

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
AGENDA FOR THE CATTLE FEEDER COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2016, 8:30 A.M.
AT THE ABP BOARDROOM, CALGARY, ALBERTA

Present: Bryan Thiessen - *Chair*
Howard Bekkering - *Zone 1*
Jimmy Nelson - *Zone 2*
Cecil Anderson - *Zone 6*
Ken Stanley - *Zone 7*
Garth Porteous - *At Large*

Staff: Rosanne Allen - *Executive Assistant*
Rich Smith - *Executive Director*

Absent: Craig Ference - *Zone 4*
Charlie Christie - *Zone 5*
Phil Amyotte - *Zone 8*
John MacArthur - *Zone 9*
Tim Sekura - *BOD Rep*

Guests: Brian Koberstein - *AAF*
Karen Yakimishyn - *PAG*

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

(a) Adoption of Agenda:

Additions: 4(i) Alberta Water Council appointment: 6(c) BIXSco project discussion:

Motion by Porteous/Bekkering:

“That the agenda be approved with additions.”

Carried

2. Approval of Minutes

(a) Minutes of the June 15, 2016 meeting:

Motion by Bekkering/Stamley:

“That the minutes of the June 15, 2016 Cattle Feeder Council meeting be approved.”

Carried

3. Financial Statement

(a) Financial Statements ending October 31, 2016:

We have invested some of the funds. We have not received an invoice yet for the Phosphorus project because they are not sure if they will need the funds.

Motion by Nelson/Bekkering:

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

Carried

4. Decision Items

(a) Financial challenges in the cattle feeding sector:

There are safety-net programs but the time frame to get some of the money back is taking too long. Livestock payouts for next year are huge. If Western is one of a series of feedlots that are closing this will become a huge problem for Alberta producers. Smith Livestock has talked about closing.

A number of producers in Alberta have been unable to bring in their feed because the land is so wet they have been unable to get into their fields.

There are programs out there that would have helped mitigate some of the loss if they had been accessed. The biggest wild cards are the Canadian dollar and the protectionism at the border.

(b) Lethbridge County Levy and municipal taxation:

ACFA asked the School of Public Policy to prepare this document to help inform our discussions with the government. The ABP Board approved funding the proposal.

Smith has also been working with Brenna Grant using the same model that is used for taxation of land. Greg Bowie and Smith attended a meeting with Municipal Affairs where they discussed the proposal. If we assess livestock operations the same way they assess farmland it would level out over time. They are hoping that the government will help fund the study.

With the court case in Lethbridge they are hoping to have some discussion on. The lawsuit is scheduled for February.

Counties that do not have any revenue from the energy sector need to find alternatives to funding their infrastructure. The government is reluctant to spread the wealth. A good way to pay for roads is with fuel tax but it concentrated in large cities rather than across the province.

The productive capacity proposal is a more balanced tax.

(c) ACFA Resolution and discussion:

The ACFA resolution was voted on at three different meetings and defeated at one. There is some question about what the ACFA means by *‘mutually agreeable modern governance and funding model’*. There does seem to some indication that the government will change the law allowing for a non-refundable check-off but we would still need to apply for it and show the government that we have the support of Alberta producers.

On most industry issues, we are aligned with ACFA but when it comes to funding they feel they should be the only organization that deals with cattle feeders.

The last proposal we made to ACFA had them making decisions on marketing and research for the beef industry. This was not acceptable to them so we need to get a clear idea of what they want.

Members discussed what actions the council should take. Hopefully this project will provide a balance for feedlots across Alberta. The NRCB should not be saying that a feedlot does not need to do something, their job is to administer the regulations.

(d) Bill 6 Working Groups and labour legislation:

Most of the working groups have completed their discussion and the groups have disbanded.

(e) Impacts of federal/provincial climate change actions:

One of the things we are looking at is getting a sense of the cost of emission pricing. There have been some preliminary numbers for transportation on feedlots. There is no real good information so we are looking at getting some work done to provide those numbers. The government has been clear on what they are charging. The carbon sequestration benefits on grasslands needs to be addressed. They won't pay offsets on what is already there but they need to recognize the benefits of keeping what is already there. Electricity charges are unknown once they phase out coal and go into renewable.

(f) Winter manure management for feedlots – Brian Koberstein and Karen Yakimishyn:

Several years ago, Alberta Agriculture received a call from some northern feedlots about their concern over the AOPA's stance on their manure management. After some conversations with industry and government there were different opinions on manure covered snow. As a result, they recognized that no one was clear on the issue. Last year they worked with 11 feedlots across the province and sat down with a focus group in Lethbridge. Awareness needs to be increased on the issue.

Karen spoke on policy and scientific trends. AOPA does not allow spreading on frozen or snow covered land if you have 9 months of storage. The legislation says spreading on snow is okay if the NRCB says it's okay or if you go to them for permission. Operations that were open before AOPA came in do not need permission from NRCB.

After meeting it was recommended that an Expert Committee be formed to validate the risk; do some extension programming including the pilot project.

The mandate was to provide an opinion on the runoff risk implementing the program.

The committee consensus was to have a plan prior to winter to properly address the runoff risk.

The impact on feedlots to move or store manure could become costly. We need to be really clear about why and when feedlots spread manure on frozen or snow covered land. There are different issues with feedlots in the north than there is in the south.

There are a number of reasons feedlots spread manure on frozen or snow covered ground: field access and compaction; window of opportunity; short growing period; adverse weather conditions; high snow/ice/water; cost; temporary storage challenges; effective use of resources; protection of feedlot infrastructure; limited access to custom operations; road bans, road protections.

Target is often that very short period of time just before it thaws; essentially no spreading on snow occurs; management of compaction and agronomic field impact; temporary storage policy is a critical element to minimizing frozen or snow covered land.

A big part of this year is to build a management plan with each feedlot and see how it works out.

The objectives for this year is to have feedlots complete a management plan; continue to build on capacity to assess field suitability. They will watch closely what happens this year because it will probably be wetter this year than last year.

(g) VBP+ and Feedlot Animal Care Assessment:

Thiessen attended a meeting with Cargill and a woman from the US about the Feedlot Animal Care Assessment where they discussed the concerns of the assessment. They next met with NCFCA to discuss the flat program and let it roll into VBP+ but we own it and can make changes on it. They wanted more producer input and an independent chair. Most seemed open to working with the changes at the time but since then no longer agree.

(h) Price Reporting:

Brenna Grant met with ACFA about price reporting. There were several concerns one being a three-week lag on reporting. They also want the mandatory part taken out.

(i) Alberta Water Council appointment:

It would be nice to have someone from ABP on the Water Council but it doesn't need to be from this council. Grew out of Water for Life. Its a multi stakeholder group that oversees the Water for Life strategy. It meets two or three times a year in Calgary.

The reason to have someone there is to make sure they don't head off in a direction that hurts the cattle industry.

Smith will get some information on the council and let the delegates know.

5. In Camera

6. Discussion Items:

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Bekkering at 2:40 p.m.

(a) TB Case in Southeastern Alberta:

Spoke with CFIA yesterday about increasing the capacity of the testing and labs. They have updates on their website and are becoming more forthcoming. They have committed people to communicate with the quarantined people.

They started with the index herd and have now added two more herds to the index herd because they wintered together. Because the infected cow did not go to the summer pasture the herds there are not as important. All the animals in the index herd will be slaughtered. All of the positive reactors are slaughtered and tested.

They may not kill anything in the quarantined herds except the positive reactors and if the positive reactors don't have TB than the herds will be released. There are two operations in Saskatchewan that are tied to the quarantine.

The problem is for the producers that are quarantined because they do not have feed or water to winter calves. ABP has been working with the government and AgriRecovery about funds for the producers. This takes time though so they are working on a short-term solution. What ABP would like to do is finding a way to get the calves off the ranches and send them to a terminal feedlot and keep the calves from different herds separate. There are a number of problems that need to be addressed.

Producers affected can apply for Advanced Payments now but this will take time. The government seems to be moving faster with AgriRecovery this time then in 2009 when ABP working with the government to activate AgriRecovery.

There are 52 reactor cattle from three different herds – 4% of the affected herds.

There is compensation for destroyed animals but no compensation for holding animals. They are doing enhanced passive surveillance on the elk herds in Suffield. The elk are either the source of the TB or have become a recipient. This strain of TB has never been found in Canada before.

(b) Impacts of Western Feedlots closure:

At the end of March Western will be completely shut down. There will be some impact in the industry with the closure of Western but the cattle will be spread out among the remaining feedlots.

(c) BIXSco project discussion:

Bekkering had a conference call in which they discussed a financial interest notification system so if the cattle are moved BIXSco is kept informed about where they are.

7. Next Meeting and Upcoming Events

- (a) December 5, 2016 at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Calgary, AB

8. Adjournment
