



HAY! HAY!... Listen Up, Students!

Local producer groups take reins of guest instructor opportunity at Assiniboine Community College

Brandon, MB (January 29, 2019)— Students enrolled in Forage and Pasture Management at [Assiniboine Community College](#) in Brandon this semester will be getting a little more mud on their boots and some real-life experiences rolled into their course curriculum this winter session.

[Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association \(MFGA\)](#) and [Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives \(MBFI\)](#) put forward a combined pitch that sees the two organizations design a guest-instructor schedule from the excellent producer expertise among their ranks to help Assiniboine deliver the course to more than 60 students twice a week.

It all came to be in early December after the college put out a call for instructors in response to a long-time faculty member going on a short sabbatical. MFGA – one of four core partners in MBFI along with Manitoba Agriculture, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Manitoba Beef Producers—and MBFI put their heads together and answered the call. Assiniboine was thrilled with the unique concept.

“It’s a fantastic opportunity to further build connections with ACC students and staff,” said Mary-Jane Orr, MBFI General Manager. “Patricia Malcolm’s hard work and organized course material has made it possible to transition into a guest lecture format. We are all looking forward to showcasing local experts and innovative practices being carried out here in Manitoba.”

Orr was essential to the education component and requirements of the course. With a rock-solid background and instructor experience from Purdue University where she led several classes and subsequent research efforts in pursuit of a PhD on soil microbial ecology, Orr worked closely with Assiniboine staff and faculty to ensure students won’t miss a beat in their studies while meeting the course requirements.

“We are fortunate to have such strong support from external partners including the MFGA and others who made the guest lecturing series possible this term,” said Tim Hore, Assiniboine’s new Dean of Agriculture & Environment.

“This is a terrific example of how closely connected programs at Assiniboine are to the ever-changing ag sector, and these partners have presented a creative approach to maximize the learning benefits for students.”

As a producer-led group, MFGA delivers outreach and extension as well as numerous presentations by staff and directors each year, including the recent hosting of the wildly-successful MFGA Regenerative

Agriculture Conference in Brandon this past November. MFGA looked to their board members and partners to fill in the required instructor sessions on a voluntary basis for the organization.

“MFGA takes a lot of pride on the way our producers farm, especially around forages, pastures and livestock as they all manage their farms with systems that reward them economically while respecting the soil, water and agricultural lands they work on. We believe when it comes to livestock, grass, water, and soil knowledge and farming practices that we have some of the best of the best in Manitoba,” said Duncan Morrison, MFGA executive director. “Additionally, we’ve approached our partners such as Manitoba Agriculture, Manitoba Beef Producers and Ducks Unlimited Canada to help us round out our guest instructor roster and so far, everyone seems really enthused to bring their valuable expertise to the students.”

As a component of the Land & Water and Agribusiness programs, the course will provide technical understanding and hands-on learning in forage and livestock production. Students will tour MBFI and the Boyd family’s Glanton Farms north of Brandon as part of the guest instructor sessions.

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