

# Soil Health Producer Highlights Series

## My Farm, My Soil, My Story

*Sean LaBrie—Difficulty Ranch, Didsbury AB*

- \* What does “Soil Health” mean to you and why is it important?

*Soil Health relates to the microbial and mineral health in our ground. Good soil health equals a healthy ranch as it radiates from the microbials in the soil, to better plant health, to improved water quality and retention, to increased animal health and daily gain on pasture, to personal well-being and a healthier financial bottom line so we can continue for future generations.*

- \* What management practices have you used to improve soil health on your operation?

*Rotational grazing in summer and bale grazing in winter have improved our pastures. We fenced our riparian areas and use solar watering systems. For weed management we target areas through mineral placement and brush mowing.*

- \* What changes have you seen?

*The biggest change has been in increased plant health and volume and a healthier riparian area. We have managed to lower production costs for feeding. This year we will test our success for drought tolerance!*

- \* What are the biggest challenges for soil health in your area?

*The biggest challenges are with brush management in native grass pastures and rodent control.*

- \* How do you advocate for soil health?

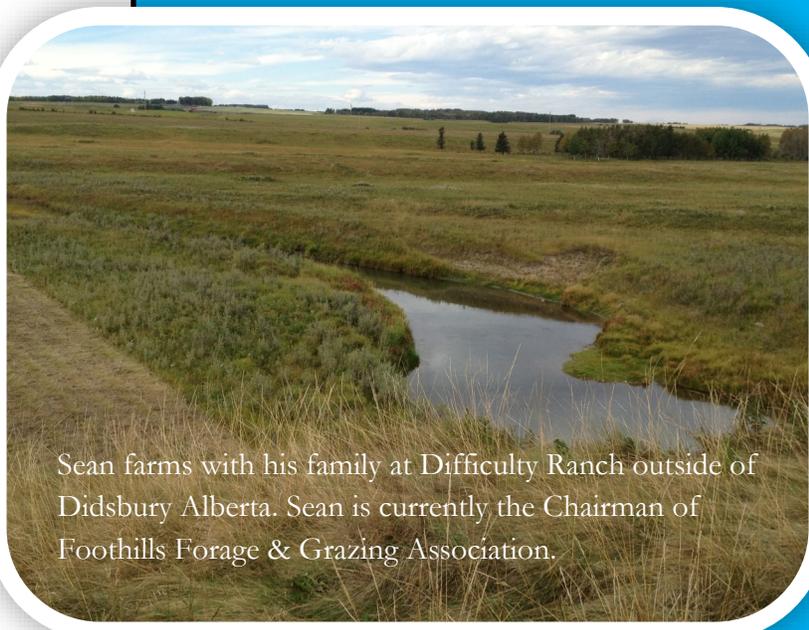
*Sean is Chairman of Foothills Forage and Grazing Association. We have conducted a bale grazing trial with field days and we contribute articles in various magazines and papers.*

- \* Do you have any future plans for improving the Soil Health on your operation?

*We are introducing new and varied forages in our tame pastures, utilizing zero till methods, to increase plant diversity and lessen the impact on the soils different levels. (A,B,C Horizons)*

- \* How has improving your soil health improved other aspects of soil health?

*We have seen changes in weed control, plant diversification and an overall improvement in pasture quality. Which means we are able to run more cows on fewer acres for longer!*



Sean farms with his family at Difficulty Ranch outside of Didsbury Alberta. Sean is currently the Chairman of Foothills Forage & Grazing Association.

Foothills Forage & Grazing Association is based in High River and assists producers in profitability improving their forages and regenerating their soils through innovation and education.

We envision a global community that respects and values profitable forage production and healthy soils as our legacy for future generations.

