Media Release

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**USask industry chair to advance forage research**

SASKATOON – In a move to strengthen research into crucial livestock production systems, Dr. Flavia van Cleef (PhD) has been appointed as the new Beef Industry Integrated Forage Management and Utilization (IFMU) Chair at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).

As the industry chair, van Cleef will bridge disciplinary boundaries, lead systems-based forage and pasture management, and utilization research to address the needs of all levels of the agricultural sector.

“Working with researchers, industry and producers, Dr. van Cleef will develop innovative tools and resources to improve forage management and use,” said Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn (PhD), dean of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at USask. “We are excited to have Dr. van Cleef join the college to deliver the collaborative, interdisciplinary research needed to support a sustainable livestock and forage sector.”

Forages are plant systems that act as high-quality livestock feed with potential benefits for soil health, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity. Established to address a gap in forage research, the IFMU chair will explore the soil-plant-animal interface to help maximize the agronomic, economic and environmental benefits of forages.

“Productive pastures and forage crops are key to maintaining a strong and competitive beef industry in Canada,” said Craig Lehr, the Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) chair and Alberta beef producer. “The investment Canadian producers have made to establish the chair in IFMU will contribute to improved forage and grazing management strategies as well as training of new expertise to serve Canada’s beef cattle and forage sectors.”

van Cleef joins USask’s College of Agriculture and Bioresources with a joint appointment between the Department of Plant Sciences and the Department of Animal and Poultry Science. As the industry chair, she will work to advance forage utilization by enhancing system health, productivity and resilience.

“My goal is to bring together the latest research and practical solutions that work in the real world, ensuring they are locally relevant and aligned with global sustainability demands,” said van Cleef.

“Identifying new technologies through applied research will be key to improving forage use and, therefore, profitability in forage-based livestock production systems. Through collaborative research, I am committed to helping the agricultural community adopt innovative strategies for a more sustainable integrated forage management.”

van Cleef completed her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in animal science at São Paulo State University – UNESP in Brazil. In 2021, she obtained a PhD in agronomy from the University of Florida.

Prior to joining USask, van Cleef was a post-doctoral research fellow at the Center for Nuclear Energy in Agriculture at the University of São Paulo in Brazil. Her studies focused on evaluating the greenhouse gas production of various arid and semi-arid tannin-rich plants.

For her research at USask, van Cleef will focus on the development and evaluation of agronomic strategies that optimize forage establishment, yield, quality, and longevity. She will also explore feeding and grazing strategies that optimize animal performance while also contributing to improved soil health and environmental sustainability.

The industry chair position is jointly funded by the Beef Cattle Research Council, the Saskatchewan Cattle Association, the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), and the Global Institute for Food Security at USask.

Sustainable CAP is a five-year, $3.5 billion investment by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada's agri-food and agri-product sectors. This includes $1 billion in federal programs and activities and a $2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

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**For media inquiries, contact:**

Victoria Dinh    
USask Media Relations      
[**victoria.dinh@usask.ca**](mailto:victoria.dinh@usask.ca)    
306-966-5487