

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
MINUTES FOR THE COW CALF COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY JUNE 10, 2015, 8:00 a.m.
AT THE DELTA SOUTH HOTEL, EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Present: Tim Smith - *Chair, Zone 4*
Rick Friesen - *Zone 1*
Brodie Haugan - *Zone 1 @ large*
Jake Meyer - *Zone 2*
John Bland - *Zone 3*
Walt Suntjens - *Zone 4 @ large*
Rose Wymenga - *Zone 5*
Kelly Fraser - *Zone 5 @ large*
Assar Grinde - *Zone 6*
Brian Chomlak - *Zone 8*

Staff: Fred Hays - *Policy Analyst*

Guests: Greg Bowie - *Board (first part)*
Stuart McKie - *AFSC*
Ken Handford - *AFSC*
Bill Hoar - *AFSC*
Sean Royer - *Alberta Agriculture*
Morgan Stromsmoe - *DUC*
George L'Heureux - *FAA*
Ryder Lee - *CCA (via telephone)*

Absent: Ted Ford - *Zone 7*
Norm Hennigar - *Zone 9*

“That the minutes from the April 15, 2015 conference call be approved with changes.”

Carried

3. Financial Report

(a) Financial Statement ending May 31, 2015:

Motion by Friesen/Haugen:

“That the financial statement be accepted for information purposes.”

Carried

4. Decision Items

(a) Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference draft had been approved by the Council at a previous meeting. Subsequence to this the Board had not accepted the membership components. These were to be defined by the Board.

Motion by Meyer/Haugen:

“That the Terms of Reference without the membership item be approved.”

Carried

(b) Membership on Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC), and the Wildlife Compensation Group:

ESCC and the Wildlife Compensation Group (formerly the Wildlife Predator and Shot Livestock Compensation Committee) are Government of Alberta committees and had been part of the Cow Calf Council. With formation of the ABP Wildlife Committee these had been transferred to their file.

Motion by Bland/Chomlak:

“To accept the changes in membership coming from the Wildlife Committee to the Endangered Species Conservation Committee and Wildlife Compensation Group as information.”

Carried

(c) Wildlife Working Group appointment:

With changes in the Cow Calf Council and Wildlife Committee Terms of References membership from the CCC to Wildlife was approved. At the CCC meeting in January 2015 members to Wildlife were Suntjens and Ford. Discussion followed that Ford continue as the CCC representative to WC.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

(a) Adoption of agenda:

Motion by Bland/Chomlak:

“That the agenda be approved as presented.”

Carried

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

(a) Minutes of the January 22, 2015 meeting:

Motion by Suntjens/Meyer:

“That the minutes from the January 22, 2015 meeting be approved.”

Carried

(b) Minutes of the April 15, 2015 conference call:

Motion by Haugan/Grinde:

Motion by Suntjens/Meyer:

“That Ted Ford continue as the Cow Calf Council member to the Wildlife Committee with Brian Chomlak as alternate.”

Carried

(d) ABP Strategic Objectives and Development of the CCC Strategy:

The Cow Calf Council objectives and strategy was discussed to better focus these in relationship to the ABP Business Plan. An objective priority and action sheet was discussed. The Council will review the business risk management (BRM) part of the strategy before developing any priorities. This would help define the BRM policy for the ABP Policy Manual.

DIRECTION: For members to review the Business Risk Management component of the Council’s strategy before the next Cow Calf Council meeting.”

(e) Fall meeting resolution:

“Be it resolved that ABP approach the government of Alberta for shared funding formula for the testing of cowherds for Johne’s Disease” This had been discussed. There is a need for more accurate testing. Had spoken with the provincial veterinarian; GOA will not fund.

(f) Cow Calfenomics update and funding request:

Had received a letter from Alberta Agriculture about the upcoming meetings in the fall. Some discussion about past meetings: low quality meetings; level of speakers was relatively low level; for younger producers attendance of mentor producers limiting. There was discussion about sponsoring young producers, and not limiting it to students studying in secondary institutions.

Motion by Chomlak/Meyer:

“To sponsor the 2015 Cow Calfenomics meetings for young producers from 18 to 25 years of age to a total of \$3,000.”

Carried

DIRECTION: Hays to send a letter to session organizers about the sponsorship arrangement.

(g) Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) Land Policy:

ACA had some communication with ABP about a possible ABP position on their board. The Council has some discussion about having more of an advisory arrangement.

DIRECTION: to send any correspondence about an ACA board position to the ABP board for their consideration.

(h) Advanced Payment Program (APP):

George L’Heureux, FAA, discussed their lending programs using APP required producers participate in AgriStability (A/S); Agriculture and Agri-food Canada places assignments to a producer’s account on AgriStability. Many producers (his number 85%) do not have A/S account thereby not being eligible for FAA-APP financial support. He was suggesting having other financial instruments to support these loans such as all risk pasture or forage insurance, crop and hail insurance and/or Cattle Price Insurance. He would like to delink AP from A/S. He was suggesting having the Safety-net subcommittee explore this with AFSC. His contact Jeff Rockborne, AAFC, would be in Alberta during the end of July. A meeting time with Rockborne could be arranged with the Safety-net subcommittee to explore this.

DIRECTION: for the Cow Calf Council to explore the possibility to have AgriStability delinked from the Advanced Payment Program for participation with Feeders Association of Alberta.

5. In Camera

To improve Council communication they would have a summary report to the industry after each CCC meeting. Hays would prepare this report to be distributed through the ABP Weekly report or as a release.

6. Discussion Items

(a) BRM meeting in Ottawa – Ryder Lee

Ryder Lee from CCA discussed the upcoming meeting in Ottawa about the possible Growing Forward 3 changes to safety-net programs. There are presently three funding streams: the Provincial; the federal GF2 Programs; and Provincial cost-shared programs. GOC wants to step out of some programs. The CCA meeting representatives need to have a position on these programs including AgriStability (A/S). A/S is considered to have some downside for the beef sector, particularly if a producer has both livestock and crops. Ontario and Quebec have a variety of programs with government dollars going toward a portion of the premiums. Need to retain Cattle Price Insurance and Advanced Payment Program (APP). CCA wants to have Cattle Price Insurance as a national program. AgriInvest contribution was cut from 1.5% of allowable sales to a cap of 1%. Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) had been designed to look after hardship situations; it was not used very much by producers and collapsed by the GOC. If producers followed a similar direction for AgriInvest the GOC could consider something similar, although there has been no hint of this. Accounting fee costs for some producers are high for A/S and APP programs. Some discussion about potential dryness or possible drought in some areas. May be a need for AgriRecovery that will be initiated by the province. GF3 program will be signed in July 2017 for activation on April 1, 2018.

(b) AFSC BRM Update:

A presentation from AFSC looked at the past enrolment and payouts from the Cattle Price Insurance Program in Alberta. During the past season there were cheaper premiums and higher coverage compared with last year. During May policy numbers decreased by 45%, possibly due to external factors of expected market conditions for the fall and supply-demand dynamics. Some producers were covering only parts of their herd, possibly to cover only hard input costs. On average producers are getting older and do not necessarily need to have their entire calf crop insured. The AFSC forage insurance program is being revamped to be set up as a “feed-need model. They anticipate having a few more Input Advisory Group (IAG) meetings on this, perhaps at the end of July and mid to the end of November. Looking to have hay and pasture insurance offered as either separate programs or parcelled in a basket, possibly looking a production and land base relationship. Looking at having a “feed need” program that could be triggered on an area base change need. Will probably use satellites for MDI and weather modifications and forage/pasture quality rider. Some producers want to have better feed quality insurance; others want to have more quantity-based insurance. There was some discussion about the current dry conditions in some areas of the province with some ability be considered to allow release of insurance forage for cattle feed. Presently require an on-farm inspection for this. June 20 is presently the cut off seeding day. May have problems with grasshoppers. Looking at new program design to deal with local price spikes in risk areas. Perhaps have weather triggers at township level. If crops are hailed are looking at having field strips and hail mapping as a pilot project as part of the crop inspection process. Will be looking at remote sensing for individual farm crop damage assessment.

(c) Social Licence:

Sean Royer from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry provided a discussion about Social Licence for producers. Social licence requires the agriculture industry’s mutual commitment to understand and embrace shared values of producers and consumers, being transparent and engaging the public. This is occurring because consumers are wanting to know where their food comes from; they want to have some say in the agriculture supply process. Some of this is science-based, some is based on emotion. Trust in the food system is fragile. Trust as a main driver of social licence is driven by three key things: influential others (such as doctors, dieticians, friends; competency (knowledge, science-base) and confidence (shared values and ethics). Consumer decisions for food production are being seen that can affect producer practices such as use of steroids and hormones in beef; management practices such as feeding, animal management and transportation and others. Beef producers have to deal with this relationship. It’s not enough to convince consumers that what they are purchasing is acceptable: consumers want to have their input as well.

(d) Ducks Unlimited Forage Program:

Morgan Stromsmoe, DUC, discussed various programs that they feel are complementary to agriculture. They are a science-base organization with about 30,000 supporters in Alberta. Core business includes Wetland Restoration, Wetland Protection, Retention of Native Uplands and Restoration of Upland Habitats (forage, winter wheat). Their Revolving and Purchase Program presently with 2,400 acres involves wetland restoration. They purchase farmland with large amounts of wetland, put on an easement to maintain the wetland and resell the land for about 70% of the original value. This goes through a tendering process. There was some discussion about this driving up the price of pasture and grazing land. The number of pintail ducks has been decreasing during the past two decades in the prairies primarily because of the loss of grassland habitat. This is related to a decline in nesting success on prairie breeding grounds. DUC has a pintail initiative to conserve habitat.

(e) Auction Mart Insurance:

This was from the last meeting. Discussion about Neilson Bros. personnel rate auction mart insurance that was prohibitively high.

(f) Board, Committee and Association Reports:

- i. *Board Report – Friesen:* Board was looking at sustainable beef program with involvement from McDonald’s, CCA and ABP. The Grazing Lease proposals were being reviewed with the GOA and grazers. The resolution of tagging bulls going to market had not been totally resolved by CCIA: this is still being discussed; ABP will be kept informed. The BSE case reporting by CFIA needs to be reviewed. Need to have price information for compensation. Farm and ranch safety is being reviewed in context with the OH&S Act. Two options were presented for incorporation 1) mandatory reporting of accidents, or 2) allowing agriculture to determine areas for safety with mandatory reporting. Meeting on June 29th will continue discussions. Because of the extending drought in some parts of Alberta the executive were meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and soon. Marketing Council is reviewing the ABP Plan Review. One main problem continues with the funding clause.
- ii. *Safety-net Report – Smith:* No report. Meeting will be held on July 9, 2015.
- iii. *Wildlife Committee Report- Sunjtjens:* Met on June 8, 2015. Colin Campbell from zone 7 is chair. Members to the Alberta Game Management Advisory Group (AGMAG) is Rick McKnight and Colin Campbell as alternate. Membership of Committee being assessed by Board. Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) would like to have deadstock funding go through AFSC office rather than ACA to help improve producer payments. WC will review Miistakis Wildlife Impact report for

follow-up. Elk are out of control in Suffield with not apparent resolution. Ducks and Geese in Sheerness area are not being controlled sufficiently: considerable crop damage from them in area.

- iv. *Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC) Report:* This is a GOA committee. Suntjens prepared report from last meeting to be distributed. Sage grouse issue in SE Alberta discussed. This Committee is now with Wildlife Committee. Gordon Graves is ESCC rep.
- v. *Drought and Excess Moisture Advisory Group (DEMAG)- Fraser:* This is an GOA Committee. They are planning to have a meeting in near future to assess provincial dry zones.
- vi. *Wildlife Predator and Shot Livestock Committee:* This is a GOA Committee. No report. Had planned a meeting for June 4 but cancelled because of the newly elected government. This is now with the Wildlife Committee
- vii. *Alberta Forages Industry Network (AFIN) Report-Bland:* John Bland is now on AFIN Board. R&D is a big focus of the group. Many ARD R&D staff have been leaving the department. This is leaving R&D support for forages limited. About 80% of forage seed is exported. Some forage seed land has been transferred to annual crops such as canola because of producer's increased profitability in those sectors. Forage acreage in the province is decreasing somewhat.
- viii. *AFAC Meeting- Wymenga:* Alberta Farm Animal Care Association had conference on March 26, 2015 in Red Deer. : Body scoring exercise with SPCA to assess poor body condition for livestock transport and sales: benchmarking compromised cattle. Discussed social licence, the social media with veterinarians dealing with compromised cattle at auction marts. New AFAC executive chair Brian Chomlak (ABP), vice chair Darryl Dalton (AVMA) and finance Grace McGregor (AFA).
- ix. *Wrap Up: Going Forward:* To assess BRM direction and priorities for the Council.

7. General Reading Material

- (a) CCC 2014 Resolution and Action Items:
- (b) Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference:

8. Next Meeting and Upcoming Events

- (a) No future CCC meeting was planned.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Chomlak at 4:40 p.m.