

Letter to the editor

Water concerns a long, hard struggle, says family

It is truly stunning the gravity of how powerless a landowner is in the face of water contamination from the oil and gas industry in our province. I can speak to this because we are involved in an ongoing struggle to address well contamination at our home.

We feel obligated to share just how vulnerable water is in our province and how impossible it is to prove industry impacted your water well because of the many loopholes and sheer dictatorship industry has on investigating water complaints. I'll explain:

The Alberta Energy Regulator is now the sole enforcer of the Water Act as it pertains to all oil and gas activity. If you have a water complaint, it investigates. So the regulator, which is 100 per cent industry funded, owes no duty of care to Albertans, cannot be sued by you for any act of negligence whatsoever and operates at arm's length of all other government functions, is who you have to trust to test and investigate any well contamination events. This was a very strategic and cunning move by the powers that be in our province and the regulator.

With concerns and complaints regarding water contamination issues mounting, the inevitable state of chemical migration, pipeline and casing failures, inescapable human error, and unsustainable consumption of aquatic resources, the stage is set for our water to be depleted and destroyed.

By removing any and all third-party involvement in the process of guarding our most valuable resource, the regulator and industry have closed the curtain on this critical issue. The bottom line is that current and future impacted Albertans will be defenceless.

Consider this: when the key public relations statement a multi-billion dollar industry relies upon is "there have been no impacts to groundwater ever in Alberta," would you feel as a landowner your best interests are being considered?

Alas, you have no choice. It is common industry and legal knowledge that there is no water testing a landowner can do that will be admissible in court. It will be argued and upheld that you contaminated that sample yourself. Just how do you contaminate your own water with methane... get your cattle to fart into the sample jar? The only samples that are possibly admissible in court are those the AER performs and analyzes at a lab of its choosing. Welcome to the system.

Let's just say your well is being tested by the AER. Here is grand loophole #1: There are no limits or standards within the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines for hydrocarbons, (methane, ethane, pentane, butane), gasoline and its organic constituents, formaldehyde or dozens of other chemicals the industry uses in its drilling and frac-

turing operations.

Your water testing can indicate such pollutants but still be considered consumable because of this oversight. Loophole #2: if priority pollutants of concern are found, the AER has two years to investigate the event and because of the self-regulating nature of the process, extensions can be indefinite.

This is largely why you never hear of well contaminations. The regulator sits on files for years, until it finds a way to discreetly close the file. Or the company responsible negotiates a "good-neighbour" compensation package complete with a non-disclosure agreement. We just graciously refused such an offer not too long ago.

It is this combination of variables that allows the industry, the regulator and synergy groups (a.k.a. lobby groups) such as SPOG (Sundre Petroleum Operators Group) and CAPP (Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers) the nerve to publicly state that there are no known cases of contamination in Alberta, even though this is blatantly untrue. If you ever see this statement written again or hear it in any form, by any organization in Alberta, I would seriously question its integrity and agenda.

In December 2013 our well was tested by Alberta Environment because we were able to make a very powerful case for suspected contamination because of historical and current well reports, investiga-

tion files of serious surface contamination on two sites near our home and surface casing vent flow from another well. This process took over a year.

Upon return of our data, six weeks after testing, we were immediately concerned over the quality and integrity of the data. Two key testing parameters, which were agreed to be part of the testing, hydrocarbons and sulphides, were missing. Hold times for testing substances were exceeded and the proper preservative for testing mercury was not used. Yet our file was to be closed.

A review is occurring stemming from our request, but it begs the question, why were there so many mistakes and omissions in our testing from accredited laboratories and how did it pass through the eyes of Alberta Environment and its quality assurance and control mechanisms?

If you want to protect your water, the only truly fail-safe approach is to courteously decline energy projects on your land. The consequences of being impacted range from the enduring inconvenience of hauling water, to the indescribable loss at not being able to sell your property, for lack of safe drinking water. Protecting your water in the face of industry is entirely on your shoulders. What will you do about it? Because once it happens, what can you do about it?

*Diana Daunheimer
Didsbury area*

Innisfail Market Report

Week Ending
Wed., Feb. 12, 2014
1041 Head for the Week

Steers

0 - 300 lb avg	1.70 - 2.50
300 - 400 lb avg	1.70 - 2.37
400 - 500 lb avg	1.60 - 2.25
500 - 600 lb avg	1.60 - 2.20
600 - 700 lb avg	1.45 - 2.00
700 - 800 lb avg	1.35 - 1.85
800 - 900 lb avg	1.25 - 1.65
900 - 1000 lb avg	1.10 - 1.45
1000 + lb avg	1.00 - 1.38

Heifers

0 - 300 lb avg	1.10 - 2.10
300 - 400 lb avg	1.20 - 2.00
400 - 500 lb avg	1.20 - 1.90
500 - 600 lb avg	1.20 - 1.80
600 - 700 lb avg	1.15 - 1.75
700 - 800 lb avg	1.15 - 1.60
800 - 900 lb avg	1.10 - 1.43
900 - 1000 lb avg	1.05 - 1.35
1000 + lb avg	1.00 - 1.30

Feeder Cows	0.90 - 1.10
Butcher Cows	0.75 - 0.99
Bulls	0.85 - 1.12
Bred Cows	\$1200-1550

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Regular Cattle Sales Wednesdays

Butcher Cattle 9:00 AM

followed by Yearlings & feeders Bred Cows & Bred Heifers! Selling March 5, in conjunction with our regular sale: COMPLETE HERD DISPERSAL, 70 red and black cows, bred Red Angus, due to start calving end of March. Selling due to health reasons. Young, good top cows. Half of the herd is second calvers. Other herds to follow.

PRESORT SALE

March 10, 2014

Please call to book your calves.

BULL SALE

- February 28, 2014 HEJ Charolais Bull Sale.
- March 4, 2014 Transcon's Bull Spectrum Sale.
- March 7, 2014 South Central Bull Sale; Charolais.
- March 14, 2014 Reese Cattle Bull Sale; Charolais.
- March 15, 2014 Gebvieh Advantage Bull Sale.
- March 18, 2014 Alberta Plaid Galloway Bull and Female Sale.
- March 22, 2014 Transcon's Mountain View Bull Sale; Simmental, Charolais, Red Angus, Polled Hereford

Catalogues are available for viewing on our website



HORSE SALE

Saturday, March 8, 2014

- Tack sells 10 a.m.,
- Horses 12 p.m. noon.

Please Check our website to see all of the upcoming sales!

For more information please call the Innisfail Auction Market
(403)227-3166 or 1-800-710-3166

Jack Daines 403-227-5113
Mark Daines 403-350-0200

Danny Daines 403-391-0580
Duané Daines 403-358-4971

 WATER VALLEY Gorgeous custom built house in the Water Valley 4 Bdrm, 3 bath, large attached garage & detached shop \$699,900	 CREMONA Great commercial opportunity in Cremona \$299,700	 BEAUTIFUL BUILDING SITE 5 acre parcel no building commitment \$179,900	 CHARMING PRIVATE ACREAGE 3Bdrm, 2 bath \$387,500
 WESTWARD HO Private acreage with 4 Bdrm home. Oversized garage with heated workshop area. \$349,900 MLS C5591546	 ESTATE SALE Amazing home on a full quarter! Over 4000 sq ft w/numerous upgrades. Beautifully landscaped! \$1,299,900	 FALLEN TIMBER Custom built acreage! 3 Bdrm, 3 1/2 bath home, 2 greenhouses, 4 car garage and full size tennis court. \$649,000 MLS C516740	 COAL CAMP ROAD 25 acre haven, 3 Bdrm house and oversized detached garage. \$474,900 MLS C558499
 BUILD YOUR DREAM HOME on a beautiful private acreage in Spruce Ridge Acres! Call for details.	 SUNDRE GREAT STARTER HOME with amazing yard! \$155,000	 SECLUDED 27 ACRE OASIS Minutes to the river and crown land. \$589,900	 BERGEN 7.22 acres with modular and barn \$408,000 MLS C559421
 SUNDRE Charming bungalow in gated community \$229,000 MLS C563076	 SUNDRE Established Acreage. 2 Bdrm Home with garage and barn \$325,000 MLS C559738	 SUNDRE Superb luxury home in gated community! Over 2000 sq ft with attached garage. \$387,500	

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