed
- forage reseeding assistance on hay and pastureland
- assistance to offset feed shortage for breeding herds.

Maximum assistance per producer is \$50,000. Deadlines to apply are April 30, 2011 for feed shortfalls and Sept 30, 2011 for transportation and reseeding applications.

Full program details and application forms are available on the SK Ministry of Agriculture [website](#).



What is an Oprah logo doing in the E-newsletter you ask? Did you happen to see Investigative Reporter Lisa Ling's video footage of a Cargill Packing Plant that aired on Oprah? If not, [click here](#) to watch the clip.

Want to receive the WBDC e-newsletter?

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

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