
**Manitoba Forage and Grasslands Association
2016 Report
Duncan Morrison, MFGA Executive Director
2017 MFGA AGM, Brandon, Mb
Feb 3, 2017**

Summary

- 2016 was a very productive year for MFGA as we continued to accelerate and strategically build our profile and grow our network of supporters, funders and partners.
- Special thanks to our colleagues and partners at Manitoba Beef Producers for their support around our MFGA AGM within their MBP AGM. Your generosity and support is appreciated and acknowledged.
- 2016 featured great work of MFGA staff: Chris Yuzdepski (Finance), Denice Girdner (Communications), John McGregor (Extension) in combination with excellent support from MFGA board members and MFGA supporters and partners.
- Increasingly, we are positioning MFGA as the organization that connects everyone. We believe the grasses we grow, steward, champion and advocate connects all of us, not only on the landscape, but in conversations, projects and basically all we do at MFGA.

Key 2016 MFGA Highlights

1) MFGA Aquanty Project:

Status: Approved June 2016

Schedule: On Time. (Month 11 of 25 month project)

With special thanks to funding by the Canada and Manitoba governments through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative, and the excellent project team management by Henry Nelson and a strong cast of project supporters via the project steering committee, with special acknowledgement of steering committee co-chair Dr Allan Preston of the Assiniboine River Basin Initiative, and the dedicated work of Aquanty's lead scientist, Dr. Steven Frey, MFGA's Aquanty Project is right on schedule.

At the end of March 2018 we will have a working HydroGeoSphere (HGS) model that can be used to predict the impact on water movement within the Assiniboine River Basin of certain basic changes to infrastructure as well as the impact of changes in the area dedicated to perennial forages and/or grasslands. We will also be able to evaluate the hydrologic response of the basin to extreme weather events, such as high snow melt rates, heavy rain or prolonged drought.

As the project proponent, MFGA will own the final license for all groups and stakeholders to access the MFGA Aquanty Project Model. As a project management team, we are currently developing the



parameters around that privilege for the best and most-meaningful uptake by all stakeholders. There will be a financial commitment for all stakeholders to access the MFGA Aquanty Model. However, in principle, MFGA wants the model to be used by as many stakeholders as possible and is determined to develop a reasonable fee structure that encourages grassroots participation.

2) Manitoba Beef and Forage Initiative

Status: Ongoing

MFGA is thrilled and proud of our role as one of four core partners at the Manitoba Beef and Forage Initiatives Inc (MBFI), a Brandon-based collaborative effort between Manitoba Agriculture, Manitoba Beef Producers, Ducks Unlimited Canada and MFGA with input and leadership from producers, academia and other industry stakeholders across Canada. MBFI is the result of industry demand for change and the need for strategic long-term partnerships for the agricultural sector as a whole. Producers throughout the industry have been asking for a model farm to test and demonstrate practices for a long time. Learning is best accomplished through observance and practice. Interest from new partners continues to expand, from beef supply and value chain members to school outreach programs, demonstrating the significance and value of this demonstration farm. Our multi-stakeholder engagements include producers, academia, provincial and federal governments, nongovernment organizations, the private sector, and the general public.

3) CFGA Conference November 2016

Status: Completed

A resounding success by many accounts, MFGA proudly showcased our Made-in-Manitoba forage, beef and grassland leadership on many fronts, from setting the stage with a tour of MBFI to kicking off with a great welcome to delegates from Minister Eichler to a Grass and Green themed conference agenda. The CFGA conference positioned MFGA as among Canada's leaders and showcased our deep and valued supporter base to the nation.

4) Leadership Connectivity

Status: Ongoing

As outlined by our MFGA chair Dave Koslowsky in his report, MFGA continues to build solid relations and dialogues with our key elected officials and partners. On government relations, we are pleased with the rapport we have with Minister Eichler and his senior department leaders. We also were very pleased to meet with Minister Cox and her team as well. But, our work is not done. We need to keep contributing to and advancing the dialogues, to be viewed as a solution to many of the issues on the agricultural lands, and to be known as the connector of all interests when it comes to Manitoba's grassland and forages.



MFGA Communications

Our MFGA communications, especially via our website and e-bulletin have been ramped up and constantly adapted to best support MFGA. We are receiving positive feedback on all our communications and partner cross-pollination efforts. We are utilizing excellent photos acquired via the MFGA Aquanty Project to help tell our story and we are a constant fixture in agricultural media. We also continued to advance our profile at producer events such as Hay Days, MBFI's McDonald's Producer Days, Manitoba Beef and Forage Week and CFGA Conference as well as via our regular programs such as Green Gold and Hay Situation in our regular communications.

Twitter:

MFGA: 737 followers

MFGA Aquanty: (recently launched): 64 followers

Fundraising/Extension/Communications

- Led by Denice Girdner, the 2017 Supporter Campaign is underway with a soft late 2016 launch bolstered by the re-upping and increased support from the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba and the provision of our supporter card at trade show booths.
- Green Gold: John McGregor: 2016 Highlights included Hay Day First Cut with highest Relative Feed Value based on field clippings. We also brought a drone component into the program via M3 Aerial that we are exploring for further advancement and connection to our report. It resulted in strong media coverage and awareness for the program.
- Financial situation being watched very closely by Chris Yuzdepski. We are making inroads. We all need to work together. We need more support.

MFGA PROJECTS 2017

- MFGA Strategic Plan: Priority work plan as part of governance/bylaws
- MFGA Carbon Position/Team: In progress/in development
- MFGA Leadership/Positioning Manitoba Cover Crops: draft proposal being reviewed
- MFGA and ALUS: dialogues underway with ALUS
- MFGA Rangeland Extension: AAFC Project underway, MFGA proponent, Mae Elsinger lead
- MFGA and SARPAL: Dialogues underway with MBP and MHHC
- MFGA and the Next Agricultural Framework: Discussion/Strategy
- MFGA Facebook
- MFGA and Mb Hay Exporters: Synergizing our opportunities