

Progress Report

2024-2025



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Canadian Forage & Grassland Association
Association Canadienne pour les Plantes Fourragères



CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD Report – Eric Boot

As I wrap up my final year as chair of the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGGA) board of directors, I am pleased to report that 2024 was a year of growth, innovation and collaboration for the association.

We continued to champion sustainable agriculture, support our producers and foster partnerships that strengthen the forage and grassland sectors. We maintained all of our board members this fiscal and I truly appreciate everyone's dedication to move the CFGGA forward in such a positive way.

While the CFGGA board of directors meets virtually each month, it was a highlight of the year when many of us attended the CFGGA's 15th annual conference in Guelph, Ontario, in early December. It is always great to meet with my fellow board members as well as others from across the country who are committed to Canadian forages and grasslands.

During the 2024-2025 fiscal, the CFGGA continued to invest in its staff and board through training and skills assessments, making us more effective as we grow the organization. As always, I thank Cedric for his leadership as executive director of the CFGGA as well as all of the board members, staff and contractors for all of their hard work. The success we see in the many projects the CFGGA manages is a testament to everyone's commitment as we tackle the issues facing the forage and grassland sector.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Report – Cedric MacLeod

As I reflect on another successful year for the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGFA), I am filled with gratitude for the dedication of our board of directors, members, staff and contractors and the partners and stakeholders who support our efforts to deliver initiatives and projects that have a significant impact on the Canadian forage and grassland sectors.

This included wrapping up some projects, like the Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool project that saw online tools become available in provinces across the country. Others, including the Advanced Grazing Systems (AGS) Program and an extension to the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF), continue into the new fiscal year. We were also excited to add new projects to our roster including the Grassland Learning Knowledge Hub (GLKH) and Tomorrow's Prairies.

I am proud to see the valuable resources and tools that come from

these projects reach producers to help them adopt best management practices on their farms and ranches, all for the good of the forage and grassland sector as well as the environment in general. I look forward to continued success in 2025-2026 as the CFGFA continues with its commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture, fostering innovation, supporting our producers and ensuring that Canadian forage and grasslands continue to thrive.



2024/2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Boot, Chair, International Exporters
Serena Black, Vice-Chair, British Columbia Forage Council
Chris Martin, Past Chair, Ontario
Mike O'Brien, Finance Chair, New Brunswick
Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Caroline Matteau, Conseil Québécois des plantes fourragères
Patricia Ellingwood, Ontario Forage Council
Duane Vandenberg, Alberta Forage Industry Network
Greg Archibald, Dairy Farmers of Canada
Garnet Ferguson, North American Exporters

FORAGE INDUSTRY SCOPE

Canada's forage industry plays a significant role in the nation's agricultural landscape. Cultivated forages for pasture, feed, and seed production cover 33.8 million acres, accounting for approximately 39 percent of Canadian agricultural production. In comparison, the next largest crop—wheat—occupies 20.4 million acres, or about 23 percent of cropland. Additionally, more than 36 million acres are devoted to native or unimproved pastures, bringing the total land influenced by forage and grassland systems to over 70 million acres.



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STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

The CFGA focuses on the following strategic activities throughout the year:

- **Governance and Leadership**

To develop a board culture where strategic visioning is paramount

- **Market Development**

To strengthen the viability of forage as a value-added or commodity product for off-farm sales

- **Research**

To support research relevant to the Canadian forage industry and position the Canadian forage industry on the world stage

- **Education**

To improve the understanding of production principles in the Canadian climate for the forage industry and those that benefit from ecological goods and services

- **Advocacy**

To build awareness of the benefits of the forage and the grassland sector in Canada as a critical component of the Canadian agriculture industry



CFGGA PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES



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ON-FARM CLIMATE ACTION FUND

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) announced the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) in 2021 to help farmers tackle climate change. The program is designed to support the adoption of beneficial management practices (BMPs) that store carbon and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These practices include nitrogen management, cover cropping, and rotational grazing.

The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) plays a key role in the rotational grazing practices stream of the program. It supports farmers in four provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. The CFGA provides assistance through implementation support as well as knowledge and technology transfer (KTT) activities, helping farmers adopt and maintain sustainable grazing methods.

Between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2025, a total of 1,338 farms applied for \$30.1 million in project funding under OFCAF. Of these, 464 farms were approved for a combined total of \$12.6 million in funding. The impact of OFCAF has been notable. Over the years 2022, 2023, and 2024, rotational grazing BMPs were implemented on 82,000 acres of farmland.

CFGA is in the process of completing the reporting for the 2024 program year to get the final numbers of hectares impacted by the first phase of OFCAF. These efforts demonstrate the program's effectiveness in promoting sustainable land use and reducing the environmental footprint of farming.

In January 2025, AAFC announced the next phase of OFCAF (2025-2028), continuing the program's presence in the original four provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. This expansion includes an additional \$16.1 million in funding dedicated to implementation, knowledge and technology transfer, and mentor training to further support farmers in climate action efforts.

In the first intake (April 1 to 30, 2025), the CFGA received 271 applications with a total project cost of \$9.6 million (covering over 37,000 hectares). The CFGA is planning to approve \$6 million in project costs and is currently in the process of reviewing all eligible applications. This financial support contributes significantly to the adoption of climate-friendly agricultural practices.

ADVANCED GRAZING SYSTEMS

Advanced Grazing Systems (AGS) Program

- A program for extension professionals and farm operators to learn the basic techniques of rotational grazing
- Includes online independent learning through the LMS platform, one-on-one mentorship and a train-the-mentor stream, and in-person workshops
- Funded through OFCAF and Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS) as their FaRM program grazing arm
- CFGA led, delivered through provincial associations (BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, QC, with national online support for NB, NS, and PEI)
- Provincial experts provide regional nuance and knowledge

By the numbers

- Since Spring 2022, the CFGA has supported 5,383 producers through the AGS program via online and in-person avenues.
- The CFGA's online learning management system (LMS) has had over 781 individuals take the AGS course, including 170 new enrollments in the past year. The CFGA has trained over 180 mentors across the country since 2022.

Other highlights

- Developed Dairy sub-course in English and French
- Developed Brown Soil Zone (Sensitive Soil) sub-course
- Developed High Performance Forage course for advisors/mentors
- Delivered High Performance Forage Workshop for extension professionals in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Launched Young Ranchers/Farmers Program
- Planning for development of additional province-specific grazing/rest guides



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ROTATIONAL GRAZING DEMONSTRATION SITES

The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGGA) offers a wide range of demonstration sites and hosts regular demonstration days in Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. These hands-on events provide producers with the chance to see rotational grazing practices in action, ask questions, and connect directly with those already implementing these systems. Whether you're just getting started or looking to refine your approach, these demonstrations offer valuable insights and practical strategies you can apply to your own operation.

Implementing partners

To ensure regional relevance and effective delivery, the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGGA) works closely with provincial partners to implement the Advanced Grazing Systems (AGS) program and support demonstration activities.

Alberta: The Agricultural Research Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) plays a key role by supporting its member associations in delivering field research, introducing new technology, and providing extension services to agricultural producers throughout the province.

British Columbia: The B.C. Forage Council (BCFC) supports the development of a strong and viable forage industry in B.C., serving both domestic and export markets through innovation, education, and advocacy.

Quebec: The Conseil québécois des plantes fourragères (CQPF) promotes and represents Quebec's forage industry, focusing on all stages of the forage value chain—including production, harvesting, preservation, processing, and marketing.

Saskatchewan: While there is currently no formal provincial implementation partner in Saskatchewan, the CFGGA continues to support the development of demonstration activities within the province through its on-the-ground delivery agent.

Across all participating provinces, implementation partners are instrumental in establishing strategically located demonstration sites. These sites highlight the environmental and economic benefits of rotational grazing and offer producers the opportunity to learn from real-world examples within their own regions.

HABITAT AND BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGFA) has successfully completed its Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool (HBAT) project. HBAT is a standardized online tool designed to help interested agricultural producers integrate the needs of multiple native species into the management of their land.

The tool provides region-specific guidance and is currently available for producers in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Québec, and Saskatchewan.

This project was developed with funding support from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), contributing to the broader effort to enhance biodiversity and promote sustainable land stewardship across the country.



Heather Peat Hamm Photo

GRASSLAND LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE HUB

In 2024, the CFGA became part of the Grassland Learning and Knowledge Hub (GLKH) in partnership with the University of Alberta, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the Restore Assure Defend (RAD) Network. This five-year project is part of a national initiative that received funding through Environment and Climate Change Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund.

The area of focus is on the Canadian grasslands in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The GLKH is part of a series of Learning Knowledge Hub initiatives across Canada, each focusing on different ecosystems.

The CFGA is actively participating in research and analysis for the Economics, Human Dimensions and Grassland Policy objectives, as well as the establishment of the Community of Practice (CoP). The CFGA is leading the Learning and Knowledge Transfer (LKT) / Knowledge Technology Transfer (KTT) strategy pillar of the project.

The project aims to contribute to climate change mitigation and habitat conservation through five key objectives:

1. Economics – Examine current conditions for conversion and conservation, and identify biophysical research gaps that inhibit the uptake of Nature-based Climate Solutions (NCS).
2. Human Dimensions (HD) – Analyze factors beyond economics that drive land loss and identify opportunities to address these challenges.
3. Grassland Policy – Identify policy barriers to effective conservation for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
4. Grassland Natural Climate Solutions Community of Practice (CoP) – Create a community of practice to share knowledge and support grassland conservation.
5. Learning and Knowledge Transfer (LKT) Plan – Establish and launch a comprehensive plan for transferring knowledge and learning across sectors.

TOMORROW'S PRAIRIES

This three-year research project aims to understand trends in the condition and extent of Canadian grasslands, with the goal of informing strategies to mitigate climate change and biodiversity loss.

It is led by Nature United, with the CFGA as a key partner, and is funded by the Nature Smart Climate Fund through Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). The project builds on the CFGA's previous work with national inventories and biodiversity data.

The project will:

- Study historical baselines and projections of Canadian grasslands
- Foster collaboration among scientists and practitioners
- Develop key indicators
- Model future scenarios of change in grassland ecosystems

The CFGA participated in the Nature United webinar launch of the project on November 27, 2024, and led an initial carbon and biodiversity indicators stakeholder session on December 3, 2024, in Guelph, Ontario, with over 110 participants attending both in person and online.



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2024 CONFERENCE

The CFGA held its 15th annual conference in Guelph, Ontario, from December 3 to 6, 2024, in partnership with the Ontario Forage Council (OFC). The event brought together attendees from across the country to celebrate the important environmental and economic role forages and grasslands play not only in Ontario but across Canada and around the globe.

The theme of the conference was "Roots to Success: The Foundation of Resilient Agriculture." Over the three-day event, attendees were introduced to exciting, cutting-edge developments in the forage sector and gained valuable information and inspiration.

Pre-conference workshops included:

- Integrating Carbon and Biodiversity Indicators Workshop
- Connections and Strategies: A Knowledge Technology Transfer (KTT) Communications Workshop

A post-conference tour was held in conjunction with the OFC's Forage Focus tour, offering attendees hands-on insights into the forage industry.

Other highlights included a tradeshow, a young farmer forum luncheon and a hay exporter and marketer social.



CFGA 2024 LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNER ANNIE CLAESSENS

The CFGA named Dr. Annie Claessens as the winner of its 2024 CFGA Leadership Award at its 15th annual conference in Guelph, Ontario, in December 2025.

Dr. Claessens is a research scientist in perennial crop breeding and genetics at the Quebec Research and Development Centre in Québec City. Her work focuses on developing cultivars and germplasm of perennial crops for the beef and dairy industries. Her research is mainly aimed at genetically improving forage legumes and grasses to increase their nutritional value, their tolerance to abiotic and biotic stresses and their productivity in order to contribute to the profitability and sustainability of the Canadian farms by increasing the proportion of forage in animal feed.



Dr. Claessens has contributed to the Canadian forage industry by co-developing five forage crop cultivars adapted to the cold and humid climate of eastern Canada and numerous new germplasms with improved nutritive quality and adapted to biotic and abiotic stresses. She is the author or co-author of 30 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. She is a member of the Plant Breeder's Committee of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association, the Québec pôle d'expertise en plantes fourragères, the Québec forage crop expert (CRAAQ), the Quebec Bio-Industrial Crop Network and of the Multistate Research Project NE-1710 (USA-Canada). She was also a board member of the CFGA and of the CQPF for numerous years as well as the coordinator of Quebec forage trials.

Congratulations Dr. Claessens!

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

The CFGA supports Canadian forage dealers by facilitating access to both domestic and international markets. Members receive quarterly market information through The Hoyt Report, which offers valuable insights into the forage industry.

Additional support includes:

- Marketing materials and a dedicated forage export webpage on the CFGA website, designed to assist members in promoting their products.
- A successful Hay Exporters Social during the annual conference in Guelph, Ontario.

This event provided an opportunity for those involved in or interested in hay exporting and marketing to connect with key industry players, learn about hay marketing and exports, and discuss the opportunities and challenges in the hay marketing sphere.

Furthermore, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, invited the CFGA to participate in a roundtable on Canada-U.S. relations. The CFGA sent a representative to the meeting and provided a written summary document outlining the CFGA's key points.



DIGITAL MEDIA

Social Media

The [CFGA Facebook page](#) saw notable growth this year. The reach was 83.9k and grew by 130 per cent over the year. The page finished with 1,418 followers, with 432 new followers over the year, a 66 per cent growth. The annual content interactions was 3.6k, 133 per cent growth. In total there were 443 posts made. Top content (by views) was for High Performance Forage Workshop, Young Ranchers Network, OFCAF announcement and Producer Info Session in French, Small Ruminants webinar series, Grazing Plan development and benefits of becoming a grazing mentor.

[X \(Twitter\)](#) discontinued analytic for free accounts, so no data is available.

CFGA Website

The CFGA has [English](#) and [French](#) versions of its website, with content updated frequently.

There were 21k active users, with 20k new users, over the year. The top 10 most viewed pages were CFGA Home, On-Farm Climate Action Fund, Conference 2024, Advanced Grazing Systems, CFGA Conference Agenda, Grazing Plan Resources, Event Calendar, Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool (HBAT), Forage Exports and Projects. The top sources leading to 100+ website users were Google, Bing, Facebook, agriculture.canada.ca, rangeward.ca, statics.teams.cdn.office.net and onforagenetwork.ca.

There were 157 [calendar events](#) listed on the website, promoting events hosted by the CFGA, its provincial members and partners and sponsored events.

Constant Contact

The CFGA uses Constant Contact for many of its communication needs, including newsletters, media releases, event invitation and project updates. Over the course of this year, the number of total contacts grew by 484 to 5,936. CFGA's Media List grew to 402 contacts and CFGA's Master List grew to 2,306 contact. In total, there have been 42,639 sends, 19,488 opens (with a 50 per cent open rate) and an eight per cent click rate. There were 55 email campaigns this year; topics included Monthly Mentor Meetings, CFGA Annual Conference, OFCAF updates, seasonal newsletters, Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool launches, the High Performance Forage Workshop and other CFGA project updates.

COMMUNICATIONS

Along with its strong social media presence on Facebook and X, the CFGA was busy during the 2024-2025 fiscal year with numerous communications activities. These included:

- A [weekly blog](#) highlighting CFGA projects and events, including the annual conference; annual partner spotlights and general content of interest to those involved in the forage and grassland sector.
- [Quarterly newsletters](#)
- [Media releases](#)
- Columns in [Glacier Farm Media's Canadian Cattlemen Magazine](#) and [Le Bulletin](#)
- Content in provincial member and other organization newsletters

CFGA in the News

Throughout the year, the CFGA is also contacted to provide information about its projects and the Canadian forage and grassland sectors as well as providing content to publications. [Here are some of those articles.](#)

Sign up for Updates

You can sign up to receive updates from the CFGA [here](#).



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PROVINCIAL FORAGE ASSOCIATIONS

The CFGA provincial forage association members provide local research and education on forages and pasture management. Working in consort with these organizations strengthens the sector across the country.



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About the CFGA

The Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) is the national voice for all sectors of the forage and grassland industry.

The CFGA formed in 2010 to provide a national voice for all Canadians who produce hay and forage products, and for those whose production is dependent upon forage and grassland production. Its main role is to uphold the robust forage industry and realize the potential of the domestic and export forage market.

Vision

The CFGA will be the recognized leader in forages and grassland opportunities nationally and internationally.

Mission

The CFGA will work cooperatively with affiliated partners to develop the forage and grasslands industry through knowledge transfer, research and supporting market opportunities in Canada and abroad.

CONTACT

2-150 Woodside Lane
Fredericton, N.B.
E3C 2R9
506-260-0872

www.canadianfga.ca
www.facebook.com/canadianfga
twitter.com/CFGA_ACPF
info@canadianfga.ca