



Ducks Unlimited Canada
CANADA'S CONSERVATION COMPANY

Feature Profile

Luc and Sandi Tellier Receive Environmental Stewardship Award

Bonnyville, Alberta - Luc and Sandi Tellier are a farm couple with a progressive vision for the future and a pioneer spirit from the past. In a highly competitive industry where big business, drought, and soaring land prices constantly threaten the survival of traditional family operations, the Telliers are committed to using environmental farm practices on their ranch near Bonnyville. Their dedication recently won them the 2006 Alberta Beef Producers Environmental Stewardship Award.

“We believe in using not abusing the land,” explains Luc. “The more we can get back to the natural way of doing things, the better it is for the land and the animals, and the better it is for society.”

Since taking over operations of the Tellier Bar LD Ranch in northeast Alberta from his parents in 2005, Luc and wife Sandi have gained reputations across the province as conservation champions committed to sustainable agriculture practices. Their style of ranching preserves the integrity of a lifestyle handed down from Luc's father and grandfather, and promotes environmental stewardship practices to conserve the land for future generations.

The Telliers are members of the Prairie Heritage Beef Producers, a grassroots organization that supplies hormone and antibiotic-free Canadian beef products to grocery stores on Vancouver Island. They worked with the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (AEFP) program to build a series of fences to protect their bush and water sources from damage caused by cattle, and implemented practices that support the conservation of natural water springs, rotational grazing and gravitational watering systems.

Their next major project includes a partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) in St. Paul to restore a fence around one of their wetlands. This will not only provide clean water and a windbreak and wintering area for the cattle, it will also serve to protect the natural grasses and plants that act as a nesting ground for many waterfowl species

Murray Klutz, DUC Alberta's Agriculture Industry and Government Liaison Specialist, worked with the Telliers to develop a strategy to maintain and restore the quality of the wetlands and uplands. According to Klutz, this project is a vital step in protecting the waterfowl and maintaining a healthy ecosystem. “Waterfowl are indicator species because they are migratory,” explains Klutz. “Their reproductive success is influenced by

water quantity and quality. If they suddenly move from a place, it is a telling sign as to the state of the eco-system and environment. This is why it is so important to take care of the wetlands and uplands.”

Klutz believes the progressive environmental approach adopted by the Telliers will provide benefits for today that can be enjoyed by future generations. “Luc is doing a great job of taking care of the land, and at the same time he is building a healthy ranch that he can pass on to his children,” said Klutz.

It is for this reason, and to honor the legacy left to him by his parents and grandparents, that Luc Tellier perseveres through the tough times. “It was touch and go after the drought in 2002, but you just got to keep surviving,” said Tellier. “Ranching is a tough business but there are groups out there who are willing to help you. It makes you feel good when people show an interest in what you are trying to do.”

Once the Ducks Unlimited Canada project is completed in the fall, Tellier says he will be looking for more opportunities to improve the ranch that are consistent with conservation. In the meantime, he remains grateful for the many people and organizations that have helped him and his family achieve their dreams of being the third and fourth generations of his family to call the Tellier Bar LD Ranch home.

“We have a simple life - we don’t drive fancy pickups or have a lot of new iron [trucks and farm equipment] sitting in the yard - but you can’t buy what we have. I get to move cattle with my kids and come home for supper every night; I don’t have to be away from family all the time.”

This feature story was written by Jodie McKague, a student in the Professional Writing degree program at Grant MacEwan College.

Ducks Unlimited Canada is a private, not-for-profit, Canadian organization. Since 1938 DUC has positively influenced more than 24.9 million acres (over 10 million hectares) of wetland and upland habitat for the benefit of waterfowl, other wildlife and people. For information, go to www.ducks.ca, call your local DUC office or toll-free in Alberta 1-866-479-3825.