



*Peace Region Forage  
Seed Association* 

2021-2025

# Strategic Plan Report

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PEACE REGION FORAGE SEED ASSOCIATION

During the winter of 2020/2021, the Peace Region Forage Seed Association engaged with grower members, researchers, industry representatives and other provincial partners to update its strategic plan for 2021-2025. See Table 1 for a breakdown on how engagement occurred to the various stakeholders.

**Table 1.** Strategic Plan Engagement Methods

<b>Engagement Method*</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Zoom Meetings	15
Survey (online & mailed in)	18
Phone calls	1
<b>Total Engagements</b>	<b>34</b>

\*Some producers engaged multiple times but were only counted in one of the engagement methods.

**Table 2.** Stakeholders Engaged

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Names</b>
<b>Grower Members</b>	Danny Limoges, Fritz Hostettler, Troy Hanson, Trevor O'Dwyer, Blair Hill, Dave Wuthrich, Tobin Dirks, Reuben Loewen, Bruce Friesen, Neil Maisonneuve, Brady Gerwatoski, John Mycek, Robert Vanderlinden, Arthur Hadland, Gordon Hill, Mike Rudakewich, 4 unknowns (survey)
<b>Researchers</b>	Nitya Khanal, Bharat Shrestha, Yousef Papadopolous, Jennifer Otani, Francois Eudes
<b>Industry Representatives</b>	Karin Roen & Keith Lyons (Nutrien Fairview), Ashleigh Bilowus & Kerry Dusik (BrettYoung), Todd Smith (DLF Moore), Doug Thiessen (Fosters)
<b>Provincial Partners</b>	Jo-Anne Relf-Eckstein (SKFSDC), Brenna Schilds (BC Ministry of Ag), Janine Rubin (BC Ministry of Ag)

#### PRFSA Vision Statement:

To improve the quality, consistency and profitability of the turf and forage seed industry in the Peace River Region.

Our **mandate** as an organization is:

- To collectively improve and support the forage seed industry in the Peace Region.
- To identify and prioritize issues, develop solutions, and extend information
- To cooperate and have mutual respect among members and within the industry.

#### Timeline:

Nov 27, 2020	Talon, Susie & Calvin reviewed 2016-2020 strategic plan content and format, prepared for directors to review
Dec 9, 2020	PRFSA Board of Directors reviewed 2016-2020 strategic plan, provided direction on content, format, and budget.
Jan 13, 2021	PRFSA Board reviewed summarized SWOT, survey that went to growers/industry and plans to consult with growers/industry
End Feb	Zoom meetings (Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> ), survey remained open until Feb 28 <sup>th</sup>
Early Mar	Summarized feedback and presented to the Board for comments and direction
March 10, 2021	Summary of strategic plan engagement presented at the PRFSA AGM
April/May 2021	Final version of strategic plan completed and shared

SWOT Analysis:

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generate matching dollars (sound financial footing) and administers projects well</li> <li>- Strong manager, bookkeeper, and levy administrator</li> <li>- Agronomist under contract to April 1 2023 with strong knowledge of the industry and great reputation with growers, trade &amp; researchers</li> <li>- Deliver quality information in a good format</li> <li>- Strong relationship with regional, provincial, national and international organizations (SARDA, CFGA, PPMUC, etc.) and seed trade</li> <li>- Not involved in politics</li> <li>- Passionate board members</li> <li>- Association has a good reputation</li> <li>- Good unity from research → growing → selling/marketing within the industry</li> <li>- Offer to growers: knowledge and expertise to both grow (production) and market a forage seed crop in the Peace</li> <li>- Ability to adapt to change in the past decade</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication of association activities, research, and information (bigger social media presence, integrate texts/emails on market info, website still difficult to navigate, articles in newspaper, info needs to be quick, easy, to-the-point, more cost of production info)</li> <li>- Unable to be involved in many market related activities, growers wanting to market themselves</li> <li>- Not involved in politics → more involvement in national organizations?</li> <li>- Growers do not see as much ownership in the association, what do we provide that directly benefit/provide value to them? How to communicate to them that they need to be more involved/ “bought in”, actual on the ground research</li> <li>- Membership is generally an older generation, difficult to involve younger generations due to limited crop insurance, banks uninterested in forage seed, inability to lose a crop year</li> <li>- Large area to cover geographically</li> <li>- Hire agronomist to travel to areas and meet with growers during growing season?</li> <li>- Outsource tasks to someone who is an expert in that area (i.e., agronomist, research assistant, communications, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advances in technology in annual cropping starting to become more available</li> <li>- Increase production of perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and other grasses or legumes that show potential for growth (i.e. large international markets) → transfer lessons learned from crops we have already grown to a new crop</li> <li>- Renewed optimism in the industry due to challenges in annual crops?</li> <li>- Markets do not seem to be saturated internationally</li> <li>- Not very many middle men as opposed to other cropping industries</li> <li>- Many opportunities → rotations, workload, break disease cycles,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fewer growers and acres leading to a reduction in levy revenue</li> <li>- Lack of people interested in working in the forage seed industry</li> <li>- No ability to influence markets, no diversification of marketing options (reduced number of seed processors)</li> <li>- Potential new disease/pest outbreaks</li> <li>- High annual cropping prices put squeeze on forage seed acres??</li> <li>- Social unrest/ trade disruptions/ political agendas (politicians have no idea about our industry) → future regulations around nutrient management, pesticide applications, tillage, C emissions, etc.</li> <li>- Growers have troubles with establishment</li> <li>- Different workload than other crops</li> <li>- Agristability is only option for insurance but it is a poor one (very long lag time)</li> <li>- Need to protect our markets and the quality of product we can produce</li> </ul>

## Research Priorities

Goal/strategy	Description
<b>Weed issues</b>	Summarize information or develop projects to address key weed issues in forage seed crops, tackling pesticide resistance issues.
<b>Herbicide tolerance trials</b>	Continue collecting data on tolerance of crops to herbicides and submit data for minor use registrations.
<b>Grass &amp; legume seed variety trials</b>	Increase number of sites in the peace, encourage companies to participate. SARDA is best option at this point outside of AAFC. Better option may be to do larger scale trials → yield, winterkill, harvestability, standability, disease pressure etc. Do research in BC (AB focus now).
<b>Disease issues</b>	Conduct surveys for current disease in forage seed crops. Develop projects and id keys if necessary.
<b>Insects</b>	Support insect monitoring programs in both the AB and BC Peace.
<b>Long term crop/forage rotations</b>	Rotations & market cycles, benefits of more perennials and less annuals. How perennials improve soil health, resilience to weather and economics of the system.
<b>Carbon credits with forage crops</b>	Are forage seed a net carbon source or sink? Need to communicate to public better how good forage seed production is.
<b>Opportunities with new species</b>	New species and opportunities. Perennial ryegrass and tall fescue should be priorities in next 5 years.
<b>Variety development</b>	Continue to support public variety development.
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economical lime sources</li> <li>- Importance &amp; effects of bees in legumes</li> </ul>

## Production Issues & Priorities

Goal / Strategy	Description
<b>Support a forage seed agronomist as an extension service to members</b>	Contract position to work with growers and seed trade and conduct on farm applied research trials driven from grower/trade issues.
<b>Aftermath studies</b>	Benefits of aftermath, double straw chopping, risk of disease/pests.
<b>Growth Regulators</b>	Continue on-farm applied research trials to fine tune responses of species to growth regulators. Demonstrate to growers the use of growth regulators. Develop staging and application guide.
<b>Cost of Production &amp; Production Manuals</b>	Develop cost of return spreadsheets for growing forage seed crops and production manuals for crop insurance.
<b>Show benefits of forage seed crops in rotation to manage diseases</b>	Fund greenhouse research project to show how the different forage species grown in the Peace Region affect club root and Aphanomyces.
<b>Legumes in rotation for fertilizer &amp; pest management</b>	Summarize past research, scan old docs, and add to website.
<b>Soil Fertility</b>	Summarize past work and determine if additional work is required.
<b>Establishment/Rejuvenation Methods</b>	Show practices for establishing and removing forage seed crops in annual cropping rotations through field days.
<b>Underseeding winter wheat/fall rye to fescue, clover &amp; other forage seed crops</b>	Work with applied research group to eliminate clip year, research weed control issues if this system developed. Include under establishment.
<b>Historical Weather Info</b>	BC Growers have little historical data, AB growers access weather data for free, Growers can access data on AAFC website.
<b>Precision Farming Practices</b>	Demos of Variable rate technology, RTK (real time kinematics), In row fertilizer applications.

## Communication and Extension Priorities

Goal / Strategy	Description
<b>Extend information to growers and seed trade</b>	Ensure long term agronomist position. Organize a variety of events targeting growers, seed trade and industry agronomist. Improve website (specifically research page), explore emailing, texting, blogging, FB & Twitter. Continue working with Manitoba on FSN.
<b>Attract people to work in the forage seed industry</b>	Maintain and build on existing staffing/contract opportunities at Beaverlodge, PRFSA and SARDA, explore incentives for students to work on forage seed projects in the Peace Region. Also for people to work in the seed trade, encourage younger participants, student bursary? \$\$ available for doctorate/thesis work?
<b>Minor Use Registrations of Herbicides</b>	Maintain membership in PPMUC. Participate in Minor Use Priority Setting Meeting in Ottawa.
<b>Participation in provincial and global workshops and meetings.</b>	Encourage and source funding for growers to participate in meetings held across Canada and the world.
<b>Use our unified voice to link with other groups &amp; revitalize research</b>	Show leadership and push for unified research plan.
<b>Compile stats by crop for setting priorities</b>	Generate report from levy data to determine percentage of species production.

## Market/ Processing Concerns & Priorities

Goal / Strategy	Description
<b>Work with Seed Trade to conduct research/extend information on new opportunities</b>	Active engagement between Association and trade, seed trade comes to the Association with potential opportunities.
<b>Maintain Peace Region as GE grass and legume seed crop free zone.</b>	Monitor developments of GE turf and forage seed crops in Western Canada. Extend information to growers and trade.
<b>Develop information and statistics on forage seed crops that affect prices and production in the Peace region.</b>	Market updates, generate articles on turf and forage seed statistics, ensure growers are aware of AFSC prices on website, cost of production worksheets.
<b>Native seeds for oil &amp; gas or forestry industries</b>	Promote use of clean, local seed for reclamation.
<b>Maintain the Peace as chalkbrood free LCB zone</b>	Inform growers on the importance of purchasing LCB within the Peace Region. Do not purchase LCB equipment used outside the area.
<b>Continue developing local &amp; national relationships</b>	Ensure a forage seed voice is at the table.
<b>Peace Branding</b>	Promotion of Peace grown seed and the seed industry.
<b>Difference in price, mark-up &amp; perceptions</b>	Compile article on the difference between wholesale & retail, include an explanation of margins.
<b>Promote development of varieties within the Peace Region.</b>	Concerns about public \$\$ to be used to develop new varieties then be sold to private companies → Will we receive \$\$ back for royalties?