

GOPHERS!

By Barry Cymbaluk

The melting of snow and the warmth of spring signals one thing, the gophers are out. For many ranchers and farmers, gophers create a major hazard. Gophers or “pocket gophers” as they are formally called are burrowing animals. This means they create little holes that are potential leg breakers of unsuspecting cattle. There are many means of removing gophers from Alberta’s prairie lands. Different types of traps have been developed, as well as different techniques. The two most common techniques are flushing the gophers out by pouring water down their holes, and good old fashion shooting.

The best method in my mind is shooting, and the best gun for this is the .22 rifle. I am not known for my big game shooting, but when it comes to the .22 I can shoot a little. I use a Winchester Cooney Model 600. It is a bolt action, with a tube magazine. It will shoot .22 longs as well as shorts. It is important that when you purchase a .22, check that it can handle the



longer bullets or LR. Some people prefer the semi-automatic .22, along with a banana clip; it would make the ultimate gopher gun. Personally, I prefer the bolt action because of its repeatability. With centerfire rifles, you can only load five bullets in the gun at one time in

order for it to be legal. However, with rimfire guns you can load as many bullets as you want.

When it comes to ammo, the .22 is very fussy. Picking up any box of ammo and expecting it to shoot accurately, is a big mistake many shooters make. Guns are a lot like people, some like Pepsi, and some like Coke. Buy different boxes, from different companies and you will see how differently each ammo shoots. There are a few things to look for when purchasing a good gopher load. Try to buy high velocity loads with hollow point lead tips. There are also hyper-velocity loads, but many, including me will tell you they lack accuracy. Also, try to stay away from the solid lead tips;

they do not create enough damage to dispatch a gopher. I have tested most of the .22 loads out on the market, and the Winchester Power-Points and Remington Golden Bullets shoot best in my gun.

