

### *A new course for farmers at the CLC*

Many of you will be familiar with CASS (Canadian Agriculture Skills Service). Have you noticed that many of the courses provide training that has nothing to do with farming more efficiently and effectively? *From Production to Profit* is a CASS eligible course run by the Conservation Learning Centre (CLC) that can help you make your farming operation profitable. We provide the information, and then you apply it!

In my last article in the Prairie Steward, the CLC had just entered into a heavy restructuring phase. Although the changes are still new and more are to come, we have cause to be excited at the CLC!

Director Duane Hill (Ducks Unlimited Canada) and I worked together in the fall to make a successful application for a course under CASS.

This approval means that farmers who apply to CASS, and are eligible, can get all their expenses reimbursed when they take our course. Regardless, farmers who take *From Production to Profit* will receive excellent value for their investment – getting reimbursed is an added bonus.

The goal of the course, *From Production to Profit*, is to direct farmers away from a traditional production mentality to a profit mentality. The course will empower farmers to understand key economic concepts that their banks, financial planners and others don't tell them about. Even though no one else is helping farmers to understand these economic concepts, they are crucial in order to be successful in farming today.

*From Production to Profit* will introduce farmers to gross margin analysis, the difference between finance and economics, and more. But what good is all that theory without practice and implementation? None! As an integral component of the course, farmers will learn how these concepts apply directly to their own farm. As an option, after producers return home, they get some homework. After learning the "how" in the course, they will apply their new knowledge to their own farm. But then, what if they made an error or are unsure of what they have done? First time – mistakes happen, right? That is why the course facilitator will go over the calculations and point out any areas that need improvement.

Duane and I understood early on that if we were farmers, we wouldn't be comfortable getting this information from someone who lived off of a salaried paycheck. Even though many academics and experts in the agricultural field may have the skills and knowledge to effectively present this course, they would lack their own experience. A successful farmer is an ideal candidate to present – someone who relies on their own proper economic calculations to create a living for their families. We currently have two experienced farmers ready to facilitate this course. *From Production to Profit* is designed to teach more than theory – the facilitator will be able to relate their own real life experiences. Through these examples, farmers will learn how to apply the theory to their own farm.

In order to successfully deliver this course, we want to present to small groups. However, we require a minimum of 10 farm operations (husband/wife teams are encouraged) in order to cover our costs; and if there are more than 14, we will look to set up another course. An added benefit is that we will bring the course to any area of Saskatchewan where there are enough people to deliver the course. This reduces your costs of attending. If you are interested, Garry Mayerle is the Administrator setting up these courses. He can be reached by phone at (306) 873-5993 or e-mail at [gf.mayerle@sasktel.net](mailto:gf.mayerle@sasktel.net), or contact the CLC at (306) 953-2796 or [info@conservationlearningcentre.com](mailto:info@conservationlearningcentre.com).

I am very excited about the opportunities this course will bring to farmers in Saskatchewan. Keep reading the Prairie Steward for more information in the future!

By Mitchell Japp, PAg