



GATEWAY RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



50 YEARS OF RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION

Gateway Research Organization (GRO) was formed from consolidation of the Pembina Forage Association in 1994.

The Pembina Forage Association was started in 1975 by local producers interested in pasture management, forage and livestock research. While

maintaining its interest in forage and livestock issues, the new organization became more involved in applied research and demonstration in crops and environmental sustainability, always with local producers' areas of interest in mind.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

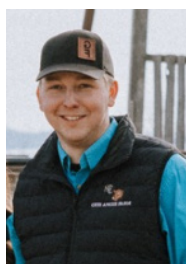


HISTORY	2
BOARD	4
PROFILE	5
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR	5
A WORD FROM OUR:	
MANAGER	6
RESEARCH AGROLOGIST	9
LIVESTOCK & EQUIP. COORD.	11
EXTENSION COORDINATOR	13
ALL THE BEST RICK!	14
INTRODUCING.....	15
FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS	16

GRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS



2025 Board (l-r): Adam McMillan (VP), Kenleigh Pasay (representative to ARECA), Ken Anderson, Lorrie Jespersen, Courtney von Rennekampff, Mike Hittinger (Chair)



Missing from above: Byron Long, Graham Letts (Treasurer), Robert Geis, Uwe Quedenbaum

GRO PROFILE

MISSION & VISION



Vision: Gateway Research Organization will be a renowned and respected agriculture research & extension organization that is the preferred source of unbiased farm production information.



Mission: Gateway Research Organization provides cost-effective applied agricultural research, demonstrations, and extension for producers in order to facilitate greater returns to farms by providing economically and scientifically sound information that enables our clients to make informed decisions.

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

MIKE HITTINGER



Another year has come and gone, and I'm happy to say that GRO's 50th year was a success! I would like to start by thanking everyone who has contributed to the continuity of this organization, whether current or past members, directors, staff and others, and wonder what we'll be researching and showcasing in agriculture in another 50 years. Looking forward, another season is in the planning stages, and there is a

lot to look forward to in the coming year. You can continue to look forward to seeing quality crop, livestock and forage research and local results from this group, as well as a multitude of extension events throughout the season. Additionally, if there is something that you would like to see us put to the test, please bring your ideas by the office, as our job is to make the mistakes so that you don't have to!

A WORD FROM OUR MANAGER

ANDRIA CARLYON, P.AG.



2025 - A YEAR OF CELEBRATION, GROWTH AND CHANGE

The past year was one full of learning and maintaining high standards of production and quality for Gateway Research Organization. I have just completed my first full calendar year as the manager at GRO and while it was a fast and steep learning curve, I enjoyed the successes and challenges. With an engaged and supportive board to guide me, GRO remains committed to ensuring local producers have access to relevant, unbiased, and science-based information. I would like to sincerely thank the outgoing directors for their commitment and wise guidance to GRO over the years: Ken Anderson, Graham Letts and Robert Geis.

We've also seen some big staff changes since I started as manager, with Jay Byer retiring, but continuing to be active in his community and to support agriculture through other means. In the spring, Kurtis Properzi was hired as the Livestock and Equipment Coordinator to overlap and transition with Rick Tarasiuk who was going to be moving on at the end of the year. Both Jay and Rick dedicated many years to

GRO and worked hard to build a good reputation for small-plot work and connection with the community.

There were many highlights and successful research projects in 2025 that GRO is proud to share in our research report. A couple of notables are the continuation of the local variety trials: canola, wheat and corn, the next stage of perennial wheat, forage pilot projects with double seeding silage and twin-row corn intercropping, and soil amendments on the heifer pasture. The successful execution of these research projects from setup, seeding, and data collection through to harvest was due to the amazing summer students: Leigh Murray, Jelena Bausch, Mohammad Khodaei and Amanda Gamble. They were well organized, engaging at producer events and cared about quality.

The field days on pasture, forage, canola/pulse and cereals brought together producers and industry to share learnings, best practices and many thoughtful questions and discussions. GRO is fortunate to have such great partnerships with other applied research associations, universities and colleges, commissions and municipalities to

"I FELT VERY HONOURED TO BE PART OF THE GRO STAFF THAT LEAD THE CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS"

provide us with experts to join us at our field days and share their knowledge with our producers. You'll find many of them acknowledged and highlighted throughout our research report.

One event stood out from the rest, and that was the 50th Anniversary Gala held on June 6. GRO was fortunate to be able to tour a dedicated group of 50 people to the heifer pasture that was started by the founders and a cereal site that has become a pillar of GRO nowadays. Transportation to the fields and within the pasture was provided by Westlock Motors, Karl and Jane Rottier, and Lonestone Farm. The group weathered a bit of rain and wind and then headed back to town for a steak dinner, a couple of messages and stories from Alan Hall, Rod Carlyon, Mike Hittinger and myself, as well as some poems from the days of the Hayshakers by Rose Bibby. The evening celebrations carried on with music by the Jeske Band. From the inception of Pembina Forage Association (PFA) in 1975 to the evolution to GRO in 1994, through many changes of people, programing, funding, and priorities, the vision of supporting the producers has always been at the center of all we do.

I felt very honoured to be part of the GRO staff that lead the celebration of 50 years with my family and family friend connections to PFA and GRO through the years. While reading

past Hayshakers and Annual Reports, listening to stories of past staff, board members and members, there is a lot of rich history within PFA/GRO that I was fortunate to learn about and do my best to showcase and share at the Gala.

The Gala planning committee was full of awesome ideas and full of more stories than we could squeeze into one day. I was grateful to those that were able to assist and ensure the event was enjoyable: Ken Anderson, Tom McMillan, Rod Carlyon, Courtney von Rennenkampff and Stacy Murray. Destinee Bizuns was our creative force behind the designing of the 50th Anniversary Logo that was used on decorations, media and swag.

GRO was fortunate to receive funding from a variety of sources to support extension, new research projects and update equipment and infrastructure. The Forage and Applied Research Association Capital Grant from the Government of Alberta department of Agriculture and Irrigation was integral in enabling GRO to expand its research and extension capabilities to better serve our producers and members. With these funds office renovations and upgrades were completed, as well as equipment purchased: plot swather, soil sampling SUV, cabbed tractor, 1 tonne towing truck and flatdeck trailer. We were also approved to receive items for free from Government surplus that were utilized in the office upgrade: chairs, tables, and whiteboards.

Our current staff are enjoying the office upgrades as it makes for a welcoming environment, and productive space for both individual and teamwork. We have some more work to do to complete the reorganization and have effective storage and workspaces for full-time staff and summer students to complete seed setup, sample

processing, measurements, and equipment maintenance.

We are looking forward to continuing full-time staff development to provide improved services and support to our producers. Three staff completed the Grazing Mentorship program through the Canadian Forage and Grazing Association (CFGGA), two staff are maintaining their Professional Agrologist designation, and everyone is continuing to attend non-GRO workshops, courses and conferences to build

their research, leadership, agronomy and communication skills.

There are many other exciting projects, events and ideas in the works and I am thrilled to be part of it. I look forward to seeing how and where they can be applied to help farming operations in the area.



2025 STAFF GROUP (L-R):

Kabal Singh Bhullar (research agrologist), Stacy Murray (Extension Coordinator), Jelena Bausch (Seasonal), Andria Carlyon (Manager), Leigh Murray (Seasonal), Kurtis Properzi (Livestock & Equipment Coordinator), Amanda Gamble (Seasonal), Mohammad Khodeai (Seasonal), Rick Tarasiuk (Field Technician)

A WORD FROM OUR RESEARCH AGROLOGIST

KABAL SINGH BHULLAR, P.AG.



ONE OF OUR MOST PRODUCTIVE RESEARCH SEASONS TO DATE

The 2025 year marked a defining chapter for Gateway Research Organization (GRO), shaped by important milestones, meaningful team transitions, and one of our most productive research seasons to date. Across all areas of our work, 2025 reflected steady growth, adaptability, and a strong commitment to serving producers.

Team Developments and Transitions

The 2025 season brought a balance of heartfelt departures and exciting new beginnings. Jay Byer and Rick Tarasuik wrapped up their final year with us and are now beginning a well-earned retirement. Their time with our organization reflects years of commitment, care, and steady leadership. We are truly grateful for the dedication and professionalism they brought to their work each day, and for the positive and lasting impact they have had on our team and our operations.

At the start of the year, we were pleased to welcome our new Manager, Andria Carlyon,

whose leadership has already made a positive impact. To ensure continuity in our operations, Kurtis Properzi joined the team to step into Rick's former role.

On a personal note, my family celebrated an important milestone in May with the birth of our first child, Harnaaz Kaur Bhullar. While becoming parents has brought both challenges and joy, my wife and I are deeply grateful for this new chapter.

Research and Field Performance

Operationally, 2025 was an exceptional year. Our team successfully seeded more than 4,300 research plots, beginning seeding of spring trials on April 30 and completing harvest by mid-October. Most notably, we achieved a 99.90 % useful data rate, reinforcing the reliability and practical value of our research outcomes.

Crop Research: This year marked the first time GRO harvested winter barley and winter oat plots, offering encouraging insight into the potential expansion of fall-seeded crops beyond winter wheat, winter triticale, and fall rye. In

the Westlock region, the growing season was generally satisfactory despite inconsistent and below-average precipitation and broader challenges related to geopolitical issues.

Cereal grains, including wheat and barley, performed consistently and aligned closely with long-term regional averages. Canola yields showed greater variability, reflecting the crop's sensitivity to moisture availability during flowering and pod fill. Pulse crops performed well overall, although seeded acres might be reduced due to the presence of *Aphanomyces*. Grain quality across crops met established standards.

Forage Research: Our forage research program continued to grow with the establishment of a new study on perennial wheat for dual-purpose grain and forage production. Based on promising observations from previous years, the trial was successfully established in 2025, with initial data expected to be shared in 2026.

In silage variety trials, barley, triticale, and wheat followed historical tonnage trends. Oat silage, however, experienced a 15-20 % reduction in tonnage, underscoring its sensitivity to drought

conditions.

To summarize, 2025 was a demanding and rewarding year. In 2025, we carried out about 45 research projects focused on crops, forages, and livestock. Through this work, we gained valuable insights that help farmers and producers continually improve their agricultural practices. The success of 2025 was driven by economic resilience and strong collaboration across our network.

I extend my sincere appreciation to my colleagues (GRO team and board members) for their dedication and support, to our funders for their continued financial support, and to our partner farmers who generously provide land that allows our research to remain practical and directly applicable.

As we step into the new growing season, working together and staying flexible will be key to keeping up with the changes in farming. Gateway Research Organization is dedicated to connecting research with practical solutions and supporting our members as they navigate the evolving world of agriculture. I wish you all a successful and rewarding 2026 growing season.



A WORD FROM OUR LIVESTOCK & EQUIPMENT COORDINATOR

KURTIS PROPERZI



MAKING A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO ENSURE FUTURE SUCCESS

2025 was a transitional year in terms of equipment operation, maintenance and management. With Rick Tarasiuk's retirement looming, I set out to learn as much from him as I possibly could in the season we worked together. Seeing Rick's dedication to perfection, I was able to understand the reputation for clean, aesthetically pleasing plot sites that GRO has built.

After attending events, reading reports, and following online for a handful of years I joined the board of directors in 2022. This time on the board grew my interest to the point that I jumped on the opportunity to join the staff when it arose. Time on the board, along with the fact I am still a producer myself, allows me to bring a slightly different perspective of the ag industry to the staff.

This year, GRO purchased a new one-ton dually and a gooseneck deck-over trailer. The investment in a second truck and trailer set up allowed us to have multiple pieces of equipment

working in different locations without requiring the truck (and staff) to run back and forth moving equipment, allowing for more efficient workdays and a reduction in miles traveled with an empty trailer. Another great investment was a new John Deere 4052R tractor, GRO's first tractor with a cab. This cab has made spraying safer and easier, made mowing and tillage much less dusty, and has provided a warm place to operate while clearing the large amount of snow we have received this winter.

With 50 years worth of grazing management trials and demonstrations you would think that GRO/Pembina Forage would run out of things to try. But with the everchanging technologies and management theories we continue to have lots to test and demonstrate.

We have been fortunate enough to have Murray Buxton as our pasture manger for a few years now. Murray's cooperation and dedication have allowed us to try the things that we do out at the heifer pasture. We look forward to continuing working together to learn as much as we possibly can into the future.

We continued our AMP grazing trial out at the heifer pasture, where we grazed the 100 heifers in 3-acre paddocks, with daily moves. These daily moves require a substantial amount of labour, having to move portable electric fencing and heifers. The rain gauge at the pasture measured a total of 134.00mm of rain in the 2025 season. Unfortunately, both years of this system have been under drought conditions which differs greatly from the previous number of years under other management practices. This factors in to make it hard to determine if the better grass utilization is worth the extra labour needed for the daily moves.

GRO is still in pursuit of an auto scale that can scan an RFID tag and weigh that animal on a regular basis as it goes for mineral. This in-pasture self-servicing autoscale would allow us to collect more regular weights and track gains without bringing animals in to go across the platform scale, impacting animal stress and labour expenses.



We are also collaborating with the UofA's Livestock Gentec group, and local producers on a multi-year study to determine if heifer success can be predicted by collecting and analyzing DNA samples. We are in the early stages of this project, but we hope that we can develop this replacement heifer profit index and help producers make herd improving decisions.

Looking back on the season that was 2025, I believe the right steps were taken to ensure the continuation of our research into 2026 and beyond. Rick's mentorship has positioned us well to keep learning, both about new and emerging innovations and the foundational practices that remain essential, while continuing to uphold the high standard established by previous staff.



A WORD FROM OUR EXTENSION COORDINATOR

STACY MURRAY



WHAT A FULL AND EXCITING YEAR!

Along with our increasing research portfolio, we continue to increase our efforts to reach the community. Our traditional events such as field days continue, but we also added some new in-person and on-line events.

Staff hosted high school and university class tours, coordinated five field days, and collaborated on a drone school. GRO hosted a Talk.Ask.Listen webinar with DoMore.Ag and FCC. Wednesday Night Networking, with Steve Kenyon of Greener Pastures Ranching, continues to draw good attendance. Our online channels continue to see increasing traffic.

Community round-tables were introduced at a couple of locations. These will continue in the new year, moving between the various communities across the region. GRO also started a GRO-ing Women of Agriculture program. This event, roughly quarterly, focuses on a different area of learning each time while encouraging networking and sharing of knowledge between the women of the region.

In 2025 GRO could be seen at many local events

throughout the region. We had floats in a couple of parades, presented at various industry events, connected with the Agricultural Service Boards (ASB) in each of the counties that we serve, had a booth at the local high school career fair, participated in Open Farm Days in three locations, and so much more.

We continue to collaborate with the other applied research and forage associations across the province on webinars, speaking tours, and conferences. We look forward to being a part of the Western Canadian Conference on Soil Health & Grazing again in 2026.

Our most exciting event in 2025 was, of course, our 50th Anniversary Gala. The pasture and field tour, while damp and windy, was a great opportunity for those, both new to GRO and involved since the beginning, to see what we're up to. The supper, by Kari's Katering, was fantastic and the stories and camaraderie shared throughout the evening were entertaining and interesting.

Remember, your ideas are always welcome. I look forward to even more connection, sharing and learning in 2026!

ENGAGEMENT

SUMMARY

555 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

198908 POST IMPRESSIONS

848 ATTENDEES AT GRO EVENTS

3809 FOLLOWERS ACROSS PLATFORMS

GUEST PARTICIPATION IN 42 EVENTS

SUBSCRIBERS

945 - Newsletter

2146 - WNN

ALL THE BEST IN RETIREMENT, RICK!



INTRODUCING OUR FORAGE RESEARCH COORDINATOR

AMANDA GAMBLE



I grew up in Peace River, Alberta, and started horseback riding in junior high, which led to my involvement in 4-H, local horse shows, and farm work. I earned my degree in Wildlife and Rangeland Management from the University of Alberta in June 2025, where I developed a strong interest in plants, particularly pasture/rangeland species.

I began working with GRO as a summer student in April 2025 and started my current role as Forage Research Coordinator in January 2026. I'm looking forward to learning more about the

behind-the-scenes work involved in setting up research trials and collaborating with producers to design projects that deliver practical, meaningful results.

This summer, I'm especially excited to spend time at the heifer pasture taking measurements, helping with shelterbelt establishment, and monitoring the trials I oversee at various sites as they progress throughout the growing season.



THANK YOU!

BASE FUNDING & PROJECT SUPPORT



CAPTIAL GRANT FUNDING



SUPPORTING COUNTIES



THANK YOU!

PROJECT & EXTENSION SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP



THANK YOU!

LAND COOPERATORS

Colby Hansen, Adam and Tom McMillan, Jubilee Farm, Anderson Seed Farms, Rick's Pedigreed Seed, Randy Pidsadowski, Pibroch Colony, Dean Weigand, Meunier Livestock, Justin Nanninga, Colin Felstad

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

AgCall, Corteva, Renovo Seeds, Greg Kyle, Barry Yaremicio, Sherri Strydhorst, Neogen, North Corridor Co-op, Westlock Seed Cleaning Plant and Growers, Galloway Seed, True Seed, Corissa Barriault, Katelyn Miller, Sarah Foster, Sarah Elliott, Kayla Jones, Danielle Borle, Kendra Stasiuk, Diane Harasimiuk, Leslie Majeau, Westlock Veterinary Center, Trevor Yurchak, Pixal 3D



THANK YOU!

ADDRESS

Bay A
9319 110 A Street
Westlock

PHONE

780-349-4546

WEBSITE

www.gatewayresearch.org

50th Anniversary Gala - Founders & First Supporters
Alan Hall, Rose Bibby, Ben Schrader, Bill Baier

