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FAIRY GARDENS

Delight Young and Old

CUT THE CORD

Cordless Workspace a Reality
With New Systems

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CONNECTED

A MESSAGE FROM PEAVEY INDUSTRIES PRESIDENT DOUG ANDERSON

We are all connected to the land – through the food and crops we grow, the resources we dig for, the places we call home, and the travels we take.

Whether we're in town, on an acreage, or on the family farm, we care for the land, and especially for our own patch of it. We use our backs and our machines to till it, test it, nourish it and protect it. And, when our family's harvest comes – whether it's carrots, canola or cattle, or chives or chickens – we see the results of our caring and our connection.

Being connected to the land means we're all farmers at heart. We want the freshest, healthiest food, and a lot of us will grow it ourselves, as naturally as possible. We want our children to see where food comes from, and appreciate the work that goes into its growth. We want the best-looking (and easiest to care for!) garden of flowers and shrubs. We know we have to preserve the land to ensure it will sustain us.

Since 1975, Peavey Mart stores have been connecting to communities across Western Canada. We're happy to know some customers consider a Peavey Mart one of their favourite places to gather, to share a story or a tip, to connect with each other and with us.

Being connected to the land means being down to earth, and approachable. It's been a pleasure to serve our neighbours and customers for more than 40 years. We hope this magazine is another way of strengthening that connection with you.

Doug Anderson



*Peavey Industries LP President
Doug Anderson.*

Photo by Drew Kenworthy.



*Cutting the barbed wire at the
grand opening of Peavey Mart in
High Prairie, AB.*

Photo by Drew Kenworthy.



NEVER STOP LEARNING

LEARNING SKILLS, MAKING FRIENDS

Story by Helen McMenamin. Top photo by 4-H Manitoba.

Farming can be a lonely life, especially for aspiring farmers not raised on a farm. They may find land far from family and friends, where help in finding solutions to farming challenges is hard to find. The district agriculturists who helped previous generations launch their farming careers have all but disappeared from Western Canada.

Conferences, workshops and field days help with information sharing and farm skills training, but newcomers need community, as well as knowledge. And events targeted at farmers may assume skills and experience that starting farmers don't have.

Some young farmers have developed their own communities to link to others facing similar challenges. They're doing things their own way – mostly online.

FarmOn is a non-profit organization that supports farmers in an online community of social learning called that has reached over 15,000 viewers from all over the world. It aims to improve the lives of farmers. The site has members' videos of their families and farming, little parts of their day, as well as training videos. Other posts tell stories of farmers and their achievements.

One FarmOn family shares their farm manifesto with their goals and reminders set out on hand lettered signs to themselves and others: "Take a moment to appreciate the beauty, ask for help, there will be struggles, never stop learning," and more.

Young Agrarians share skills and knowledge but they also aim to renew rural communities and strengthen links between consumers and food producers. For many, this means working

directly with consumers who want local food produced in a more traditional way by a person they know.

The group began with mostly market gardeners in BC and expanded into Alberta about a year ago and has grown to include a variety of ventures from large managed grazing operations to market gardens of less than an acre. Many rent their land and have little land equity, but they are building social equity with their customers.

A Peavey Mart Community Agriculture grant helped Young Agrarians launch their Alberta program of events, such as mixers and pot luck get-togethers, and establish an online presence. They were then able to access some funding from the Alberta Meat and Livestock Agency to develop a formal apprenticeship program, develop a mentorship guide, and work with farm clubs.

The group has an informal mentorship system using established farmers as hubs where members can get advice. Sometimes mentors host get-togethers where aspiring farmers can learn from each other, as well as from farmers with more experience. They're also working on links with other organizations and looking for ways young farmers can grow some equity in their businesses.

"People are getting into farming. It's not impossible," says Dana Penrice, of Young Agrarians. "There's a lot of land available in Alberta and a huge market for local food. We'd like to see government policies that help retiring farmers hand over their land to new farmers."



A Young Agrarians event. Photo by Sara Dent.



Photo by 4-H Manitoba.

Like all farmers, she's an optimist.

"We see a lot of room for creativity in agriculture now. Farming needs to be profitable and one way is certainly providing local food.

"My partner and I are direct marketing our grass-fed beef, lamb and chicken, and setting our own prices. We are price setters rather than price takers.

"We do have a challenge teaching our customers to cook our chicken. Our heritage chickens grow slower than commodity chickens, so they need to be cooked low and slow."

At the other end of the learning spectrum, Nuffield Scholarships give mid-career people with a passion for agriculture an opportunity to study some aspect of farming in depth, including at least 10 weeks outside Canada.

Each year Canada's three scholars join scholars from other countries to meet with major figures in agriculture, expanding their understanding of

world trade issues. They also explore farming in a region very different from their own, meeting people at all levels of agriculture, from farmers and their staff to cabinet ministers and others.

Nuffield scholars are committed to lifelong learning and sharing their knowledge with farming and other communities, often becoming leaders. They all speak of their

Nuffield opportunity as life-changing. Clayton Robins, Executive Director of 4-H in Manitoba and a Nuffield Scholar, speaks of 4-H as the foundation of agricultural leadership development and Nuffield as its pinnacle. Maybe he needn't limit that leadership to agriculture.

4-H - IT'S FOR CITY KIDS TOO

The traditional view of 4-H as a way to learn about livestock, is no longer the whole story. 4-H clubs can focus on anything that interests young people. It's not just for rural families either.

Members can be any age from 9 to 21 and 6- to 8-year olds can join as Cleavers. As few as two young people from different families and a leader can form a club. It can be mountain-biking or sewing, small engines, canines or rabbits; just about anything.

The great thing about the 4-H model of hands-on learning is that the adults lead and the members learn skills by doing - whether it's working on their project, setting up a meeting, planning an event or public speaking, says Clayton Robins. Each member has to help run the club, do something for their community and participate in a public speaking event.

"The skills learned in 4-H serve an individual well as they go forward in their career," says Robins, executive director of 4-H, Manitoba. "It's a great program all around.

"We're developing future leaders, but also providing a lot of life skills - working together, helping others, teamwork and organizing. Much of what our members learn, they don't appreciate till they're 21," says another 4-H'er.

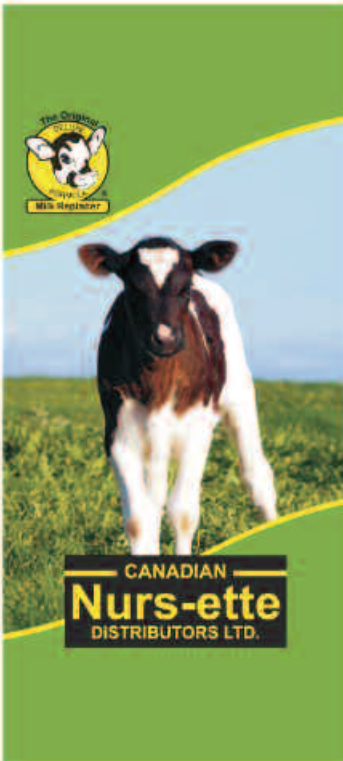
4-H offers a lot of opportunities to young people, from summer camps to international exchanges and scholarships. It's also a respected item on a resume.

Peavey Mart is a sponsor of Provincial 4-H organizations.

Photo by 4-H Manitoba.



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CANNING: A FOOD SAFETY GUIDE

Guide by Penn State Extension.

Traditional canning recipes may not be safe, say food safety experts. When canning low acid foods, such as meats and vegetables, boiling water is not hot enough to kill spores of *Clostridium botulinum*, which can grow and produce a toxin that can cause fatal food poisoning.

To can meat or vegetables safely, you need to use a pressure canner. High acid foods can be canned in a boiling water canner. Dry heat, such as the oven can cause jars to explode and does not exclude toxic bacteria.

Standard Mason jars work best for canning. Use new lids. Do not use recycled commercial food jars – they don't always withstand the heat of a pressure canner. Bail jars with glass lids, sealed with rubber rings are also not recommended.

Follow recipes and instructions published since 1994 as older recipes



may not have pressures and processing times that ensure food safety.

Cold-packing food can lead to air spaces developing in the food that can discolor in storage.

PRESERVING METHOD NEEDED FOR VARIOUS FOODS:

PRESSURE CANNING

Most vegetables

Asparagus
Beets
Carrots
Green & dried beans
Okra
Peas
Peppers
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Sweet corn

Meats

Beef and Poultry
Mincemeat pie filling
Seafood
Wild game

Combination Foods

Meat sauces
Soups and stews

BOILING WATER BATH CANNING

Most fruits

Apples and apple sauce
Apricots
Berries
Cherries
Grapes
Jams and jellies (fruit only)
Peaches and nectarines
Pears
Pie fillings (fruit only)
Plums

Acidified and fermented foods

Chutney
Pickled vegetables
Pickles (cucumbers)
Relishes

Salsa

Sauerkraut
Tomatoes (acidified)*

** Most tomatoes do not have enough natural acid to be safely canned in a water bath canner. To acidify tomatoes add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon or lime juice or vinegar per litre, or half a teaspoon of citric acid per litre. Vinegar can cause a change in flavor. Add sugar if the acidified tomatoes are too sour.*

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HERITAGE CHICKENS

FUN FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

Story by Helen McMenamin.



Chickens in a range of colours pecking and scratching in the yard are the iconic picture of a traditional farmyard. Maybe that's what attracts people to the idea of backyard chickens, or maybe it's the appeal of still warm, rich-tasting eggs. It could be that being around coloured and patterned chickens — clucking quietly to each other (and you) as they go about their chicken business — just feels good.

Whatever the reason, there's quite a demand for city and town councils to change bylaws prohibiting keeping livestock in town to allow chickens. So far, just a few of the bigger centres in Western Canada permit urban chickens in residential areas.

Chicken bylaws generally require a license, a limited number of hens (3 to 8) and no roosters or chicks, a coop with an outdoor run, and good husbandry. Some cities require that people take a formal course on chicken-keeping. Keeping the chicken coop and run clean and secure is the main concern so the chickens are not a nuisance to neighbours.

The spring after Red Deer approved backyard chickens, Jest Sidloski had a license and a coop with an enclosed run and four day-old barred Plymouth Rock chicks ordered from Peavey Mart, where he's Director of Customer Experience. As he, his partner Marilou and their two dogs watched the chicks grow, the original do-it-yourself notion of chickens faded and the little birds became pets.

"At first, they were not going to be pets, but they're pets now," says Sidloski. "And, I defy you to find one person who has backyard chickens who doesn't consider them pets."

Each chicken lays an egg a day, except for the six weeks or so each year that they moult, growing new feathers and losing their old ones (feathers are made of proteins so the birds can't spare the protein needed for eggs). The hens live and produce eggs (no rooster needed) for 8 to 10 years although the number of eggs drops off as they age. Getting eggs year-round requires more light, which can be provided, along with some warmth from an LED light.

"We give most of the eggs to our neighbours and friends," says Sidloski. "The chickens have made us lots of new friends, who love them almost as

much as we do. I think they like the colour and the taste of the eggs, but I think they also like knowing the chickens and the good life they have."

Daily chores for the chickens are collecting eggs, feeding them, refilling, and often washing the waterer. Four hens eat about a 20 kg bag of feed a month. Hens happily eat kitchen scraps, fruit and vegetables close to going to waste and forage on plants and insects in their run. Sidloski's chickens also get dried worms from the pet store and fresh fruit. In the evening, or if it rains, the chickens just put themselves to bed in their coop.

The downside of urban chickens is the same as keeping birds anywhere, but in the city, it's a more frequent chore that cannot be put off to another day: cleaning out the coop. In the city, it has to be done at least once a week, bagging up the used bedding and replacing it with fresh shavings or straw.

"The chickens have changed the way we live," says Sidloski. "One of us has to feed and water the chickens seven days a week. And if we go away, we have to arrange for someone to look after the chickens."

Chickens have also changed Sidloski's yard. He used to have a beautifully landscaped backyard,



Photo by Jest Sidloski.

DUCKS FAVOURITES WITH POULTRY FARMER

Poultry of all kinds are a mainstay of Trent Smith's farm, west of Edmonton. He raises exotic chickens, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, turkeys and peafowl, which he sells through his internet site, Duckopolis. This year, he'll also be selling duck chicks through Peavey Mart.

Calling ducks — so called because hunters used them as decoys to call wild geese within range, are his favourites of all his birds. "Ducks are much more social, and noisier, so they draw attention to their own personalities more than most birds," Smith says. "And the little calling ducks seem to me to have the nicest personalities. I just like those little guys."

Ducks can be raised much the same way, even in the same coops as chickens, as long as the birds aren't on medicated feed. But, Smith cautions that they are messier than chickens.

"They don't need a pond, and they can't swim until they're 14 days old and develop the waterproofing on their feathers, but if they're around any water, they try to get into it."

Ducks are tougher than chickens, but grow more slowly, mature later and live longer. They also lay bigger eggs that some people prefer to chicken eggs.

The eggs have a different allergen from that in chicken eggs, so some people who are allergic to chicken eggs can eat duck eggs. Duck eggs have twice the protein, almost twice the beneficial fatty acids, and 50% more vitamins and minerals. They are especially good in gluten-free baking, as the extra protein makes up for the lack of protein in the flour.

but the chickens scratched and pecked one area after another into a desert as he moved the run to fresh ground. Now, he moves the run and immediately rototills the area and reseeds grass.

Most of the days-old chicks Peavey Mart brings in go to acreages and farms where people can keep up to 100 birds without restrictions. For some it's a hobby. For others the birds bring in some income. Some people graze chickens, moving them in portable runs every day to fresh grass to make tasty meat chickens.



Photo by Jest Sidloski.

HERITAGE CHICKS HELP SAVE RARE BREEDS

Heritage chickens are breeds that were once common, but are almost forgotten today as fewer and fewer people keep chickens and each egg producer has more birds. In Alberta, fewer than 200 farms produce eggs for over 3 million people. Those producers and their birds are efficient, but there's risk. All the laying hens in North America have very similar genetics. Rare breeds, the ancestors of today's super-efficient chickens, might be needed to provide new genetics for eggs and meat in the future.

Some of the genetics are preserved in Canada's gene bank, where seeds of thousands of plant species and frozen semen and embryos of hundreds of animal breeds are preserved. But living flocks of these birds will allow future breeders to look at the birds themselves and their records. And, in the event of some problem at the main centre of heritage chickens at the University of Alberta farm, breeders will look to hobby chicken keepers for help. The chickens are food security for the long term, as well as a joyous hobby.

Peavey Mart has been working in a partnership with the Poultry Research

Centre at the University of Alberta in 2014, offering pre-orders of chicks and sending the funds to the centre's Heritage Chickens program. Last year, Peavey Mart sold 7,000 chicks for the program.

PRC heritage or conventional chicks can be ordered at any Peavey Mart store and the chicks can be picked up at your choice of about seven stores.

This support for the program and for hobby chicken farmers reflects the longstanding commitment of Peavey Mart to food security and to reconnecting urban Canadians with the production of their food.

"Overall, species health provides customer choice, which is great, and the program supports scientific excellence in the Ag sector in Western Canada," says Doug Anderson, President of Peavey Mart. "Our customers support the program, and we give back 100 percent of the purchase price to the University. It's a win-win."

Peavey Mart also supports poultry shows where people, mainly hobbyists, can show off their chickens and other poultry. Shows and sales are great places to meet people raising poultry and see different types of various poultry.

An advertisement for Stanfield's underwear. On the left, a red textured background features a white-bordered logo that reads "STANFIELD'S LEGENDARY COMFORT SINCE 1988 MADE IN CANADA". Below the logo is the website "STANFIELDS.COM". On the right, a pair of red briefs is displayed against a white background. The text "HOW'S MY UNDERWEAR?" is written in large, bold, black letters above the briefs, and "CALL 1-844-STANNYS" is written in large, bold, black letters below them. The briefs have "STANFIELD'S" printed on the waistband.




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Agri-Blok™ 25% Cattle Block 25 kg

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10:6 Molassified Sheep Mini-Pak

Agri-Melc™ 23:23:30 Lamb Milk Replacer 10 kg

Agri-Melc™ 20:20:16 Calf Milk Replacer 20 kg

Agri-Melc™ 22:22:20 Kid Goat Milk Replacer 10 kg

Cattle

- **Agri-Blok™ - 20% Range Cattle All Natural Protein Supplement** - has been formulated to balance the diet of cattle on range. Can be fed to horses. Feed free choice. Additional Salt Not Required.
- **Agri-Blok™ - 25% Range Cattle Protein Supplement** - has been formulated to balance the diet of cattle on range and contains 25% Crude Protein of which 15% is derived from non-protein sources. DO NOT FEED TO HORSES. Offer free-choice. Additional Salt Not Required.
- **Agri-Blok™ - 10:10 Range Cattle Mineral** - is designed to be fed free-choice, and would normally be fed when legume or legume-grass forages make up most of the diet. It is particularly useful when forage rations are used without grain feeding after calving. Additional Salt Not Required.

Horses

- **Equest™ - Agri-Blok™ 8:8 Salt Mineral** - Nutritionally Balanced, Additional Salt Not Required, Feed Free Choice, daily intake is approximately 100 -200 grams on mature horses, Choice of 25kg or 2.5kg Mini Pak, Weather Resistant
- **Equest™ - Agri-Blok™ 15% Protein** - Nutritionally Balanced, Additional Salt Not Required, Contains yeast culture, full spectrum B complex, plus biotin and extra molasses, Feed Free Choice, Daily intake is approximately 500 - 1000 grams on mature horses, Available in 25kg Tub with lid, Weather Resistant
- **Equest™ - 17% Horse Crunch** - Based on dehydrated alfalfa, oats, and peas, Contains B-Complex vitamins for stress, Available in 25 Kg & 1.5 Kg treat size

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Lamb: Agri-Melc 23-23-30 Lamb Milk Replacer - A high quality 100% all milk protein, high fat, low lactose product to be fed after 3 days of age to orphan lambs, undernourished lambs, or lambs that refuse to suckle.

Kid/Goat: Agri-Melc 22-22-20 Kid Goat Milk Replacer - A high quality 100% all milk high protein and high fat milk replacer for kid goats.



Equest™ 17% Horse Crunch 25 kg



Equest™ 8:8 Horse Mineral 25 kg



Equest™ 15% Horse Protein Tub 25 kg

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or e-mail your questions to norm@canadianagriblend.com. 1-800-340-2311

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GARDENING

QUALITY PLANTS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE TO A GARDEN

Story by Helen McMenamin.

The key to a lovely garden is matching healthy plants to the unique climate of your place, starting with strong healthy plants. Peavey Mart plants, grown in Alberta, fit the bill.



Photo by Meadowbrook Greenhouses.

“I grow the plants that do well in Western Canada – the tried and true favourites and new varieties developed for the area,” says Rob Visser of Meadowbrook Greenhouses. “My favourites are the old-fashioned ones – pansies, snapdragons, and petunias. There are others too, but we focus on plants that can take the prairie weather and still look good. And we work hard to have strong plants that adapt quickly to life in the garden, after their cosseted life in the greenhouse.”

Peavey Mart stores bring in well-started annuals, herbs, vegetables and shrubs, all grown in Western Canada. Visser is also supplying

complete planters of annuals or shrubs, including succulents – a new trend that can be really impressive.

“A planter can be spectacular – bringing a real Wow factor to a patio or entrance,” he says. Some of his planters include herbs like rosemary and lavender, with the annual flowers. Others are made up of tomatoes, beets, onions, carrots and herbs.

“I’m a big fan of edibles in the garden,” says Visser. “Growing herbs and vegetables in your garden or in a planter makes it so easy to include

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them in your meals. It makes such a difference to have fresh-cut herbs, as you're cooking. Fresh herbs and vegetables make a huge difference to a meal – they're part of healthy eating."

Fruit may be the best of garden edibles, and this year Peavey Mart will have everbearing strawberries as well as the traditional June-bearing type. All are produced from bare root stock for good health, and will be ready to bloom by May.

Traditional fruits like rhubarb, gooseberry, raspberry and Saskatoons never go out of style. But the hardy sour cherries developed at Saskatoon make great pies and are beautiful in blossom. Haskaps, (also called honeyberries) are tasty right off the bush.

Peavey Mart also has a wide selection of vines that do well on the prairies: thumbergia, scarlet runner beans, morning glory, lab-lab or hyacinth bean and hops, which have attractive foliage and may encourage beer-makers to try gardening.

Visser is a huge fan of gardening for the whole family, getting away from the iPads and other screens, to enjoy digging in the dirt together.

"Gardens add colour to your life. It's healthy, relaxing, stress relief. It's great family time. You can talk as you work."



Photo by Jest Sidloski.

KEEPING PLANTS STRONG AND HEALTHY

Providing high-end plant material for retail stores is challenging. About 80% of plants grow from seed, each plant with it's own ideal conditions. The other 20% have to be grown from cuttings.

Wave petunias, for example, are bred and grown in Ethiopia or Israel under very strict sanitation. Only stem cuttings, no roots or soil, are exported, and they're checked to ensure they are free of disease, especially viruses, before shipping to growers around the world.

Visser ships only within Western Canada from his Meadowbrook Greenhouses, near Red Deer, so plants are picked, shipped and in the retail location the same day. He uses his own semi-trailers with translucent roofs or lights in the ceiling, so plants don't become stressed and vulnerable to disease between greenhouse and the store.

By contrast, plants destined for big box stores are mostly grown in the southern US where costs of growing plants are lower. That means over 24 hours in a dark, humid truck – a perfect environment for plant diseases to gain a foothold in the plants, and usually not long enough for signs of disease to appear.

Plant disease experts talk about the triangle of disease because it takes three things for disease to become an issue: the disease organism (often a fungus), a susceptible host, and an environment that suits the disease organism – most plant diseases like high humidity and some can be inactivated by sunshine. Diseases only become a problem when all three are present.

Diseases that cause only minor problems can sometimes spread to other plants, like trees or important crops. Late blight, a serious fungal potato disease (it was the cause of the Irish potato famine), had never been found in Alberta, even though it's common in most potato-growing areas. The disease suddenly appeared a few years ago – apparently on imported tomato plants (relatives of potato). Now, Alberta potato growers have to continually watch for weather conditions that suit the fungus, and spray chemicals to protect their crops.



Photo by Meadowbrook Greenhouses.

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Tips for Success this Spring and Beyond

Caring for Your Tack

With reliable performance and timeless beauty, leather has been the tack material of choice for generations of horse owners. While leather tack is an investment, proper care and maintenance will help keep you and your horse safe while ensuring years of dependable service.

It's important to clean your tack on a regular basis to help prevent leather from drying out, rotting or breaking. Be sure to stock your tack room with a good neutral pH-balanced cleanser or saddle soap and protective conditioner with ingredients like lanolin and neatsfoot oil for easy maintenance.

While you're cleaning is also an excellent time to inspect your tack for any damage that may affect its integrity. The leather should be supple with no visible cracks, stretching or tears. Areas with buckle holes like a headstall's check pieces should be free from excessive stretching or deformity.

Also ensure that all stitching is intact, areas around buckles are not excessively worn, and all hardware is in good working condition. Repair and replace parts as necessary so your tack is always ready for your next ride.

Preparing for the Show Ring

Leg hair. It's a good thing so put your clippers down! In fact, it's one of the hottest looks right now — in the sheep and goat show ring, that is. Yes, those full, fluffy legs make the feet and bones look big, giving the animal a more balanced look from top to bottom. Hair and wool must be trained and maintained over a period of time to achieve big volume on show day, so begin now for optimum results this summer.

Showmen take a lot of time to properly wash and condition goat and sheep legs. Use leg wraps on clean legs to keep out dirt and debris. Dirty legs require more grooming and scrubbing, which can pull out or damage leg hair and wool.

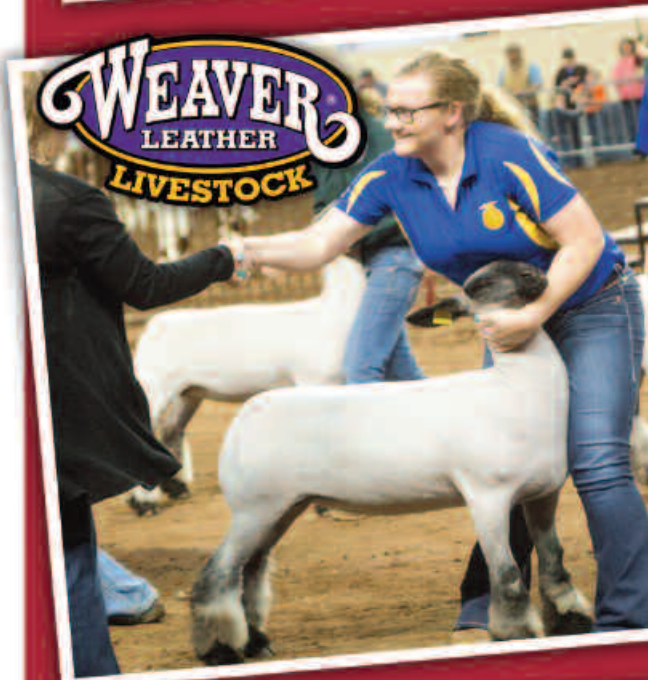
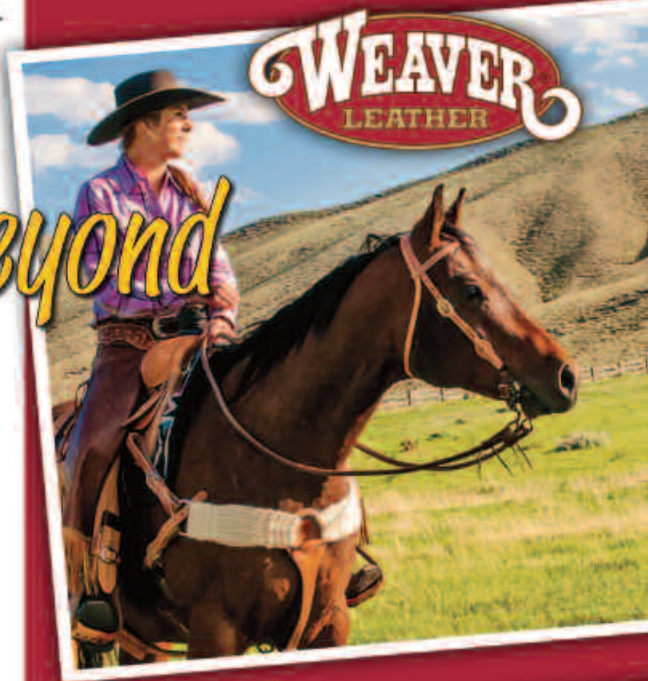
The drill-powered Mini Roto Brush is a must-have tool for goat and sheep legs. The unique rotation of the alternating long and short bristle rows trains and stimulates leg hair and wool growth. Use it daily and on show day as the first step in your fitting process for volume that wows the judges!

Enhancing Your Dog's Wellbeing

Your dog is part of your family and like any family member you want your animal to have the best quality of life possible. It all starts with proper nutrition, exercise, veterinary care, grooming, and gear. With spring right around the corner, we'd like to give you a few tips in the grooming and gear departments.

When determining your dog's grooming needs, it's always important to take into consideration breed and hair type and start a regular schedule to maintain hair coat and skin condition. To make washing your animal quick and easy, choose a hypoallergenic cleanser like our EZall® Pet Shampoo in conjunction with our eZall® Foamer that allows you to simply spray on the shampoo and rinse off for a clean animal in under five minutes.

It's also good to periodically check to be sure gear like collars and harnesses still fit correctly and replace if necessary. If it's time to replace, look for products like those in our Terrain D.O.G.® line with features like reflective safety stripes, comfortable neoprene linings, and durable anodized hardware that are designed to suit the lifestyles of active dogs.



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MANAGING GRAZING

GET MORE OUT OF PASTURE

Story by Helen McMenamin.

Simply putting cattle, sheep, goats or horses into a field for the summer is probably not what's best for the animals, the grass, the earth or your pocket book.

The problem is that grazing animals treat the nice big pasture as a smorgasbord. They eat the tastiest things first. And then, when they've had a little of all their favourite foods, they go back to the plants they bit off first and take another bite. By then, the plant is especially tasty to the animals because the plant has just put its resources into rebuilding its leaves. The new growth is generally soft and sweet, so grazing animals enjoy it a lot.

The trouble is that regrowing the leaf – the solar panel that powers the plant – requires resources from the plant's roots. The plant diverts nutrients stored in the roots to building new leaves, pruning off its own roots for energy. If the new leaves have long enough before the next animal comes to bite it off, they absorb the sun's energy and carbon dioxide from the air to make sugars and other plant nutrients. The plant can use these nutrients to build new roots. With more roots, the plant can absorb more moisture and nutrients from the soil to fuel more growth of leaves.

If the grass plant is repeatedly grazed before it can recover its original size, it falls into a deadly spiral. Without enough roots to bring in the moisture and soil nutrients it needs, and without enough leaf to collect and use sunlight, it can only grow slowly, and hungry grazers keep biting off the developing leaves. The grass might disappear entirely, leaving a bare spot for weeds to take over.

As the nutritious grasses are being repeatedly chewed by animals that choose the tastiest plants, the less tasty plants were left to grow, becoming more fibrous and less appealing to grazing animals. Old grass may look brownish with lots of old-looking leaves, sometimes seed heads. Ranchers say those plants are wolfy and most animals avoid them.

As nutritious grasses are constantly bitten off, weeds and wolfy grasses have an advantage and come to dominate the pasture and there's less and less nourishment for the animals. The pasture greens up later in spring and it's a thin stand that's grazed off quickly.

There is an alternative. You can imitate Nature, instead of matching your animals' grazing to the existing fences.

Before settlers arrived and fenced their own fields, bison (buffalo) roamed the west, grazing their way around half a continent. A vast herd grazed and trampled an area for a short time and then moved on to new grazing. Likely, the area they left behind looked terrible with muddy creeks and no green grass to be seen. This still happens with some of Africa's free-ranging herds of grazers. But, the herd didn't return to area for a year or more. By then, the grassland had recovered.

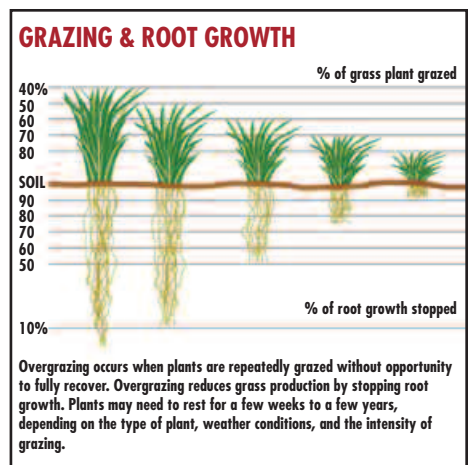
Today, we can mimic the natural grazing system by giving animals only a part of the pasture, hopefully one with about 8 inches of growth before grazing. With limited grazing available, the animals graze all the plants. It's called intensive, or rotational, grazing.

Ideally, each plant should only be bitten off once, leaving some leaf for photosynthesis to fuel regrowth of leaves and replace the roots that were lost after grazing.

Moving animals off the pasture – giving it a “rest” – allows the plants to work hard and use the nutrients left by the animals to produce more new growth. It's the most important time for a healthy pasture. The time a pasture needs to recover depends on the time of year and weather conditions, as well as how much plant material was removed and the type of grass.

How to make sure a pasture has enough rest is different for each operation, but many graziers subdivide their pastures into small paddocks with electric fencing, and move the animals from one to another as soon as the available forage is about half what it was when grazing started.

There's a lot to learn about rotational grazing. Judging pasture utilization is a skill that takes time to learn, but most intensive, or rotational graziers help one another and beginners. Tours of operations let you see how they manage their grass and see the ingenious solutions they've found for their challengers. Grazing seminars, the internet and forage associations help too.



Grazing with this more natural system of management gives animals more and better nutrition and the grass is healthier, faster growing with more roots. The plant roots take advantage of nutrients from the animals' manure and urine to grow more roots.

Healthy plant roots ooze sugars into the soil, nourishing soil microorganisms and increasing soil organic matter, an indicator of soil health. Organic matter is mostly carbon, pulled out of the air for photosynthesis – the original carbon sequestration.

Good pasture management means more productive animals eating more fresh forage, healthier, more productive forage plants, more nutrients in the soil and less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and lower costs from less need for hay or reseeding pasture. It's a benevolent spiral.



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BEEKEEPING

IT'S NOT JUST BUZZ - LEARNING ABOUT BEES

Story by Helen McMenamin.

There's a lot of interest in keeping bees these days, but a full-time honey producer and a hobby beekeeper have the same advice: learn as much as you can about beekeeping before jumping into a hive of your own.

Dean Rugland, Manager of the Peavey Mart in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, has two hives of his own but he says the hobby isn't for everyone.

"It's not just a matter of setting out a hive and taking out the honey in the fall," he says. "It's not a lot of work, but it does take time and you must know what you're looking for and what to do. Bees are living creatures, and we have to care for them."

Rugland advises taking all the time you need to learn about bees. He started learning about beekeeping because he was curious and Peavey Mart (where he works) offered an introduction

to beekeeping. Then, he moved back home to Saskatchewan and wanted a functional acreage.

"I thought I could get right into bees, like you can with chickens, but I found there's a lot more to bees," he says. "You really do need to read and talk to people, attend every course you can. We have the basics at Peavey Mart. But join a bee club, and work with somebody on their bees."

"Beekeeping is very personal. I've found that if you ask 10 people how to do something, you get 10 different answers. But there are guidelines."

Kevin Nixon has been a commercial beekeeper and packer near Red Deer for 20 years. He has the same advice for getting into beekeeping.

"Not everyone should be a beekeeper," he says. "It's very labour intensive. It takes lots of time and there's a lot to learn. But, everybody starts

somewhere. I encourage people to take a course, participate in workshops and conferences. Stay abreast of changes through a beekeeper association, so you know what's going on with bees.

"Bees are not native to this country, so they have to be looked after like other livestock - but you can't corral them like cattle. They travel 3 or 4 miles from the hive, and they intermingle with other bees, so there's a big biosecurity risk. We all have to look out for other people's bees as well as our own."

Many bees are used for pollination, with honey production only a byproduct, but getting the biggest yields of fruit, nuts or seed may mean a huge number of hives in quite small areas, so disease can spread very quickly.

As Chair of the Canadian Honey Council, Nixon is particularly aware of the risks to domestic bees across the country and the need for good bee health care. He focuses on honey and does not put his bees to work pollinating crops. But working with owners of land where bees work is important.

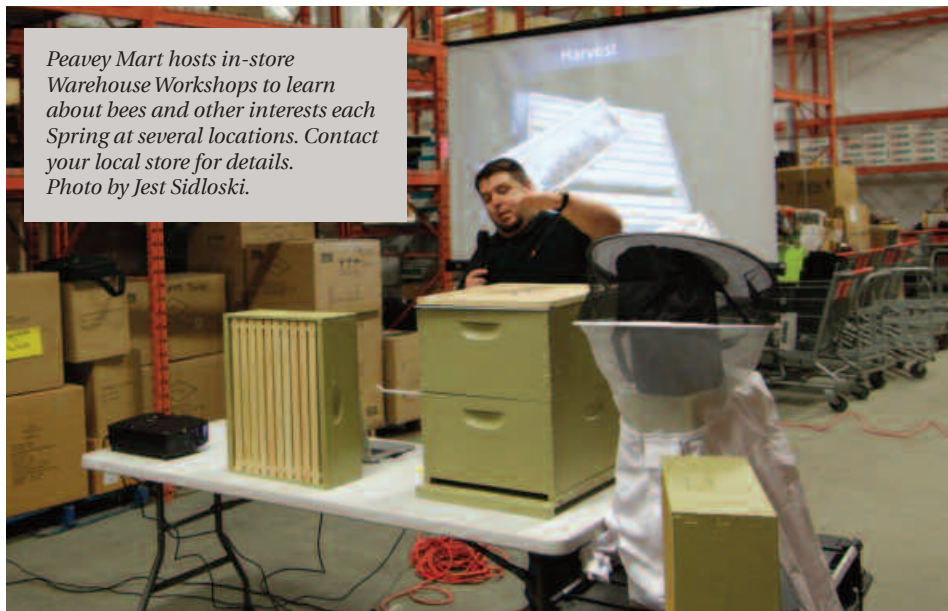
"We have to stay in contact and respect each other," he says. "If a farmer needs to spray a chemical to protect a crop, I can suggest a more bee-friendly chemical or they can spray in the evening after the bees are back in the hive. If we can't work around each other, I move the hives."

"As a beekeeper, you must be able to identify diseases and treat for them with effective medications, or you're putting other bees at risk. There's even some thought that domestic bees can spread disease to native bumble bees. And, some organic bee disease remedies do more harm than good."



Photo by Melanie Kempers, Canadian Honey Council.

Peavey Mart hosts in-store Warehouse Workshops to learn about bees and other interests each Spring at several locations. Contact your local store for details. Photo by Jest Sidloski.



“We think it’s important not to kill the natural enzymes in honey, he says. “Our process allows us to get the consistency we want and preserve the natural antimicrobials and enzymes.

If you’re buying honey, he advises looking at the fine print on the label. “Canada Number 1 is just a grade,” he says. “It can be applied to honey produced anywhere in the world. You need to check the back of the label where you’ll find whether the honey is 100% Canadian, produced elsewhere or a blend of Canadian and imported honey.”

Customers pick up their government-certified bees. Photo by Alan Flowers.



Rugland agrees, and cautions against starting beekeeping with used equipment that could carry disease. It’s false economy, if bees contract a disease and the hive and equipment have to be destroyed.

“Bees are time-consuming and you will be stung, even through a suit,” he says. “But I find working with them rewarding. My 10-year old son and I work together. We enjoy the bees. And, my first year in bees, I had the best Saskatoon berry crop I’ve ever had.”

THE HONEY BUSINESS

Nixon processes all his own honey and only his own honey, which he supplies to Peavey Mart stores. He selects only the best honey as part of maintaining Alberta’s reputation for premium honey, with mild flavor and good colour.

He uses a unique proprietary creaming process because it involves less heat and less processing than that needed to ensure a long shelf life for liquid honey.

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HOMESTEADING

THE MAKE-IT-FROM-SCRATCH MOVEMENT FINDS SUPPORT AT PEAVEY MART

Story by Helen McMenamin.

There's a whole new section at some Peavey Mart stores – homesteading. It's supporting a trend to “make your own...” that's gaining quite a following these days.

People are making all sorts of foods and household products from scratch, rather than buying the ready-to-eat or ready-to-use versions you might find in a supermarket or specialty store.

When you've made something yourself rather than shopping at the mall, it's very satisfying to

savour its unique flavor or perfume, whether it's a pretty soap you've perfected with essential oils, or sauerkraut that's even better than grandma's. Families who have members who suffer from allergies can relax, knowing they've made allergen-free products and they don't have to scrutinize the packaging for problem ingredients. There's also satisfaction in the independence of being able to make your own, rather than depending on professionals.

“For some, it stems from distrust of large food and packaged goods companies,” says Peavey Mart Vice-president of Operations, Dave Simmonds. “They prefer to make their own products just the same way they were made 100 years ago.”

Revisiting old ways fits well with Peavey Mart's appreciation of customer traditions. The company suspected there was an unmet demand for the equipment and ingredients for preparing foods and even personal hygiene products. Peavey Mart located makers of traditional equipment and modern labour-saving versions, and put them in special Homesteading sections of a few stores.

It's been a success, and Homesteading is being added to more stores in 2017.

Dione Frenette works in the Kamloops Peavey Mart, where she is the Homesteading specialist, providing advice on using the equipment. “I love this section,” she says. “It has a different look from the rest of the store, with a log arch entrance that draws people in. And the grey treated wood shelves add to the feeling of going back to our roots.”

Fermented foods are being promoted as probiotics that encourage beneficial gut bacteria. Peavey Mart has traditional Ohio stoneware crocks for making sauerkraut, kimchi and other fermented vegetables. A traditional cabbage shredder keeps the vegetables even and culture ensures rapid fermentation.

Frenette is seeing huge interest in kombucha, or tea kvass. It's sweetened green or black tea fermented with a scobi, a combination of yeast and a special bacteria. It's reputed to improve gut health, prevent and treat arthritis, boost the immune system and help prevent cancer. Frenette likes the taste, which she says varies from resembling a fizzy dry lemonade to a fuller sweeter drink, nothing like tea. And the scobi floats like a puck on top of the fermenting tea so it can be recycled to make another batch of kombucha.



Photos this page by Sean Christophers.



Photo by Sean Christophers.



Homemade cheese. Photo by Jest Sidloski.



Photo by Sean Christophers.

In the Kamloops area, big gardens are everywhere, so all sorts of fruit and vegetable preservation are popular. Peavey Mart has a wide variety of dehydrators, including at least one type that can be used to make jerky without power. There's a steam juicer, apple peelers and cherry pitters, as well as all kinds of equipment for jams, jellies and canning. And for fresh salad any time of year, there's a big range of seed sprouters.

The most ambitious homesteaders can even find a hand-cranked grain mill and cheese making supplies. And to keep the whole house in line with simpler times, there's a whole range of J.R. Watkins products, fresh honey from an Alberta beekeeper, and unfiltered apple cider vinegar.

"People are going back to their roots and they're looking for ways to have a sustainable way of life that's healthier for themselves and better for the planet. We have things that fit that nicely," says Frenette.

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Kamloops	Red Deer	Saskatoon	Brandon
	Grande Prairie	Yorkton	Winkler
			Winnipeg

Watch for Homesteading to Grow into more stores in 2017!



7 REASONS TO RAISE SHEEP

... AND HOW TO GET OVER THE REASON YOU DON'T

Story by Gord Schroeder.

Canadian lamb producers have a huge opportunity. Lamb consumption is increasing in Canada, and Canadian lamb is the product of choice.

Lamb production in Canada is not keeping pace with the demand. We produce just over 40 percent of our domestic consumption – the rest is imported. Consumers and retailers continually ask for more Canadian lamb.

Good things about the lamb industry:

- The lamb industry can be a family enterprise – the size of the animal lends itself well to families with small children.
- The lamb industry has a low cost of entry.
- The production cycle is quite short – you can see positive returns quite quickly.
- Lamb producers can control production and margins. Good management can increase lambing percentages and lambs marketed per ewe.
- Sheep adapt to new feedstuffs quickly. They can be raised in a variety of production methods, from grass-based to dry lot intensive production units, and anything in between.
- Sheep can be used to create a positive environmental impact.

So, what's the problem – what prevents people from entering the lamb industry? In my opinion, it has to do with an inaccurate perception of the lamb business. There's the notion that sheep are a stupid animal, lots of work, and the financial return is limited. I say this is not accurate.

Commercial lamb production can generate very positive financial returns. You can manage production to increase the number of lambs marketed annually per ewe for a tremendous financial reward.

Look at the numbers. A general target is that one lamb sold per ewe should pay the bills – anything

above that should be the producer's. Six ewes are one animal unit, equivalent to one cow in terms of the feed they need. The six ewes should produce nine lambs based on average production of 1.5 lambs per ewe.

Many lamb producers are currently marketing two or more lambs per ewe per year. Depending on the weight of the lamb at marketing, the return per lamb has been around \$150-175 for a feeder lamb and \$200-225 for a finished butcher lamb. From birth to marketing usually takes five to eight months, depending on management. You can do the math.

To the thought that sheep are stupid animals: contrary to what you may have heard, sheep are not stupid. They rank just below the pig and on par with cattle in intelligence among farm animals. The problem is more that people do not understand how sheep think. I was a sheep producer with a large flock for many years and studied sheep behavior.

Behaviour is an animal's response to its environment. People working with animals often do the same thing over and over again and expect a different response. I say if it's not working, change the environment, and the animals' behaviour will change. Sheep respond to the situations they are placed in according to the instincts they have been created with and have developed. Understanding how sheep think and using it to your advantage makes working with sheep much easier and more enjoyable.

Here are just a few examples of sheep instincts and characteristics you need to understand when working with sheep:

- They are social animals, and don't want to be by themselves. Separation causes them stress and a negative response.
- They are followers, so create systems that allow them to follow each other and the shepherd.

- Sheep have poor depth perception. Shadows and changes in walking surfaces make them hesitate, so eliminate shadows and changes in walking surfaces when working sheep.
- A sheep's defence is escape, so when they feel preyed upon or too much pressure is applied to them they seek an escape. A key to handling sheep is to create a controlled escape.
- Sheep, like other animals, have a flight zone. Understand what it is and use it when working with the flock.

If you're considering, entering, or are already in the sheep business, learn two basics. Firstly, understand the animal's normal behaviour and use this to your advantage. Working with sheep is more of a mind game than physical effort. Secondly, know the basics needs of sheep production: if you know the basics, you can expand from there. When done right, the sheep industry is enjoyable and profitable.

My desire is to share my years of experience to help grow the lamb industry, and for producers to enjoy the business and management of sheep. The Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board offers a 2-day workshop called "Getting Started in Sheep." During the workshop, I address such topics as the basics of lamb production, nutrition, lambing time management, sheep behaviour, and handling and marketing.

For more information on the full workshop outline and information, please see our website www.sksheep.com and click on Services and Training, or call me at 306-933-5582.

Gord Schroeder is Executive Director of Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board, and for 18 years ran about 1,000 ewes.

Peavey Mart is a sponsor of the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board.



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Whitewood Town Square: A vacant lot has been turned into a beautiful oasis with new grass, a gazebo, picnic tables, ornamental trees and several permanent benches. This photo was taken early on in the development and it will take a couple of years for the flower beds and trees to mature. The official opening took place in September 2016.

GROWING COMMUNITIES

THE PEAVEY MART COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL GRANT

Story by Bonnie Warnyca. Photos by Community Agricultural Grant recipients.

Each year since 2013, the Peavey Mart Community Agricultural Grant has offered funding to community groups to help strengthen their communities. Here's a roundup of the impact of some of the winning projects.

DESTINATION WHITEWOOD, WHITEWOOD, SASKATCHEWAN

Destination Whitewood applied to Peavey Mart for a grant to help beautify their town. They wanted to turn a rundown double lot across from the town office into a useful green space, and call it Town Square.

"We had hoped to finish the project in 2015, but flooding in the area prevented us from completing it until the summer of 2016," says Lee Aldous, volunteer coordinator for the project.

Once word of the \$15,000 Peavey Mart grant got out, other area businesses

stepped up to contribute funds and services, bringing the total funding for the project to \$27,000 – enough to add to the original blueprint.

The once forlorn looking lot was cleared and levelled and black dirt was brought in and grass planted. Now, the Town Square is the pride of the community with a 20 by 30 foot gazebo that holds four large picnic tables. Two large flower beds were built using interlocking stone and cement pads poured along the west and north edges of the property. Picnic benches line each side. Ken Aldous is currently building a wishing well to help disguise a water hydrant.

While the ornamental trees planted have yet to mature, the Town Square now hosts family gatherings and is the backdrop for many wedding and grad photos. It's also a serene spot for folks to just sit and enjoy the scenery.

IMAGINING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Each of us has a community, and most of us have ideas about how our community can be helped to be better and stronger.

But we don't all develop those ideas into plans, build support from other individuals, groups, businesses and government, and act on those plans. That kind of development is the purpose of the Peavey Mart Community Agricultural Grant.

The Grant exists to nourish that entrepreneurial spirit, help incubate and develop good ideas, to give people a reason to come together, and ultimately help the communities where we live and work – all with a focus on Agriculture.

The Peavey Mart Community Agriculture Grant application period is from March 1 to May 31 annually. We encourage groups to visit our website at www.peaveymart.com to download an application for funding.

Doug Anderson, President, Peavey Mart.



IMAGINE a Stronger Community
Up to \$50,000 in funding for your community initiative!

The Peavey Mart Community Agricultural Grant offers a source of funding for innovative local agricultural projects that will help strengthen your local rural area, town or city.

Who can apply?
Anyone who lives within 200 km of a Peavey Mart store can apply.
The grant will be awarded to a non-profit organization or group of individuals.

Application period: **March 1 - May 31, 2017**

Community Agricultural Grant
Peavey Mart

For more information or an application, visit www.peaveymart.com

"We're so thankful for the money that Peavey Mart provided," says Aldous. "Two young fellows from Peavey Mart in Yorkton brought gifts for the kids and helped us celebrate our grand opening last fall."



St. Paul:
Local volunteers and members of the Boys and Girls Club help plant Incredible Edible Barrels.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE, ST PAUL, ALBERTA

Entering their final year of their Peavey Mart Community Agricultural Grant of \$49,000 over three years, Champions for Change in St. Paul, Alberta, has come a long way in the past two years.

"The grant has enabled us to develop new outreach programs promoting healthy lifestyles in the community," says Penny Fox, Chairperson of St. Paul Champions for Change. The funds have allowed the group to have administrative help, develop healthy lifestyle displays and publish a list of local food producers. They also sponsored a health and wellness show in the town, and their workshops on the basics of growing vegetables have been popular throughout the community.

One of the most successful projects to date has been putting "Incredible Edible Barrels" throughout the community – 68 in 2015 and 59 in 2016. Each barrel is filled with fruit and vegetable plants, including edible flowers. All plants were labelled along with ideas on ways to use the produce. Families are encouraged to talk to their children about the food, and to pick whatever is ripe.

The remainder of the foodstuffs are served during "Party in the Park" events in summer. This popular project will continue, and several other



St. Paul:
Incredible Edible Barrels are located throughout the St. Paul downtown and business areas.

communities have asked about starting their own "Incredible Edible Barrels."

In 2015, the CFC partnered with St. Paul Family and Community Support Services in the Heritage Festival, showcasing music, cultural foods, entertainment and art of all the different cultures in the community. During the Sunday art show, CFC provided appetizers made of locally grown foods prepared by students at the Culinary Arts Program at Portage College.

The Peavey Mart grant helped kickstart many new projects that will continue (or be run in partnerships with) other community organizations.



St. Paul: Workshop – Harvest of the Forest.

"We are now a pilot community for the Alberta Prevents Cancer Project," says Fox. "We've been able to take experience gained through the Peavey Mart projects into this partnership. We're working to expand the Incredible Edibles project and to have school students build raised garden beds and install them at the food bank, the crisis centre and 15 group homes."

ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING, BEAUSEJOUR, MANITOBA

Prior to receiving a \$30,000 Peavey Mart Community Agriculture Grant, the Association



Beausejour greenhouse.

for Community Living (ACL) in Beausejour relied on a small six by six foot greenhouse to establish vegetable and flowering plants to raise funds to provide training to clients with intellectual disabilities.

"The grant money allowed us to build a 60 by 20 foot greenhouse, which was completed in the fall of 2014. We planted our first seeds in the spring of 2015," says Ashley Seymour, Director of Operations for ACL Beausejour.

"It was an exciting time and a project that pulled so many people together. More than 50 of our clients, support staff and community volunteers participated in the planting of seeds and helped to nurture the seedlings which included a variety of vegetables, flowers and grasses."

The first year, the group had to invest in tools, trays and lighting so their inventory and profit margin was fairly small. But in 2016, the group was able to profit more than \$6,000.

"This is truly a gift that will keep on giving," says Seymour. "We use the greenhouse profits to purchase new technologies, classroom materials and art supplies for pre-vocational classes to train people for various types of employment."

Bonnie Warnyca is a freelance writer from Indian Head, Sask, where she also runs a bed and breakfast.



Beausejour greenhouse.

FAIRY GARDENS

DELIGHT YOUNG AND OLD

Story by Helen McMenam. Photos by Helen McMenam and Susan Pfefferie.

For some, fairies are irresistible. And, fairy gardens – with real plants but also tiny figurines of fairies and their own tiny furniture and buildings – can provide hours of fun for young and young-at-heart gardeners.

Most Peavey Mart staff had not seen fairy gardens until they arrived in a few stores, but they've been happy to see the delight of customers discovering the figurines. Customers purchased the figurines as fast as staff could unpack them to build a display garden. Peavey Mart has now shipped fairy gardens to more stores this spring, part of a trend sweeping across North America.

Fairy gardens were introduced in the US in 1893, probably as part of bonsai gardens at the Japanese pavilion at the World's Fair in Chicago. They were featured in the New York Times, and fairy gardening became a popular hobby that's carried on since with occasional surges. The current enthusiasm might be linked to fairy homes built into hillsides – rather like hobbit houses in *Lord of the Rings*.

Fairy gardens can include a whole village in a shallow pot that's centerpiece for a picnic table or they can be bigger and easier for little hands to manipulate the fairies and their furniture. Some owners use window boxes to keep the plants healthy.

Prairie gardening guru, Lyndon Penner, has a slightly different take on a fairy garden. In his excellent book, *Garden Design for the Short Season Yard*, he tells his response to a new condo owner who had a tiny garden space, less than 6 by 2 feet. Rather than crowding in just a few plants, he made a fairy garden.

He used flat pebbles to create a "path" through a miniature landscape. Miniature perennials included thymes, Scotch moss, saxifrages, Corsican mint and some bulbs with delicate flowers and tiny dianthus. Miniature roses and topiary fuschias are the trees in the landscape – fairy trees always have flowers! Fuschias can be quite easily trained into shape by pinching off side shoots.



Small fairy figurines complete the tiny landscape. Young visitors love the garden, and search for the fairies after the gardener has moved them around.

Choosing plants that either stay small or can be trimmed to fairy scale and keep the garden looking good can become an addictive hobby. One US retailer who specializes in miniature gardens says fairy gardens come and go, but never fade away entirely. A fairy figurine always adds a touch of whimsy to a small gift plant.

Miniature gardening is growing steadily, says the retailer. "As you get older gardening becomes more difficult. This is a way to downsize and it's easy to maintain. It's a great thing to do with kids and grandchildren. Children love them. It's just their size."



Fans of fairy gardens choose any combination of figurines from Peavey Mart displays, and create their own space.



CUT THE CORD

CORDLESS WORKSPACE A REALITY WITH NEW SYSTEMS

Story by Helen McMenamin. Photo by Stanley Black & Decker.

Cordless tools have taken over for small hand tools like drills. Now, new battery technology has made cordless tools more powerful and more convenient than ever, and made the workplace safer.

Old style cordless tools just didn't have the torque to be as powerful as a corded or a gas-powered version, so it's been back to the shop or extension cords or generators on site, along with tripping and other hazards. New batteries and related technologies are leading a revolution on jobsites, around homes and on farms.

For homeowners, garden tools that used to be gas-powered or corded now use batteries and more powerful versions are available for landscapers.

DeWalt has developed over 100 tools that all use the company's FlexVolt system to deliver the power of a corded tool with the convenience of battery power. The batteries are sold separately and are interchangeable among tools, and each one draws just the power needed to give you the torque and the run time you need for a job.

"I own some of these tools myself," says Peavey Mart's Grande Prairie store manager, Rob Dahlen. "I have an acreage where I don't have power. I can take the tools I plan to use and a couple of batteries, and I have the power I need and the flexibility I want.

"I can trim my two and a half acres with my FlexVolt string trimmer. It's much lighter than the gas model I used to use. And I don't need to carry a jerry can of gas around. It's much quieter, too. The only sound is the whack of the brush falling, so I can hear what's going on around me."

"We're making the cordless workplace a reality," says Stephen Blain of DeWalt. "It's more convenient and it's safer, because there isn't the tripping hazard of a cord and you can hear what's going on around you. Since 1992, it's been our mission to convert workplaces to cordless. Now, we have the technology to do that for all our professional tools."

Milwaukee Electric Tool has a similar vision, but it's focused on linking each tool's motor, electronics and power source to a task. The battery is the driver but the electronics are crucial. One key is a phone app that links to tools

for remote on/off, or to set rpm, torque or the speed of the ramp up. The app can record exactly what was done, the date, time and tool settings and print off a record. An electrician can use the app to record details of every wire crimped so work quality can be shown to match the most stringent requirements.

One key can track a tool or other piece of equipment, easing cross-country inventory control for rental companies and big contractors – but also helping when a tool is misplaced. And, tools can be locked from a cell phone so they won't work if they're stolen.

"We work on needs our customers bring to us," says Scott Moore, Director of Marketing for Milwaukee. "Lighting is a huge challenge, whether it's a job site with hundreds of lights, or fixing a combine in the field. We have cordless LED lights with three or more settings for area, tripod or task lights, and with our new 9-hour battery they can run all night.

"Electronics are the brains behind the new generation of tools – the communication between motor and power source, but also between operator, tool and supervisor."

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CHARGING STATIONS

A VITAL PIECE OF A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Capri Rasmussen and Jason Auch find planning trips to a Peavey Mart location to top up the charge in their Tesla Roadster is just part of deciding where to have lunch. Story by Helen McMenam. Photo by Capri Rasmussen and Jason Auch.

Most of us think of electric cars as impractical because their range is too short and there are too few charging stations. It's time to look again. You can actually drive across Canada in an all-electric vehicle without once paying for fuel.

Kent Rathwell of Sun Country Highway actually did that in January 2013 and to really make the point, he made the trip from St Johns Newfoundland to Victoria in the middle of winter.

"If we could do that in the biggest, coldest country in the world, zero emissions cars can work anywhere," he says.

When the first of the current generation of electric cars came out Rathwell didn't want to see the concept die again – electric cars were preferred until about 100 years ago, and efforts to revive them in 1970s and '80s failed. He saw the challenge: an electric car doesn't fit our transportation needs unless it can be charged quickly anywhere.

He developed the Level 2 charger, the world's fastest. It will power any model of electric vehicle in a few hours. He set up Sun Country Highways and installed chargers at partner locations across the country throughout the US and as far south as Chile and in Europe.

Tesla is currently installing even faster charging stations around the country, but only their newer Tesla vehicles can use them. But Level 2, 240-volt and Level 1, 110-volt chargers are compatible with all Tesla and other makes of EV vehicles.

"My goal is to create environmentally sensitive transportation to reduce pollution that damages people's health and threatens the survival of other species," he says. Rathwell is particularly concerned about birds, whose populations have fallen to small fractions of those of a century ago. (Sun Country Farms, the birdseed supplier to Peavey Mart is a Rathwell company.) Apart from their existence since dinosaurs, birds do humanity great pest control service, especially as insect feeders.

"I want to empower Canadians to use zero emissions transportation," he says. "Renewable power and electric cars mean far less emissions and much lower cost driving.

"Canada can be a leader in changing the world with economically, socially and environmentally sustainable choices. It will be the easy choice."

Every Peavey Mart location now has an EV charging station.

"Most stores see a car every day," says Jest Sidloski. Customer Experience manager with Peavey Mart. "It's not much yet. Some places, like our Red Deer store, see more as people stop in between Edmonton and Calgary. And chargers are available 24/7 so we don't see every car that uses them.

"We started this project in 2013. It was a huge commitment for us. Putting in the electrical wiring is quite costly. But, it's an investment in the future and in our customers' future needs and the environment.

"It's important to us to be ahead of the uptake of electric vehicles, even though it might be a decade before EVs become mainstream we need to be there. It may be sooner, farmers are big adopters of new technology."

Peavey Mart buys power from Bullfrog Power, so its stores and distribution centre as well as vehicles topping up at the chargers are all emissions-free. "It's all part of our commitment to a sustainable footprint, and customer service," says Sidloski. "I see charging stations and green energy as one of Peavey Mart's most exciting initiatives."

Capri Rasmussen and her husband, Jason Auch, agree. They charge their Tesla Model S at Peavey Mart whenever they're close to a store.

"We only worry about charging when we're on a road trip," she says. "We stop for lunch and top up the charge, sometimes we shop in the store, buy birdseed or other things. People we meet in

the store are always friendly and interested in our car. Farmers are always interested in what's new.

"We really value Peavey Mart and Sun Country. The chargers are a great service, so we visit as many as we can. And, the stores are centrally located so we can walk to a restaurant or stores."

The couple love their electric sports car, even though it's not a car for everyone or for all types of weather (the height clearance isn't ideal for heavy snow). They're car enthusiasts who like a vehicle with panache. They were excited to own a unique proof of concept car.

"It's different to drive, but fun," says Rasmussen. "It has a lot of torque, instant power when you hit the accelerator. All you hear is the wind and the tires. I think it's a bit like being on Star Trek and hitting warp speed.

"One of the things I really like about this car is that when you get up in the morning it's always charged up and ready to go. You never have to go to the gas station. And, there's almost no maintenance, updates go direct to the car's computer, there's no oil changes, just tires and windshield wipers to replace."

ONE MILLION EVs!

Global sales of electric cars hit 1 million late in 2016. About a quarter were Nissan Leafs and 160,000 Teslas. Another million vehicles were special purpose vehicles, including school buses.

Sales are increasing and lithium ion battery costs are dropping fast. Vehicle costs for electric cars are predicted to be competitive with gas models in the next three or four years. With fuel costs of under \$100 for 10,000 km more us may well be driving EVs sooner than we think.

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