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Humboldt, SK  
Immediate Release

## **WBDC Looks at Herd Size – Making the Choice**

The Western Beef Development Centre (WBDC) is hosting its annual Summer Field Day Tuesday, June 26, 2012. The event's keynote presentations will be on the beef cowherd size; what is the current situation and where might herd size and herd expansion be headed.

Beef cow numbers have stabilized after several years of contraction in Canada. Not only are there fewer beef cows, there are fewer ranches, too. Current record-high prices for feeder cattle are set to drive expansion of the beef cowherd over the next few years. It is widely presumed that increasing herd size can decrease costs. Is this truly the case? Will industry consolidation and individual herd size growth be part of the next round of expansion?

Nobody can give a definitive, long-term forecast of where the beef industry will go in the next ten years, but Dr. Glynn Tonsor from the Department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University uses a multitude of indicators to make an educated "guess." Dr. Tonsor's broad experiences span issues throughout the meat supply chain. Through both applied research and first-hand knowledge with livestock production, he has expertise in topics including animal identification and traceability, animal welfare and handling, food safety, and price risk management and analysis. Dr. Tonsor's research on a host of livestock economic issues has been published in many journals.

Following Tonsor's presentation, Kevin Woods of Westwood Land and Cattle at Moosomin gives his view from a local Saskatchewan perspective. Woods' family farms 10,000 acres and runs 4,000 cow-calf pairs and 1,300-plus bred heifers, some 200 bulls, and operates a 10,000-head backgrounding feedlot. They have successfully expanded their cow-calf operation through some tough times post-BSE. Now, as prices for bred stock have improved, they have reached their target of 5,000 top-quality females.

WBDC's Beef Economist, Kathy Larson, will discuss how and why production costs differ as herd size changes, using results from Western Beef's annual cost-of-production study as an example. Dr. Bart Lardner, Senior Research Scientist at the Termuende Research Ranch, is in charge of the afternoon research tours, which will include: Short-Rotation Forage Legumes, Eco Buffer, Sainfoin Variety Trial, Pasture Supplementation with By-Product Feed Pellets, and an Ear Tagging demo and Body Condition Score demo.

This is the 14<sup>th</sup> year that WBDC has been hosting a summer Field Day. The Termuende Trust Fund sponsors, in part, a noon lunch to those participating in the event. There is no charge to attend, and those present can expect an interesting day, with presentations, tours, and a tradeshow. More information on the Western Beef Development Centre and its Field Day can be found on the web at [www.wbdc.sk.ca](http://www.wbdc.sk.ca).

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