

**ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
MINUTES FOR THE CATTLE FEEDER COUNCIL MEETING
FRIDAY JANUARY 15, 2016, 8:30 A.M.
AT THE ABP BOARD ROOM, CALGARY, ALBERTA**

Present: Bryan Thiessen - *Chair*
Howard Bekkering - *Zone 1*
Jimmy Nelson - *Zone 2*
Craig Ference - *Zone 4*
Charlie Christie - *Zone 5*
Cecil Andersen - *Zone 6*
Ken Stanley - *Zone 7*
John MacArthur - *Zone 9*
Garth Porteous - *At Large*
Tim Sekura - *BOD Rep*

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

Absent: Phil Amyotte - *Zone 8*

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

(a) Adoption of Agenda:

Additions: 6(c) Bill 202; 6(d) Ontario Teacher's Federation Pension Fund;

Motion by Porteous/Bekkering:

“That the agenda be approved with additions.”

Carried

2. Approval of Minutes

(a) Minutes of the August 20, 2015 meeting and the December 7, 2015 meeting:

Motion by Christie/Stanley:

“That the minutes of the August 20, 2015 and December 7, 2015 Cattle Feeder Council minutes be approved as presented.”

Carried

3. Financial Statement

(a) Financial Statements ending December 31, 2015:

Two invoice payments for the ILWG project and the Phosphorus project have been paid. Due to variations between the fiscal years of ABP and Alberta Milk, we received two invoices for the ILWG project in the same ABP fiscal year. We could carry the second invoice as an account payable, but Laura Procnier thought it was simpler to just pay it. Paying off all of the invoices has put the

council a little over budget, but in the overall ABP budget, we will be fine.

Motion by Sekura/Bekkering:

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

Carried

4. Decision Items

(a) Bill 6 update and strategy:

The latest update that ABP has distributed is available in the package. As of January 1st the OH&S Act and WCB coverage came into force for paid non-family employees. Under the Act, an employer has a responsibility to provide a safe workspace. Employers have until April to register under WCB, but their employees are covered as of January 1, 2016.

The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry says that the focus of workplace activity will be on education. It appears that the consultation for OH&S has been turned over to Agriculture and Forestry. The government is proposing six discussion tables or working groups to provide consultation on employment standards, labour relations and the OH&S Code. The original timelines for development of regulations and standards under Bill 6 have been extended to the fall of 2016 or the spring of 2018. The government has committed to taking the time to get these elements done correctly.

There are a number of agricultural groups that have been created to address Bill 6. All of the agricultural Board and Commissions, along with other invited organizations, will be meeting January 22nd to create a more formal coalition of the organizations and discuss how to deal with Bill 6 and the upcoming tables. It is very important that industry is able to advance our positions on specific elements of labour relations, employment standards, and OH&S code requirements.

(b) Manure spreading on frozen or snow-covered ground:

Brian Koberstein, of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) sent a note out on manure management specifically to feedlots. In some areas, there are feedlots that are spreading on frozen and snow-covered ground as a management practice. There was a meeting with feedlot operators on January 6th in Airdrie to discuss the issue. They are looking for people to participate in a pilot project on winter pen and manure management. AOPA does not allow spreading on frozen or snow-covered ground if an operation has 9 months manure storage, as feedlots have.

(c) Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA) Review:

The NRCB has met with AF personnel about a review of AOPA. The regulations under AOPA all expire on June 30, 2017 and must be reviewed and renewed before that date. The government is also considering that it might be an appropriate time to open up the act. There was discussion about opening the Act the last time it came under review and it was decided not to take that step.

The AF staff members have been meeting with livestock and poultry organizations, including ABP and ACFA, to discuss the matter of opening up AOPA. The meeting package contained a review of what would areas in the act would be reviewed and discussed. The Industry people do not think that act needs to be opened. The regulations do need to be reviewed, but there is more risk than benefit in opening the act. AOPA works very sensibly; the main problems seem to be with how the NRCB administers and interprets it.

Motion by Stanley/Andersen:

“That ABP work with the Alberta government on the Agricultural Operation Practices Act regulations, but does not support opening up the Act.”

Carried

(d) Feedlot animal care assessment/VBP+:

Smith handed out the Feedlot Animal Care Assessment that the National Cattle Feeders Association (NCFA) has put together. The Assessment has now received Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) approval. PAACO is an American organization that sets guidelines for animal care certification. The NCFA assessment has been in the works for more than a year and has gone through a number of revisions. The NCFA is trying to make this the audit tool used by feedlots across Canada. The NCFA audit would be almost impossible for feedlots to pass at all times through the year. If feedlots are forced to use it there is the concern that data will be falsified rendering the program useless. The NCFA is in talks with the packing plants to make this assessment mandatory for feedlots.

VBP+ is developing animal care modules for sustainability audits across Canada that would apply to all cattle operations. The VBP+ audits would be less expensive and would support reasonable expectations from cattle operations. ABP’s hope is that VBP+ will become the recognized program in Alberta and across Canada.

The NCFA has been pushing the assessment across Canada, but Ontario has pulled out of the NCFA and Quebec is happy with VBP+.

DIRECTION: for the ABP Executive to meet with the ACFA Executive to discuss concerns behind the Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment Program.

DIRECTION: for ABP Executive to speak with CCA and find out why they are supporting the assessment.

Motion by Stanley/Bekkering:

“That the ABP Board of Directors send a letter to the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association stating we support VBP+ and do not support the Feedlot Animal Care Assessment and copy the letter to the National Cattle Feeders Association.”

Carried

(e) Taxation of intensive agricultural operations:

The government is in the process of revising the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and one of the areas of consideration is taxation of agricultural land and operations. There does not seem to be much pressure for changing the structure of taxation of agricultural land, but there is strong interest in addressing the infrastructure (roads and bridge) challenges caused by intensive agriculture, particularly confined feeding operations. ABP is part of an Intensive Agriculture Operations Working Group (IAOWG) that is considering this issue.

In the mean time, Lethbridge County has started a process of creating a by-law for a business tax on CFOs and a special tax on farmland to provide funding for infrastructure maintenance. In our view, the proposed taxes put far too much of the burden on livestock operations and are particularly onerous for cattle feeders. The business tax on CFOs is based on animal units and we have always opposed a “head tax” on feedlots. We recognize that municipalities face infrastructure funding challenges, but unfair and excessive taxation of CFOs is not the solution to the problem.

The province collects fuel taxes from everyone and some of this money should be directed to funding for roads and bridges. If Lethbridge is successful with this by-law, it could move across Alberta. Smith will work with Brian Walton, ACFA, and Ron Axelson from ILWG on an appropriate response to Lethbridge County.

(f) Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) Appointment:

The ILWG is a group of the major livestock and poultry organizations. Smith has been the staff person appointed to this and Stuart Thiessen has been the producer appointment. Thiessen has agreed to continue if there is no one else who is interested.

Motion by Sekura/Bekkering:

“That the CFC approve the appointment of Stuart Thiessen as their producer representative on the Intensive Livestock Working Group.”

Carried

(g) Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) Non-Point Source Project Team:

CASA is a group that uses collaborative consensus to make decisions. Its members are from industry, government, and non-industry. ABP has the agriculture seat on the board and Smith is the director. CASA has previously done projects on emissions from CFOs and odour management.

Since agriculture is seen as a contributor to non-point source emissions, it would be very good to have an agriculture representative on this project team. Smith will approach a producer from the grain industry to participate.

(h) Manure Record Keeping App - Laura Thygesen, AF:

Laura Thygesen, of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, made a presentation on the manure record keeping application that the government is developing. Producers are required by the AOPA to keep records of manure application and the record keeping app would help producers keep these records and assist in the manure management on their operations.

5. In Camera

6. Discussion Items:

(a) CCA Report:

The CCA AGM will be held during the second week of March.

The National Check-off increase was discussed at an NCO meeting with provincial funders in Montreal during the first week in January. The NCOA has hired Melinda German as the new General Manager. Most provinces are supporting an increase in the NCO. The Maritimes support the increase and are looking at increasing their provincial check-off as well. BCRC needs an increase in the NCO before January 2017 if they want to maintain their research with GF3. Ontario is not supporting the increase and does not agree that they cannot take money back.

(b) Harmony Beef:

Smith toured the plant just before Christmas. They are still aiming at opening in April and there is a lot of work being done at the plant. They have improved the sanitation processes and upgraded their water system.

They are looking to sell in Europe and Asia once they are in production.

(c) Bill 202:

The Bill is a private members bill intending to promote the marketing and purchasing of locally grown food. The MLA who introduced the bill does not seem to understand agriculture well and most people in the agriculture industry question the need for this legislation.

(d) Ontario Teacher's Federation Pension Fund:

This pension fund has begun purchasing agricultural land in Alberta and is pushing prices out of the range that producers can pay. They have also applied for a grant from the federal government because they say they are out of money. Farm Credit is trying to get them out of Alberta because young farmers are unable to compete. Producers have concerns about outside corporations owning agricultural land in the province and increasing the competition for this land.

DIRECTION: to bring this issue of the Ontario Teachers Federation buying farm land in Alberta forward to the Board of Directors at their next meeting.

7. Next Meeting and Upcoming Events

- (a) Semi-Annual General Meeting, June 14, 2016, Delta Edmonton South Hotel, Edmonton, AB

8. Adjournment