SASKATCHEWAN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

2021-099: Evaluation of polycrop mixtures for swath grazing, soil health and economics

Researcher: Aklilu Alemu
Funding: $50,000.00

Polycrop mixtures have become a popular part of many discussions at beef and forage conferences and events. Producers already extend the grazing season by swath grazing polycrop mixtures late in the year, and some have tested polycrop blends in their annual forage crops. Proponents have noted that polycrop mixtures improved biomass yields, forage quality, soil fertility weed control and utilization of sunlight water and nutrients in other studies.

This research would provide detailed evaluations on forage growth and nutritional quality, grazing animal performance and behavior, soil physical and chemical properties, and system economics. Dr. Aklilu Alemu and his team will complete this work at the Agriculture and Agri-Foods Research Station in Swift Current and at the Livestock and Forage Center of Excellence near Clavet. A simple polycrop mixture will be compared to a complex polycrop mixture with 8 species. Both will be grown alongside a control, with only forage oats.