



Box 3003, 800 Central Avenue, Prince Albert, SK S6V 6G1

T : 306-953-2796

school@conservationlearningcentre.com

CLC AgriArm Report 2009

The Summer That Wasn't

The growing season of 2009 will be remembered as the Summer That Wasn't. Early frosts stunted our forage corn plot in the lower lying areas. These areas recovered quite well, but didn't achieve the growth of the plants not affected by the frost. Other plots were less affected as a result of our cool spring. The largest challenges the CLC faced this growing season was weeds and ground squirrels. The history of the CLC's weed count has caused us to develop a long term management plan that we hope will reduce our control problems. Pre-emergents and timelier spraying showed promising results. These efforts will continue next growing season and into seasons to come until we feel our goals have been met. Richardson Ground Squirrels, along with badgers are causing us great concerns. The ground squirrels reeked havoc with our woody perennial plantations by eating a significant % of the new plugs planted. These plugs were later replaced. Controlling these pests with poison has been avoided in order to comply with our environmental mandate. The Gophinator provided acceptable results but its application is quite expensive.

One of the newest plots with the U of S plant sciences department struggled with the summer of 2009. Along with Dr. Doug Waterer, the CLC established a plot with the latest varieties of vegetables and had mixed results. Some varieties took weeks to germinate while others didn't even come out of the ground. Overall this plot demonstrated the challenges the weather poses when establishing new initiatives. On the brighter side, we at the CLC did experience some successes in 2009. Our miscanthus '*miscanthus sp.*' plots established in 2008 wintered very well and produced significant growth this season with two of the genotypes setting seed. This season we established a biomass plot along with Prairie Agricultural Manufacturing Institute showcasing different crop types grown for biomass. One of these crops was switch grass and we are happy to report that 2009 was the first time the CLC has been successful in establishing a plot of switch grass. We look forward to evaluating these crops in 2010. Along with our newest partner, the Saskatchewan Research Council, the CLC has focused on the production of woody perennials. With new spraying equipment and extra labor, plantations established in 2009 showed excellent growth with some trees growing over 8' tall. With continued weed control and the use of pre-emergents, we anticipate a successful growing season for 2010.

This season rekindled some old partnerships that the CLC continues to exploit. The CLC hosted a training day and BBQ for Crop Insurance which was very successful. Further development of this relationship is ongoing and shows future promise. The Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists also had a training day-BBQ at the CLC which focused on GPS, mapping and autosteer. The Farm and Garden Centre (FGC) from Prince Albert supplied a tractor outfitted with all the necessary electronics for all agrologists to test drive. They also provided a training seminar to familiarize all attending with the specifics of these technologies' abilities.

FGC out of Prince Albert is in ongoing negotiations with the CLC for next season to expand this new relationship. This season, FGC and the CLC partnered to demo FGC's latest line of baling equipment which was featured at our annual field day. Next season we anticipate demoing more of their mapping technologies and possibly their complete line of ag equipment required to grow a successful crop. The CLC looks forward to building new relationships and an improved growing season for 2010.