



**FOOTHILLS FORAGE  
AND GRAZING ASSOCIATION**

*Innovation, education and regenerative agriculture*

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# GRASSROOTS NEWS & VIEWS March 2025

## Director's Note — Dave Sammons

### Greetings FFGA Members

What a difference a year makes! Our hay yard is full and we will be grazing corn until the end of March. Due to the early rain last spring, we had ample grass and were able to rest some overgrazed pastures. This is a nice change compared to the last three dry years.

One of my neighbours started a soil improvement project on a piece of irrigated farmland this summer. They seeded a diverse perennial stand of forage and I provided the cattle and electric fence to intensively graze it. It was amazing to see the healthy soil, complete with dung beetles, after year one.

It is exciting to see firsthand the benefits of grazing forages in the cropping rotation. It builds the biology in the soil. Lengthening the crop rotation also helps to break up disease cycles and chemical resistance in weeds. My seed-grower neighbor was pleased with the results of the first year and plans to continue this project.

The “down time” of winter makes it a great time to sharpen your axe. I am currently taking an online class on Sell / Buy marketing. It teaches how to identify over and undervalued classes of livestock utilizing tools like the cattle square. My biggest take away, so far, is that bred females aren't as overvalued as I thought they were. This class is offered by Richard McConnell and Tina Williams. You can find their website at [handnhandlivestocksolutions.com](http://handnhandlivestocksolutions.com).

I listen to a number of Ag podcasts while working. Two books have been referenced numerous times by many speakers so I thought I would add them to my reading list this winter. They were good reads and I highly recommend them both. The first is Thoughts and Advice from an Old Cattleman by Gordon Hazard, DVM. “Doc” Gordon Hazard relays his experience and advice on raising cattle after spending 60 years as a vet and cattleman. Knowledge Rich Ranching by Allan Nation was the second recommendation. It focuses on how the cattle business works. This was an excellent book giving a lot of insight on the cattle cycle. It is a book I will definitely be rereading.

This summer promises to be full of more great FFGA field days that I look forward to attending and meeting you at. Thanks to Laura, Kayla and Sonja for doing such a great job of organizing these wonderful opportunities!

Keep Warm, Spring's Coming (in spite of what the groundhog says!)

**Dave Sammons**



*(Photo: Dave Sammons)*

### IN THIS ISSUE

Four sustainable deworming tips to battle parasite resistance	3 & 4
Balance utilization with postgrazing residual	7



FOOTHILLS FORAGE & GRAZING ASSOCIATION

Presents:

# 2025 Annual General Meeting

Featuring:

Our Own Device



COST:

FFGA Member: \$40/ Non-Member: \$50

Please register before: March 7, 2025

[www.foothillsforage.com/agm2025](http://www.foothillsforage.com/agm2025)

**March 14, 2025**  
**Heritage Inn Hotel, High River**

**Registration: 4:30pm**  
**AGM Business Meeting: 5:00pm**  
**Supper: 6:00pm**  
**Live Band and Dance: 7:00pm - 10:30pm**

Please note, you must be a member in good standing to vote during the Business Meeting. Memberships can be purchased online at:  
[www.foothillsforage.com/membership](http://www.foothillsforage.com/membership) or at the door.

Are you interested in joining the Foothills Forage & Grazing Association Board of Directors? Email [manager@foothillsforage.com](mailto:manager@foothillsforage.com) or contact a FFGA Director for more details!

*On the Cover: Sheep grazing at Waldron Ranch. Photo: FFGA*

Thank you for your support!



# Four sustainable deworming tips to battle parasite resistance



Photo: FFGA

“We’ve been thinking about parasites in the short term for 30 to 40 years,” shared Christine Navarre, DVM, Extension veterinarian at Louisiana State University Agricultural Center. “Parasite resistance is a real concern. We must think about deworming in the short term and the long term; otherwise, we’ll be left with nothing to combat parasites.”

Parasite resistance occurs when parasites survive deworming treatment and continue to reproduce, gradually diminishing a product’s effectiveness over time. “With no new medications with different or unique mechanisms of action for parasiticides on the horizon, it’s important to be good stewards of the parasiticides we do have,” said DL Step, DVM, Boehringer Ingelheim.

Cattle challenged with internal parasites can experience reduced feed intake, weakened immunity, reduced reproductive efficiency and less milk production.<sup>1,2</sup> Implementing sustainable deworming practices can boost herd productivity, help preserve dewormer effectiveness, and lower the risk of parasite resistance on your operation.

## **Diagnostic testing provides a baseline for resistance**

Routine fecal egg count reduction tests (FECRT) can provide valuable insights into the level of parasite challenge, monitor product efficacy and assess parasites that are potentially surviving treatments.

“Assessing the efficacy of your

deworming program is an important first step,” said Step. “A FECRT can provide a baseline for product performance, and help determine if there is a potential resistance problem that needs more attention.”

To conduct the test, two manure samples are needed from the same animal: one collected before or at the time of treatment and another collected after a specified period following treatment. The timing of the second sample depends on the specific product used, as each medication requires a different interval following treatment to evaluate the effect of the product. “It’s important to have FECRT tests processed by trusted laboratories, and you can work with your herd veterinarian to ensure this,” stressed Step. “Your veterinarian will be familiar with the test requirements, and can recommend reliable labs for sample analysis.”

“We’re seeing some severe resistance in some of our products,” noted Navarre. “I urge producers to do their homework, and work with their veterinarian to conduct a FECRT test and see where they sit with the product efficacy. A lot of producers don’t know, and they may be wasting money on a product that no longer works on their operation.”

## **Refugia protects product effectiveness**

Refugia is a proven strategy to help manage parasite resistance, and is viewed as one of the best tools available. The practice involves intentionally leaving a portion of animals untreated during deworming. This allows susceptible parasites to remain in the environment, and helps dilute resistant parasite populations to slow the development of resistance.

Determining which animals or how many to leave untreated will vary, depending on the

herd and the efficacy of the dewormers being used. Collaborating with your veterinarian during diagnostic testing is an ideal opportunity to evaluate how refugia could be implemented on your operation.

“It might seem simpler to treat the entire herd and skip the step of identifying which animals to leave untreated,” said Navarre. “However, if we keep taking that approach, we risk losing the effectiveness of our products much sooner.”

## **Combination treatment broadens parasite coverage**

Step pointed out, “Combination treatment offers an excellent opportunity to enhance cattle performance and productivity. Using parasiticides from two different classes of dewormers at the same time not only maximizes performance, but also broadens parasite control — reducing the risk of developing potential parasite resistance in your herd.”

Using two or more dewormers from different drug classes has been proven to reduce fecal egg counts in cattle herds by nearly 99%.<sup>1</sup> When results like this are achieved, there are also fewer resistant parasite survivors to cause trouble down the road. To ensure combination treatment remains beneficial, be sure to pair the practice with refugia to minimize the risk of multidrug resistance.

Dewormers available in the United States can be divided into three different classes, based on their chemical structure and mechanism of action (Figure 1): macrocyclic lactones (endectocides), benzimidazoles (white dewormers) and imidazothiazoles. Each class controls a different spectrum of parasites and for a different amount of time.

“For example,” said Step, “a producer looking for extended deworming coverage during a three-month grazing period should consider pair-

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

ing an extended-release eprinomectin with a product from a different class, such as a benzimidazole or imidazothiazole. This strategy promotes broader parasite control and supports long-term treatment effectiveness.”

**Parasite control and animal health are holistic**

“A successful herd health plan must be integrated,” shared Navarre. “Many parasite infections occur at a subclinical level, silently costing us money without obvious signs of trouble. Holistic management protects overall animal health, but also a producer’s bottom line.”

To build an effective strategy, Navarre and Step recommend addressing two key areas: health management and pasture management.

- A strong health program does

more than protect cattle from disease — it strengthens immunity and reduces parasite risks. A sound vaccination plan, quarantining new cattle to prevent parasite introduction, and minimizing stress through low-stress handling are key practices to start with.

- Effective pasture management directly impacts the parasite exposure cattle are going to experience when grazing. By carefully planning pasture rotation with parasite transmission in mind and avoiding overgrazing, you can disrupt parasite cycles and create healthier grazing environments for your herd.

**Resistance is not a regional problem**

“I’ve had calls from veterinarians

from most regions who have seen challenges of low product efficacy,” said Navarre. “There are a lot of factors that go into how resistance may look on a farm, but I don’t think any region or operation is immune to it.”

Step and Navarre agree there is no magic formula that works for every operation. They emphasized the importance of producers working closely with their veterinarians to determine the best approach for their herds.

Author: Boehringer Ingelheim  
Original Article:

<https://www.beefmagazine.com/livestock-management/four-sustainable-deworming-tips-to-battle-parasite-resistance>

MACROCYCLIC LACTONES (ENDECTOCIDES)	
DRUG CLASS INCLUDES	CLASS KNOWN FOR
Ivermectin Eprinomectin Doramectin Moxidectin	Endectocides offer convenient injectable and pour-on formulations with internal and external parasite control. Read each product label for persistent efficacy claims.
BENZIMIDAZOLES (WHITE DEWORMERS)	
DRUG CLASS INCLUDES	CLASS KNOWN FOR
Oxfendazole Fenbendazole Albendazole	White dewormers deliver a rapid “purge effect” and only control internal parasites. Efficacy lasts no longer than two days. See efficacy claims listed on each label.
IMIDAZOTHIAZOLES	
DRUG CLASS INCLUDES	CLASS KNOWN FOR
Levamisole	Known for being quickly absorbed and distributed throughout the body but only controls internal parasites. Can be delivered orally, topically and by injection. See efficacy claims listed on each label.

Source: Boehringer Ingelheim



# SAVE *the* DATE

TWIN BUTTE, ALBERTA  
JULY 16 & 17, 2025

*Details to come*



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March 18-19

9:00 – 4:30



Brooks, Alberta



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# Balance utilization with postgrazing residual



Photo: FFGA

Utilization is the percent of forage production that is used by grazing livestock and wildlife. There are two types of utilization to consider, and it is important for a serious grazer to know the difference. The terms are often used without fully understanding the difference in meaning, and that has led to confusion among pasture and range managers.

Temporal utilization is the percent of standing forage that we plan to harvest in a single grazing event. This is sometimes also referred to as “grazing period utilization.” Seasonal or annual utilization is the term that describes how much of the total forage production over the course of a year is consumed by livestock or wildlife. In set stock situations (continuous grazing), there is no difference in these terms, so we really concern ourselves only with seasonal utilization rate.

It is when we start moving cattle through a series of pastures with the expectation of two or more grazing events annually, as with management-intensive grazing, that our focus shifts to temporal utilization. Temporal utilization can also be thought of as severity of use within a single grazing event. Obviously, the inverse of utilization is postgrazing residual. Managing the balance between utilization and residual is the most important skill of a grazing manager because it largely determines both individual animal performance and the productivity of pasture and rangeland.

When we think about forage quality, most graziers understand that there is greater nutrition in leaves than in stems. The upper part of the pasture plant is mostly leaves, while the lower part of the plant has more stems. If we allow our livestock to only harvest the upper 20% of the canopy, they will perform admirably, as they are harvesting forage with a high percentage of digestible energy. This is also where the highest protein levels, bio-available minerals, vitamins, and other beneficial nutrients are found.

The deeper into the plant canopy we ask our livestock to graze, the lower the overall nutrient density of each bite. With the declining bite size of the second and third bites from a plant, the lower nutrient intake becomes. Because the volume of each bite is determined by the amount of indigestible fiber present in the plant, each successive bite is both smaller in volume and less nutrient dense. Thus, increasing temporal utilization rate results in reduced nutrient intake and declining individual animal performance.

From the land productivity side, green leaves are the main photosynthetic factory of the plant. As we utilize more and more leaves, daily photosynthetic output is reduced. The more days of the year that livestock are actively removing more leaf growth than new growth is occurring, the net productivity of the land is declining. High utilization rates over the course of longer grazing periods substantially reduces total forage production per acre.

## A matter of time

The unfortunate perspective of many livestock producers is they must achieve high temporal utilization to get their “money’s worth” out of their pastures. The opposite is actually true. Lower temporal utilization rates will generally lead to both higher individual animal perfor-

mance and enhanced forage production per acre. The key to success comes in balancing utilization and postgrazing residual across the continuum of time management.

While we do recognize the relationship between severity of utilization and individual animal performance, we must also understand this is a time relationship as well. If we use the classic “take half, leave half” utilization model, we find that 50% utilization with daily moves yields higher individual animal performance than does managing for 50% utilization over the course of a seven- to 14-day grazing period. The difference comes in the consistency of daily nutrient intake with daily moves compared to the declining pattern of nutrient intake over longer grazing periods. Thus, the same utilization target yields different results, depending on the duration of the grazing period.

If we make a comparison of total forage production between the daily move pasture and a similar pasture managed with seven- to 14-day grazing periods, we find the pasture with daily moves is more productive than the pasture using the longer grazing period because there are more days of actual recovery and growth taking place over the entire growing season when animals are being moved daily.

The bottom line is that we can more effectively manage the balance between temporal utilization, postgrazing residual, and the subsequent effects on both individual animal performance and land productivity when we do it in the context of time management rather than just spatial management.

Author: Jim Gerrish

Original Article: <https://hayandforage.com/article-5211-Balance-utilization-with-postgrazing-residual.html>



## Need to Renew or Start an Environmental Farm Plan?

Contact Sonja Bloom at:  
[enviro@foothillsforage.com](mailto:enviro@foothillsforage.com)

Maintaining a healthy environment is essential to the success of Alberta's agricultural producers. The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program helps you identify and address environmental risks in your operation. It will also increase your understanding of legal requirements related to environmental issues.

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**Mission:** Assisting producers in profitably improving their forages and regenerating their soils through innovation and education.

**Vision:** We envision a global community that respects and values profitable forage production and healthy soils as our legacy for future generations.

This Publication is made possible by our major funder - Results Driven Agriculture Research



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