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**ALL FOR THE BEEF**

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## Editor



### LAURA LAING

Laura Laing is a public relations and marketing and communications specialist and consultant, who specializes in agriculture. In addition to her full-time role as Owner and President of L.L Communications, Laura is also a cattle producer, who along with her husband, own and operate Plateau Cattle Company, just West of Nanton, AB, where they sustainably raise world-class, Alberta beef.

## Contributors



### JILL BURKHARDT

Jill Burkhardt, her husband, Kelly, and their three children, own and operate a mixed farm near Gwynne, AB. Originally hailing from Montana, she has a degree in Range Management from Montana State University. Jill's agricultural passions are cattle and range management but she enjoys writing and learning more about all aspects of farming.



### DR. ELIZABETH R. HOMEROSKY *DVM, MSc., DABVP*

Dr. Elizabeth R. Homerosky is a partner veterinarian at Veterinary Agri-Health Services, Ltd., a beef cattle exclusive practice near Airdrie, AB. The VAHS professional team specializes in cow-calf and feedlot production medicine and consulting, beef cattle research, and teaching. Dr. Homerosky also raises Red Simmental and SimAngus cattle west of Crossfield.



### DIANNE FINSTAD

Dianne Finstad used her ranch roots to spur on what's become a long communications career in television, radio and writing, covering agriculture and rodeo. She's based in the Red Deer area. She serves on boards for Lakeland College and Westerner Park, and you can find her on RFD-TV Canada's new show Frontline Farming Canada.



### MARY MACARTHUR

Mary MacArthur has spent her life in agriculture talking to farmers around the world. When Mary isn't writing about agriculture, or taking photos, she spends her time running and hiking.



### LORI LOREE

Lori Loree grew up on an Angus and Charolais ranch near Lloydminster. She's now a full-time photographer, operating Loree Photography in Nanton, AB.



### ROBIN GALEY

Robin Galey fell into an agricultural communications career after falling off a horse in the Alberta foothills over 25 years ago. She has been cheerfully writing and editing agricultural communications from her home office in Calgary ever since. She seldom rides horses.



### BRENDA LEE SCHOEPP

Brenda has dairy herd and cattle feeding management experience and has developed grazing and bred heifer programs in Canada. She consults for agriculture and agri-business and mentors young entrepreneurs globally.



### CHRISTIAN HECKLE

is the proud-to-be cowgirl and farmer behind the lens of the inspirational western lifestyle photography of Prairie Rose Photography. A 5th generation cattle and grain farmer on the southern Alberta prairies, cows have always been Christian's passion. She expresses this passion as a social media influencer with over 10,000 followers through @prairierosephoto



“ I love being part of this industry and sharing my way of life on the farm through photography ”

# #AllForTheBeef

WITH BRAD DUBEAU

Change is the constant that propels us. It can be uncomfortable and challenging but also inspires us to build a better future from the tools we have, forging fresh connections and opportunities.

---

The constant of change is most apparent in spring. For many producers, calves are already on the ground, and as the season moves into full swing, we anticipate a brighter year ahead.

The first ABP magazine arrived in mailboxes in February, and ABPDaily.com launched too, providing real-time, curated digital content available online and via smartphone app.

We've received an amazing amount of producer and industry feedback, the majority of it positive. We hear that it's "stylish," "a breath of fresh air," and a "modern presentation of our industry."

Change is difficult to embrace, but readers are engaging with us, and that's excellent—we're having an impact. We continue to be open to insights and ideas and look forward to your continuing feedback.

ABP worked closely with WS, our marketing firm partner, to create a cost-effective, self-sustaining model, and it's helping us evolve. Let's talk numbers. In the last two budget years, ABP spent \$52,000 per year on Grass Routes. Those dollars, along with \$26,000 in annual spending on print advertorials have been redirected. From 2018 to 2020, ABP spent \$133,000 per year on

Cattle Country, which has been scaled back to \$42,000 annually. The Annual Report has transitioned to online distribution, significantly reducing costs. Highlights from the budget will be included in the ABP Fall issue, with direction to the full Annual Report online.

These shifts allowed us to allocate funds to the new magazine and digital platform, hitting our target of investing in relevant communication tools for the future. We're committed to helping raise the bar in beef production. Striving to connect and engage with our 18,000 Alberta beef producers in addition to industry peers, organizations and of course, consumers.

Since the first issue launched, we also held a successful AGM in March, with nearly 80 participants and 31 delegates. We have three seats yet to fill in the NW and one in central Alberta. We addressed a variety of issues brought forward by delegates. It was an opportunity to come together in challenging times to discuss and address issues. We came out of it with a new 12-member board of directors, elected at large by the delegate body.

Kelly Smith-Fraser is serving as past chair after multiple years on the board and executive and as a delegate. Thank you, Kelly, we appreciate your hard work and dedication to our organization and the beef industry.



We started 2021 with steady to strong markets and look forward to seeing those advance toward a powerful fall run for long yearlings and calves.

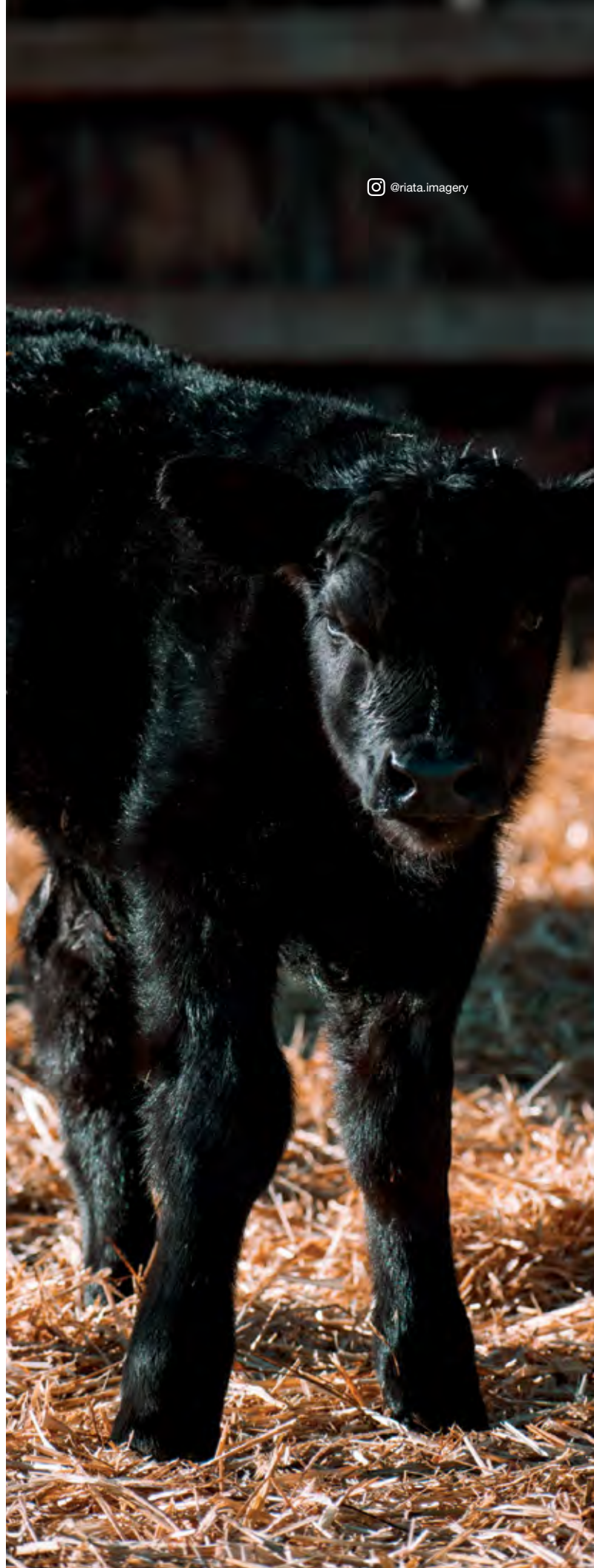
I look forward to the opportunity to work with our new Board of Directors and board chair Melanie Wowk. Melanie is a dedicated individual who has served as a delegate, board member and on the executive for many years.

We started 2021 with steady to strong markets and look forward to seeing those advance toward a powerful fall run for long yearlings and calves. Consumers continue to ask for, demand, and embrace Alberta beef. I am excited about the season ahead which will continue to realize new opportunities and advancements for our industry and producers.

I hope you enjoy our second issue of the ABP magazine. We have strived to bring even greater content that we hope will offer insights that inspire ideas, or opportunities to help elevate and evolve your beef operation. 🍖



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## INSPIRATION

A Symbol of Spring – The Prairie Crocus

# Igniting the Future of Agriculture

BY DIANNE FINSTAD

---

If you ever need to rejuvenate your enthusiasm for being in the beef industry, spend a little time with young people like these two Albertans. They're out there – outstanding leaders excited for a future in agriculture. They expand our minds beyond traditional career thinking as they discover new and interesting ways of playing a role in today's complex, data-driven and multifaceted journey from the pasture to the palate. And hang on...their passion is contagious!



# Jessica Sperber

Who knows what interests can be ignited when kids tag along on farm chores? Jessica Sperber has some favourite photos of her childhood days where her pint-sized self is wearing a big grin, standing smack dab in the middle of a pen of fed steers with her grandpa.

These days, the pure joy is just as evident as she collects data on a pen of steers at a research barn in Lincoln, NE where she's working on her PhD in ruminant nutrition.

“When we were like one year old, we did everything on the farm – riding in the combine, working with the cows.”

Sperber is a prime example of a generation eager to make their mark, while learning about the beef business and ways to make it even better for the future – a spark ignited early.

“When we were like one year old, we did everything on the farm – riding in the combine, working with the cows,” she recalls.

Growing up on a fourth-generation commercial cow-calf and grain operation just west of Ponoka, Sperber joined her older sister in the local 4-H club as soon as she could, taking advantage of pretty much every position and learning opportunity the program could provide, building a cattle herd of her own along the way.

Sperber opted to follow her sister's footsteps to MacEwan University in Edmonton to start her post-secondary career, studying biology. While it may not be a typical start to a doctorate in the livestock field, the science background it gave her, as well as the many connections from her active student community work, helped springboard her next steps.

Her farm interests were never far from her mind, as she challenged her professors' experience realm when she explored cattle connections to her various assignments, like doing presentations on cattle egrets or beef tapeworms for her zoology classes.



Graduate studies were on her mind, and that's when the redirect to animal science began in earnest.

"I had a really, really close friend pass away, and I think that was kind of an eye-opener. I just decided I needed to do what I wanted to do," says Sperber.

Becoming a semi-finalist for the Cattlemen's Young Leaders program provided a key path. During the interview process, she got visiting with fellow candidate Kurtis Reid about her master's quest. He enthusiastically told her she needed to go to Texas to learn from the 'coolest professor ever'.

"The next day the professor, Ty Lawrence, calls me while I was at the beef conference," says Sperber.

Reid had given him the lowdown on Sperber, and it truly was a fit. She was soon off to West Texas A&M University for a master's in meat science.



Jessica Sperber's passion for the beef industry ignited at a young age on her family's 4th generation farm west of Ponoka, AB.

She was also chosen at CYL and began a mentorship with Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association CEO Ryder Lee – an experience that expanded her horizons.

While in Snyder, TX, Sperber worked with the university's Beef Collector's Research Center, which entailed visiting over 20 different packing plants across the U.S.

"It was incredible exposure to the industry, and very good for data collection and research techniques.

"I saw a lot of different cattle in a lot of different states. You just don't realize just how different beef production in the Pacific Northwest in the U.S. is from the south, versus the Midwest.

"Ty's research program gave me my passion for the carcass industry. I have a huge interest in the feeder packer relationship. It made me have a whole new appreciation for the packing industry, and want to then do feedlot nutrition for my PhD."

Diversifying her work again, Sperber plugged into ruminant nutrition research efforts at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, working with professors Galen Erickson and Andrea Watson, focusing on sustainability efforts in cattle feeding.

"Essentially all my research has been on how can we improve our environmental impact. Cattle are carbon sequesters – a lot of them have negative methane production because they are doing that much, eating plants that no other animal in the world can eat. Then they use it as an energy product, ruminate with it, defecate it back into the soil for nutrients – like literally, they are so incredible!"

Sperber is hoping to be able to wrap up her doctorate work and graduate before the end of the year. Because of the nature of her studies, it's been considered essential work, and she's been able to continue her research despite the pandemic. But she has missed networking opportunities through conferences and events, as she looks to begin a career in the industry, hopefully somewhere in the feeder-packer realm.

In the meantime, she's busy serving as Vice-President of the Young Cattlemen's Council in Canada, and is also giving back to the CYL program by sitting on the Selections Committee. "I'm very thankful for CYL."

"I think maybe what the beef industry was missing was this driven passion for what people are doing. In my generation, that's a big thing – find your passion and chase it. I see it all the time, through the CYL candidates and it makes me so pumped. I just think there's a lot more opportunity for young people nowadays, which makes me excited for the future of the beef industry."





# David MacTaggart

David MacTaggart sees himself as an ambassador for agriculture and is embracing a role in science to help fulfill that ambition.

He was fortunate to have early contact with agriculture on the family's small hobby farm near Lacombe, which enabled an active 4-H career. But he also spent lots of time at his mom's family farm near Camrose.

"It was something we were always involved with and connected in," says MacTaggart. "Probably like a lot of kids involved in the ag industry, I always wanted to be a farmer. Once I got into high school, looking at different spots I could contribute, not coming from a family farm, I thought ag research was a good path for me."

“ I have a bit of a preference for that public good ag research, and definitely the technicians and scientists were great people to learn from. I still keep in contact with them. ”

It helped being in a community where ag research is high profile, with both Agriculture Canada and, at the time, Alberta Agriculture research facilities.

MacTaggart spent several summers with the Ag Canada agronomy and weeds crew, under weed scientist Dr. Neil Harker and then his successor, Dr. Breanne Tidemann.

"I have a bit of a preference for that public good ag research, and definitely the technicians and scientists were great people to learn from. I still keep in contact with them."

MacTaggart went on to take his degree in Crop Science at the University of Saskatchewan, finishing as the top graduating ag student in 2020. Along the way, his path led to forage crops.

"I took an Introduction to Grasslands Management from the gentleman who's now my graduate supervisor, Bill Biligetu. It just piqued my interest because it's a space where you can work quite closely with

producers, while still being a researcher. I could see applications on our small farm here, in addition to my family members as well. Seeing that close connection to value is something I really enjoy.”

MacTaggart likes how forages bring cows and crops together. “Moving forward into a future where we need to demonstrate how the agriculture industry is working to be environmentally sustainable, I think that’s actually a real strength we can leverage – of getting cattle onto crop land.”

MacTaggart enjoyed forages so much, it’s what he chose to do his master’s studies in, when he settled on the University of Saskatchewan for graduate work. He liked being able to work with the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence there, and opportunities offered for extension through conferences and field days. The pandemic changed that plan, so he’s been looking for other ways to share, being active on ag Twitter and doing Facebook videos about his research projects.



A younger David MacTaggart wins a red ribbon with his 4-H beef animal.

“While it’s not the same as reaching out, shaking hands, and talking with people about their operations, it’s something that’s good enough for now,” he comments.

MacTaggart is also involved with the Saskatchewan Forage Council as a director.

“I’ve already learned a lot, engaging in all those different aspects of the forage industry – with researchers, producers, industry, government.”

He adds the governance training is another plus, and already has him interested in participating in other agricultural organizations.

“I love science, I love being outdoors with the ag industry, but probably my first love is the people.”

MacTaggart hopes to deliver value for both farmers and other followers with his forage research videos, explaining the story of the why, and not just streams of data. He’s always realized the need for expanding horizons with the agriculture message. Taking his high school in Red Deer, he met classmates who’d never seen beef cattle, despite living in agriculture-rich central Alberta. Out of a class of 500, he was one of only two students to take an ag-related post-secondary program.

MacTaggart cultivated his consumer awareness efforts by founding a 4-H gardening club in Lacombe, attracting more urban young people or new Canadians to give them a 4-H and agriculture experience.

At university, he wanted to help give first year ag and international students a taste of what agriculture was really like in Saskatchewan. As Vice-President of the Ag Students Association, he helped revamp an annual event into a ‘Farm to Fork Tour’ and filled a bus with participants to tour the feedlot at the Forage Centre of Excellence, the Black Fox Farm and Distillery, and an egg processing facility. Along with gaining an awareness of various aspects of the food chain, some attendees even found jobs with connections made on the tour.

MacTaggart is a big fan of broadening the pool of people involved in the ag industry, seeing benefits on both ends, with the broad range of career options available, and the great skills those with non-agricultural backgrounds can provide. So not surprisingly, it is the communication aspect of research MacTaggart is drawn to.

“Generating ideas is what interests me the most, talking with farmers about what they need, figuring out ways to develop research projects out of that, and communicating new information.”

“I love science, I love being outdoors with the ag industry, but probably my first love is the people.”





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
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# Transforming Animal Health Education in Real-Time on W.A. Ranches

“Having a 1,000-head cattle ranch as part of our facility at the University has been a game changer, providing students with a connection to the land and the cattle and making the University of Calgary’s already exceptional Faculty of Veterinary Medicine become one of the most sought-after programs on the continent,” says Dr. Ed Pajor, Professor of Animal Behaviour and Welfare and Ranch Director, W.A. Ranches.

 @prairierosephoto





Master's student Abby Hodder, with a variety of study sampling materials at W.A. Ranches. Photo by Karin Orsel



As part of the study, calves at W.A. Ranches gradually weaned through fence-line weaning. Photo by Karin Orsel



@riata.imagery

"Since its transformative \$44 million gift to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine from owners J.C. Anderson and his daughter Wynne Chisholm, in the Fall of 2018, one of our goals and visions is to provide collaborative research for the benefit of beef producers."

In the following study, W.A. Ranches researches the costs and benefits of preconditioning calves with a focus on reduction in antimicrobial use and antimicrobial resistance.

## CAN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES REDUCE ANTIMICROBIAL USE IN THE BEEF INDUSTRY?

It's a common and costly problem for beef producers: Calves developing potentially fatal Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD) at the feedlot, which can result in animals suffering and significant economic losses.

BRD is the costliest disease for producers, accounting for up to 70% of all beef cattle morbidities and the primary cause of beef cattle mortality in feedlots across North America.

"Stress can cause immune suppression in the calf, especially when multiple stressors occur in a short period of time," says Dr. Karin Orsel, DVM, PhD, a professor and cattle disease expert in the University of Calgary's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM).

Orsel and a consortium of researchers are doing a deep dive into preconditioning. Many components of preconditioning have proven weight gains; however, there is still limited uptake from the industry. One question raised from feedlot owners was whether

preconditioned calves would still outperform commercial calves when commingled.

They're investigating whether low-stress handling on the ranch, combined with gradual weaning and a schedule of vaccinations "preconditions" them to better adapt to feedlot life.

Fewer sick calves would mean a reduction in the use of antibiotics. That would provide not only a solution to the cattle industry, but also a defense against antimicrobial resistance.

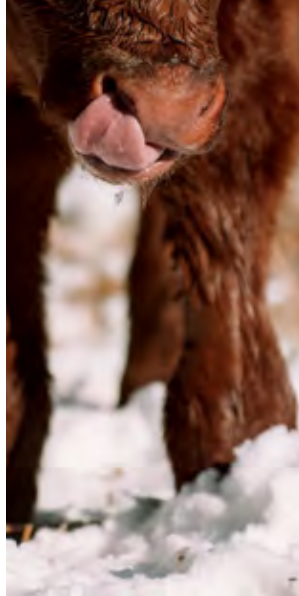
## STUDY ENLISTS THE HELP OF CALVES AT W.A. RANCHES

The researchers raised 250 calves at W.A. Ranches for the project. They bought another 250 at auction and housed calves in groups of 100 at the feedlot pens at Olds College. Two pens had either auction-derived or W.A. calves; the other three pens had different ratios of the two groups mingled.

"It's a big antimicrobial resistance project and really multidisciplinary," says Orsel, who is collaborating with two UCVM researchers, Dr. Ed Pajor, PhD, an animal welfare and behaviour expert, and Dr. Frank van der Meer, DVM, PhD, who specializes in bovine virology.

The project draws on the expertise of cattle economists Kathy Larson at the University of Saskatchewan and Dr. Henry An, PhD, at the University of Alberta, as well as Dr. Trevor Alexander, PhD, a microbiologist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Lethbridge, and Sean Thompson, a livestock feed and nutrition researcher at Olds College.





Calves in the W.A. Ranches study were penned for 40 days as part of the feed transition through bunk breaking. Photo by Karin Orsel



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After a low-stress separation process, W.A. calves are put in a pen before receiving their vaccinations. Photo by Karin Orsel



@prairierosephoto

“Dr. Frank van der Meer is looking at the calves’ respiratory microbiome—the population of bacteria in their noses—and Dr. Ed Pajor is studying behaviour of calves,” explains Orsel. “With my students, I’m looking at epidemiology—the rate of illness and death at the feedlot. They’re also studying the implications of preconditioning on a variety of other issues.”

Calves bought at auction generally have an unknown vaccination history or information on weaning strategy, distance travelled, etc. We know from our own studies that approximately 50% of calves on arrival have low or no antibody titres against common BRD pathogens. Also, when vaccinated on arrival, it can be challenging for the calves’ compromised immune system to successfully respond to vaccination.

At the feedlot, calves from multiple sources are grouped together in pens, which of course, greatly increases the risk of BRD rapidly spreading.

## PRECONDITIONING TRIALS

“For the calves at W.A we used a fence-line weaning method. We gave them second shots of vaccines and a week later moved them to a different location with feed bunks and easy access to water.” When moved to the Olds feedlot pens, calves were bunk broke and familiar with troughs and bunks for food and water,” says Orsel.

## COMPARING CALVES RAISED WITH DIFFERENT METHODS

Orsel compared several groups of calves at the feedlot. One pen had only preconditioned calves from W.A.

Ranches, one pen housed auction calves, and three other pens were a mix of the two in different ratios.

“The big difference with the W.A. calves is they’ve been gradually separated from their moms,” says Orsel. “Along with being raised with low-stress handling, we think the vaccination protocol used will result in their immune systems responding better to the challenges they may experience when being moved to the feedlot.”

Additionally, Orsel says that the stressors, like weaning, vaccination, transportation and mingling, are now spread out over a two-month period.

Once completed, the project findings will add to the body of evidence around the costs and benefits of preconditioning in animal welfare, disease prevention and reduced antimicrobial use.

“We want to see if W.A. calves will still benefit from preconditioning if they’re mixed in with auction calves,” says Orsel. “Ultimately, we’re going to evaluate whether these handling practices and preconditioning practices will pay off.”

According to Orsel, findings from the project will be published in Summer 2021.

This project is funded as part of the Major Innovation Fund focused on antimicrobial resistance and through the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry grant and further supported by Alberta Beef Producers.

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Master's student Abby Hodder, with a variety of study sampling materials at W.A. Ranches. Photo by Karin Orsel



As part of the study, calves at W.A. Ranches gradually weaned through fence-line weaning. Photo by Karin Orsel



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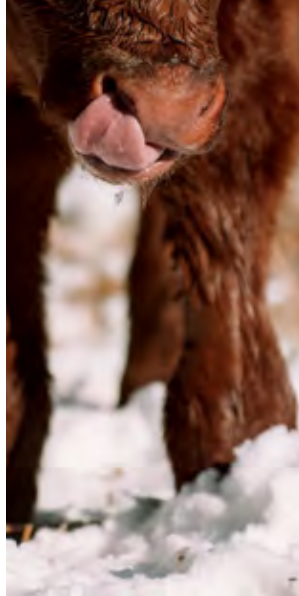
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After a low-stress separation process, W.A. calves are put in a pen before receiving their vaccinations. Photo by Karin Orsel



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“Dr. Frank van der Meer is looking at the calves’ respiratory microbiome—the population of bacteria in their noses—and Dr. Ed Pajor is studying behaviour of calves,” explains Orsel. “With my students, I’m looking at epidemiology—the rate of illness and death at the feedlot. They’re also studying the implications of preconditioning on a variety of other issues.”

Calves bought at auction generally have an unknown vaccination history or information on weaning strategy, distance travelled, etc. We know from our own studies that approximately 50% of calves on arrival have low or no antibody titres against common BRD pathogens. Also, when vaccinated on arrival, it can be challenging for the calves’ compromised immune system to successfully respond to vaccination.

At the feedlot, calves from multiple sources are grouped together in pens, which of course, greatly increases the risk of BRD rapidly spreading.

## PRECONDITIONING TRIALS

“For the calves at W.A we used a fence-line weaning method. We gave them second shots of vaccines and a week later moved them to a different location with feed bunks and easy access to water.” When moved to the Olds feedlot pens, calves were bunk broke and familiar with troughs and bunks for food and water,” says Orsel.

## COMPARING CALVES RAISED WITH DIFFERENT METHODS


Orsel compared several groups of calves at the feedlot. One pen had only preconditioned calves from W.A.

Ranches, one pen housed auction calves, and three other pens were a mix of the two in different ratios.

“The big difference with the W.A. calves is they’ve been gradually separated from their moms,” says Orsel. “Along with being raised with low-stress handling, we think the vaccination protocol used will result in their immune systems responding better to the challenges they may experience when being moved to the feedlot.”

Additionally, Orsel says that the stressors, like weaning, vaccination, transportation and mingling, are now spread out over a two-month period.

Once completed, the project findings will add to the body of evidence around the costs and benefits of preconditioning in animal welfare, disease prevention and reduced antimicrobial use.

“We want to see if W.A. calves will still benefit from preconditioning if they’re mixed in with auction calves,” says Orsel. “Ultimately, we’re going to evaluate whether these handling practices and preconditioning practices will pay off.” 

According to Orsel, findings from the project will be published in Summer 2021.

This project is funded as part of the Major Innovation Fund focused on antimicrobial resistance and through the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry grant and further supported by Alberta Beef Producers.

Reprinted with permission from the University of Calgary.

miles of pipeline, water delivery has required springs to be developed and dugouts to be set up. It's a long endeavour."

### Stewardship is a future-focused imperative

Stewarding the land environmentally while working animals on it is an important aspect of being successful, Lees notes. "It preserves the equity in your ranch and adds to profitability too. Without either of those, we won't survive in years ahead."

Environmental stewardship is a progressive learning process, which means the bar will continue to be raised in the years to come. "Twenty-five years ago, if you had a solar waterer that pumped out of a creek, you were 'nailing it'. Today, we all have solar waterers—it's normal. Those primary aspects are still valuable, but to rise to the top is the bigger view of the operation's environmental impact," says Chris Israelson, one of ABP's long term ESA judges.

### Award recognizes holistic approach


The ABP ESA recognizes operations that take a multi-faceted approach to environmental stewardship. Nominees are judged on their management style in a number of areas, including: range/cropland, riparian areas, water protection, wintering, manure, wildlife

The ESA has been a prestigious mainstay of the beef industry in Alberta. ABP is pleased to congratulate Scott and Elan Lees of Soderglen South on being the deserving recipients of this distinction in 2021. The award was presented during an Alberta Beef Producers Town Hall held in April 2021.

habitat, and animal welfare. They must also demonstrate community involvement, extension and environmental stewardship activities, goals, and accomplishments.

"The nominees that rise to the top must demonstrate engagement in many levels of stewardship, employing a holistic management style," says Israelson.

Soderglen South also supports environmental sustainability through other projects and initiatives. In partnership with Ducks Unlimited, they have: set up conservation agreements to maintain native prairie and wetland habitat; converted cropland to perennial forage; restored historically drained wetlands; and established a tenure agreement to mutually benefit wildlife and waterfowl habitat on their land. They also work with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Pheasants Forever Canada, and 10 years ago, set aside habitat that has helped establish the pheasant population in the St. Mary's River basin, protecting grizzly habitat in the valley at the same time.

Environmental stewardship is a progressive learning process, which means ABP judges expect the bar will continue to be raised in coming years. "Today, to rise to the top, an operation has to take a broader view of their environmental impact, and be acting on it in a variety of ways," Israelson notes. 

(To view the video visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiXf3qLCGwY>)



Scott and Elan Lees, Soderglen South





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BY DESIGN:

# Linking Calf Health and Carcass Quality

BY BRENDA LEE SCHOEPP

Every event in the life of a newborn calf contributes to their value and quality pre and post weaning. Ensuring that health and growth are constant is the challenge and the opportunity in the cow calf herd.

The linkage between a health event and complications later in life are strong, particularly if the young calf has contracted scours or suffered from a secondary viral or bacterial infection. Not only does an interruption in growth contribute to a reduction in weaning weight, it is also linked to a loss of value in the beef carcass.

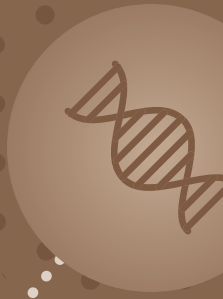
Sick calves are often lethargic, have reduced social interaction, are off feed or consume less, may be anorexic and do not drink enough water. Disease and treatment may have an impact on carcass value. Long term usage of antibiotics devalues drop credit in organs such as the liver, and scars on lungs or lesions in the

rumen may be present after illness and antibiotic use. The presentation of lung lesions in cattle is directly related to a reduction in marbling, less external and internal fat, lighter hot carcass weight and a reduction in dressing percentage.

Digestive upsets, even early in life, create acidosis – which is the curse for ruminants as it takes a long time to restore rumen pH. Acidosis has an impact on respiration, even in young calves. Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) is a heavy contributor to a reduction in feed intake and carcass value, and has a proven negative impact on tenderness.

Disease may also be an influence on reproductive proficiency. Fever in males can affect sperm and underlying health and nutritional issues will inhibit female reproductive capabilities.






The long term health of the calf is determined largely within the first four hours of life when it requires the immunoglobulins found in its mother's colostrum. Colostrum also helps to establish much needed microbes in the calf's digestive tract. Ensuring that mother and calf have a constant plane of nutrition is critical as the highest level of lactation is in the first 16 weeks, a time when that calf is dependent on mother's ability to sustain its growth. Her body condition score (BCS) going into her third trimester will play a part in the wellness of her offspring and as will her age, temperament, vaccination and health history.

Vaccination pre or post birth will not prevent disease if management and environment are not complementary. For calves, soil is the medium under which the culprits for scours such as rotavirus, coronavirus and cryptosporidium thrive, and ground also hosts coccidioidomycosis, E. coli, salmonella and Johne's disease. It is helpful to provide clean, dry space that is not crowded to reduce the incidence of viral and bacterial disease transmission.

As the demise of the health of a calf, even before it becomes symptomatic, is often a chain or series of events, a veterinarian is an essential partner in the neonatal and pre-weaning plan. Functional care and handling facilities designed to reduce stress and injury to cattle and people mitigate the risk of further stress complications from disease, and are conducive to safely capturing data on that health event.

Never losing sight that the health and welfare of a calf intersects with fertility, carcass quality and the tenderness of beef.

Producers have an opportunity beyond husbandry to be assisted by technology such as observation and behaviour devices, specialized apps to remind the owner when to intervene and what to do through standard operating procedures, data collection systems that track every event in the animal's life pre and post weaning, during feeding, on the rail and then to benchmark it all. For the commercial cow calf and the seedstock industry, validated data is the segue to making informed choices for optimal health, and in capturing marketable traits and value information throughout the life of the food animal.

To optimize genetic capability in the herd and to link beef product and data history that meets consumer needs – start with the end in mind – never losing sight that the health and welfare of a calf intersects with fertility, carcass quality and the tenderness of beef. 

# Branding: More Than Just a Hot Iron

## ABP Collaborative Study Gives Insights to Improving Pre-weaning Health and Performance

BY DR. ELIZABETH R. HOMEROSKY, DVM, MSC., DABVP  
*Partner Veterinarian, Veterinary Agri-Health Services*

For many of us that grew up on a ranch or work in agriculture, “branding” has a much deeper meaning than the roar of branding pot and a hot iron. It symbolizes many things; tradition, a time to socialize with family and friends, and the sense of both humbleness and pride that comes with knowing we are producing wholesome nutritious food for the other 98%. In recent years, many producers have elected to forego physically applying a hot iron brand to their calves and have re-termed the event, “spring processing.” Regardless of what this annual event means to you or how you characterize it, the most important thing is to ensure calves receive the protection they need to thrive throughout the next stage of production.

Raising healthy calves always starts with the cow. It is imperative that the cow is receiving excellent nutrition that she in turn passes along to her growing fetus and that she is on a comprehensive vaccination program designed to boost colostral antibodies. Ideally, all calves will absorb enough colostrum to protect them through the pre-weaning period. However, research from the University of Saskatchewan and my own personal research through the University of Calgary

Vaccinating these calves at branding or spring processing provides them the immunity they need on pasture and strengthens their response to the vaccines they receive down the road.

proves that just isn't the case. Approximately 1/3 of beef calves in Western Canada do not acquire optimal levels of passive immunity and are predisposed to morbidity or reduced performance. Vaccinating these calves at branding or spring processing provides them the immunity they need on pasture and strengthens their response to the vaccines they receive down the road.

Very few herds, if any, are truly considered closed either due to the introduction of new additions such as herd bulls or unavoidable contact with outside cattle. There's always that one fence line that leaves something to be desired. Wasn't that side the neighbour's responsibility?



Anyways, this means that all cow herds encounter various viruses and bacteria throughout the year. The most prevalent respiratory virus circulating in cow herds is BRSV, however BVD, IBR, and PI3 commonly make appearances. Less is known about the prevalence of bacteria as some of these pathogens are notoriously difficult to isolate. In collaboration with Alberta Beef Producers and other industry partners, Veterinary Agri-Health Services, Ltd. recently completed a study that attempted to characterize respiratory bacterial pathogens present in calves at various stages of production.

For this study 660 calves originating from 22 Alberta ranches were enrolled. A deep nasal swab (similar to that very uncomfortable COVID test) was collected at 1-2 mo. age, again at weaning, and finally several months following weaning. At 1-2 mo. of age, a total of 49 calves (7.4%) tested positive for at least one strain of bacteria that causes pneumonia (*Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Histophilus Somnus*, or *Mycoplasma bovis*). At first glance, 7.4% doesn't

seem too bad, but what if I told you only healthy appearing calves with no disease history were eligible for this study? Additionally, recovering bacteria from nasal swabs collected in a field setting can be difficult. This means that number is likely quite conservative. By the time these healthy appearing calves made it to weaning, over half had evidence of pneumonia-causing bacteria in their upper respiratory tract.

Now that we know protection against these pathogens is warranted, let's discuss practical vaccination options. All 5-way respiratory viral vaccines offer some protection against BRSV, PI3, IBR and BVD, however maternal antibodies passed to the calf in colostrum are sometimes strong enough to block the BVD component. Intranasal respiratory vaccines are highly efficacious due to their unique ability to circumvent colostral antibodies however, to date we haven't been able to perfect the technology needed to vaccinate against BVD using an intranasal route. Despite that,



@prairierosephoto

intranasal vaccines still have lots of value as they strengthen immunity at mucosal services, such as the nose or the mouth that are commonly the point of exposure. Intranasal vaccines are often recommended in herds that battle higher than expected rates of calfhood pneumonia, particularly those associated with BRSV, or herds in the midst of an outbreak. Determining whether or not to use an injectable (either modified live or modified live/killed combination) vs. an intranasal vaccine is something you should discuss with your veterinarian. Regardless of the route you choose, calfhood vaccinations have lifelong benefits as they initiate “memory” in the calf’s immune system, allowing them to create a stronger response the next time that calf is vaccinated.

That toxins released by some bacteria are more detrimental to the calf than the bacteria itself.

In the aforementioned study, *Mannheimia haemolytica* and *Pasteurella multocida* were the most common bacteria isolated at 1-2 mo. and weaning. Vaccines against these two pathogens are available in both injectable and intranasal vaccines and are commonly found in combination with the five viral components. It is important to note, that toxins released by some bacteria are more detrimental to the calf than the bacteria itself. As such, bacterial vaccines are often designed to help mitigate the effects of these toxins and in some cases they aren’t as effective at preventing respiratory

disease compared to their viral counterparts. Check out the label to further differentiate what each vaccine component is designed to do whether that be aid in the prevention of disease, control or aid in the control of disease, or simply reduce the severity of clinical signs.

That being said, 7- and 8-way Clostridial vaccines are extremely effective against a variety of bacterial diseases and should always be included when putting together your spring vaccination protocol. Contrary to popular belief, the “8” is used to designate inclusion of *Clostridium haemolyticum*, the bacteria responsible for Red Water disease, not *Clostridium tetani*, the bacteria causing tetanus. Any calf being banded should receive a Clostridial vaccine with a tetanus toxoid. Unlike knife castration, banding creates areas of dead tissue in the scrotum, predisposing banded bulls to tetanus. Another bacteria, *Histophilus somnus*, is commonly found in combination with these Clostridial vaccines. Including it, in addition to other products and practices as part of your spring processing protocol should be customized in consultation with your herd veterinarian based on opportunities and challenges unique to your herd. Vaccine handling on the day of the event is also extremely important as shaking vaccines too vigorously, particularly those with bacterial components, can increase the chances of a vaccine reaction.

In conclusion, by better understanding pathogens commonly circulating in our cow herds and by properly vaccinating calves, we can improve preweaning health and performance translating to added value through the entire beef value chain. Whether that lingering smell of smoke comes from the branding pit or from some rocky mountain oysters sizzling on the grill, spring processing is a time to celebrate that we endured yet another winter and grass turnout is imminent. Those calves are the result of many months of hard work and care and they will forever carry your stamp of quality regardless whether they carry a brand. 🇺🇸

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# Connecting Agriculture to Curriculum in the Classroom

Inspiring Youth, Building Community and Next Generation in Agriculture

BY MARY MACARTHUR


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For many past generations of youth who grew up in rural Alberta, farm and ranch chores were part of the daily morning and evening routine before and after school. For a growing number of rural schools today, students are now doing chores when they get to school.

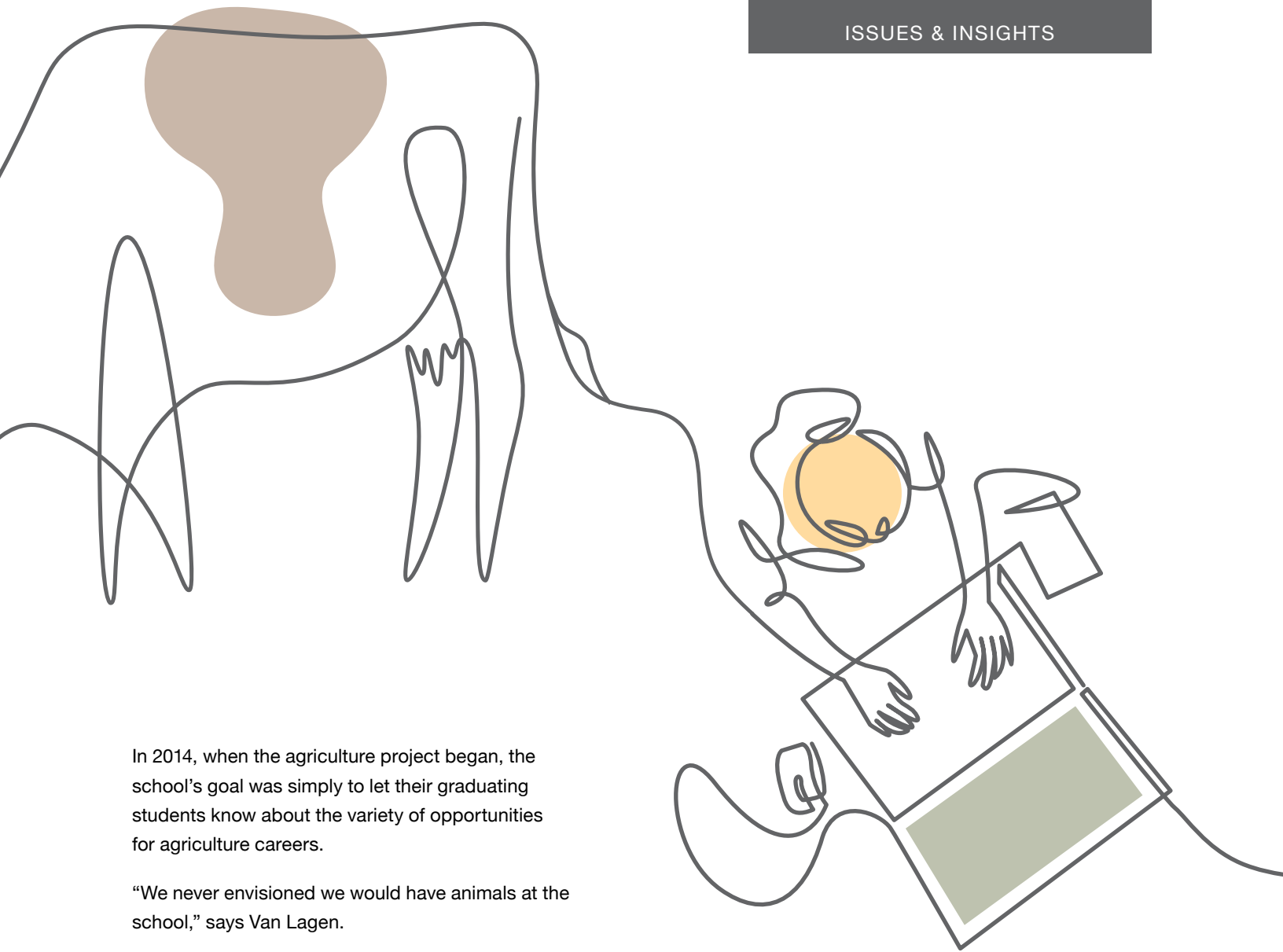
At Altario, a tiny school in the Special Areas of east central Alberta, students drop their backpacks and head to the school's student-led farm to feed the chickens, turkeys, sheep, steers and bred cows.

"It only takes 10 to 15 minutes to get all the chores done because there are so many kids. It's like a beehive there is so much activity," says Kevin Van Lagen, Altario School principal.

Students can study general agriculture in all high school grades, take beekeeping courses, or take classes towards becoming a greenhouse technician. Soon the school will add a class in animal husbandry as well, to look after the school's goats.







In 2014, when the agriculture project began, the school's goal was simply to let their graduating students know about the variety of opportunities for agriculture careers.

"We never envisioned we would have animals at the school," says Van Lagen.

As manager of the student-led farm's beef program, Van Lagen's son, Lucas, 15, collects the younger students assigned to help him that week, to care for and feed the three steers on their school farm. In addition to the three steers are three 4-H steers belonging to students of Canadian immigrants, whose families work on nearby farms.

"We teach them how to take proper care of the animals and be safe around them," says Lucas.

Growing up in Lethbridge, Lucas had little connection with agriculture before moving to Altario. Last year, he was the student-led farm's general manager. This year he is the beef manager, and has since joined the local 4-H club with plans to become a veterinarian after graduation.

"When the student-led farm opened up I thought it would be really fun because I never had a chance to grow up on a farm," says Lucas.

In the spring, the students of Altario join community members to work in the large community and school garden, study the Chinook Applied Research Association plots beside the school, or walk-through a nearby field with the local farmer to discuss his plans for the field.

About two hours west of Altario, at École Secondaire Lacombe Composite High School, about one quarter of the 850 students are enrolled in one of the many agricultural credit classes.

Students can study general agriculture in all high school grades, take beekeeping courses, or take classes towards becoming a greenhouse technician. Soon the school will add a class in animal husbandry as well, to look after the school's goats.

“It is so powerful. I pinch myself every day. We just have to be able to listen and follow our students’ passion,” says Steven Schultz, a teacher leading the agriculture classes at the high school.

The school’s agriculture project started in 2007 and the agriculture classes have since become an inspiration for students and the community. In the school’s 850 sq. ft. geodesic tropical greenhouse, powered by four renewable energy systems, students grow bananas, figs, pineapples, lemons and peppers.

[[ The number one thing is the school has a vibrancy to it and the students are proud of being part of the school. There is a sense of pride and renewal to the school and we’re growing as a school and growing as a community. ]]

Every Wednesday students harvest lettuce, herbs and vegetables. Sales from the greenhouse in the winter are more than \$250 a month. During the summer, sales from the greenhouse and from the school’s hundreds of fruit trees, honey, garden vegetables and goat milk can reach more than \$1,000 a month.

“The students are developing life skills and learning resilience,” says Schultz. “It is providing them with an opportunity to recognize and discover their passion.”

Both Schultz and Van Lagen said the key to the agricultural success at the schools is community involvement. For example, Van Lagen says that at his school’s first fundraiser the first steer project was auctioned off nine times and raised \$39,585.

“The community was so excited about it,” says Van Lagen. “That kind of support just gives you the green light to continue. We have local citizens that mentor the students. Part of that is for sustainability. The program continues because it is not dependent completely on teachers’ expertise. You need to bring the community in,” said Van Lagen.



LNA photography | Lucas Van Lagen, Beef Manager, Altario School, AB



This year, the steers in the Altario school program will be butchered and the cuts of meat sold through the school's new student-led retail store. Their goal is to have students raise animals on their own farms and sell the meat through the school's retail store.

The Altario school's success also means the community's success. In 2014, when the project started, only 15 people lived in the hamlet, including one youth. Today there are 39 people in the hamlet, including 13 youth and the local government is looking at subdividing more lots for new houses. School enrolment went from 49 to 62 and students now brag about the cool things happening at their school.


"The number one thing is the school has a vibrancy to it and the students are proud of being part of the school. There is a sense of pride and renewal to the school and we're growing as a school and growing as a community," says Van Lagen.

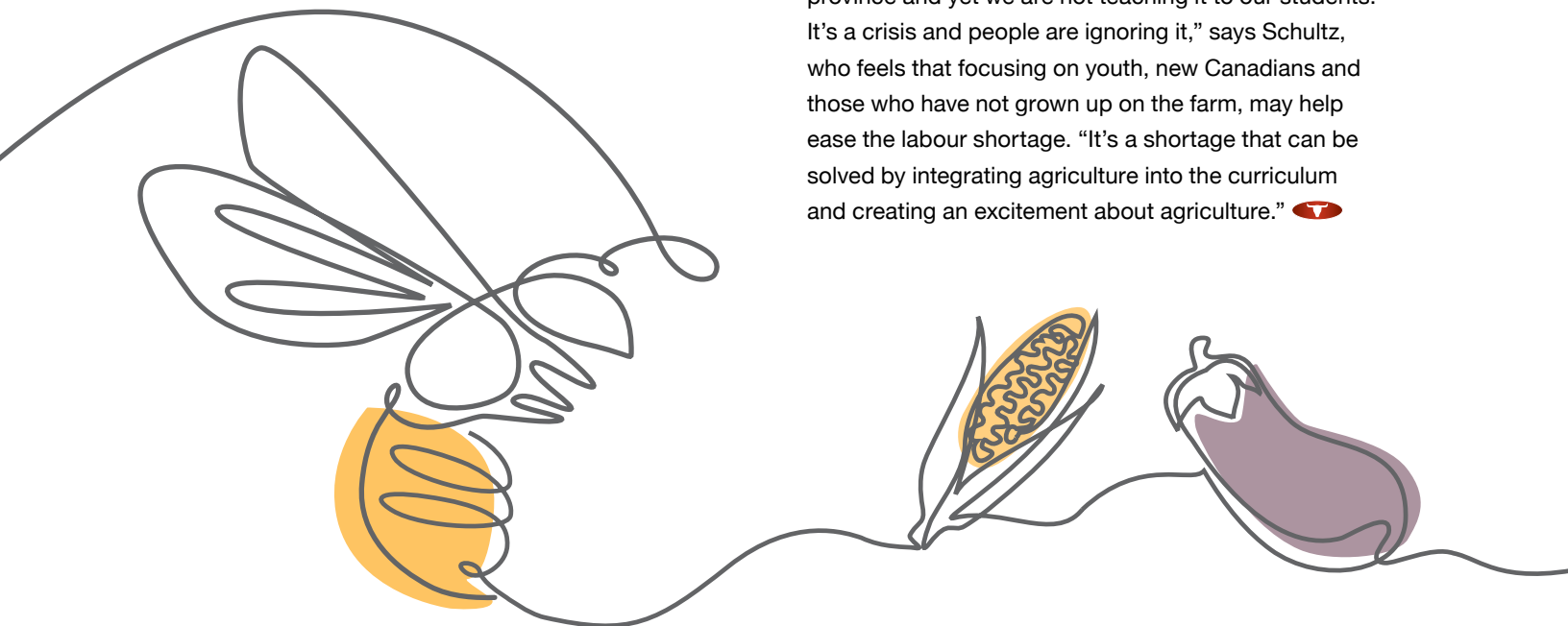
Van Lagen says too, that when governments talk about rural revitalization, or investment in rural Alberta or agriculture, it is important to understand that it will not be successful without strong rural schools. The growing interest in agriculture-based schools is a step towards keeping families in rural Alberta.

Schultz agrees and says integrating agriculture classes into the curriculum is one part of solving the growing shortage of agriculture workers in Alberta.



An important problem to solve as Alberta agriculture has one of the fastest growing labour gaps that is expected to triple in size from 7,000 to 23,000, by 2025. It is not only a provincial problem either. In fact, The Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council estimates the gap will widen across the country with 113,800 jobs in agriculture left unfilled across Canadian agriculture by 2025.

"Agriculture is our second largest industry in the province and yet we are not teaching it to our students. It's a crisis and people are ignoring it," says Schultz, who feels that focusing on youth, new Canadians and those who have not grown up on the farm, may help ease the labour shortage. "It's a shortage that can be solved by integrating agriculture into the curriculum and creating an excitement about agriculture." 



ALBERTA –

# King of the BBQ

WITH COREY THE BUTCHER

---

It's time to fire up the grill. Enter...the King. Alberta beef is King of the barbeque, and consumers are happily making the annual switch from winter stews to the summer grill. Corey shares some tips and insights from across the counter at ACME Meat Market.

“When we think BBQ, we think steak. For good reason. Steaks are always best for grilling – done well, it brings out the exceptional flavour and quality. For many of my customers, the BBQ is a stage – and the grilling a performance. There are a few tips that I share with my customers to make the most of their grilling experience.”

## The Cowboy Cut – A Cut Above

A standard cut for steaks is 1 inch thick, but we go even a bit thicker for grilling – 1 ½ inches works well. Bone-in rib-eye is popular, but my favourite is the cowboy cut. You get a generous meal – sometimes even with

leftovers for a sandwich the next day. The cowboy cut is a rib steak, cut about 1 ½ to 2 inches thick, with frenched bone. It's a simple cut, but still eye-catching to plate.

Grilled burgers are always a hit too of course. In our shop, “What's your grind?” is an important question. Our customers know the product and ask for what they want: ⅓ short rib, ⅓ brisket, and ⅓ chuck is most popular. Some prefer it finely ground, and others chunky. We give them choice.

One other grill trend I noticed starting last season was increased demand for cuts like flank and skirt steak. It's something new for people looking for something different from grilling rib-eye steaks. Perhaps considered lesser quality steaks, people are embracing





kitchens. This is really positive— as more than ever before, people are more involved in what they eat, where it comes from and how it's prepared. It's terrific. We are gearing up for a great grilling season ahead and hold hope that backyards across Alberta will be once again filled with family and friends, and of course, Alberta beef on the BBQ.

Follow Corey @coreythebutcher to learn more about what's happening in front of and behind the meat counter. 🍖



them for their flavours. They marinate well, you can grill and serve them sliced family style with chimichurri for a deliciously creative dinner.

Grilling steaks is a science, and everyone swears by their own formula, but the standard is six minutes, flip, then four. I prefer the usual sear method, but the reverse-sear has been popular for some years now too.

The usual sear involves starting with a super hot grill to seal the juices in, then moving to lower heat to finish. In a reverse sear, you start the steak on medium heat, cook to almost finish, and then move to high heat for that strong seared finish and clean grill marks.

Fads like reverse sear have been more prevalent this past year, for people with more time on social media, watching videos, picking up chef tips to apply in their



# Livestock Price Insurance


Producers have certainly noticed some changes taking place with the recently rebranded Livestock Price Insurance (LPI) program, formerly referred to as WLPIP. The calf insurance purchase deadline has been permanently extended into June, with the 2021 deadline set for June 10th and policy expirations available until February 21, 2022. Policy purchase hours are now available from 2-11 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and claim settlements are available on Mondays during the same hours.

These changes are meant to fulfill a risk management gap experienced by producers, and to provide additional opportunities to participate in a program that better suits the operational needs of producers who calve in late spring, summer or fall. To adhere to program parameters (36 week policy lengths), extending sales into June is required to offer settlements in January and February.

We discussed some of these changes and the overall program with beef producer Ed Lange. Ed runs about 650 mother cows on his family cooperative, cow calf to finish operation.

“We’ve bought LPI annually for roughly the last five years to use jointly with price protection by going through a broker, depending on the markets and price they can lock in,” said Lange. “Our main motivation for purchasing calf insurance is to protect our profit margins. It allows for planning and allows me to sleep at night knowing that I am not subject to market volatility.”

Lange says he can calculate his break-evens and expect the program to cover them along with some profitability, which makes purchasing insurance worthwhile for their farm. During COVID he knew they would be covered when the processing plants idled, and fat prices dropped. However, Lange does point out that he watches the market and waits for the right opportunity, acknowledging that buying into the program is not a blanket approach.

“We insure in 10 percent increments as opportunities arise and are satisfied that the price covers enough risk. While we find calf insurance works for our farm, there is room to make the program more flexible, through more specific weight breakdowns, for example.” 

“ Our main motivation for purchasing calf insurance is to protect our profit margins. It allows for planning and allows me to sleep at night knowing that I am not subject to market volatility. ”





# CCA Leads Dialogue Series for UN Food System Summit



Bob Lowe, President,  
Canadian Cattlemen's  
Association


If 2020 has taught us anything, it has brought the importance of high-quality products and a safe food system to the minds of Canadians, and we have valued, more than ever, our vast and diverse ecosystems we are lucky to have outside our backdoors.

This past year has also put our food system and supply chains in the spotlight. Coincidentally, the United Nations (UN) is planning a Food Systems Summit for later in 2021, the first of its kind in 25 years. The Food Systems Summit is part of the decade of action to deliver the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The decade of action was called for by World Leaders at the 2019 UN General Assembly to accelerate efforts towards the achievement of the SDG's, many of which directly relate to food production and security.

Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is excited for the opportunity to participate in this event, to ensure the global policy and public opinion coming out of it considers the Canadian context and unique benefits of raising cattle in this country. A key concern of Canadian beef producers is the global forum's focus on reducing meat consumption, particularly red meat, for environmental and health reasons.

There are nutritional and environmental benefits to the production of beef and our goal is to ensure these facts are part of the dialogue. With that in mind, CCA is collaborating with its international partners, including Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB), Livestock, Environmental and People (LEAP), Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL), International Meat Secretariat (IMS), and others, to ensure our Canadian beef story is being shared via global networks. Domestically, CCA is working with stakeholders to contribute to Canada's official government-led dialogue. Perhaps our biggest display of leadership is that CCA was responsible for organizing our own independent dialogue, here at home.

As part of the Summit, in late April CCA led a dialogue series entitled "Grazing Livestock: Building Sustainable Protein Supply Chains," which explored grazing livestock and the role it plays in building a sustainable protein supply chain. A solutions-oriented event for efficient, regenerative, and nutritious protein production brought together a diverse set of stakeholders for a bold discussion on what is being done now and where we need to go next.

CCA's food policy initiatives are very much tied to the broader objective of telling the story of modern-day cattle production. Be sure to follow CCA social media channels on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn for more on the outcomes of the dialogue. 




# The Prairie Crocus

*Anemone patens*

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Early settlers called this native Anemone the prairie crocus. This resilient perennial is not actually a crocus, but rather hails from the buttercup family. Also known as ‘windflowers’ because they are believed to blossom only when the winds blow in springtime, the prairie crocus is a cherished symbol of spring – thriving in grazing pastures and speckling the landscape of calving pastures across Alberta’s prairies, bringing a symbol of renewal and rebirth to ranchers, as winter loosens its grasp on the land.

 @prairierosephoto





# CCIA

## Traceability, Tags and Other Resources

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### IMPORTANCE OF A TRACEABILITY SYSTEM

Simply put, traceability is the ability to follow an item or a group of items – be it animal, plant, food products or ingredient – from one point in the supply chain to another, either backwards or forwards.

As a producer that purchases and applies approved Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) tags, you are the important first step in the Canadian livestock traceability system. Premises Identification numbers (PID) and the ability to track movement of livestock are the other important components of a successful traceability system.

Current Health of Animals Part XV regulations focus on Animal Identification; where all cattle must be tagged with an approved tag/indicator prior to moving from their current location or leaving their farm of origin.

Proposed amendments to the regulations will be shifting to a more comprehensive movement tracking system that will be dependent on Premises Identification.

### HOW DO I GET A PID NUMBER?

Each Canadian Province and Territory has specific guidelines for creating a premises identification number. Canadaid.ca has a section regarding premises registration in your province <https://www.canadaid.ca/traceability/premises-identification/>

### WHAT IS THE CLTS AND HOW DO I UPDATE MY ACCOUNT?

Everyone who has ever purchased tags already has a Canadian Livestock Tracking System (CLTS) database account and it is housed at [clts.canadaid.ca](https://clts.canadaid.ca). Your retail tag dealer uploads your newly purchased tags into your CLTS account within 24 hours of their purchase. CCIA manages the CLTS database and provides tools and information for data capture.

CCIA is not government, we are non-profit, industry-driven and here to help you navigate reporting and recording requirements.

New users to the CLTS database can call the CCIA call centre at (1-877-909-2333) and a Client Support Representative (CSR) will be happy to get you started with a username for you.

Download the CLTS MOBO APP to have the CLTS database available on your mobile device, for fast and convenient data uploads.

### BUY TAGS ONLINE WITH THE CCIA WEBSTORE

The CCIA Webstore offers all approved tags and matching applicators with a full selection at the most competitive price. Order online or by phone and you will receive your tags in the mail 5-7 business days later!





### REWARD PROGRAMS

A limited time rewards program is offered for those setting up new webstore accounts and those adding/ updating contact information and PID numbers on their existing accounts. A variety of prizes and rebates are available. For more information, or to update or create an account, call CCIA at 1-877-909-2333.

### WHAT RESOURCES DO WE HAVE?

CCIA has an online CLTS Resource Centre (CRC) that is new and improved. The new CRC is your “how to” destination for everything CLTS. At [support.canadaid.ca](http://support.canadaid.ca) you’ll find comprehensive guides for how to submit events, frequently asked questions and more.

To learn more about what we do visit [www.canadaid.ca](http://www.canadaid.ca); to learn more about the CLTS visit [support.canadaid.ca](http://support.canadaid.ca) and login to your account at [clts.canadaid.ca](http://clts.canadaid.ca). Try out our new online chat feature, available during business hours or email [info@canadaid.ca](mailto:info@canadaid.ca) or call toll free at 1-877-909-2333. 





# You have more ways to GET TO KNOW US BETTER



## TRACEABILITY MADE EASY

[support.canadaid.ca](http://support.canadaid.ca)

Whenever you need help, the CLTS Resource Centre is your "how to" destination for everything Canadian Livestock Tracking System (CLTS).

Here you'll find comprehensive step-by-step guides to easily navigate your way through the CLTS, on your computer or on your mobile device.

Try out the new chat feature!

## CLTS DATABASE

[clts.canadaid.ca](http://clts.canadaid.ca)

Canadian Livestock Tracking System (CLTS), captures regulated and volunteer livestock traceability data such as birth dates, move-in and retirement, data essential to a first line of defence in the event of an emergency.

## WE'RE INDUSTRY

[canadaid.ca](http://canadaid.ca)

Led by representation from 15 livestock organizations from across Canada, CCIA is the responsible administrator for beef cattle, bison, sheep and pending regulation cervids and goats in Canada (with some exemptions in Quebec).

## ONLINE WEBSTORE

[tags.canadaid.ca](http://tags.canadaid.ca)

Tags and tag accessories when you need them, 24/7. All approved beef and breed-specific breed tags, pre-approved cervid and goat indicators, management tags and accessories available for purchase.

With four information packed websites to choose from,  
you have more ways than ever to learn about moving traceability forward and to  
**get to know us better!**

[canadaid.ca](http://canadaid.ca) | [info@canadaid.ca](mailto:info@canadaid.ca) | 1-877-909-2333



## LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD WITH

# Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association

Looking back, 2020 was quite a year for the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA), just as it was for everyone. In early March of 2020, we began responding to the COVID situation; where we were influential in the approval of both the 'Fed Cattle Feed Assistance' program and the 'Set Aside' program. Looking forward, as we head into Spring 2021, we continue to work to ensure this program will be available should we encounter further issues with our packing plants.

We continue to push for meaningful reforms to the suite of Business Risk Management programs at both the provincial and federal levels. This has been a major lobbying effort for ACFA and while we have increased government awareness on the need to eliminate the cap, which has not been changed in 17 years, this has not yet come to fruition. With a reform of the BRM programs under the fed-prov Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) scheduled for 2023, we will continue to push for this amendment.

In addition to working on programming and policy, we worked to make sure our members were kept informed. We created a COVID specific website with up to the minute updates on policy, news, and government programs, and we maintained a feedlot specific Best Management Practices Guide to ensure our members had the most timely and relevant resources to keep employees safe on their farms.

Like many organizations, we shifted our events to online and hosted valuable webinars to ensure members had access to facts and experts to navigate the changes. The 2020 Alberta Beef Industry Conference was our last in-person event of 2020 which was greatly successful, raising \$83,000 for Dreams




Megan Madden, Communications Manager, ACFA, NCFA

Take Flight. This year's conference was virtual and will be available for viewing at [www.abiconference.ca](http://www.abiconference.ca).

ACFA usually hosts MLAs and government officials at educational networking dinners and events. In lieu of these events, we donated 8,000 pounds of Alberta beef to the provincial Food Banks and were recognized by Premier Kenney for doing so.

In the fall, the Board and staff developed a new five-year strategic plan. Coming out of this strategic planning session our focus did not significantly change but we will put a finer focus on three key result areas:

1. Advocacy
2. Member Value
1. Partnership and Collaboration

Going forward, and using these areas as our strategic focus, we will build on our strengths and resources to affect a positive change for the fed cattle industry in Alberta and federally through the National Cattle Feeders' Association. 

# Advancing Business Risk Management for Producers

BY KATELYN LAVERDURE

*Lead, Stakeholder Communications, ABP*



The need for modernization of our business risk management programs has been further emphasized throughout the pandemic.

Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) has and continues to put significant efforts towards communicating and consulting with provincial and federal governments on how to best support producers, with continued conversations focused solely on business risk management.

The following is a timeline of industry response to COVID-19 as it relates to business risk management programs.

## March 2020

- The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) began a conversation with the federal government in a letter to Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Bibeau requesting the entire food supply chain be designated as critical infrastructure; COVID-19 be declared a natural disaster under AgriRecovery; preparation for a potential major supply chain disruption that would require the development of a fed cattle set-aside program; modification of Livestock Price Insurance (formerly WLPPI) to include a cost-shared premium structure; and that changes be made to AgriStability to make it more effective at managing risk.
- A joint letter was sent to Minister Bibeau, Minister Hajdu and Minister Morneau on behalf of all provincial cattle commissions to underscore the importance of maintaining business continuity at all levels of the supply chain. ABP and the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA) sent a similar letter to Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Devin Dreesen outlining the potential risks of COVID-19 to the beef industry.



**May 2020**

- The federal government announced \$252 million of agriculture funding support following the temporary closure of the Cargill High River processing plant. It included \$125 million in disaster relief funding through AgriRecovery, with \$50 million dedicated to a federal-provincial set-aside program. With the federal commitment in place, ABP released a statement asking the provincial government to support Alberta's beef industry by committing to the provincial portion of AgriRecovery funding. The Government of Alberta announced their commitment on May 7, 2020.
- ABP and ACFA submitted a joint proposal to the Alberta government for immediate financial assistance to cow calf and backgrounding producers, requesting funding to reduce the premiums on cow calf and feeder policies under Livestock Price Insurance, and support for the growing federal and provincial initiative to eliminate the Reference Margin Limit on AgriStability.

**July 2020**

- A joint letter sent to Minister Bibeau on behalf of all provincial cattle commissions requested the following changes to AgriStability: elimination of the \$3 million payment cap, removal of the Reference Margin Limits, and to increase the payment trigger from 75 to 85 percent.

**November 2020**

- The federal government announced a proposal, based on the recommendations from industry, to eliminate the reference margin limit and boost the compensation rate to 80 percent.

**December 2020**

- A joint letter was sent to Minister Dreeshen on behalf of 11 Alberta agriculture commodity groups encouraging the provincial government to accept the federal government's AgriStability proposal.

**January 2021**

- ABP met with Minister Dreeshen to reiterate support of the federal government's proposal and to encourage the provincial government to accept the changes to AgriStability that would add \$170 million to the national program.

**February 2021**

- ABP and ACFA provided comments and recommendations to the provincial government on the complete business risk management suite.
- ABP met with Minister Dreeshen once again to encourage provincial support of the federal government's proposed changes to AgriStability.

**March 17, 2021**

- The federal government issued a statement urging the prairie provinces to support the proposed changes to AgriStability, acknowledging the request from provincial agriculture ministers to hold a federal-provincial-territorial ministers meeting on the issue.
- After Minister Bibeau's statement, CCA issued a statement of support, ABP issued a statement strongly encouraging the provincial government to accept the proposed changes, and the 11 Alberta agriculture commodity groups issued a joint statement calling for a decision from the provincial government.

On March 25, 2021, federal and provincial governments reached consensus on the removal of the reference margin limit, increasing the overall AgriStability pay out amount by approximately \$95 million. The removal of the reference margin limit will be retroactive to 2020 and the AgriStability enrollment deadline has been extended to June 30, 2021.

While a decision on the compensation rate was not made, the federal government has expressed that the offer remains on the table with a hard deadline of June 30, 2021.

These changes aim to simplify AgriStability and help producers by making it easier for agricultural operations with lower allowable expenses Advancing Business Risk Management for Producers to trigger when in need. This is an important step towards making the program more accessible and we encourage producers to review the changes with a financial planner to see if AgriStability works on their farm or ranch. 



# **Australian Cattle Ranch Sells \$500,000 in Carbon Credits to Microsoft**





## Improved grazing management strategies and soil testing consistency can pay big dividends to producers—and support the environment.

BY LAURA LAING & ROBIN GALEY

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Collecting consistent field data can have a truly high value, one Australian ranch finds. Wilmot Cattle Company in New South Wales recently signed off on a significant sale of carbon credits—valued at \$500,000—to tech giant Microsoft.

The ground-breaking sale was the product of enhanced grazing management strategies and consistent soil data collection, which resulted in documented soil carbon gains over the past three years.

Wilmot is the first cattle operation to sell carbon offsets in a private unregulated market transaction.

Wilmot's carbon credits were verified and sold through U.S.-based start-up company Regen Network by Microsoft as part of the company's carbon offset initiative. Wilmot is the first business in Regen Network's portfolio to sell credits, branded "CarbonPlus Grassland Credits," based on soil organic carbon sequestration achieved through rotational grazing.

Stuart Austin, general manager of Wilmot Cattle Company, says improvements in their grazing management strategy helped increase efficient use of pasture, build drought-resilience and significantly lift soil carbon levels. "We saw an increase from 2.5% to 4.5% in sequestered carbon demonstrated through soil sampling data. The scale of the transaction was enough to get people talking: 40,000 tonnes of carbon net of emissions—that's what they paid us for," he says.



Soil monitoring is a family affair for Stuart Austin and his family at Wilmot Cattle Company.

Wilmot's goal is to reach 6% soil carbon levels measured down to a metre deep by 2023. Grazing management strategies that are supporting increased carbon sequestration include time-controlled rotational grazing, additional fencing and permanent water systems, and reduced paddock size.

Combined, the strategies have resulted in improved soil and plant health, increased ground cover biodiversity and biomass, better water retention, reduced need for chemical fertilizer, and the elimination of soil erosion.

Wilmot now also uses remote sensing to further increase the consistency and regularity with which soil test data can be collected. The ranch's soil sampling strategy is a key message Austin shares with other producers: "Consistent samples—taken at the same time in the same areas over a number of years—have been pretty critical to this project for us," he says.

Alasdair MacLeod, chairman of the Macdoch Group, which owns Wilmot Cattle Company, said he believes this is a step forward for the livestock industry. "Instead of being part of the environmental problem, we believe that well managed livestock can be part of the solution to the challenge of carbon emissions."

Wilmot Cattle Company operates three farms in northern New South Wales, which are managed separately but operate cooperatively, with a complementary mix of breeding, trading and 100% grass finishing of their herd.

Wilmot is the first cattle operation to sell carbon offsets in a private unregulated market transaction. The sale came about after Austin went to a conference in the U.S., where he met with Regen Network, a business talking about monetizing carbon. Regen Network validated the carbon credits and sold them to Microsoft.

"We sent them our data, and the real strength of our data was that it was from the same sites at the same time of year every year, so it was really consistent," says Austin.

Wilmot Cattle Company is also working with the Australian government and Clean Energy Regulator to help develop a regulated market for soil carbon credits in Australia. The program is good and important, he says. But participating is onerous.



“We are not a carbon farm, and we don’t claim to be—we’re a beef production business, but carbon is a benefit.”

“The cost, rigour, and administrative burden are a challenge. It’s a great program, and there are huge opportunities for landholders,” Austin explains. “But we’re in constant conversation with the government around simpler, cheaper, easier, more efficient implementation of those projects in hopes that more people will participate.”

To understand the scale of Wilmot’s commitment, Austin points out that they recently took 150 samples down to a metre deep across all three of their farm sites, at a cost of about \$160,000. Collecting that data now will pay dividends down the road. “Now that we have this data, we’ll collect it again over five years and go back to Microsoft. Next time we’ll have one metre of carbon to sell, not just 15 centimetres, which is what we sold them so far,” he says.

Austin says Wilmot supports the government program over pursuing private sales in a non-regulated market, but doing so certainly gained some attention: “One reason we wanted to do it was to start the conversation. It’s a significant amount of money. All of a sudden, people are asking: “Hey, how do I do that?””

The larger goal is to help kick-start government and industry support for farms implementing sustainable practices, and show consumers that raising cattle can have a net positive environmental impact. On Wilmot farms, the cattle emit about 2,000 tonnes of methane annually, but the land management strategy is resulting in the sequestering of nearly 10,000 tonnes. Austin adds: “I have no doubt that many other producers are in the same position as us this way, they just don’t have the data to prove it.”

It’s all part of a signal to the rest of the world to say, “Let’s get on with this!” Austin says, “Our passion around soil carbon is that, rather than reducing emissions,




Stuart Austin, wife Trisha Cowley and their children Harry and Poppy of Wilmot Cattle Company.


or doing something in one area to offset emissions somewhere else, this is actually taking carbon out of the atmosphere and putting it in the ground.”

His advice to Alberta beef producers is to combine consistent soil testing with grazing management improvements. “The thing that’s made the difference is grazing management; higher density holistic management, rotational grazing and regular and consistent soil testing. Start getting some samples and take them in the same place where you took them three or five years ago so you can compare them to see what you’ve achieved.”

He adds that the most valuable tool Wilmot has used in the process is the grazing management software Maia Technology. “It’s helped us become very proficient grass managers, and that’s what we had to do fundamentally to make this work,” says Austin.

Finally, Austin points out that he hopes Wilmot’s story will encourage other producers to work toward documenting sustainable land management practices. “I hope we inspire other producers to consider this. Carbon has been a co-benefit of our beef production business. We are not a carbon farm, and we don’t claim to be—we’re a beef production business, but carbon is a benefit,” he concludes. 



 @prairierosephoto





# A Virtual Twist on Mentorship and Leadership Opportunities

Over the past year, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has shifted much of its programming to a virtual format to continue to offer unique career development opportunities to the next generation of beef industry leaders.

The CCA Cattlemen's Young Leaders (CYL) Mentorship Program was established in 2010 as a national initiative open to young people ages 18-35 involved in all aspects of the beef supply chain. In 10 plus years of operation, it has seen over 120 graduates. Each year, 16 participants are selected and paired with hand-picked industry leaders for a nine-month mentorship opportunity in the participant's specific area of interest in the industry, such as grazing management, public trust, livestock handling and welfare, industry policy and much more. Participants also receive \$2,000 to use towards learning opportunities of their choice, and traditionally take advantage of national and international travel opportunities.

Whether connecting with their mentors virtually, using their allocated funds towards online training sessions and conferences, or finding opportunities to remain in contact with fellow CYLs, these young leaders have adapted to the changing landscape of COVID-19 by continuing to make the most of program opportunities that have shifted to a virtual format.

In June 2020, the 2019-20 class of CYLs had their time in the program extended another year to graduate with incoming participants, as COVID-19 significantly limited their networking and travel opportunities. This means there are currently two groups of CYL participants in the program set to graduate this August.

The CYL Mentorship Program is pleased to see strong representation and interest from young Albertans each year, with current CYL participants from the province as follows:

Aydon Almberg (Czar), Broek Murray (Picture Butte), Cameron Olson (Rocky View County), Claye Harsany (High River), Cody Adams (Picture Butte), Dave Slingerland (Coaldale), Haley Scott (Lacombe), Iva Harberg (Hay Lakes), Kaitlin McLachlan (Fairview), Katie-Jo Stehr (Lethbridge), Kaylee Chizawsky (Edmonton), Lacey Tillotson (Innisfree), Mackenzie Argent (Cremona), Savannah Hodgkinson (Niton Junction) and Tamara Quaschnick (Bashaw).




@riata.imagery

A webinar series was created for the young leaders to connect and learn from program sponsors, with topics covering precision agriculture technology applications in forage equipment, herd health protocols,

succession planning, government relations, business risk management tools, nutrition and antibiotic stewardship, and what to know when meeting with your banker. Participants have also had the opportunity to connect via Zoom with researchers from the Beef Cattle Research Council's Researcher Mentorship Program who study cattle, beef, genetics, feed or forage production. The sessions allowed participants from both programs to learn from each other and create meaningful industry contacts.

CYL applications are open annually from the beginning of January to the end of March. The 24 semi-finalists for the 2021-22 program year, selected from the submitted applications, will be announced in June and will then compete for one of 16 spots in the program this August.

You can learn more about CYL participants and their industry mentors by visiting the participant spotlight page at [www.cattlemensyoungleaders.com](http://www.cattlemensyoungleaders.com) 



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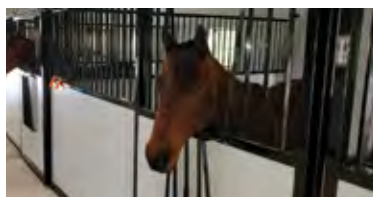
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SHEEP & GOAT HANDLING



HORSE STALLS



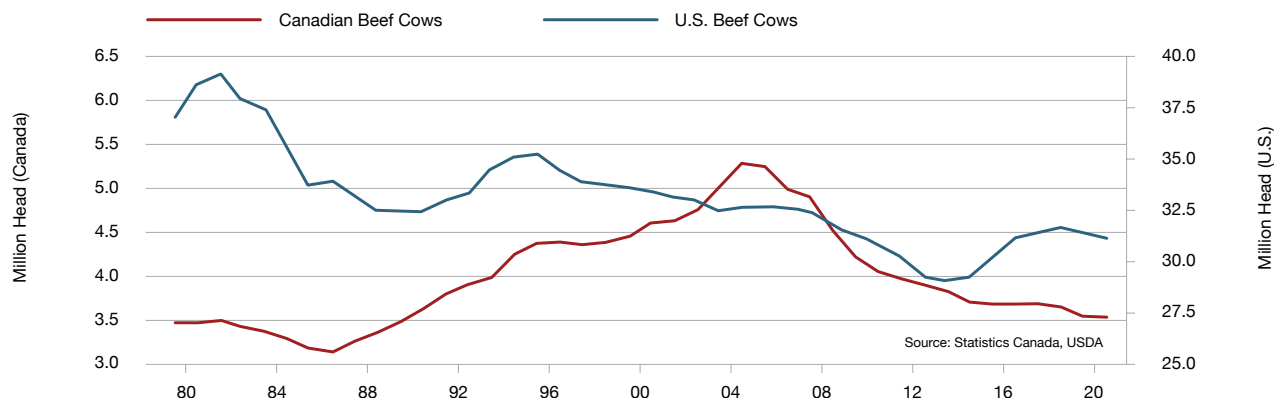
MINERAL PROGRAM

1-866-443-7444 | [LakelandFarmAndRanch.com](http://LakelandFarmAndRanch.com)





## Canada vs U.S. Beef Cow Numbers – January 1



# Canfax Cattle Market Update

BY BRIAN PERILLAT




Brian Perillat, Senior Analyst Canfax

The Canadian and Alberta cattle inventories continued to decline in 2020 and were 1% and 3.3% lower, respectively, to start this year. Cattle inventories are near 30-year lows. That said, beef breeding stock numbers showed some stability with Alberta cow numbers down only

0.1% on January 1, 2021, while bred heifer inventories were up 4.1%. This year's calf crop could be steady with a year ago, while the U.S. calf crop will be smaller. Broad supply and demand fundamentals look positive for the beef market, but the timing remains uncertain as to when cattle prices will respond to these positive fundamentals. Fed cattle prices have been somewhat restricted due to ample supplies and packing capacity constraints. Feedlots have seen a significant amount of red ink over the last couple of years and that will likely continue through the summer. An improved spring market is possible if tighter numbers prevail and packer competition improves, but fed cattle prices seasonally come under pressure in the summer and early fall. Pressure from the strong Canadian dollar and high grain prices will also weigh on feeding margins. Break-evens into the \$160/cwt for fed cattle this summer could extend feedlot losses further. The feeder and calf markets could also be pressured if the values for the Canadian dollar and barley are sustained. It is very

rare to have a year over year increase in calf prices when feed grains and the Canadian dollar are on the rise. That said, there is plenty of time for things to change over the summer. In these uncertain and volatile markets, tools such as Livestock Price Insurance may provide opportunity to protect against a difficult fall market if the futures and/or dollar go our way in the meantime. The new extension for calf insurance being offered into June and calf coverage available into January and February is also worth watching.

Calf and feeder prices have been supported by stiff feedlot competition. As a result of the shrinking cow herd at the start of 2021, the supply of calves and feeders outside of feedlots was down 10% compared to 10 years ago, while feedlot capacity is only 4% smaller. This has resulted in Canada being a net importer of feeder cattle the last couple of years and could continue this year. The strong feedlot competition has generally supported calf prices in the \$200/cwt range and higher. Calf prices heading into the fall should continue to be supported at prices near a year ago with certainly some upside potential if the other market factors, such as feedlot profitability, feed grain prices and the Canadian dollar shift in the cow calf producer's favour.

For ongoing market analysis and to become a Canfax member, please visit: [www.canfax.ca](http://www.canfax.ca) 

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHAIR

# ABP Welcomes Melanie Wowk as Chair, Alberta Beef Producers




[[ It's fantastic that we're not only engaging producers, but hearing that it is reaching consumers too and resonating with them. ]]

Born in Montreal and raised in Calgary, Melanie Wowk brings unique perspective, insights, and skillset to her elected position as Chair, ABP. In addition to her roles as Finance Chair and former Vice Chair, years as an ABP delegate and cattle producer, Melanie has led efforts within our industry as a cow calf veterinarian for over 25 years, including running her own successful mobile clinic. Today, partnered with her husband on their fourth generation cattle operation Wowk Ranch, in Beauvallon, Alberta, Melanie's career remains in animal health as Manager, Veterinary Services, Cattle, Equine and Small Ruminants, Product Support for Zoetis.

When we spoke to Melanie about her new position, one of the things Melanie is excited about is our new digital communications strategy for ABPDaily.com and the launch of ABP magazine:

"I throw my support behind what the team has developed here. It's fantastic that we're not only engaging producers, but hearing that it is reaching consumers too and resonating with them. It's so important for them to see the progressive nature of our industry," Melanie Wowk, Chair, ABP.

Welcome Melanie. We look forward to working together to continue building opportunities and advancements for our producers and industry. 





# Checkoff Dollars

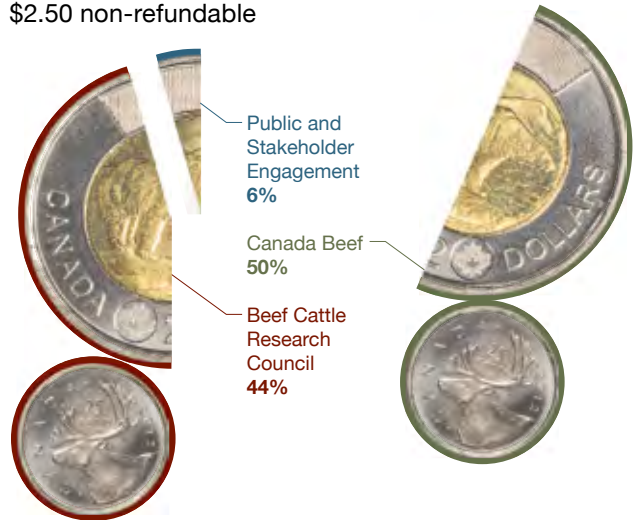
**Non-refundable  
National Levy – \$2.50**



**Refundable Provincial  
Service Charge – \$2.00**



**National Levy Breakdown  
\$2.50 non-refundable**



## WORK DONE WITH PROVINCIAL SERVICE CHARGE FUNDS

- Government relations and policy work aims to build strong relationships with provincial government members to keep producer interests top of mind when creating legislation, regulation and policies that impact the beef industry. ABP is working closely with the government and industry partners on the modernization of business risk management programs available to producers.
- Collaborate with other funding organizations to ensure research investments and projects address beef priorities and provide Alberta producers with information and technology that will support sustainable and competitive operations.
- Alberta Beef marketing and education initiatives aim to build consumer support, public trust, and understanding of our industry among students. Alberta Beef branded programs are gaining popularity within Alberta, nationally and globally.
- ABP uses a wide range of communications tools, including this magazine, ABPDaily.com, radio and social media to disseminate information to producers, the public, and governments.

**Provincial Service Charge Breakdown  
\$2.00 refundable**



- Work done by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) on international trade strongly encourages the continuous expansion of free trade and the optimization of standing agreements. Notable trade efforts include: the renegotiation of CUSMA, encouraging ratification of CPTPP, and ongoing efforts related to CETA and the U.K.
- The CCA leads national efforts to protect beef industry interests on policy issues such as business risk management, traceability, animal health and care and the environment.
- The CCA led significant efforts in supporting industry response to COVID-19 impacts with the goal of maintaining business continuity. 

# ABP Zones and Delegates

## ABP ZONE REGIONAL LISTINGS

### SOUTHEAST ZONE

comprises those lands that are located within the following areas:

- (a) Cypress County;
- (b) County of Forty Mile No. 8;
- (c) County of Warner No. 5;
- (d) Municipal District of Taber;
- (e) County of Newell;
- (f) Vulcan County;
- (g) Wheatland County;
- (h) Kneehill County;
- (i) Starland County;
- (j) Town of Drumheller;
- (k) County of Stettler No. 6;
- (l) County of Paintearth No. 18;
- (m) Special Area No. 2;
- (n) Special Area No. 3;
- (o) Special Area No. 4;
- (p) Municipal District of Acadia No. 34;
- (q) any city, town, or village that is encompassed by the land described in clauses (a) to (p).

### SOUTHWEST ZONE

comprises those lands that are located within the following areas:

- (a) Cardston County;
- (b) Improvement District No. 4 (Waterton);
- (c) Municipal District of Pincher Creek No. 9;
- (d) Municipality of Crowsnest Pass;
- (e) Municipal District of Willow Creek No. 26;
- (f) Lethbridge County;
- (g) Municipal District of Ranchland No. 66;
- (h) Foothills County;
- (i) City of Calgary;
- (j) Kananaskis Improvement District;
- (k) Rocky View County;
- (l) Municipal District of Bighorn No. 8;
- (m) Improvement District No. 9 (Banff);
- (n) Mountain View County;
- (o) Clearwater County;
- (p) Red Deer County;
- (q) any city, town, or village that is encompassed by the land described in clauses (a) to (p).

### CENTRAL ZONE

comprises those lands that are located within the following areas:

- (a) Lacombe County;
- (b) Ponoka County;
- (c) County of Wetaskiwin No. 10;
- (d) Leduc County;
- (e) Strathcona County;
- (f) Improvement District No. 13 (Elk Island);
- (g) City of Edmonton;
- (h) Sturgeon County;
- (i) Thorhild County;
- (j) Athabasca County;
- (k) Municipal District of Opportunity No. 17;
- (l) Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124;
- (m) Woodlands County;
- (n) Westlock County;
- (o) County of Barrhead No. 11;
- (p) Lac Ste. Anne County;
- (q) Parkland County;
- (r) Brazeau County;
- (s) Yellowhead County;
- (t) Improvement District No. 12 (Jasper National Park);
- (u) Municipality of Jasper;
- (v) Improvement District No. 25 (Willmore Wilderness);
- (w) any city, town, or village that is encompassed by the land described in clauses (a) to (v).

### NORTHWEST ZONE

comprises those lands that are located within the following areas:

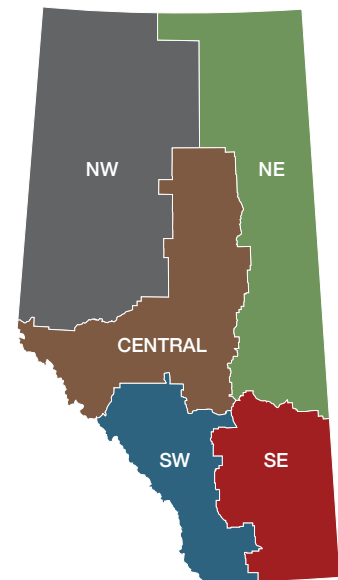
- (a) County of Grande Prairie No. 1;
- (b) Municipal District of Greenview No. 16;
- (c) Big Lakes County;
- (d) Municipal District of Smoky River No. 130;
- (e) Birch Hills County;
- (f) Municipal District of Spirit River No. 133;
- (g) Saddle Hills County;
- (h) Municipal District of Fairview No. 136;
- (i) Municipal District of Peace No. 135;
- (j) Northern Sunrise County;
- (k) County of Northern Lights;
- (l) Clear Hills County;
- (m) Mackenzie County;
- (n) any city, town, or village that is encompassed by the land described in clauses (a) to (m).

### NORTHEAST ZONE

comprises those lands that are located within the following areas:

- (a) Camrose County;
- (b) Flagstaff County;
- (c) Municipal District of Provost No. 52;
- (d) Municipal District of Wainwright No. 61;
- (e) Beaver County;
- (f) Lamont County;
- (g) County of Minburn No. 27;
- (h) County of Vermilion River;
- (i) County of Two Hills No. 21;
- (j) Smoky Lake County;
- (k) County of St. Paul No. 19;
- (l) Municipal District of Bonnyville No. 87;
- (m) Lac La Biche County;
- (n) Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo;
- (o) Improvement District No. 24 (Wood Buffalo);
- (p) Improvement District No. 349;
- (q) any city, town, or village that is encompassed by the land described in clauses (a) to (p).

## ABP ZONE MAP





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Melanie Wowk



**NORTHEAST ZONE – CHAIR**

Melanie Wowk and her husband operate Wowk Ranch, a multigenerational cow-calf operation near Beauvallon. Melanie has also been primarily a cow-calf veterinarian since 1993, operating her own practice, and she now works in the pharmaceutical industry. Melanie has served on the ABP board for four years, two of those as Finance Chair and this past year as Vice Chair. She also sits as a member of the AFAC board.

**CELL** 780-210-2500

**EMAIL** dvm.mcw@gmail.com

**REGION** County of Two Hills No. 21

### Jason Hale



**SOUTHEAST ZONE – VICE CHAIR**

Jason Hale was born and raised in Bassano where he and his wife own and operate a cow calf ranch. They have two sons who are also involved in the agriculture sector. Jason has served as the MLA for Strathmore-Brooks, currently is a member of the Agriculture Society Executive, and was elected to the Eastern Irrigation District board where he is the Chair.

**CELL** 403-793-1611

**EMAIL** jasonhale4@gmail.com

**REGION** County of Newell

### Brodie Haugan



**SOUTHEAST ZONE – FINANCE**

Brodie Haugan was raised on his family's ranch, near the town of Orion. Brodie attended the University of Saskatchewan, earning a Bachelor of Science in AgriBusiness. Along with his parents, he operates a commercial cow-calf herd, and they produce all their own feed. He also works with several feedlots, backgrounding and finishing cattle. Brodie is a graduate of the Cattlemen's Young Leaders Program and a past board member of the Young Cattlemen's Council.

**CELL** 403-580-9534

**EMAIL** brodie.haugan@gmail.com

**REGION** County of Forty Miles No. 8

### Darren Bevans



**SOUTHEAST ZONE**

Darren Bevans is General Manager of Deseret Ranches, a large cow calf operation located near Raymond. Darren is excited about the new direction at ABP and is looking forward to contributing as the organization and industry move forward.

**CELL** 403-634-6451

**EMAIL** dbevans@deseretranches.com

**REGION** County of Warner No. 5

### Colin Campbell



**CENTRAL ZONE**

Colin Campbell and his wife, Marilyn, own and operate a purebred herd of Angus in the Bon Accord area. From 1975 to 2010, Colin was heavily involved in regulatory and corporate liaison activities with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Having served as an ABP delegate for eight years, of which he has served as zone director for five years, Colin has advocated to prevent or reduce costs being imposed on the sector.

**CELL** 780-914-9066

**EMAIL** colinjames.campbell@hotmail.com

**REGION** Sturgeon County

### Rod Carlyon



**CENTRAL ZONE**

Rod Carlyon and his family live and run their beef operation near Westlock. Rod has been an ABP delegate for the past two years. He has been involved with the Research Committee and volunteered for various other projects representing ABP.

**CELL** 780-206-7872

**EMAIL** rcarlran@gmail.com

**REGION** Westlock County

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### Sheila Hillmer



**SOUTHWEST ZONE**

Sheila Hillmer and her family have a farming and ranching operation near Del Bonita, and her two sons are beginning the process of succession in the family business. Sheila is a Key Account Manager with Elanco Canada, a global animal health company. Sheila works with corporate feedyards and is based in southern Alberta. She also spends a significant amount of time developing and executing Learning and Development, both internally within Elanco and externally to customers.

**CELL** 403-394-5798

**EMAIL** hillmer\_sheila@elanco.com

**REGION** Cardston County

### Kent Holowath



**SOUTHEAST ZONE**

Kent Holowath operates a grain and cow-calf operation with his wife, Jill, and three kids near Rumsey. They have both purebred and commercial black Angus cattle, as well as a backgrounding operation. Currently he is the head leader of the Rumsey 4-H Beef Club and a director at the Big Valley Feeder Association.

**CELL** 403-820-6352

**EMAIL** holowath@telusplanet.net

**REGION** Starland County

### Lee Irvine



**SOUTHWEST ZONE**

Lee Irvine and his family have recently set up a grass backgrounding operation in the Cochrane area. Throughout his career, he has had the opportunity to market cattle through TEAM and Calgary Stockyards, to sit in the boardroom of multinational pharmaceutical companies and to run the auction market and feedlot software for ViewTrak Technologies. He has been an auditor for the Verified Beef Production Plus program and sat on the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef Framework Committee.

**CELL** 403-671-4878

**EMAIL** lee@irvinefamily.ca

**REGION** Rocky View County

### Chris Israelson



**SOUTHWEST ZONE**

Chris Israelson, along with his wife, Stacey, and their young family, operate a cow-calf herd, background feedyard, and market finished cattle near Didsbury. Chris also owns a custom harvest operation that services beef and dairy producers in the southern half of the province.

**CELL** 403-994-0561

**EMAIL** cisrael@telus.net

**REGION** Mountain View County

### Fred Lozeman



**SOUTHWEST ZONE**

Fred Lozeman operates a farm near Claresholm. Along with family members and dedicated employees, they produce cattle, grains, oilseed, and forage. Fred has been an ABP delegate for the past four years, including four years as a Director, three years as the Chair of the Research Committee, three years on the Governance Committee, and two years as an ABP representative for BCRC.

**CELL** 403-625-6391

**EMAIL** flozeman@telusplanet.net

**REGION** MD of Willow Creek No. 26

### Mike Nadeau



**NORTHWEST ZONE**

Mike Nadeau, along with his wife and three children, have a joint venture ranching operation with his in-laws, southwest of Beaverlodge. They have a cow-calf operation as well as a backgrounding feedlot.

**CELL** 780-933-8886

**EMAIL** mike@melbern.ca

**REGION** County of Grande Prairie No. 10



## SE ZONE DELEGATES

### Shawn Freimark



**SOUTHEAST ZONE**

Shawn Freimark grew up in Buffalo, AB on a ranch. After high school he went to B.C. to work on ranches and guided hunts. He travelled abroad before coming back to Alberta. Shawn currently ranches near Castor.

**CELL** 403-740-9576

**EMAIL** ibcow@hotmail.ca

**REGION** County of Paintearth No. 18

### Craig Lehr



**SOUTHEAST ZONE**

Craig Lehr was born and raised on his family farm, Short Grass Ranches, near Medicine Hat. After three years at Olds College he returned to the farm where he lives with his wife, Nicole, and their two kids, who are the fourth generation on the farm. Short Grass Ranches consists of a cow-calf operation and backgrounding feedlot, along with irrigation and dryland farming.

**CELL** 403-581-7242

**EMAIL** craiglehrsgr@gmail.com

**REGION** Cypress County

### Brad Osadczuk



**SOUTHEAST ZONE**

Brad Osadczuk, along with his wife, Elaine, and their three daughters, ranch in the community of Jenner, located in Special Areas #2. They run a primarily cow-calf and yearling operation. Brad has been a delegate with ABP for seven years and in that time has sat on the Board of Directors.

**CELL** 403-793-5041

**EMAIL** brad.osadczuk@gmail.com

**REGION** Special Area No. 2

## SW ZONE DELEGATES

### Jim Bowhay



**SOUTHWEST ZONE**

Jim Bowhay, along with his wife, Nola, and their family, operates a mixed farm operation near Sundre. The mixed operation includes cow-calf, meat goats, butcher turkeys, and laying hens. Jim often refers to it as a mixed-up operation. Jim has been involved in both the cattle industry and government while being on the provincial board of the Alberta Feeder Association for 12 years, on the LIS board for six years, and also worked in the field as a Brand Inspector for several years. Jim has a real passion for our youth in the industry, which is demonstrated by close to 50 years of 4-H involvement.

**CELL** 403-994-0517

**EMAIL** jnbowhay@gmail.com

**REGION** Mountain View County

### Graeme Finn



**SOUTHWEST ZONE**

Graeme Finn and his wife, Heather, run a cow-calf and grass finishing operation near Madden. They run a year-round grazing program based on regenerative agriculture. Graeme is president of Union Forage.

**CELL** 403-312-2240

**EMAIL** graeme@southerncrosslivestock.ca

**REGION** Rocky View County

### Kelly Smith-Fraser



**SOUTHWEST ZONE**

Kelly Smith-Fraser operates her family purebred operation, NuHaven Cattle Co., near Pine Lake, where they raise Maine-Anjou and club calves for show steers. Kelly has served the producers of central Alberta for the past six years as a delegate and zone director, as well as Finance Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of Alberta Beef Producers. Kelly was also appointed to the interim board of the Results Driven Agriculture Research and is a director of the Canadian Cattlemen's Foundation. Kelly holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Marketing from Texas Tech University.

**CELL** 403-598-4323

**EMAIL** klkfraser@gmail.com

**REGION** Red Deer County

## NE ZONE DELEGATES

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### Emil Dmytriw



**NORTHEAST ZONE**

Emil Dmytriw is a fourth-generation grain and cattle farmer northeast of Innisfree. Emil feels that he is a beef producer dealing with the same issues, and has the same concerns, as most other producers. As such, he looks forward to continuing to work hard for the beef industry to keep it sustainable for years to come.

**CELL** 780-603-3645

**EMAIL** barwd1@gmail.com

**REGION** County of Minburn No. 27

### Shane Franklin



**NORTHEAST ZONE**

Shane Franklin, along with his wife, Charlene, own and operate the Franklin Rodeo Company in the Bonnyville area, which supplies livestock to rodeos across Canada. They also have 120 head of Black Angus Simmental cattle.

**CELL** 780-812-1338

**EMAIL** franklinrodeocompany@gmail.com

**REGION** MD of Bonnyville No. 87

### Jay Hager



**NORTHEAST ZONE**

Jay Hager and his family run a 400 head cow-calf operation near Provost. They also operate a welding business that fabricates cattle handling and feeding equipment, and custom fence in the summer. Jay is an active 4-H leader for the Stainsleigh club and is involved at district and regional levels.

**CELL** 780-753-4375

**EMAIL** 07jaybar@gmail.com

**REGION** MD of Provost No. 52

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### George L'Heureux



**NORTHEAST ZONE**

George L'Heureux operates a ranch near Lac La Biche. As he reaches retirement, he is downsizing to a 60 head cow-calf operation, which will allow him to dedicate more time to ABP to assist the industry in going forward. He is also involved in municipal politics as a county councillor, chair of the local ASB Board, chair of the Athabasca Heifer Co-op, and vice-chair of the Lac La Biche Ag Society.

**CELL** 780-689-8036

**EMAIL** georgelheureux1@gmail.com

**REGION** Lac La Biche County

### Josie Pashulka



**NORTHEAST ZONE**

Josie Pashulka lives in the County of Two Hills, near Derwent. She farms with her husband, Ken, and three sons, operating the Rusylvia Cattle Co. They raise 400 cows and farm 2,000 acres of grain, silage, hay, and grazing corn. Josie was a 4-H beef leader for 14 years, and currently teaches the Beef Artificial Insemination course at Lakeland College.

**CELL** 780-787-0077

**EMAIL** kenpashulka@hotmail.com

**REGION** County of Two Hills No. 210

### Joanne Solverson



**NORTHEAST ZONE**

Joanne Solverson and her family operate a cow-calf to finish operation near Camrose. Joanne has been working in the ag industry for most of her life in both retail and on the farm. Working with producers and helping the industry grow has always been her passion.

**CELL** 780-679-5618

**EMAIL** joanne.solverson@gmail.com

**REGION** Camrose County



## NW ZONE DELEGATES

Lori Kinnee



**NORTHWEST ZONE**

Lori Kinnee, along with her husband, Paul, and their family, ranch in the Lost Lake area west of Grimshaw. Lori is looking forward to being a part of ABP in promoting Alberta beef to consumers, as well as moving the industry forward for young producers.

**CELL** 780-834-8851

**EMAIL** tenbarcattle@abnorth.com

**REGION** MD of Peace No. 135

Erin Moskalyk



**NORTHWEST ZONE**

Erin Moskalyk, along with her husband, have started a niche market herd of commercial Scottish Highlands near Fairview. They plan on building their herd and marketing grass finished holistically raised beef.

**CELL** 780-834-0187

**EMAIL** mustcallitfarm@gmail.com

**REGION** MD of Fairview No. 136

Gary These



**NORTHWEST ZONE**

Gary These, together with his wife and son, operate a cow-calf and backgrounding operation north of Peace River. Gary has been an ABP delegate for the last two years and was previously a director for Peace County Forage and Beef. At ABP, he was on the Cow-Calf Council and found risk management very interesting.

**CELL** 780-625-6793

**EMAIL** gjthese@gmail.com

**REGION** Northern Sunrise County

## CENTRAL ZONE DELEGATES

Martin Clausen



**CENTRAL ZONE**

Martin Clausen, together with his fiancé and parents, run Hazel Bluff Angus near Westlock. Having grown up on a cattle operation, the beef industry has become an important part of Martin's life. Martin hopes to be a positive voice for young producers who are looking to join the agriculture industry.

**CELL** 780-307-7042

**EMAIL** m.clausen4@hotmail.com

**REGION** Westlock County

Austin Dow



**CENTRAL ZONE**

Austin Dow lives just outside of Onoway where he runs a cow-calf operation along with his wife, Kaitlin. Austin grew up in the agriculture industry and has always had a passion for livestock. He worked in the fertilizer industry for 10 years and has his core technology diploma from Lakeland College.

**CELL** 780-318-3317

**EMAIL** auzzdow@gmail.com

**REGION** Lac Ste. Anne County

Cathy Sharp



**CENTRAL ZONE**

Cathy Sharp and her family own and operate a purebred cow-calf operation east of Lacombe. Cathy has served on the ABP Board of Directors and as an ABP representative to the Canadian Cattlemen's Association Board of Directors.

**CELL** 403-358-0575

**CELL** gwsharp@platinum.ca

**REGION** Lacombe County

Melissa Van Sickle



**CENTRAL ZONE**

Melissa runs a commercial cow/calf operation near Pigeon Lake and holds a BSc in Agriculture from UofS. She is also involved in her family's AI company, Genetic Ventures, and taught the continuing education AI course at Olds College for several years. She also operates Pigeon Lake Processing with her partner who is a butcher. A CYL graduate in 2019 where she focused on genetics, Melissa holds a life-long love for the beef industry and is passionate about contributing and improving on collective decisions and serving the cattle community.

**CELL** 403-704-3483

**CELL** gv.cattleai@outlook.com

**REGION** Leduc County

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# ABP Celebrates Canada's Agriculture Day

In honour of Canada's Agriculture Day on February 23, 2021, Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) past Chair Kelly Smith-Fraser shared a glimpse into her family's cattle operation with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Agriculture Marie-Claude Bibeau.

During the virtual meeting, the three discussed Alberta's role in the Canadian food supply chain and issues that impact producers on their farms and ranches.

Kelly spoke of her passion for the industry she was raised in, which she now sees ignited in her daughter, Aubrey. They discussed the unique experience of raising cattle on Alberta's native grasslands and their ability to sequester carbon while providing wildlife habitat, expressing that producers don't feel recognized as part of the solution when it comes to conservation and the environment.

During the virtual farm tour, Kelly was able to highlight a few key locations on her ranch and talk about her daughter's experience raising 4-H cattle. The tour went through her feed alley for a closer look at the pens as they discussed how winter feed grown on-farm and used to supplement cattle through the winter, and rotationally grazing pastures, which have been in her family for generations, throughout the summer.

The conversation led to the economic strain on the industry this last year and how it impacted the entire beef supply chain, from producers to the processing facilities. The government's decision to declare agriculture an essential service was underscored as a critical point in managing this pandemic – recognizing that as we continue to navigate COVID-19, the health and safety of processing plant workers needs to stay top of mind as governments roll out vaccination plans. ▼





ABP

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## ABP Programs & Updates

# Annual General Meeting Resolutions

### 1. ALL ZONES

*“Be it resolved that ABP continue to work with partner organizations to effectively work with the Government of Alberta lobbying sustainable solutions to issues that arise from multiple use demands (resource extraction, recreation, forestry, etc.) on the land and water resources.”*

**Carried:** ABP Board of Directors and staff are working with partner organizations to find solutions to this issue.

### 2. SW ZONE

*“Be it resolved that ABP work with the Government of Alberta to develop and implement solutions that allow responsible recreational use, while preventing impacts to farmers and ranchers and promoting the environmental sustainability of Alberta’s lands, both private and public.”*

**Carried:** Mark Lyseng, ABP Government Relations and Policy Lead is actively working on this issue.

### 3. SE ZONE

*“Be it resolved that ABP lobby Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to ensure equal representation exists between landowner stakeholder groups and hunting/fishing/conservation groups. Also, AEP should make agendas, minutes, and recommendations/conclusions of Alberta Game Policy Advisory Committee (AGPAC) and AGPAC sub-committees public and allow stakeholder representatives to freely disseminate information among respective stakeholder membership.”*

**Defeated:** While the delegates understood the concerns of the mover, the majority felt that, as guests to AGPAC meetings, it was not ABP’s place to lobby for other organizations.

### 4. CENTRAL ZONE

*“Be it resolved that ABP lobby for the mandatory sharing of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag information, such as slaughter plant carcass data.”*

**Defeated:** Producers were promised that the information collected with RFID tags would be kept private and delegates did not support ABP lobbying for the release of this information.

### 5. SW ZONE

*“Be it resolved that ABP consult with the purebred associations and the Canadian Beef Breeds Council to create a more feasible rate for premiums and a more open burden of proof criteria, and/or investigate the possibility for purebred breeders to insure bulls purchased from them by their clients, with their own insurance fund for injury and mortality within the rules of the Alberta Securities Commission and the Insurance Act.”*

**Defeated:** Delegates believe this is an issue of free market between sellers and buyers.

### 6. SE ZONE

*“Be it resolved that ABP lobby Environment and Parks to extend the Landowner Antlerless Elk Special Licence to be valid for all open seasons for which the licence is valid.”*

**Carried:** Delegates agreed that extending the use of this special licence would be beneficial to landowners and help control the elk population.

### 7. SE ZONE

*“Be it resolved that ABP request Alberta Environment and Parks to place more emphasis on antlerless wildlife management of big game species in wildlife management units where populations are above goal.”*

**Carried:** Delegates agreed that it is important to encourage Alberta Environment and Parks to manage females to control the growth of a herd.

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## 8. SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP request that the Government of Alberta amend legislation to prevent future withholding of Firearms Discharge Permits on legal hunting days."*

**Carried:** Discussions will take place to determine next steps.

## 9. SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP request the Alberta government (Biologists and Fish & Wildlife officers) work more closely with private landowners when dealing with predator conflicts."*

**Carried:** Mark Lyseng, ABP Government Relations and Policy Lead is working on this issue. Delegates understand the frustration producers are feeling with the current situation.

## 10. SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP continue to work with partner organizations to lobby Justice and Solicitor General to increase the presence and fill vacant positions of Fish & Wildlife Officers in areas that currently lack."*

**Carried:** There is a lack of support across the province from Fish & Wildlife when it comes to dealing with hunters, and a lack of funding to hire more officers during hunting season.

## 11. SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP actively engage all individuals from Alberta involved with the Young Cattlemen's Council (YCC) and Cattlemen's Young Leaders (CYL)."*

**Carried:** Discussions are taking place on stronger engagement with both national youth programs.

## 12. FLOOR

*"Be it resolved that ABP lobby the provincial and federal governments and maintain pressure on the Alberta oil and gas industry to close orphan wells and reclaim abandoned oil and gas sites so as to remove the threat of livestock poisoning and death, and the landowner expense of building and maintaining perimeter fencing of abandoned sites."*

**Carried:** Delegates understand the importance of this issue. It remains an expensive proposition to producers who have to fence off the well site.

---

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESOLUTIONS

## 1. SW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP lobby Alberta Environment and Parks and Municipal Affairs to prohibit rural Municipal Governments from allowing development of Off Highway Vehicle trails for the purpose of recreation on road allowances, as this is not the purpose or intent."*

**Carried:** The Board will work with other ag organizations to address this issue.

## 2. SW ZONE/SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP work closely with partner organizations to protect the rights of leaseholders and ensure those rights are not diminished to that of a permit holder."*

**Carried:** Over the last year ABP has worked with government to ensure any changes to the grazing lease dispositions does not diminish the rights of leaseholders.

## 3. SW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP will take an active role in supporting its members and the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association to prevent the Government of Alberta from unilaterally replacing grazing leases with grazing permits."*

**Carried:** Over the last year ABP has worked with government to ensure any changes to the grazing lease dispositions does not diminish the rights of leaseholders.

## 4. SW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP stand firm against the Government of Alberta's potential changes to the existing grazing dispositions framework that would erode our present rights. Such support may include but will not be limited to the following: (a) meet with the Premier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and Minister of Environment and Parks; (b) meet with the local MLAs; and, (c) meet with the Western*



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Stock Growers' Association (WSGA), the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, and Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association (AGLA) to ensure these organizations and members are fully aware of the situation and solicit their support to prevent changes to the existing grazing dispositions framework."

**Redundant:** Over the last year ABP has worked with WSGA, AGLA and the government to ensure any changes to the grazing lease dispositions does not diminish the rights of leaseholders.

#### 5. SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP continue to work with partner organizations to lobby Environment and Parks to complete the disposition renewal document to address the backlog and the slow pace of grazing lease renewals."*

**Carried:** The government has stated that they are working on the backlog of grazing lease renewals.

#### 6. SW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP lobby the Government of Alberta to reinstate a Coal Development Policy for Alberta (1976 Coal Policy) that was rescinded on June 1, 2020, until such time appropriate public consultation has taken place to determine land use planning for resource development that would guide future coal exploration and development within the province of Alberta."*

**Carried:** Directors agreed that there should have been consultation with the public before the policy was rescinded.

#### 7. SW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP will take an active role in supporting its members to prevent open pit/ mountaintop removal coal mining from taking place in Alberta's Eastern Slopes foothills watersheds."*

**Defeated:** Directors strongly believe that ABP cannot dictate to other industries what they can do or how they should do it.

#### 8. SW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP take an active role to assist stakeholders in their efforts to preserve the agricultural and environmental integrity of the lands and watersheds affected by the proposed mining operations."*

**Defeated:** Directors did not feel they could support this resolution without consultation on the issue.

#### 9. SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP establish access to a current list of eligible producers within the province to ensure proper communication when holding elections."*

**Carried:** ABP staff continually work to keep our lists up to date, and are in discussion with LIS to use their mailing list for elections. ABP needs to be notified when producers are no longer in the cattle industry.

#### 10. NW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP lobby the provincial government to include processing plant workers at the beginning of phase two in the COVID-19 vaccination roll out."*

**Carried:** ABP Executive contacted the government about prioritizing workers in the supply chain for vaccination and were told the government was looking into it.

#### 11. SE ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP investigate the probability that COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing may limit the availability and affordability of livestock medication in the future."*

**Carried:** Vaccines produced for animals are not processed in the same facilities that produce human vaccines. There was a shortage of animal vaccines earlier this year, but it was not due to the manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines, rather a shortage at the facilities producing the animal vaccines. According to the Canadian Animal Health Institute, they do not anticipate a shortage of the most important veterinary medications.

#### 12. SW ZONE

*"Be it resolved that ABP engage with other like-minded ag organizations to lobby the provincial government to join with the federal government and accept the industry requested changes to AgriStability, specifically the removal of the Reference Margin Limit and raising the compensation rate from 70% to 80%."*

**Carried:** This is an issue that ABP has been working on for the past year.

# Canadian Land Access System

## ASSISTING PRODUCERS TO MANAGE LAND ACCESS FOR PUBLIC USE

Designed to bridge the gap between landowners and hunting and recreational users, the Canadian Land Access Systems (CLAS) virtual platform gives producers and other landowners the ability to specify rules and limit liability for land access, all through an online interface.



“The story of CLAS begins with two guys talking over coffee at the end of a long day of searching for places to hunt. A day of burning gas, angering landowners and wasting time,” says Mark Wojszel, Cofounder and VP Business and Development, CLAS. “The obvious solution was to create a virtual space where landowners and those seeking access could more easily and efficiently connect.”


As a landowner himself, Mark also understands the concerns on the other side of the fence for landowners. He along with his CLAS business partner and Cofounder Mike Gertstenbuhler envisioned a system that would let owners ‘laydown the rules’ without the hindrance or demand of face-

to-face contact. The system would support the landowner through an app that approves and invites guests, as well as notifications of who is on their property, why and for how long. Most importantly, at the end of the day, users would agree upon conditions for access and respected and safe use of the land.

The CLAS app is free and recreation users pay an annual fee to search and access any of the lands available in the system. The landowner manages scheduling and approvals at the time of the request and approved users can scan in and out of the property, notifying the landowner of their presence and receiving up-to-date rules.

“With landowners facing greater liability and a growing demand and pressure to allow access to land, especially during hunting season, CLAS enables non-intrusive dialogue between landowners and users, while simultaneously providing landowners with a tool to manage their land easily and effectively,” says Mark.

Today, over 6,000 landowners and leaseholders, along with several key organizations including the Alberta Conservation Association, the Western Stock Growers’ Association and the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association support CLAS and encourage their members and other landowners to join.

To learn more about CLAS visit [canadianlandaccess.com](http://canadianlandaccess.com) 

## STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE –

# Help Provide Critical Insights & Support for Canadian Agriculture

Statistics Canada's Census of Agriculture is an important tool that helps farmers and ranchers gain insights into emerging trends in agricultural technologies and practices. The results provide the industry and the public with a snapshot of the state of agriculture in Canada, and the importance of this sector.

The census is the only source of community-level data that ensures that the unique perspectives of farmers and ranchers, farm communities and agricultural operations are included when making decisions that affect them and their livelihood. The data is essential to defend the interests of producers like you and our collective industry in issues like trade disputes and ensuring market access, by providing fact-based evidence to inform government decisions regarding financial support programs. The data also assists in measuring the impacts of disease outbreaks and climate change (such as fires, floods, droughts and storms).


You, along with all Canadian farm operators will receive a letter in May 2021 with instructions on how to complete the census questionnaire online.

The online questionnaire is designed to be efficient and easy to fill out. For example, it will automatically add totals and will only ask the questions that apply specifically to your farm. This will reduce Statistics Canada's need to call you to clarify answers.

The Census of Agriculture has other benefits too:

- It identifies trends and provides factual information on emerging economic and social issues, opportunities and challenges within the agricultural community.
- The questions cover a wide range of topics, such as land use, crops, livestock, agricultural labour, machinery and equipment, land management practices, and farm finances.

Support your community and our industry by completing the Census of Agriculture questionnaire. It can be completed by anyone who is responsible for, or knowledgeable about, the day-to-day management decisions of your operation.

Find more information at [census.gc.ca](https://census.gc.ca) 





# Realizing New Opportunity Through Ranch Branded Retail

BY LORI LOREE

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March 2020 was the month Trish Tetz, of Tetz Cattle, a fourth generation beef and grain farm located near Three Hills, AB, was set to launch her new Craft Beef Company, offering curated boxes of meat delivered straight to the consumer's door. She had no idea the timing of their opening would coincide with a world-wide pandemic, changing how people purchased their food.

At the beginning of 2020, Matt and Addy Bolduc of Cudlobe Angus West had a goal to market 12 head of cattle as part of their new branded-beef program. They hit that goal in three months, ultimately processing nearly 40 head to sell direct to the consumer at the Lethbridge Farmer's Market.

[[ We feel like the customer wants to go to one place and source cuts from a bunch of different local farms and have it all shipped in one box to the door. ]]





@loreephoto

Trish Tetz, Tetz Cattle & Craft Beef Company, Three Hills, AB

Brisket Case, a family-based business in Nanton, AB, was created in 2018, selling food products for team fundraising, as well as a grocery service for high-quality meat and produce. In March 2020, owner Geoff Murray realized that his small, upstart business was about to get wild, as consumers flocked to the internet to buy groceries. To help both meet and realize the demand, he expanded his business to retail space at a store in their town called The Hive.

With COVID-19 keeping people in their homes and with fewer options in treating themselves, many looked to cooking the perfect meal at home. Consumers were willing to spend a little more, and they wanted the convenience of doorstep delivery. Consumers also wanted to support their local community and purchase products that made them feel happy to cook and

prepare for their families, as they faced another day inside their house.

Ranchers and consumers have long been in a direct relationship selling sides and quarters off-farm. Where the change is being seen is through the online and retail spaces devoted to selling ranch-branded cuts.

“Pre-COVID, this trend of buying direct from farm was there, but slow-growing. Everyone knew a farmer who would sell a half or a quarter; that was already there,” says Tetz. “We feel like the customer wants to go to one place and source cuts from a bunch of different local farms and have it all shipped in one box to the door.”

Tetz says that buying from local producers is something that Europe has been doing for years, and it was a trend she looked at when starting Craft Beef Co.



The company routinely shipped about 100 boxes a month since opening. Recently, they've seen their sales quadruple since receiving media attention.

"People are eating at home more often and they're rediscovering traditional eating and cooking. We are seeing a resurgence of homegrown culinary skills and exploration," says Ron Glaser, Vice President Corporate Affairs, Canada Beef. "We are seeing more meal-box delivery where consumers create a meal from scratch, using fresh ingredients."

Tetz says that she anticipated her customer being female and 25 to 50 years of age; someone savvy with the internet and ordering food online. What surprised her was the volume of senior citizens ordering. She also says that her Wagyu products are mostly purchased by men.

Glaser says projected total beef consumption was up 3.3% in 2020. Per capita consumption was up 1.9% and retail demand up 6.8%; the second highest it's been since the 1990s.

"This is very much due to COVID and the change in eating habits," Glaser adds. "Our website usage is up

significantly with people looking for recipes, culinary advice and how-to videos on cooking."

Geoff Murray of Brisket Case agrees. "If there is a positive to COVID, it was that people ramped up their support of small businesses; they became more aware and were making more meals at home."

As Murray's business grew, he began looking at sourcing a larger variety of products from local producers. He partnered with farmers and ranchers who were able to provide cuts that sold well and were consistently high-quality.

"The trend that I see is new butcher shops popping back up," adds Murray. "I think we are going back to those days. It's just like micro-breweries. I think we are going to see something similar – like micro-beef."

Addy Bolduc and her family are in the purebred Angus business near Stavely, AB. In 2020, she decided to invest in selling through the Lethbridge Farmer's Market. Each week, she would pack up a refrigerated trailer and spend the day visiting with customers about their product, their ranch, and their cattle. It allowed her





One of the most important things for doing this is finding a good butcher. If you're not getting your carcass cut optimally, you're leaving money on the table.

to meet new people and talk to them about how they enjoyed a certain cut they purchased the week before.

"It's definitely more labour intensive taking two head to the butcher each week. I end up doing meat labelling in the night while the kids are sleeping. Does it fit into our life? Is it more work? Heck yes," says Bolduc. "But I love it and I love interacting with new people and giving them a really good piece of beef."

Bolduc does have advice for anyone looking at selling direct to the consumer.

"One of the most important things for doing this is finding a good butcher. If you're not getting your carcass cut optimally, you're leaving money on the table. That butcher needs to be as invested as you into cutting high-end cuts of meat," said Bolduc. "It's not hard to find one to cut striploin and ribeye, but they also need to be able to cut skirt steaks, picanhas, and tomahawks. They need to have your back."

Clint Buhler of Buhler Beef sells Longhorn cuts through the Brisket Case. A large portion of his consumers are in the fitness world; athletes looking for a lean protein. But, he wanted to have a local presence and supply his community as well. He processed 50 head in 2020, selling direct to the consumer.

"This is something that I've dreamed of doing my entire life, and I am living it," says Buhler, a Calgary police officer who calls Nanton home. "It's awesome having people work together, instead of against each other. I want to build steady relationships with clients that last a long time."



With consumers looking at modern ways to purchase food that is convenient, local and fresh, beef producers are getting creative at how they close the gap between their pasture and a kitchen table. Consumers are craving restaurant-level experiences with their food but are either unable or unwilling to dine out. They've turned to the internet to order food boxes with fresh ingredients to be cooked at home or are buying small batches at small retail stores stocking local meat. They are taking the time to wander their local farmer's market to purchase weekly produce and meat. The experience has become an adventure in a world where we haven't wandered far from home in over a year. Adventures have been in the kitchen, creating meals with family and exploring the world of cooking and flavours. Businesses like Craft Beef Company, Brisket Case, Cudlobe Angus West and Buhler Beef have all pivoted and are giving consumers what they want; a culinary experience that brings joy and comfort to their lives – another reason to celebrate our world-class Alberta beef. 

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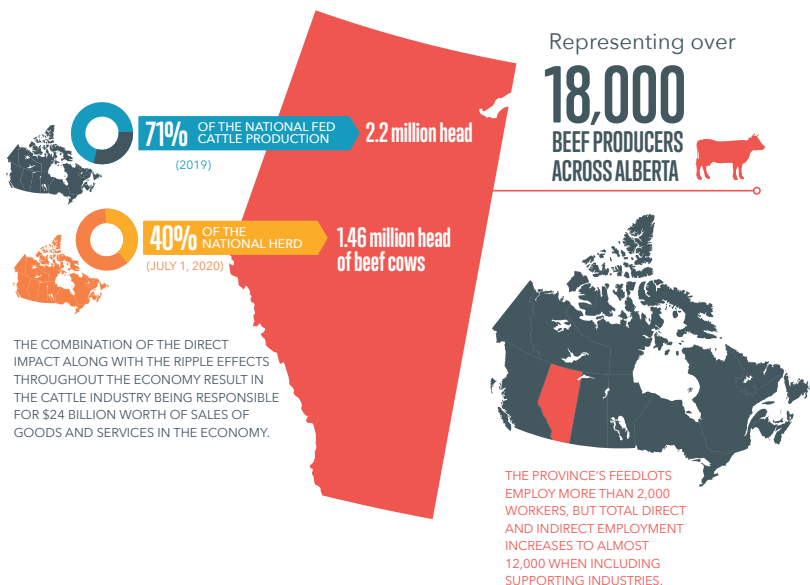


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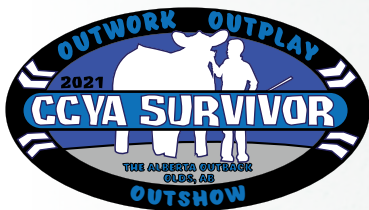
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