



# Research

## *Biological Control of Foxtail*

*“Developing biological strategies to control foxtail barley in saline hayfields”*

**Project No. 0007-037**

**Research Institution:** Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Swift Current Agricultural Research Center)

**Lead Researcher:** Dr. Harold Steppuhn

**Objectives:** This study aims to identify forage varieties that can help suppress foxtail barley on saline land, provide good nutrition for grazing, and maintain long stand life.

**Background:** Foxtail barley invades disturbed pastures, hayfields and cultivated land. It spreads rapidly and is difficult to control, particularly in saline soils. The sharp, stiff, and barbed seed awns can become lodged in the nose and mouth of grazing animals. These animals and their calves eat less, produce less milk, and gain less weight.

These researchers are working to identify forage varieties that can suppress foxtail barley in

saline areas in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and to assess the forage quality and digestibility, livestock health, productivity and pasture longevity associated with these suppressor forages. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2011.

**Implications of the Research:** Dramatic increases in grain and oilseed prices may shift forage production onto lower quality land. Improving the yields and quality of forage that can be grown on this land will benefit cow calf producers, while helping to reduce herbicide input costs.

