



Alberta Grazing Leaseholder's Association

Box 340 Stavely, AB T0L 1Z0

Dear Alberta Grazing Leaseholder,

Please take a moment to review your 2013 Newsletter and consider attending the 2013 AGM in Medicine Hat. Your Association turns 15 years old this year and its success is more critical now than ever before. You can help ensure this success by keeping your membership current and attending the AGM. As always, we are looking for people to volunteer some of their time to the Board of Directors. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the Directors if you have questions or concerns. Hope to see you in Medicine Hat.

Sincerely,

Alberta Grazing Leaseholder's Association Board of Directors

*George Morrison	Debolt	780.957.2594	Vacant		
*Darcy Wills	Coutts	403.344.4312	Vacant		
*Pat Rutledge	Monitor	403.577.2382	Lanni Bristow	Heinsberg	780.943.2236
*Larry Sears	Stavely	403.549.2481	Mike McNiven	Duchess	403.556.2421
James Hargrave	Walsh	403.937.2128	<i> Indicates current term expires in 2013</i>		

Annual General Meeting Notice

The 2013 Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Grazing Leaseholder's Association will be held on Wednesday, February 27, 2013, in Medicine Hat at the Medicine Hat Lodge.

Annual General Meeting Agenda

12:00 pm	Registration & Coffee
1:00 pm	Chairman's Report – Larry Sears
1:15 pm	Treasurer's Report – James Hargrave
1:30 pm	Guest speaker –To Be Announced
2:15 pm	Coffee break – Juan Valdez
2:30 pm	SRD Activity Update – Dan Smith, Rangeland Management Branch
3:00 pm	Questions & Resolutions
3:45 pm	Elections
4:00 pm	Adjournment

AGLA Chairman's Report

Once again, it is time for your Association to fill you in on its activities over the last year. As we move into another new year in the cattle business, again we see optimism on the supply side and the price end of things. We have seen record high prices across all sectors of our industry, but not everyone is in the black ink. Demand remains a question mark that will be determined by economic conditions outside of this country alone. Our cow numbers were down again, although it appears there are cautious growth signs out there. Profitability remains nearly certain for the cow-calf sector in the foreseeable future, but the feeding and packing sector have had a lot of volatility and red ink.

Your Board of Directors has been attending property rights consultations around the province, as well as participating in many of the Regional Planning sessions being held on the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan this past year. We have collaborated with other groups such as ABP and WSGA to lobby for the changes that we believe are important to our industry.

The Provincial Election and its Repercussions

You are all aware that the PC's were returned with a majority in late April. The winds of change did not blow as we expected, but there were certainly some implications from the results for you as leaseholders. The Land-Use Bills were a contentious issue going into the election. They were given lip service and blunted during the campaign, but basically ignored afterward.

There were some changes to Bill 19; Bill 50 has been repealed this fall, but only after three powerlines were approved. Bill 202 is the only effort from this government that fell off the table before the 3rd reading, but that may have been a bait and switch attempt in order to distract us from the next Bill.

Bill 2 is the latest in a list of misguided and ill thought out pieces of legislation aimed at paying off PC supporters and punishing those who questioned their wisdom on some policies. It passed 3rd reading this fall, enabling the oil & gas sector to have a streamlined one window access to all regulatory hurdles. It sounds like a great idea, and AGLA would have been supportive of that type of efficiency had it not removed the right of any appeal by the landholder to decisions or actions that he feels are unjust or need to be tweaked to improve them. Bill 2 is scheduled to be in place by June 2013 and the regulations will be the most important part of this Bill. We expect most of the regulations to be very unfriendly to landholders in general. If enacted as we expect, the basic harmonious relationship that exists between oil & gas and agriculture may well disappear.

So we find ourselves in an interesting position of trying give meaningful input to the Regional Plans that were enabled by *central planners* in Edmonton who think they know better than landholders and communities. These Regional Plans potentially strip your rights to operate as you have, and if they mandate change, can do so without just compensation. These are frightening scenarios for those of us who are statutory consent holders (grazing leases, water licenses, confined feeding operations, and industrial leases), as all of us have investments in these

businesses with the expectation to be able to conduct our business and make a profit. Many of us have partners called banks who have used some or all of our operation as collateral towards a loan – this should scare the hell out of them. Bill 36, Alberta Land Stewardship Act, paves the way for the bureaucrats in Edmonton who know little or nothing about your business to recommend to cabinet how this province can operate better. This is hypocrisy at it's finest!

It seems to me that the whole process is being controlled and guided by a bureaucracy that is filtering the responses that the elected politicians are getting. The net result for us is going to be a deterioration of any relationship leaseholder's have had with the people in SRD who understand agriculture and want to work with us. This will leave us in a situation where the only people left for leaseholder's to deal with are the command and control freaks that lack the basic understanding of both agriculture and economics. This scenario is not good for the resource that we protect and depend on, nor does it make for a healthy and vibrant industry.

Transfer to Agriculture

AGLA has made a couple of requests to this government, one prior to the election and one following the election, to transfer the Rangeland Management Branch in its entirety to Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. Initially, our reasoning was that the grazing and agricultural interests were a very small part of Sustainable Resource Development, who had bigger interests in Forestry, Fish & Wildlife. We contended that agricultural expertise and focus would be more suitably housed within Agriculture. While there seemed to be a sympathetic ear for that prior to the election, that feeling certainly evaporated following the election. This has become even more of an issue as SRD is now a part of Environment.

This particular department most certainly has a lack of understanding towards agriculture and while we still have the Rangelands branch there, I don't think it is being given the profile or importance it deserves. Due to this restructuring and a lack of positive direction, the frustration level for some Rangeland staff will increase to the point where we will lose many of the very people who have advocated for us in the past. I expect there to be even further pressure coming from within Environment to manage more intensely any land under their control. The most disappointing aspect of this roller coaster ride is that I doubt there is a vision for these lands with agriculture as a part of them 50 years from now. If we indeed want to maintain a healthy and functioning rangeland ecosystem that makes a significant contribution to the agricultural economy, we should not stray far from the system that has served us well for the past 130 years.

Options for Leaseholders

Unfortunately, what we have is a situation where our ministers are either insulated from reality by bureaucrats or they are too arrogant to understand there is another perspective that exists – that from an industry that they have a very poor understanding of. If we as leaseholders want to preserve our operations as they exist today, with the same values, productivity, and potential, we are going to have to get vocal. Our representatives in Edmonton, regardless of which side of the aisle they reside, need to understand the threat to our operations is real!

We need only to recognize the push from the Government, in particular Parks and Tourism, to turn a significant area which would include grazing leases in the South Saskatchewan, into one giant Heritage Rangeland, with Parks in control. Who could possibly ask for a more

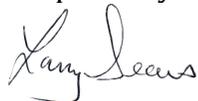
intelligent or knowledgeable outfit calling the shots on your leases, and of course by fiat, the rest of your operation? Does the term *Regulatory Jihad* sound like an appropriate description of what is taking place? If you are still not convinced, understand that those of us in the South Saskatchewan Regional Planning Area are going to have Conservation Management Areas forced on us, even though none of us asked for them or have an understanding for the intent/future use of these areas.

The Land Secretariat knows what is best for all of us, and has assured the politicians that, “yes, of course the ranchers are onside, and they don’t have any problems with this direction, after all, we have gone out and held consultations throughout the province and the region.” This particular consultation process they have engaged in has been guided and filtered to achieve the desired outcomes and messages, it is not a reflection of the true grassroots feedback that has been out there. Your organization, as well as the Western Stock Growers Association, have been viewed as radical and not representative of the feelings of ranchers and farmers in rural Alberta. It may be time to stand up and make sure that all of our elected representatives know that your organization does indeed speak for you and the vast majority of leaseholders.

I realize that some of you may think I’ve been a little harsh in the assessment of our situation, but I think all of us should be able to see and sense not only the erosion of many of our property rights, but a really serious lack of common sense being displayed by a government who has allowed the bureaucrats and planners to formulate policy for far too long.

“My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government.”
Thomas Jefferson

Respectfully submitted,



Larry Sears, Chairman, AGLA

AGLA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your membership is now due to be renewed. We have appreciated your support in the past and hope that you will choose to continue to be involved. The goals of the AGLA are to gain support and membership of leaseholders across the province and to communicate with government, the public, and other interest groups on leaseholder’s behalf. The annual membership fee is \$20 and that goes towards the administrative costs of maintaining the organization. Please include a cheque for \$20 with this membership form and mail to:

Alberta Grazing Leaseholder’s Association – Box 72, Walsh, AB T0J 3L0

AGLA MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____