Rethinking the Packing Sector and Prioritizing Financial Stability BROUGHT TO YOU BY: Volume 2 Issue 1 JANUARY 2022

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ON THE COVER

It's that time of year, soups and bone broths to keep warm on those cold winter days. Bone broth is trending because of the strong demand from today's consumers.

Social Influencers

CIARA GRIFFITH

Hey there! I am Ciara Griffith, a fourth-generation commercial cattle and mixed grain farmer located East of Hussar, Alberta. Ranching and farming have always been passions of mine, as well as photography, especially Western Lifestyle. Being able to capture my lifestyle and share it through images is something I consider very special.

I have always had a drive for photography, I can remember getting my first camera when I was nine and taking it out before school that morning to take photos of weaning. It's incredible to me, to have the capability to capture emotion and freeze a moment. I strive for my images to tell stories and spark memories. When I'm not taking pictures or working around the farm, I'm teaching Grade Two at a neighbouring Hutterite Colony.

KIRK PRESCOTT - BAR XP PHOTO

Born and raised in the interior of BC, I hail from a large ranching and blue-collar background. I am passionate about our ranching heritage and remain grateful for the opportunities and experiences that the agricultural industry has afforded both family and friends. The people and places that embody our western way of life serve as a focus of my photography. Each image that I share reveals part of a story. I live on a ranch, near Okotoks, Alberta, and spend a great deal of time in my saddle or on the highway, living my best life. I teach elementary school by day, and my students truly light up my life.

To me, the "West" is a way of life. It's a culture that embodies hard work and community. Our ranching industry is rich in history and grounded in traditions that have been carried forward for generations. In my images, I aim to share authentic experiences and interesting stories. Above all, I aim to portray our western way of life in an appealing and reputable manner.



Editor



LINDSAY ROBERTS

Lindsay is the Marketing and Communications Manager at Alberta Beef Producers. She has an extensive background in agri-marketing, publication and brand development. Lindsay has a passion for creative storytelling and all things agriculture.

Contributors



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.



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.



RYAN COPITHORNE

Ryan has an MBA from Queen's School of Business, a finance degree, and over 25 years in the ranching and farming business. His current company is called Cows in Control, a company designed to focus on providing financial and risk management advice to farmers to protect the value of their commodities and inventories.



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 along with her husband, West of 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.



CRAIG LESTER

Craig is an award-winning agricultural journalist who loves connecting people, ideas, and resources. He is also a cattle producer, who enjoys working on the family farm in Rolling Hills, AB.

Social Contributors



#AllForTheBeef

WITH BRAD DUBEAU



Happy New Year and welcome to 2022.

What a year we endured in 2021, but as the saying goes, "don't look back, you're not going that way."

Of course, at ABP we do need to reflect upon our organization and industry

experiences, learnings, and considerations from this past year, as that continues to be a foundation for the growth of our organization and our industry.

I want to first extend our thoughts and continued support to our industry families in British Columbia, who are striving to recover from the devastating floods they endured in November. May the year ahead bring healing recovery, relief, and restoration.

2021 was a year of many facelifts both internally and externally for ABP. From internal structural changes to become more efficient, to our new external communication elements, including this magazine and our forward-facing digital platform. We have been delighted with your feedback and suggestions. We know that people have varying opinions on all the new tools, from the magazine to the app, or ABP daily. This feedback is adding to the evolution and experience and

raising the bar for even more relevant content, designed to provide insights and inspiration to elevate your operations and ultimately, the success of your business.

Despite the barriers that COVID presented in 2021, we strived to build even stronger relationships with producers and encourage dialogue and engagement. We are utilizing your check-off dollars to the best of our ability and making sure the voices of Alberta beef producers are heard and are at the table, whether it be provincially or federally. As always, we are also ensuring that every single check-off dollar is working hard at the end of the day to put more dollars back in the pockets of producers and supporting continued sustainable advancements for our industry or realizing government support programs as we did for producers who experienced extreme drought this past year.

ABP also worked diligently last year as a lead on a beef competitiveness grant that was initiated and announced at the Calgary Stampede in July, 2021. We are working together with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Alberta Cattle Feeders', with assistance from Canfax on this grant, in efforts to build resiliency in the processing sector, in Alberta, as well as price discovery for the producer. We're looking at our whole processing industry because we know that the pressure is on both our feedlot and cow calf producers. We know too, that the processing and retail sector seems to be flourishing

and that consumers are paying the price. Our mission at Alberta Beef Producers is to see this price discovery realized all the way through to the producer level. Profit sharing can be a part of this industry so that every level can be sustainable.

We are really pleased that Cargill and their employees were able to meet a resolution in early December that avoided any interruptions or negative impacts to producers and our value chain.

In a month filled with New Year's resolutions, at ABP our goal remains for 2022 to stand up, for and behind Alberta beef producers and help lead and navigate a path forward that brings opportunity for the world-class beef product that you produce. I am confident about the year ahead and the advancements that we will continue to make as an industry.

Cheers to a brighter year filled with positive returns.





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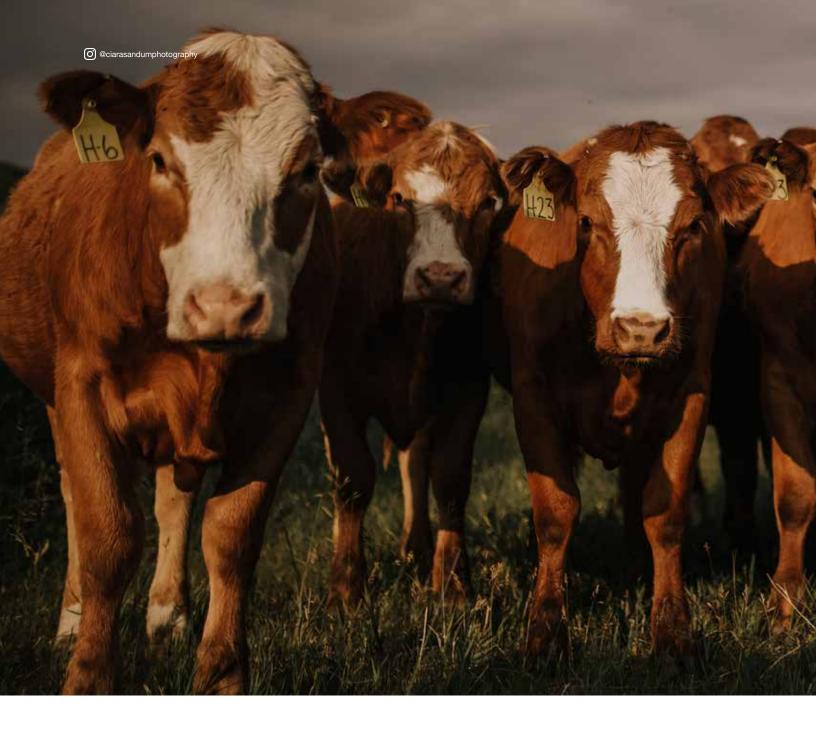
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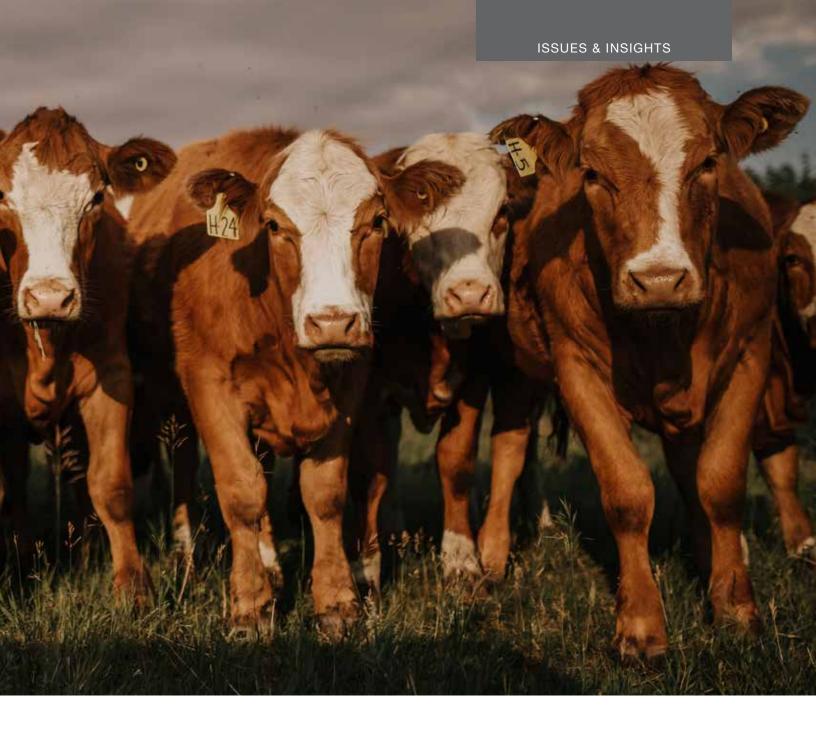


INSPIRATION

Wired

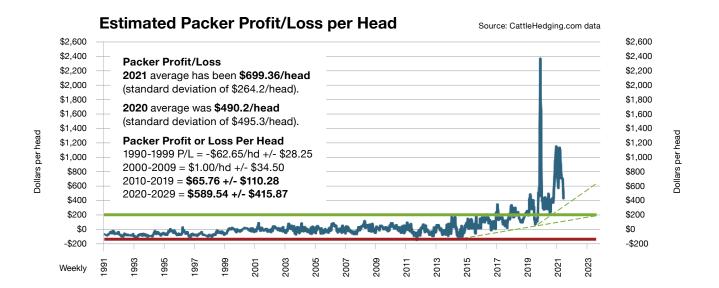


Rethinking the Packing Sector



BY RYAN COPITHORNE

Wow, have you looked at the price of a steak lately? Canadian retail beef prices are at the highest level in history, inflating over 20% a year. A good steak or roast can cost \$25-50 in the store; can you believe it?



That is for an unbranded commodity product sold from a largely undifferentiated commodity system, in a major retail store. These are not the niche butcher or local variety retail store prices. Prices are even higher there. So why is every cattle person I know grumbling about margins?

Beef cutout prices rose 38%, yet our fed cattle prices are at the same level as they were at the end of 2019. We may need to rethink our system here.

One US packer reported Q3 earnings for 2021 were up 93% year on year. Another, (a private company that stopped publicly reporting its earnings in 2020) just revealed its biggest profit in its 156-year history; up 64% year on year. A third reported Q3 2021 earnings growth of 146.9% year on year. On the next page is a long-term chart of packer margins (courtesy: cattlehedging.com) in the US. I think we can see the trend.

If we used pre-COVID packer margins, fat prices would be \$791 Canadian per animal higher than current prices.

The beef packing industry has evolved into an oligopoly system with four major packers in the US controlling 85% of total supply and two major packers in Canada controlling 75-80% of the nation's supply. In the past two years we have seen drastic pullbacks in fat cattle prices during the plant fire in Holcombe, Kansas, or the JBS ransomware attack or, of course, the COVID shutdowns in 2020.

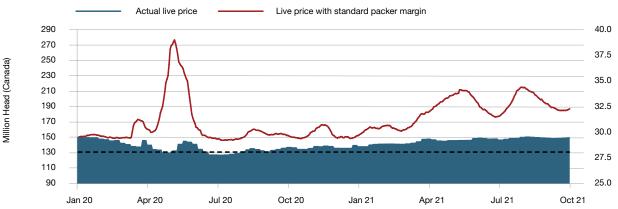
Does it make sense from a food security standpoint in Canada to have two foreign-owned, standalone facilities that handle 35-40% of the total beef supply each? One COVID outbreak, plant strike, fire or whatever, and 40% of the beef supply goes offline.

A contrary example would be in the country of Uruguay. Uruguay has a land mass 1/3 the size of Alberta, a similar number of cattle and similar processing capacity as Canada, but has 27 federal exporting, regionally distributed plants. It exports 75% of its product outside the country, fully traceable. This model is possible if the industry wills it. I am not sure that our industry has been "willing it."

Packer margins (value of the beef carcass minus the value of the live fed animal) in the US before COVID averaged \$150-250 per head. They got as high as \$2700 during COVID, and are around \$700 today. Our fat prices since 2019 have been flat in the US and Canada. If we used pre-COVID packer margins, fat prices would be \$791 Canadian per animal higher than current prices.

Actual vs where US Live Cattle Should Be with a Standard Packer Margin





There is our producer margin issue.

Plants will argue that costs have risen due to COVID PPE measures. Let's remember that the packers in Canada were awarded \$77 million during 2020 to address COVID measures. Then look again at the 2021 corporate packer profit growth.

Consumers are begging for more connection to their food; to know where it comes from. The large plants do not custom process and have no individual farm to consumer brand programs. If producers want to develop niche

products, they sorely lack processing capacity to develop these programs as most of the smaller plants are provincial only, or small federal plants are booked with several months waiting lists.

Many advocates in our beef industry are defending the big plant systems as they suggest smaller plant initiatives have been largely unsuccessful in the past, costs are higher in the smaller plants, and access to temporary foreign labour has been a challenge. To keep beef affordable and competitive with pork and chicken, they say we need cheap, large plants. Hmm.



Large packer margins of late have not kept beef cheap. A little competition would help.

If our primary focus is to go head-to-head with commodity pork and chicken on price, we will continue to lose market share. Could beef be sold more like wine – a high-quality product differentiated by breed, region, how it is raised, branding, by values connections between the producer and the consumer? That's more difficult to do in a big plant system. It will take smaller, regional custom plants to develop that type of market connection, and value add to our prices.

Let's look at the cost benefits of smaller plants. Firstly, they can be regionalized, closer to where the production occurs, thereby reducing the freight and shrink costs as well as time that cattle stand on trucks being hauled to plants. Good from an animal welfare standpoint, but also for beef tenderness, which is tied to animal stress. Long truck rides are stressful. Secondly, there are savings in having less food, biosecurity and cattle price risk in a small plant going offline compared to large plants where 40% of the total national supply can go down in a single plant event. Thirdly, there is the value creation of custom processed, ranch to retail marketing programs. Lastly, what is the security and optics value of locally owned food processing over foreign owned brands and processing?

So how do we get more of these smaller plants? Firstly, our industry needs to promote them; lobby on their behalf. Secondly, streamline the federal permitting and regulation process to get them started. Anyone trying to start a plant has run into that hurdle. Thirdly, expedite and seek federal assistance on temporary foreign labour availability, as well as local labour promotion in these smaller plants. Fourthly, protect smaller start-up plants from predatory pricing tactics by the majors during start-up periods. Fifthly, government and industry need to develop more national and local plant management training and meat cutting schools. We need to develop the human resources needed to operate these smaller plants. And lastly, producer plant initiatives have often failed due to lack of committed supply, capital, and/or professional experienced management. Harmony Beef Plant in Balzac has been an example of a success story that made this a priority from the start.

The benefits of source verified ranch to retail product from custom plants can easily compete with the cost efficiency advantage of larger plants. Let's not do away with larger plants, but can we support and look at alternatives as an industry? That will differentiate Canadian and Alberta beef from its competition and allow beef to sell more like wine. "I'll have the XX breed, raised in the XX region of Alberta by the XX family ranch, raised sustainably by doing XX, please."

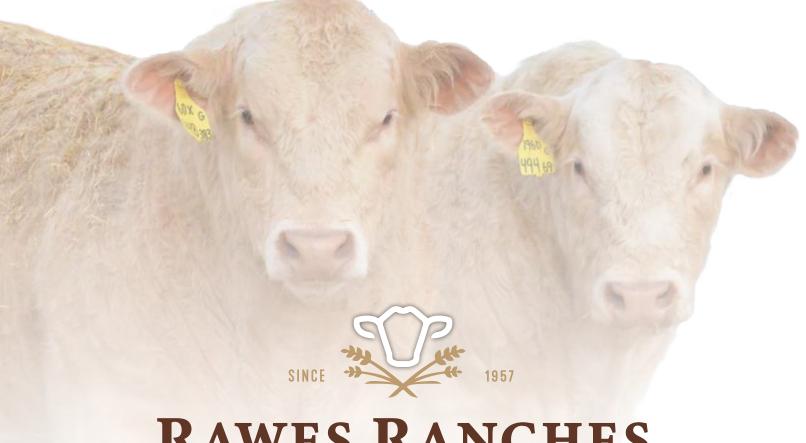
ALBERTA BEEF INDUSTRY COMPETITIVENESS STUDY

A study, led by Alberta Beef Producers, alongside the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association, Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Government of Alberta, will assess risks and overall competitiveness of the province's beef industry.

This study will enable the industry and government to better understand the needs of the sector from a whole supply chain perspective. It will shed light on the best approaches to build capacity, diversify and enhance the resiliency of Alberta's beef processing sector.

The study will involve an extensive survey of current operations, of all sizes, to underscore common and unique challenges to better understand barriers to growth. Additionally, price and market transparency will be explored to identify critical data points indicating when markets are operating efficiently and potential options for when supply chain dynamics become suboptimal.

The goal of this study is to help build a set of recommendations to increase capacity focused on the size of the operation, geographical need and cattle requirements. A strategy will be developed that will focus on maintaining, expanding and attracting beef packing capacity in the province.



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Highlights from the Chair

WITH MINISTER NATE HORNER, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

BY MELANIE WOWK, CHAIR, ABP



In my role as Chair at ABP, I have had many producers recently ask me about our newly appointed Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development. I had the opportunity to sit down with Minister Nate Horner to gain insights into his position and his vision for our industry. Here is what he had to say.

Q) What propelled your desire to enter the political platform?

A) The agriculture sector is really all I've ever known and I have a strong desire for it to remain sustainable and profitable. I wanted to make sure that we had a strong agricultural voice in government that also had a strong understanding. I also thought it was important to have different perspectives. It is a challenge for me with my young family at this stage in my life to do this for sure, but I also think that it is a great opportunity to have people at different stages in their life representing the industry. Those like myself who are still trying to grow their business, and not retired and looking backwards. So, these are important perspectives to have in the legislature and I felt that I could bring that to the position.

Q) How do you manage the demands of your position and all the time away from your cattle operation and young family?

A) Well, it's very difficult. I owe my wife tremendously for keeping everything together at home. I told her the next midlife crisis definitely gets to be hers. But on a serious note, it's very difficult and we also rely on both sets of grandparents that my kids are quite close to, so they're a big, big part of this puzzle. When it comes to the cattle and farming operations, I have a gentleman that has worked for and with me for 16 years. It wouldn't be possible without him either. I had to ask his permission to run for this position



Nate Horner, his wife Jennifer and their three children Avery, Luke, and Kase.

too. I'm not sure the order – if it was before my wife or after my wife. Regardless, it certainly wouldn't have been possible without his participation. He welcomed more responsibility, so I said, I'll give you all the responsibility you can handle. So here we are today, and we are kind of flying by the seat of our pants, but he is doing a great job. My situation is reflective of the agricultural community and the support of family and community coming together to support each other in times of need.

Q) What is your vision for a sustainable beef industry in Alberta?

A) Oh, that's a good question. I think it's fairly complicated, but at the same time it's fairly simple. We see the pressures that are being faced on a lot of different sectors, but agriculture specifically. We have to roll with the punches. We are facing a lot of environmental pressures to continue to show the world that we are sustainable and good stewards of the land. We also need to ensure that we're profitable and that's very difficult right now for a number of reasons. We are facing inflation and rising input costs on everything that we touch in our farm businesses. Combine that with the fact that we are price takers. At the end of the day, I would love to see more hook space brought into this province and in this country. As beef producers, we know there's a ton of value in this chain and we are confident that the leverage

is going to shift to the producer and the feeder in the near future, but I would like to see more capacity, and the ability to share that value back to the producer.

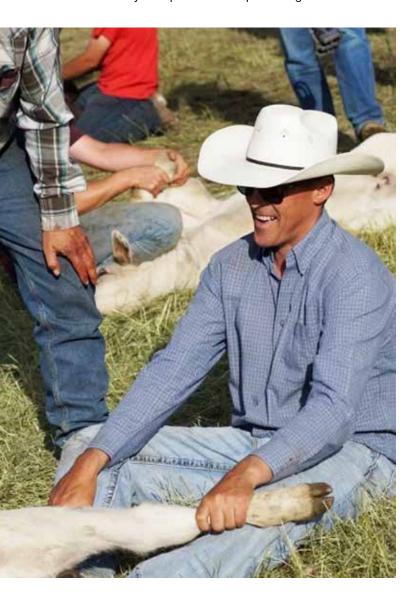
Q) What is the key issue in our industry that keeps you up at night?

A) Well right now, I'd have to give you about three or four. I would love for the beef sector to get more processing capacity in this province as I mentioned before, and I'd love to address the veterinarian shortage. I'd love to see some real changes made in Alberta on those fronts. In the general ag sector, I would love to move forward with some business risk management changes that address all of the subsectors of agriculture, so that we can really mitigate our risks. And lastly, I would just love to be able to tell our environmental story in a way that moves us forward – a way that shows the world that we are the best stewards of the land and that we are indeed doing a tremendous job.

Q) Tell us a bit about your cow calf operation.

A) My wife and I farm and ranch together with our families. I still have an uncle and aunt farming and my parents are still actively farming as well as my wife's parents. I had an opportunity to buy into the family farm at a fairly young age after my grandfather passed. Since then, I have been trying to grow and adapt for the past

17 years. We are predominately a cow calf operation. We have a little irrigation that I set up a few years back as well. I am trying to balance our strengths and our weaknesses. At times I thought grass was a strength, so I would try to shore up the feeding side of our operation and just as you're doing that, you are trying to enhance the equipment requirements and just trying to move forward. These efforts are all put forth to try to remain profitable and stay in the game and hope to someday be able to give my kids the opportunity to carry it on. I'm well aware that if it wasn't for the continuity of the generations before me - they could have all cashed in their chips in many different stages, but they didn't - if it wasn't for that, almost no one would currently be in the business of farming or ranching. Especially now with the availability of capital and land prices in general.



Thank you Minister Horner. I am certain that those same issues are keeping fellow Alberta beef producers up at night across our province as well. I know they ring true for me as Chair, ABP and as a producer myself. Of course, the veterinarian shortage is an issue that lies close to my heart as well.

Okay, now for some rapid-fire questions. Are you ready?

A) You bet.

Q) What generation are you leading on your operation?

A) I'm fifth generation on my grandmother's side. My homeplace, my grandfather bought with the help of my great grandfather in 1947.

Q) What is your earliest ranch memory?

A) My earliest ranch memory is getting run over by a cow in our branding pen.

Q) What's your best ranch memory that you hold close?

A) Those would be memories of our family together at branding and weaning.

Q) Horses or Quads?

A) Well, it used to be all horses and now it's both. So, my answer would be both.

Q) Favourite beef breed?

A) Angus.

Q) Favourite cut of beef?

A) Ribeye.

Q) How do you like it done?

A) Medium Rare.

Q) Favourite rodeo event?

A) Saddle bronc.

Q) Thanks so much for taking the time to speak with us. In closing what are your plans post-politics?

A) To return home to the farm, raise my kids and hopefully make it up to my wife.







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ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS

Prioritizing a Path to Financial Sustainability

THIS IS THE FINAL PART OF A THREE-PART SERIES. YOU CAN FIND PARTS ONE AND TWO IN THE SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER ISSUES OF ABP.

Since the implementation of a refundable provincial check-off in 2009, ABP has reduced its annual budget by \$2 million, and depleted reserve funds by another \$2 million. Those reserves, which have previously funded legal action against international trade disputes, may not be at the industry's disposal in the future.

Of the almost \$30 million in provincial check-off dollars refunded, 13 per cent of Alberta producers who have asked for refunds are responsible for 87 per cent of the requests – meaning less than 2,400 producers have requested \$26 million in refunds

Our financial situation has been an ongoing discussion, and this year, the Board of Directors saw an urgent need to stop the bleeding if ABP is to remain whole.

"The board identified that a budget of \$3 million was needed to execute programs in our priority areas. Fulfilling our strategic objectives needs to be ABP's top priority and this is the line we can't afford to cross – unless we're ready to start cutting whole programs," says Brad Dubeau, ABP General Manager.

ABP's direction was clearly outlined during the five-year plan review held in 2019, and more recently through an in-depth review and approval by the delegate body of our 2021-22 strategic goals. With the focus on narrowing our scope to be a more effective organization with the dollars available, four key priority areas were identified: communications, government relations, marketing, and production.

When Dubeau moved into the General Manager position he was tasked with finding a solution to ABP's financial woes. Budget cuts were made internally, and external industry partners were notified of reduced funding, including Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA).

In 2020, ABP was only fulfilling 48 of the 53 cent CCA assessment, which all provincial members had agreed to pay on per head gross marketings until June 2023. The ABP Board of Directors couldn't justify pulling dollars from our reserve fund to contribute to CCA reserves, and 48 cents was determined as an amount that would support their operating budget. We've since cleared up the accumulated arrears and moved back to the 53 cents to honour our commitment.

Unfortunately, with our current level of refunds, fulfilling the 53 cents means ABP is contributing closer to 90 cents of the \$2 provincial check-off that isn't refunded (retained earnings). Discussions have begun on transitioning the CCA assessment from gross cattle marketings to retained

As the largest beef producing province in Canada, it is pertinent that we maintain our presence in provincial and national research programs.

earnings. In the meantime, we've made the difficult decision to reduce our annual contributions to CCA once the current commitment is fulfilled. Effective July 2023, the Board of Directors is proposing that our annual CCA assessment be set to a quarter of our retained revenue. ABP simply can't continue to prioritize the support of other organizations over our own.

CHECK-OFF DOLLARS BREAKDOWN

To break it down: The \$2.50 non-refundable national levy provides industry funding for the Beef Cattle Research Council, Canada Beef, and the Public and Stakeholder Engagement program.

The \$2 provincial service charge supports the work done by ABP and our contribution to CCA. From that \$2, we are refunding 46 per cent and committed to contributing 53 cents to the CCA assessment.

Last year, the \$4.50 per head check-off paid when an animal is sold in Alberta equated to approximately \$16 million in gross revenue.

- \$9.1 million in national levy payments
- \$3 million in provincial service charge refunds
- \$4.6 million set as the ABP budget, which includes
 \$2.1 million for CCA

"It isn't sustainable. ABP can't continue to fund other organizations to our own detriment. The way we fund CCA needs to align with how ABP itself is funded. And until our fiscal situation changes, we need to move towards an assessment based on retained marketings," says Dubeau. "For example, \$4 million in retained

check-off, less refunds and after the national levy is paid, would leave approximately \$1 million for Alberta's contribution to the Canadian Cattlemen's Association."

Recognizing that changes to national programs often have the greatest impact in Alberta, most ABP representatives don't want to see CCA take such a significant cut. But ABP is as lean as it can be. Staff roles and responsibilities are streamlined, and consumer engagement and provincial research dollars were significantly reduced.

Alberta's research budget may be small, but it elevates our voice at the national table. As the largest beef producing province in Canada, it is pertinent that we maintain our presence in provincial and national research programs.

At this time, we continue to negotiate with CCA and the provincial members to find an affordable solution that will see ABP assessed on retained dollars, allowing the organization to stay whole. We are operating as effectively as possible in our priority areas with the dollars and resources available. Further cuts to ABP could result in eliminating entire programs.

While we navigate this financial crossroad, ABP needs to hear from producers in all sectors of Alberta's beef industry to provide input on the path forward. ABP Producer Meetings take place at the end of January through the beginning of February, providing a timely opportunity for elected representatives to hear from their zones and inform future policy and direction.

"I took this position because I want to see ABP continue to excel in the minds of producers. I want to be part of a process that allows Alberta producers from all sectors to come together and lead the industry. I believe this organization can connect with producers to give them a sense of pride and ownership over their industry," says Dubeau.

"This industry needs a strong organization working to represent all sectors of the industry. We need producers to be connected and engaged along with the delegates, directors, executive, and staff. We're asking producers to understand what we are up against and acknowledge the severity of our financial situation."

Building the Best Beef Team

The beef cattle industry is changing.

BY BRENDA SCHOEPP

Cattle are forward contracted at a historic volume; consolidation is rampant and foreign ownership is threading itself throughout the industry. Identity and certified programs capture much of the market through to slaughter, while feeder cattle continue to swap countries just as readily as they do provincial borders.

Export markets demand renowned Canadian genetics and world-class technology, which industry partners are delivering. In the background is the natural environment in which this all happens. The tidy farms, clean air, pristine mountain ranges, pure water, fertile soils and grasslands all are part of the value in marketing the final product – beef.

Farmers, ranchers and cattle feeders know that to be successful they must be supported by professional teams. Veterinarians, nutritionists, forage specialists, IT folks, health crews, accountants, researchers, risk managers and legal advisors are some of the most engaged in the beef cattle community. As we look to the future and the change within the industry, different teams may be necessary.

The cow calf sector has historically taken the bid price that was established through fed cattle markets and the related cost of gain. Traditionally, the focus for the cow calf producer has been on low-cost production

and the health and welfare of the animal. Price was not a controllable factor. However, there is potential in looking at marketing with a sharper lens, remembering that both the calf and the data that accompany it have value and are the owners' property until both the animal and data are transferred. Selling a \$1,200 feeder steer may seem good enough, but it is short of the inflationary costs of production and does not reflect the upside potential when coupled with relationship selling for quality attributes, employing risk mitigation strategies or retained ownership.

Retained ownership is not without risk, especially at the current cost of gain. Some producers have turned to retaining a percentage of their herd to market as fed cattle directly to consumers. Appreciating the worth of beef cuts and the potential in value adding can move the mark from mainstream pricing to higher end offerings. Markets are diverse and buyer centric. Consulting with a marketing expert, exploring the range in cultural demand, and adding value with spice/smoke/age/flavour or pre-cooking are all viable options.

The current-day non-negotiable product attributes are climate and environment. Throughout the beef industry, staying ahead of the regulations is just one aspect.

The rest of the game is in developing and measuring



benchmarks and protocols and then reporting for an evidence-based evaluation of success. Having a designated person on the team or bringing in expertise is critical as we transcend into an era of beef production wherein the future lies in our environmental behaviour as much as it does in genetics or feeding.

Tracking all this action takes a systems approach based on digital technology. Without systems in place and teams to interpret the data, the actions are not measurable nor do they accurately calculate the cost benefit.

Some benefits are immediate and impressive, such as extending grazing seasons with the use of techniques and forage mixes or the application of genomics in genetic selection. Knowing about how the rest of industry works is also imperative and failing to do so can be restrictive. For example, the uncontested move by packers from rail grade to live bids on fed cattle before the development of value-based carcass pricing, cost the fed cattle industry dearly and directly impacted feeder cattle value.

What could come next?

Regardless of the size of the operation there is room for an advisory board or mentors. Calling in those who are

visionary allows us to see the possible. Collective voices who have an area of expertise mirror a live research project, bringing evidence to the table.

The sole market for the final beef product is the consumer. Including a young urban consumer in the discussion is really important. They are both interested and invested in information about food production systems and environment, food quality and nutrition. Inviting mentors, financial experts, regulatory and export advisors, investors, meat buyers, environmental specialists, risk mitigators, risk managers, human resources, youth (Gen Z), marketing and herd health experts, researchers and wealth advisors is encouraged. With technology these sessions can be from the comfort of home or office.

Inviting diverse thought to your team and carefully evaluating and measuring results will promote a clearer view of your potential participation up and down the beef chain. Even if there is only one good recommendation, what if it was the game changer for your cow calf herd, feeding program, marketing, risk strategy, beef product development goal, technology upgrade, international exposure or investment partnership?

It takes a team to navigate change. Who is on yours?



Late Gestation Nutrition

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGING HEIFER HEALTH PRE-CALVING.

BY ROBIN GALEY

Across Alberta last fall many cattle came off pasture thin. This is a serious concern, especially when it comes to preparing for and protecting the health of the next generation. We asked beef nutrition consultant Barry Yaremcio for some recommendations to support pregnant heifers through late gestation and calving. Here is his advice.

RECOGNIZE UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS

The nutritional requirements of a bred heifer are higher than that of a mature cow. They are still growing when the first calf is born and reach mature weight when their second calf is born. It's best to feed bred heifers separate from other animals, Yaremcio suggests.

Improving their body condition score to 3.0 or 3.5 will provide increased fat insulation to help the animal withstand cold temperatures, and support the production of a sufficient volume and quality of colostrum. "Having a high quantity and quality of colostrum provides calves with the passive immunity necessary to support good health," explains Yaremcio.

SELECT HIGH ENERGY FEED

Putting weight on heifers at this late stage of pregnancy requires a high energy feed source. "They need a ration that combines different feeds to provide sufficient amounts of protein, energy, macro- and micro-nutrients and vitamins," says Yaremcio.

Providing higher energy feed such as barley, oats, wheat, triticale or rye in combination with hay or silage will support weight gain and improve body condition. "Grains have approximately 40% more energy on a pound for pound basis compared to hay or silage on a dry matter basis," Yaremcio suggests.

Feeding byproducts can support high energy needs: cull potatoes, French fries, Brewer's grain, malt sprouts, oat groats, wheat mids, or wheat shorts.

Yaremcio offers this handy table to assess ration quality for bred heifers.

Minimum Nutritional Requirements in Pregnant Heifers*

Stage of pregnancy	Mid- pregnancy	Late pregnancy	After calving
Energy – % Total Digestib Nutrients	60 le	62	65
% Protein	10	11	12





TAKE A MEASURED APPROACH **TO ADDITIVES**

Trying to stretch forage supplies by adding straw or lower quality forages is unavoidable when supply is tight. Remember that straw takes longer to digest and contains less protein and energy. In late pregnancy, when feed intake is limited and nutrient requirements are higher, it's important to ensure the best quality feed goes in.

Limit straw intake to two or three pounds for pregnant heifers, and leave it out altogether after calving. When considering ways to make straw more palatable, pencil out the cost compared to using grains, peas, lentils, or distillers' byproducts to supply protein and energy, says Yaremcio.

"Straw may reduce the overall cost of the ration, but it is also the most difficult to digest, and additives don't change that. If a cow has one to two pounds of undigested straw sitting in the rumen for a day, it reduces their feed intake," says Yaremcio.

SUPPLEMENT VITAMINS NOW

In 2021, more feed was harvested as silage. This doesn't alter its quality, but the fermentation process destroys vitamin precursors. Yaremcio says, "Producers should have been supplying adequate amounts of vitamins A, D and E as soon as they started feeding silage."

He also points to the need for extra selenium in Alberta in some cases: "Vitamin E and selenium work together like a belt and a pulley. Both are needed for effective passive immunity provided by the colostrum."

MINERALS, TOO

Producers should have begun boosting mineral intake when grass went dormant last fall. "I advise starting to feed a mineral supplement four months ahead. This allows micronutrients to reach optimum levels prior to colostrum production, which occurs four to six weeks prior to calving. It reduces the number of problems later on," says Yaremcio.

When feeding pregnant cows, you are not only preparing the animal for the calf in utero, but also for the next one.

If you're not adding a mineral and are only providing salt, Yaremcio recommends fortified trace mineral salt with selenium. "It contains not only cobalt and iodine, but also copper, manganese and zinc. These trace minerals improve metabolic efficiency, so cows use feed more efficiently," he says.

FEED FOR GENERATION NEXT

When feeding pregnant cows, you are not only preparing the animal for the calf in utero, but also for the next one. A thin cow will be challenged to put on weight between calving and the start of the next breeding season, and take longer to start cycling.

"Research has shown a 20 to 30 per cent reduction in pregnant cows when they are thin and lost weight between calving and the next breeding season. So you're not only feeding the cow for this calf, but also preparing her for next breeding season," Yaremcio says.

TEST WHAT YOU HAVE

Finally, take feed samples and have them lab tested. "Without a feed test you don't know where you're starting from or where you are going to end up," says Yaremcio.

The best tools for sampling include a core sampler, grain probe and silage probe. A grab or hand sample usually won't provide an accurate quality measurement, Yaremcio notes. Nutritionists, feed salespersons, and county offices usually have sampling tools.

Spending a little money on sampling ensures you can provide a balanced ration, support weight gain, have fewer sick calves and fewer open cows next season, and possibly reduce ration cost. "It's the best way to ensure you're providing a ration that supports the healthiest outcome for cow and calf," Yaremcio says.

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Helping Droughtstricken Cattle Producers Bounce Back and Beyond

BY MARIE-CLAUDE BIBEAU

It's been a tough year for many cattle producers in Western Canada who have suffered through the worst drought in 70 years. Last summer, I visited some of the hard-hit regions of the Prairies during the peak of the drought. It was heartbreaking to see the sun-scorched fields and to meet farm families forced to send the majority of their breeding herds to market, selling genetics developed over generations at a fraction of their worth.

Farmers needed their governments to act, and fast. Working closely with each of the affected provinces, we rapidly deployed programs that could deliver a total of up to \$825 million in federal-provincial shared disaster relief funding under the AgriRecovery framework. Across Western Canada and northwestern Ontario, well over 20,000 livestock producers, mainly cattle producers, have already received over \$300 million under AgriRecovery, helping them access feed and water for their animals. And more payments are processed each day. The ranchers I met during my recent trip near Olds, Alberta told me just how much this quick support meant to them during a time of need.

This year's drought and the flooding that struck British Columbia are a stark reminder that farmers and ranchers are among the hardest hit by climate change.

We also changed the crop insurance program so that grain producers could offer their damaged crops for animal feed and still be eligible for crop insurance payments. We got more money into the pockets of farmers through larger advance payments under the AgriStability program. And we have committed \$4 million to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's Hay West program, covering transportation costs for Eastern Canadian farmers to share their bumper forage crops with their Western neighbours in need.

This year's drought and the flooding that struck British Columbia are a stark reminder that farmers and ranchers are among the hardest hit by climate change. In early December, I travelled to the Fraser Valley to visit with farm families, whose lands, livestock and livelihoods have been ravaged by floods and mudslides.

As we respond to catastrophes now, we must also look to the long term. Extreme weather events like this are adding more stress and unpredictability to farm businesses, and taking a toll on producers' mental health. How are we to build a sustainable sector that ensures clean water, air and soil for the next generation of producers?

Canadian beef producers have already made great gains in sustainable agriculture. Today, the industry has half the greenhouse gas footprint per kilogram of production, compared to the global average. More than ever, Canadians are choosing Certified Sustainable Beef. And you have taken up the challenge of the Global Methane Pledge, to reduce methane emissions by at least 30 per cent below 2020 levels by 2030.

Now is the time to double down to improve our resilience to the effects of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the sector. Because without continued sustainability, we compromise our competitiveness. Canada's trading partners are demanding a sustainable product with a low carbon footprint, and Canadian beef producers are delivering, with 2020 exports up by 25 per cent.

We want to help Canada's beef industry build on this great work. Over the past year, the Government of Canada has launched over half a billion dollars in new programming to help farmers adopt sustainable practices and clean technologies. We're also working together with provinces to shape the next five-year, multi-billion dollar agricultural policy framework, with a shared vision that prioritizes the sustainability of the sector.

The sky is the limit for Canada's beef industry. Demand for protein is growing and producers will have a huge role to play in feeding a growing world population. Canadian beef producers can rest assured that we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them to support their growth, resilience and sustainability.

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau is Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

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SIMMERING THE BENEFITS

of Alberta Beef with Bone Broth

WITH COREY MEYER

No bones about it, bone broth is trending because of the strong demand from today's consumers who are enjoying it in soups and teas for its savoury, nourishing and healing qualities.

Bones are the most nutritious part of the animal. Rich in protein, collagen and gelatin, bone broth has been used for thousands of years as a healing tonic and in a digestive support system. It was a common staple of generations before, and it is most definitely a growing and renewed trend at the meat counter.

Today's consumer is highly conscious of the role that diet plays in our health. I often have customers referencing this "new" thing called bone broth, when in fact, it has been around for centuries. Regardless, it has been coming back with a vengeance the past couple of years. To the point where it's difficult to keep bones in stock to meet the giant upswell in demand for them to make bone broth at home.

What is really great about this growing trend is the fact that we are fully utilizing all of the value of the beef carcass, using the off-cuts like knuckle bones, or for a denser broth, marrow or what we call pipe bones.

Although the demand for Alberta beef bones remains strong all year long here at Acme Meats, the high season is in the winter months starting in January aligning with cold and flu season, which is no coincidence as it is sought after for its healing benefits. Perhaps one positive that we can contribute to COVID is a return to the concept of food as medicine and consumers are returning to the staples as they are more cognizant of that.



How to Make Beef Bone Broth

Although bone broth hasn't always been trending, it has always been delicious. Made from roasted bones, beef bone broth is rich in protein, collagen and gelatin. Cooked for hours, the goal is to not only extract the gelatin but also to release its nutritious minerals.

- Start with Alberta Beef Bones a mix works well that includes marrow, knuckle and/or short ribs or oxtail. Add sliced carrots and onions, and garlic and place all on a baking sheet or roasting pan.
- 2. Roast at 450° F for 40 Minutes to enhance the richness and flavour of the broth tossing halfway through.
- 3. Bring Broth to a Simmer fill a large pot with roughly 12 cups of water, add two celery stalks, bay leaves, two tablespoons of black peppercorns and one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar. Scrape the roasted bones and vegetables into the pot along with remaining juices from the roasting process. Add additional water if necessary to cover the bones and vegetables. Bring the covered pot to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat to a low simmer, and be sure to leave the lid slightly ajar.
- 4. Let Simmer for 24 Hours...or more the longer you simmer the broth, the better your stock will be.
- 5. **Strain and Enjoy** strain the broth, discarding vegetables and bones. Allow to cool in the refrigerator. Fat will solidify on top after cooling, so skim as desired. Season and sip the broth and enjoy the savoury and nourishing benefits or use as a base for other cooking options like sauces or soups.

The demand for beef bone broth is trending with beef customers for its nutritional benefits. Photo by Corey Meyer.



Join us for the 2022 Producer Meetings

CENTRAL ZONE | Monday, January 24

Location: Holiday Inn, 201 Jennifer Heil Way, Spruce Grove

NORTHWEST ZONE | Wednesday, January 26

Location: Dunvegan Inn and Suites, 9812 113 Street, Fairview

NORTHEAST ZONE | Thursday, January 27

Location: Vermilion Regional Centre, 5702 College Drive, Vermilion

SOUTHEAST ZONE | Tuesday, February 8

Location: Heritage Inn Convention Centre, 1217 2 Street W, Brooks

SOUTHWEST ZONE | Wednesday, February 9

Location: Heritage Inn Convention Centre, 1104 11 Ave SE, High River

ALL ZONES | Thursday, February 10

Location: Online via Zoom at 6:30 p.m.

ALL IN-PERSON MEETINGS WILL RUN FROM 1-5 P.M.



Scan the QR code with your phone camera to register for your zone meeting, or go to abpdaily.com/checking-in-with-abp/abp-producer-meeting-schedule/



ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS

2022 ABP Producer Meetings

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS FROM ALL SECTORS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE 2022 ABP PRODUCER MEETINGS RUNNING JANUARY 24 TO FEBRUARY 10. ONE IN-PERSON MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN EACH ZONE AND A VIRTUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD.

During the meetings you can look forward to presentations from ABP Chair Dr. Melanie Wowk and General Manager Brad Dubeau, an update from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, guest speakers, zone delegate introductions, and the opportunity to bring forward resolutions that may shape our policy and direction.

Free advanced registration is encouraged. Please go to the event links available at abpdaily.com/checking-in-withabp/abp-producer-meeting-schedule/



Or scan this QR Code with the camera on your smartphone for meeting details and registration.

The in-person meetings will be required to follow the Alberta Restrictions Exemption Program guidelines, which include:

- proof of full vaccination with QR Code, or
- proof of a privately-paid negative rapid test result taken within 72 hours, or
- documentation of a medical exemption, and
- mandatory indoor masking

ALL IN-PERSON MEETINGS WILL RUN 1-5 P.M. WITH A COFFEE BREAK

CENTRAL: Monday, January 24 Holiday Inn, Spruce Grove

NORTHWEST: Wednesday, January 26Dunvegan Inn and Suites, Fairview

NORTHEAST: Thursday, January 27 Vermilion Regional Centre, Vermilion

SOUTHEAST: Tuesday, February 8Heritage Inn Convention Centre, Brooks

SOUTHWEST: Wednesday, February 9Heritage Inn Convention Centre, High River

ALL ZONES:

Thursday, February 10 at 6:30 p.m.
Virtual Producer Meeting via Zoom with zone breakout rooms







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"IT'S ABOUT FAMILY."

IT'S AMONG THE FIRST WORDS EXPRESSED BY DYCE BOLDUC AND HIS DAUGHTER KAITLYNN. THEY'RE SITTING DOWN OVER A FEW CUPS OF COFFEE AFTER MORNING CHORES ON THEIR FARM IN STAVELY, AB. TWO GENERATIONS OF PUREBRED CATTLE OPERATIONS AT CUDLOBE ANGUS.

You can't just sell that herd and split the money between the kids.

Dyce can remember in detail the first three purebred Angus cows his dad and he purchased at a sale in Nanton in 1966, when he was only 16. They paid \$400, \$290, and \$270 for them respectively. The third was for his mom because she had specifically requested Dyce to purchase one for her.

This would be the first of many times the topics of family, succession, and passion for cattle would be brought up during our discussion. Dyce shared a few stories dating back to the turn of the 19th century when his grandparents first got into livestock where these three themes went hand-in-hand.

SUCCESSION PLANS ARE UNIQUE

Every farm succession plan is unique because every operation is different, every family behind that farm is in different circumstances and has different needs.

The family behind Cudlobe Angus includes Dyce, Adrianna, Steven, Kevin, and Kaitlynn.

As with many farm families, it includes members of the next generation who are on the farm and some who are not.

In this case, Steven has pursued a passion outside the farm, while Kevin and Kaitlynn have remained on the farm.

The farm was passed down to Dyce's parents, then to Dyce and his brother David, owner of Cudlobe Angus West. With each generation, a little more knowledge is gained on how to improve the process for the next generation.

But the Bolducs are humble, saying they are in no way experts on succession planning and are constantly learning.

"Succession is hard, because it involves families and feelings and you want to remain a family, which is the end goal of every succession," says Kaitlynn.

STARTS WITH LOVE

Passing along and receiving the genetics starts with the love of cattle.

"You have to have a love for the cattle."

Without that key ingredient with both the older and younger generation, she says it simply won't work.



That love is a trait that goes back to their grandma (Dyce's mother), who always put an emphasis on good cattle. This mindset is one thing that has successfully been passed down from one generation to the next with ease. Both Kaitlynn and her brother Kevin have been showing cattle since they were very young, and it is apparent when you talk to both that their passion for livestock has only grown over the years.

MOVING THE GENETICS FORWARD

The words "Gold Mine" come up many times during the discussion, that's what they call their cowherd – how high they value them and the work that they have put into them.

"You could not replace the cows that we have today. The genetics we have built within this cowherd have been a process over many, many years," says Kaitlynn.

She adds you can't just sell that herd and split the money between the kids.

"That's not an option, that could not replace what the family has built."

So, the conversation is always focused on how they divide the herd, so it stays active in the next generation to keep those genetics viable moving forward.

Dyce is quick to point out that genetics is also about the clientele they have grown over the years.

"They have spent a generation developing clientele in this area."

So as the farm is passed along, so is the clientele, a fact not lost on Kaitlynn or Kevin as they spend a lot of time connecting with the buyers who have been coming to Cudlobe Angus for generations.

SUCCESSION IS HARD WORK

The topic of succession is not easy and in many cases is steered clear of because families struggle to communicate and fear tough, confrontational conversations.

For Kevin and Kaitlynn they have made a point to have these conversations face to face.

"Just saying how we feel and where we are at, whether we agree on it or not. At least then we know where each of our mindsets are at, we're not caught off guard." I don't think anyone goes through succession and says it is easy and we're no different and by no means are we experts.



They have taken the knowledge passed down by their parents and their Uncle David and Aunt Marg with Cudlobe Angus West that they learned from succession when they separated out what was passed down from their parents.

The siblings have then added to it by setting out plans ahead of time.

Always keeping family front of mind.

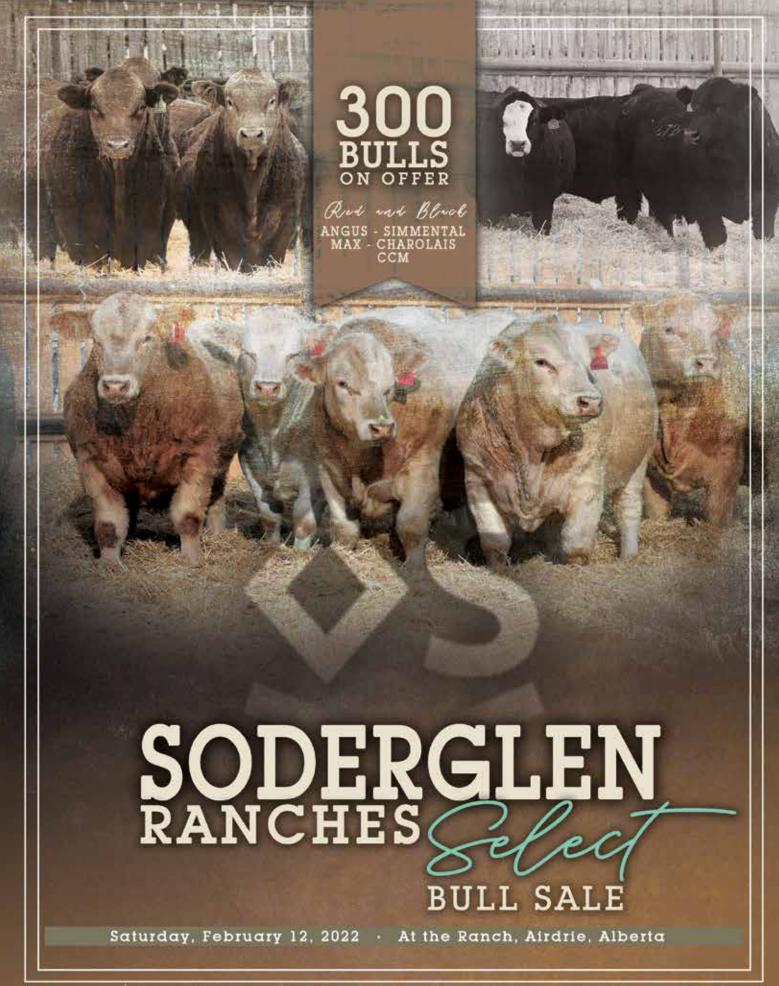
THE ROAD AHEAD

Both agree that the road to this point has been bumpy, and it will continue to be bumpy as everyone works through the plan.

"I don't think anyone goes through succession and says it is easy and we're no different and by no means are we experts," says Kaitlynn.

It is at this moment that Dyce comes back to his original point.

"You have to put family first, and that isn't always easy, but that has to be the end goal."





An Update on Beef Transport Research Findings

BY ROBIN GALEY

ENSURING CATTLE HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING TRANSPORT IS IMPORTANT. AS THE TWO-YEAR PHASE-IN PERIOD FOR CANADA'S NEW CATTLE TRANSPORT REGULATIONS COMES TO AN END THIS FEBRUARY, NEW RESEARCH FINDINGS ARE BEING RELEASED THAT OFFER HELPFUL DIRECTION FOR INDUSTRY AND PRODUCERS.

"As an industry, we expect that our policies, regulations and management practices are informed by scientific research. Projects like this transport project, performed under Canadian conditions, not only give producers more information on how to improve the health and welfare of their cattle, but also provide key data to regulators to ensure that legislation and policies are reflective of the best available scientific knowledge." Karin Schmid, Lead, Beef Production and Extension, ABP.

In February 2020 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) began phasing in stricter regulations reducing the length of time livestock can be in transport without feed, water and rest from 48 to 36 hours, and increasing the required length of the feed, water and rest interval from 5 to 8 hours

The new regulations have been phased in over the past two years to allow industry time to adjust and is scheduled to be fully enforced beginning in February 2022.

Dr. Karen Schwartzkopf-Genswein, Principle Research Scientist, Beef Cattle Physiology and Welfare with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Lethbridge, along with her research associate Dr. Daniela Melendez are currently leading research designed to improve animal welfare outcomes by determining the effects of transport and rest stops on cattle. "Our goal is to provide research data to validate the recommendations so they would be science-informed," she says.

In collaboration with Dr. Derek Haley at the University of Guelph, with primary funding provided by Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC), three research trials have now been conducted. Here is a review of those findings.

TRIP LENGTH MATTERS MORE

The first year of the study trialed various lengths of rest stops after either 12 or 36 hours of transport followed by an additional four hours of transport. Behavioural and physiological indicators were measured during all tests, and health and growth performance was monitored for 28 days after.

"We were completely surprised. We saw no differences in any of the stress or behavioural measurements between those given rest versus no rest, with the exception of the feed deprivation measurement," says Schwartzkopf-Genswein.

She continues: "It wasn't in the rest stop that we saw the difference; it was between the times of transport. A longer transport time produced a greater impact on the animals."

Calves transported for 12 hours generally shrank less, weighed more and grew faster than calves transported for 36 hours, the research found.

PRECONDITIONING HAS BENEFITS

At the end of year one, researchers realized preconditioning might have an impact. The calves were preconditioned prior to transport – vaccinated, given antibiotics, dewormed, and adapted to pens. In the second trial, they included preconditioning as part of the experiment.

The study was done one year later with a different group of calves, and compared rest periods of zero and eight hours after 36 hours of transport followed by another four hours of transport.

Results again showed no significant impact as a result of the rest stop, except unrested calves that were deprived of feed. The more significant difference was found in preconditioning. Non-preconditioned calves had greater stress indicators, including inflammation and muscle fatigue.

"There were many differences indicating that non-preconditioned calves had more stress than preconditioned calves," says Schwartzkopf-Genswein. "The provision of rest seems to be less important than preconditioning, which is much more impactful than rest in terms of what we see in their stress and welfare responses."

Transport Tips

1. One size does not fit all

Transport regulations that currently treat all livestock the same should not be one size fits all. "Our findings with young healthy calves show one thing, but if you did the same study with cull cows you'd likely find something quite different," notes Schwartzkopf-Genswein. "We suggest that the regulations should be targeted to the type of animal, and not applied to all animals in the same way."

2. Preconditioned animals fare better

Research found preconditioning is beneficial for feed calves, and improves their ability to handle transport stress more than providing feed, water and rest during the trip. "The condition of the animal going onto the truck really dictates how well they manage the transport. The first two studies show how important preconditioning is – it really makes a difference," she says.

3. Reduce animal stressors

To improve an animal's transport experience, reduce stressors and consider their conditions prior to being loaded. "This research provides good support for ensuring that animals are in best condition before being transported. Don't create stressors for them right before they travel," says Schwartzkopf-Genswein.

YEAR THREE RESULTS COMING SOON

In the third trial, a longer period of transport after the rest stop was included. This required more funds for the additional transport, which was provided by ABP and Beef Farmers of Ontario.

"Cattle travel on average 15 hours to their final destination after they are rested at Thunder Bay," says Schwartzkopf-Genswein. "The extra funding helped us provide this longer transport time after the rest stop, which was a unique aspect of the third trial."

Both conditioned and nonconditioned calves were included in the third trial. They were transported 20 hours, then rested for either zero or eight hours, then transported an additional four or 15 hours.

Schwartzkopf-Genswein and her team are interested in learning whether the longer transport after the rest makes a significant difference. "The longer journey after the rest may affect the results, since in the first two trials the calves were only transported an additional four hours after their rest," she says.

Year three results were being analyzed when this article went to print. They will be released in February 2022, and shared with the CFIA, supporting a scientific basis for future changes in livestock transport regulations.

Wired

Barbed wire, nicknamed "the Devil's rope," was the first wire technology capable of restraining cattle. Introduced across Canada in the late 19th century, it was seen as an inexpensive way for landowners to fence in large fields and maintain control over their herds. The Devil's rope has thus far withstood the test of time, still existing in a day of technology and innovation.

Photo by Neville Palmer, Reflective Eye Photography, High River, Alberta

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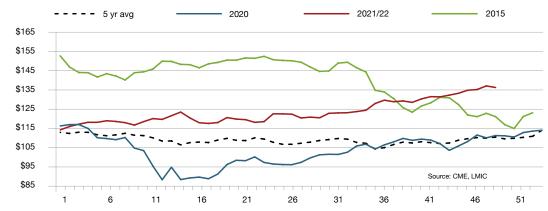
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August Live Cattle Futures



CANFAX CATTLE MARKET UPDATE

Markets Pricing in Optimism

BY BRIAN PERILLAT

US \$/cwt



Brian Perillat, Senior Analyst Canfax

The market heading into 2022 looks positive, but unfortunately, high feed costs have taken a bite out of calf and feeder prices. The fall cattle market had its share of challenges. Ample fed supplies kept fed prices relatively flat to start the fourth quarter, cow prices

hit some of the lowest prices in over 10 years this fall, and calf and feeder prices have been under pressure. Although fed prices have not been high enough for feedlots to be profitable, fed prices are near the second highest on record for the fall period with prices only below 2014 and about inline with 2015. Calf prices were generally trending lower through the fall. The lowest weekly 550 lb steer calf prices were \$203.78/cwt. This was the second lowest fall calf prices since 2014, with only 2016 having lower prices. Although fed prices are still relatively strong compared to historical levels, calf prices are under pressure because feed costs are well above any past record high values, and drought has added additional volume to the fall run. Calf prices could have been even lower if the 2022 cattle futures weren't trading as strong as they are.

The August live cattle futures have traded at the highest since 2015 but are well above where they were in the fall of 2015. August live cattle futures are near US\$137, whereas a year ago they were US\$111, and in 2019 were US\$115/cwt. In 2015 for this same week, they were US\$122, and in 2014 the record highs were US\$158. At the time of writing, April feeder cattle futures had traded up to US\$172/cwt. This is also the highest price since the fall of 2015 for the April feeder contract.

These high futures prices are offsetting the high grain prices. If the August futures were the same as 2019 at \$115/cwt, and you held all other current market factors the same, 550 pounds steer calf prices would be \$70/cwt lower than current prices (\$131/cwt). On the other hand, if we were to change feed grain costs from current prices of around \$420/tonne, to the five year average of \$250/tonne, and left all other market conditions the same, calf prices would be projected around \$75/cwt higher this fall.

Although there is optimism moving forward, the market is already pricing in higher prices for 2022. While there could be opportunity for higher calf prices, feed costs remain a challenge. Strong futures markets can provide risk management opportunities through hedging or price insurance, which is important to follow.

Something B.I.G. is Coming to a Beef Retailer Near You

BY LINDSAY ROBERTS



Connecting producers and retailers to beef consumers is about to get a whole lot easier thanks to a QR-code or UPC code-based education portal spearheaded by Canada Beef.

The Beef Information Gateway is a new digital ecosystem that aims to put beef education in the hands of consumers and open their minds to new and different cuts of beef.

T-bone Grilling Steak

\$ 00.00

T-BONE GRILLING STEAK

Michael Young, president of Canada Beef, explains, "The pandemic trained all of us to use scannable codes, not to mention [develop new] habits and skills, as consumers tried new recipes and cooked more meals at home. With beef prices where they are, we know folks are looking to save a few dollars at the store – The Gateway is an opportunity to expand horizons into new cuts of beef and new recipes."

The Canada Beef branded version is planned for an early 2022 launch. The Gateway will showcase 75 different cuts of beef, each cut with its own menu profile, details on carcass utilization, preparation methods, nutritional breakdowns, videos, and recipes – and that's just the beginning. Later phases will feature co-branded partnerships with major retailers working with Canada Beef to create customized editions of the Gateway.

The goal of The Gateway is for consumers to have on demand access to beef information and resources, making contemplation at the meat case a thing of the past. "The more we can empower consumers to try new things and request different cuts of beef at their retailer of choice, the stronger our domestic market becomes, which has a trickle-down effect back to our Alberta and Canadian beef producers," says Young. "It's going to be a game-changer – it's a

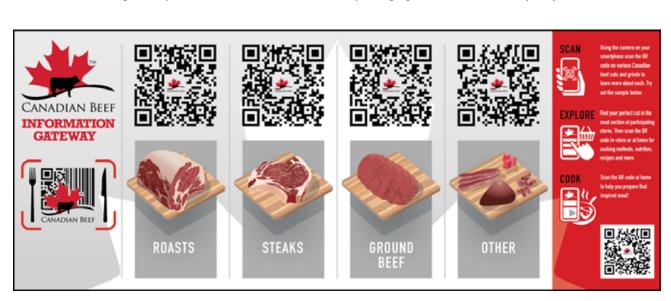
Local producers that direct market their beef and smaller abattoirs can request a general kit from Canada Beef. The kit includes promotional material, stickers and packaging

win-win for everyone in the industry."

material that features the QR code or UPC code, making it simple for everyone to access The Gateway.

The Canada Beef branded marketing kit will be available to order through Canada Beef in January 2022.

Scan one of the QR codes below for more information and to experience The Gateway for yourself.



Growing Forward into the 2022 Grazing Season



BY AGROCLIMATE SPECIALIST, TREVOR HADWEN Science and Technology Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada



IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO KEEP TOP OF MIND WHILE PASTURES AND NATIVE GRASSLAND ARE FROZEN THIS WINTER BUT, UNDER THE SNOW, THE LAND THAT SUFFERED THROUGH EXTREME HEAT AND DROUGHT IN 2021 IS IN DISTRESS. AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO THE 2022 GRAZING SEASON, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE IN PASTURE REJUVENATION STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT RECOVERY.

In my role at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), I focus on weather and climate impacts. What we experienced in 2021 is unprecedented. It was an unusual climate occurrence in terms of lack of moisture and intense heat combined, and what is of greater concern is how widespread it was. Drought is typically caused by a moisture deficit, but this year it combined with heat stress, exacerbating the problem and making the impacts more severe.

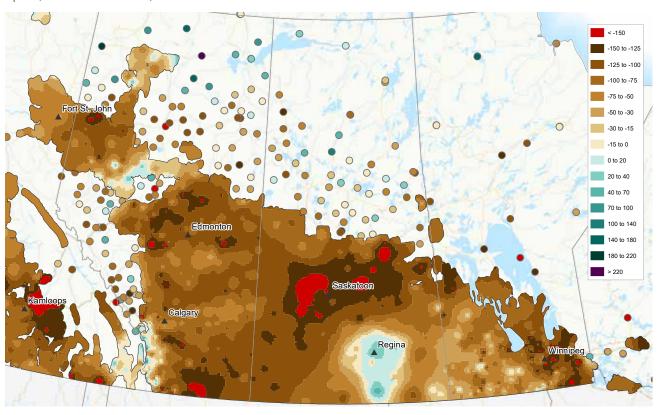
Not only was a large portion of grazing land severely impacted by drought in 2021, but many areas had already faced a two to three year moisture deficit. Surface water supply maps show high levels of extreme and severe moisture deficits throughout southern Alberta, west to east, for the past three to four years.

January is the coldest month of the year in Alberta. As we look out at our frozen grazing pastures this winter, the extreme and unprecedented drought conditions experienced in 2021, for most producers can feel like a distant memory. Photo by Laura Laing



DEPARTURE FROM AVERAGE PRECIPITATION (mm)

April 1, 2021 to October 25, 2021



This map represents the Prairie region in static scale detailing the precipitation departure from average over the past growing season. Copyright © 2021 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

The forages and perennial plants we use for forage and cover cropping typically thrive on soil moisture recharged in the fall, when the root systems build up or recover moisture reserves to get a head start going into winter. But this past fall, we did not receive sufficient moisture for recovery. In fact, groundwater continues to recede. As a result, pastures were forced into dormancy with no recovery. Based on these facts, we can predict that pasture regrowth and recovery in 2022 will be very slow.

Even if we receive the much-needed moisture through this winter and early spring, we can expect a slower start to the year, simply because the land didn't have the moisture recovery period in the fall. Giving pastures the extra recovery time they need this spring will be difficult for producers stretched to source feed through the winter, and anxious to get cattle back on pasture. In terms of pasture production in 2022, being patient could mean the difference between having a pasture recovered enough to graze come summer, and not having a pasture at all.

Prescription for Drought-stressed Pasture Recovery

PATIENCE PAYS

Drought reduces forage growth in pastures. Plants need a rest from grazing to restore their energy reserves. For pastures across Alberta that exited the drought in poor condition last fall, the road to recovery will take longer and demand patience.

Livestock should not return to the pasture until grass regrows to 8 to 10 inches. Plants that are rested and allowed to build up energy reserves will reward you with compensatory growth when rainfall finally comes. Plants overgrazed during drought will grow slowly in comparison.

KILL THE COMPETITION

The best approach to post-drought pasture management is to reduce competition. Use aggressive weed control measures to reduce competition for moisture and nutrients, allowing native grasses the best chance to recover and re-establish.

Once favourable growing conditions return, the lingering effects of competition will continue, including increased presence of grassy and broadleaf weeds. Pasture growth will be slower, especially in overgrazed pastures, due both to weed competition and a reduction in the energy reserves that promote early spring growth.

CONSERVE MOISTURE

Remember that overgrazed pastures have less ability to hold snow or moisture, and weeds present will compete for it. To conserve the moisture you do get, use the first two strategies described here. First, don't overor early-graze, to ensure there is more ground cover to hold moisture. Second, manage weed competition so it doesn't steal valuable moisture from desirable plants.

Many pastures may appear as if there is no hope for reasonable recovery when conditions return to normal. Restricted root growth is more of a concern during and immediately following drought, since root structures are responsible for extracting moisture and nutrients from the soil. To best support pasture recovery, it is critical to focus on management practices that enhance root regrowth.

Even with substantial rainfall, warm-season grass pasture recovery is difficult to predict. Any pasture growth response to management practices will depend entirely on available moisture. We can't make it rain, but we can be attentive to best practices to give drought-stressed pastures the best chance for recovery.



Don't forget what just happened in the drought. Best practices in managing pastures help in a more rapid and complete recovery than those not well managed. Don't graze too soon or too short.

One of the initiatives that
Trevor Hadwen works on with
a team of specialists at Agriculture
and Agri-Food Canada is
Drought Watch (droughtwatch.ca).

Drought Watch is an online resource providing maps, reports and data on historical and current weather and climate conditions, including drought and yield forecasts and impacts. It is designed to provide insights to the Canadian agriculture industry and relies on real input from farmers and ranchers about the impact and reality of drought in regions across Canada.

Just as important, the drought survey information provided by producers through Drought Watch assists staff who make recommendations for Livestock Tax Deferral and other agricultural assistance or relief programs.

To learn more about drought in your area, view weather reports and forecasting models, or to complete the online surveys, please visit droughtwatch.ca

To submit an impact assessment of drought on your farm, visit Agroclimate Impact Reporter: Submit Impacts – agriculture.canada.ca

Help Wanted: Veterinarians and Vet Technologists in Short Supply

BY CRAIG LESTER



Dr. Pat Burrage

IN 2018, DR. PAT BURRAGE SOLD HIS
VETERINARIAN PRACTICE IN BLUFFTON, ALBERTA
TO A YOUNG VET, THINKING HE WOULD HAVE
A LOT MORE TIME TO SPEND WITH HIS FAMILY.
HE ALSO THOUGHT HE WOULD FIND MORE TIME
TO TALK TO HIS ANGUS CROSS AND LONGHORN
HERDS ON HIS FARM JUST WEST OF THE
CENTRAL ALBERTA COMMUNITY.

However, that was not meant to be for the President of the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association.

A growing shortage of veterinarians in the province created the need for him to help in the short term at the Lethbridge Animal Clinic, which provides services to Feedlot Health owned by Telus Agriculture.

It started in January 2019, a month after he 'retired to the farm.' He figured he could do the work and be back in time for calving. Two years later that short-term job is still ongoing and is keeping him on the road. Lethbridge is approximately 430 kilometres from Bluffton, a four-and-a-half-hour drive. Dr. Burrage enjoys the work, but his thoughts are often at home, where his eldest daughter Erin and her husband Randy manage the herd.

What we haven't done very well from the education side is produce vets at a pace that competes with the population growth.

"As a small town vet, you're the electrician of animals, you're the mechanic of animals," Burrage says. He speaks with a lot of pride about his time as a vet in Bluffton. Saying it is an honour being there for the community when their livestock, dog, cat and even the odd iguana needed to be treated.

He says he was able to manage the workload and the herd on the farm, because of his three daughters who helped with the livestock while they were growing up.

The current shortage of veterinarians in the province has been talked about a lot lately, but the issue has been going on for some time.

The cause? Burrage says in the last 10 years, the population of the country has grown exponentially and as a result, so has the number of companion pets, such as dogs and cats, which a rural vet needs to keep up with, on top of the 400 to 500 cow-calf clients they may have. At the same time, the profession is seeing the same number of graduates every year that it was 30 years ago.

The problem is also not limited to rural, but urban as well.

Burrage says that it's not enough to replace the vets who are retiring, but falls short of what they need in order to keep up with the demand.

"What we haven't done very well from the education side is produce vets at a pace that competes with the population growth."

This has put a lot of pressure on vets and vet technologists, who are also in short supply, and their support networks.

There are many who are putting in a lot of overtime, to make sure their client's livestock and pets are taken care of in a timely manner.

COVID-19 has also added to the problem, as everyone is forced to extend appointments a little longer to ensure health and safety protocols are carried out to keep everyone safe.

Work has been underway in recent years to remedy the problem. Burrage says they have been collecting data and have been in ongoing discussions with post-secondary schools such as the University of Calgary's Veterinary Medicine program and government, who are both very aware of the issue.

Both sides are working on short- and long-term solutions.

Increasing the number of vets isn't the only issue the industry is facing. Retaining them is also top of mind. Burrage calls it 'leaky bucket syndrome.'

"They keep falling through the cracks."

He says a considerable amount of time and energy is being invested to find ways to keep both vets and vet technologists in the industry. Every veterinarian practice is hoping to land a post-secondary graduate or two from the 2022 class to help deal with the demand.

Speaking of education, he is a big proponent of mobilizing vet technologists to do more by teaching the skills needed to handle jobs the vets normally do, something some practices have done really well.

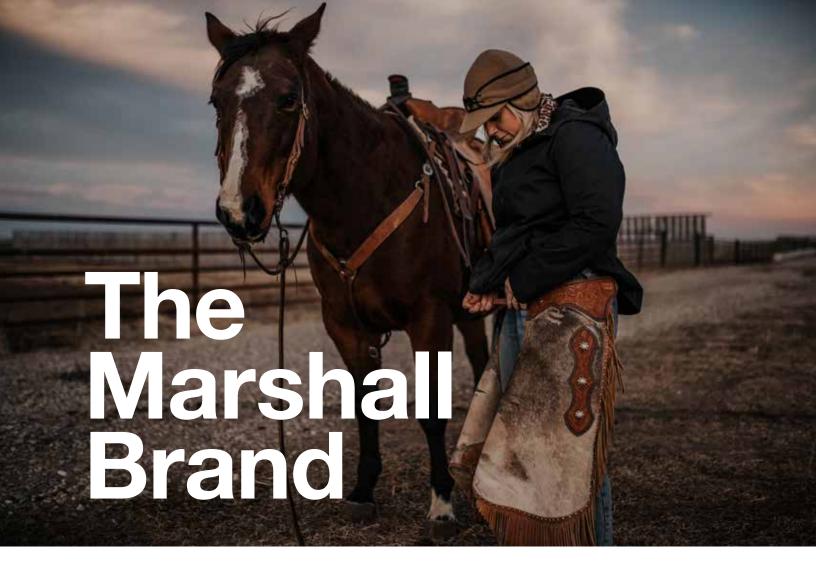
"We need to get better at what we do with the resources that we have."

Burrage says the changes we are seeing in the livestock industry now are happening much faster than they would have 10 years ago.

While he still thoroughly enjoys his work, he is hopeful the day will come soon when a young vet will come in and take his place.

For now, Burrage says he will keep on, keeping on. Supporting the industry until it can get back up on its feet.

At which point he will have more time to talk to his cows.



BY DIANNE FINSTAD

There's more than one kind of branding going on at the MGM Cattle Company, and that's just the way Meghan Marshall likes it.

She's a busy Mom and ranch hand, but throws her own unique enterprise into the mix, to make for a full and varied life she wouldn't trade with anyone.

The family's livestock brand is the running M symbol, but the Running M Brand has also come to represent Marshall's own business, and her social media presence, sharing their family's story of being part of Alberta's beef business.

Meghan and her husband Garnet have some 800 head of cattle around the ranch. They've created a real market niche by calving out 500 heifers each spring, then selecting and selling the most suitable mother cows in an annual December bred female sale. That's alongside having their own cow herd, plus Garnet works at his family's Marshall Feedlot, just outside Bowden.

While Meghan had grown up near High River in a rural lifestyle, she wasn't directly involved in ranching. But her horse passion led to high school rodeo and roping,













and then on to Olds College, where she earned an applied agriculture degree. That's also where she met Garnet, who was active on the rodeo team as well.

"He's just a natural with a rope," says Marshall.

While it's up for debate about who caught whom, the two wound up together in ranch life.

As they were establishing their cattle operation, they were also building their family, at a breakneck pace. Their three daughters were born within three years. And that meant Meghan spent a lot more time indoors than she was used to.

"When the kids were little, and I was stuck in the house, it felt like the same day over and over again," she confesses. "Diapers and milk and cleaning dishes and doing laundry, and you feel everything you were doing was getting undone, within minutes!"

Searching for a creative outlet to break the cycle, Marshall remembered a family treasure. "My Grandma and my Dad had passed six days apart, so that was a roller coaster of emotions. But when Grandma had passed, I got her serger. It sat in my basement for four or five years. Then I finally just needed something more I could do in the house, while still watching the calving camera, and the kids."

While sewing started more as 'therapy,' it quickly also became a way to contribute to their family, as she hit upon an idea that was a real fit for their lifestyle.

"Something that interests me always is the cowboy way of life, so I thought 'you know, I could probably make some wild rags.' It was just something I could DO."

What started out as useful gifts to friends and family soon were in demand, so she set up a website and began to market through social media, offering fun western prints and even kid-sized wild rags.

When she was trying to come up with a company name, it came to her to use their livestock brand, and call it Running M Brand.

"It's something we're proud of, and it ties in the beef industry for me, which is something we're passionate about."

Marshall loves the flexibility of being able to work on her own time, around her family and ranch duties. For the first few years, wild rags were all she did. But as a true southern Albertan, she's always conscious of the wind and protecting her family's ears, so she came up with the idea of creating a headband. She began marketing those this year, and they've really taken off, with a neighbour using her scraps to make hair scrunchies, which she also sells.

"It's really rewarding that I'm still at home. I'm still looking after the kids, making supper, doing laundry – all those things that the ranch wives are home doing, checking the cows, checking the waterers... but I have something for myself that I'm contributing, to help out."

"The worst part," she chuckles, "is Garnet says 'oh good, we can buy more cows now!"

"But it's very rewarding knowing that he's proud of what we're doing, and it's a way to add to the dream of the ranch and land and cows that he's always been part of, and I always dreamed to be part of," she smiles.

Living the dream hit a life challenge two years ago, when Meghan was diagnosed with a type of leukemia.

"You never think it's going to be you. It was an eye opener."

Fortunately, most of Marshall's treatments could be taken from home, so she didn't have to do extended hospital stays away from the ranch and her family.

"That was definitely the scariest part of it. I can easily take a pill a day and deal with a couple of side effects, because I'm still getting to do everything I love, and have a completely new appreciation for all of it."

With the medication, her blood levels are balanced and the leukemia is in remission.

"It worked out, and every day I'm very thankful that it did."

Marshall has found social media to be both an effective marketing tool for her business, as well as an outlet for her stories. Through her Instagram posts, she shares glimpses of her life on the ranch – both good and challenging days.

"I don't want people to feel like I'm just trying to sell them something. I want them to see the kids growing up on the farm, and the effort and work we put in when we just love doing it. I'll share branding photos, so people understand now what a brand is, and what it means, and this is what we do for a living."

Marshall has developed a real following and has built connections and marketing her products with both agricultural and non-rural people across the country and into the U.S., who have come to recognize and love the Running M Brand as a symbol representing western initiative, tradition, practicality, and inspiration.

"I don't want anybody to think I have it all together, or it's not hard with three kids and all these cows. I try and be real about it, and vulnerable and honest. Social media allows me to do that. I appreciate them following along and investing that time in me too."

"We had agreed that when I started sewing that family and the farm will always come first, and sewing is my extra. I'm just really happy that I can encourage and inspire people, because they're doing the same to me."

You can follow Meghan's stories on Instagram @running.m.brand or @meghan_marshall or check out her website www.runningmbrand.ca

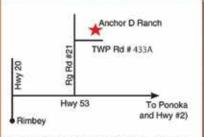




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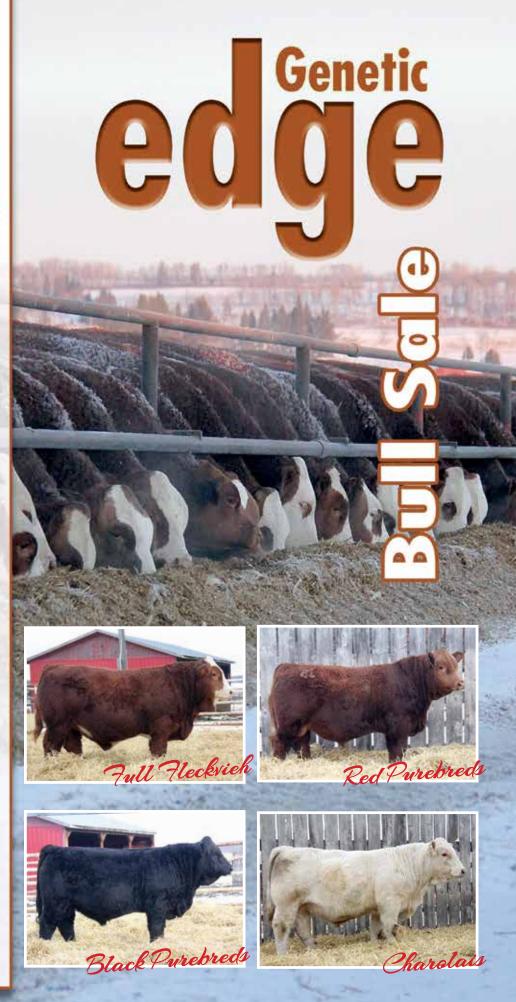


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What You Need to Know About AgriRecovery Phase 2

BY MARK LYSENG
Government Relations Lead. ABP



With a new year upon us, it brings new perspectives for planning on the year ahead. For producers across the province, this means looking at programs and available support to position for a strong year ahead.

AGRIRECOVERY

On August 6, the provincial government announced a commitment to an AgriRecovery response. While Phase 1 has already closed, producers who were unable to participate are still eligible for the full amount. As of December 17, roughly 11,500 producers have received \$172 million in payments, accounting for 1.83 million head of cattle in the province.

Phase 2 applications are now being accepted. Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) is encouraging producers to apply using AFSC Connect. The online application can immediately identify errors and missing information, significantly decreasing the time to payment.

Every client that applies online for Phase 2 is entered to win a Milwaukee 18V impact wrench with grease gun combo or a Dewalt 20V grease gun kit.

Under both phases, producers can qualify for up to a total of \$200 per cow. The deadline to apply for Phase 2 is January 31, 2022.

AgriRecovery Phase 2 has two different options producers can use to claim: a "Need Feed" and a receipted program. The program was developed with all producers in mind, and attempts to provide equal support regardless of drought preparedness. For producers who bought feed because of drought, the receipted program is an easy way to capture some of those costs. Conversely, for producers who have managed drought through their own operation, stored grass, and stored feed, the "Need Feed" calculation can capture those costs.

Prepare to apply by:

- Reviewing the Q&A and Terms and Conditions on AFSC's website.
- 2. Determining the number of bred cows as of December 31, 2021.
- 3. For "Need Feed" Determining the number of extraordinary feed days. This is the difference between when you changed management practices due to drought, and when you'd typically start feeding. Changed

management practices may include feeding stockpiled hay, weaning early, feeding creep to calves, using crop for alternative use, or changing your typical rotational grazing. This is by no means a comprehensive list.

Example: An operation started to push their pastures harder on August 21. The managers usually start feeding October 15. In this case, the operation experienced 55 extraordinary feed days.

4. For Receipted Program – Collect receipts or record expenses for extraordinary expenses due to drought. These may include feed, temporary water provisions (not covered by the CAP Water Program), temporary fencing, transportation costs related to hauling feed, water or animals, pregnancy tests, and other activities required to secure feed supplies or maintain the breeding herd.

Keep in mind that AgriRecovery is not complete coverage and should not be relied on. The province has a series of programs that are available to beef producers to help mitigate risk. Some of these programs are worth considering with fresh eyes for 2022. The removal of the Reference Margin Limit in AgriStability and changes to the Moisture Deficiency Insurance (MDI) program may benefit cow-calf producers.

For more information on AgriRecovery or any of the business risk management programs, go to *AFSC.ca* or contact your local AFSC office.

OTHER PROGRAMS

AgriStability

 A whole farm risk management program, covering eligible expenses that AgriRecovery typically does not.
 Deadline to enroll: April 30, 2022.

Livestock Price Insurance (LPI)

- Allows producers to purchase livestock price protection in the form of an insurance policy, covering against an unexpected drop in prices over a defined period. First days for purchase:
 - · January 11, 2022 (fed, Alberta feeder)
 - Feb 1, 2022 (for the 2022 calf season)

Perennial Insurance Programs

- Includes hay insurance, export timothy hay insurance, moisture deficiency insurance (MDI) for pasture, and Satellite Yield Insurance for pasture.
- MDI now has a 1.0 mm minimum moisture threshold and attributes for days with heat over 30°C.

Anyone who had an insurance policy in 2021 will see it automatically renewed, and will receive a notice later in January with policy details. New applications, changes to an existing policy, or cancellations must be submitted to AFSC no later than February 28, 2022.

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T Bar C Cattle Co. Ltd.

Box 2330, Warman, SK S0K 4S0 Chris' Cell: 306.220.5006 Shane's Cell: 403.363.9973 Ben's Cell: 519.374.3335 info@tbarc.com • www.tbarc.com

VIEW THE CATALOGUE ONLINE AT WWW.BUYAGRO.COM

Out and About with Alberta Beef Producers

BY MEGAN MCLEOD, Field Specialist, ABP

In a year of continued challenges due to COVID-19, drought, extreme weather and more, we saw the true strength and resilience of the agriculture industry. We saw producers innovate and problem solve as mother nature put them to the test. We saw communities and groups rally together in support of each other and we saw organizers and planners work tirelessly to bring about some of the best events the industry has seen in recent years. In a year of adversity, this industry needed a reason to gather. Here were a few places we were this fall:

THE ALBERTA HEREFORD SHOWCASE

In its inaugural year, this event combined a junior prospect steer and heifer show, the Hereford Genes Bull Event, the Genes of the Future Sale, as well as the Western National Hereford Show.

This event saw great attendance, with more than 350 commercial and purebred cattlemen voting for their Hereford Genes event, as well as trade show exhibitors from various large and small businesses relating to the cattle industry.

FARMFAIR INTERNATIONAL

Under the new leadership of Explore Edmonton, Farmfair International put on a world-class cattle exhibition, paying out more than \$200,000 in prize money.

While COVID-19 restricted the ability for international guests to attend the event, there were guests in attendance from Mexico and Argentina.

The delegates from the **Northeast and Central Zones** and I spoke with many producers and industry professionals throughout the week at our ABP booth.

CANADIAN WESTERN AGRIBITION

Celebrating their 50th anniversary and hosting all breed national shows, Agribition saw great attendance with

the highest international attendance of the fall show run. Agribition carries on their legacy of being a premier agricultural event in Canada, with representation from a broad variety of subsectors.

ACA ALBERTA SELECT PEN SHOW & FEMALE SALE

With two years of awards and recognition to bestow on a number of highly esteemed breeders, the evening social and breeder's choice pen show was well received.

The Alberta Charolais Association placed a great emphasis on getting more youth involved in the Charolais breed, giving eleven \$1,000 Alberta Select Female Sale credits to 4-Hers and youth who had shown a purebred Charolais or Charolais-influence animal the previous year. A number of junior members took home cattle from the sale using the credit program.

MEDICINE HAT BULL PEN SHOW

Medicine Hat was able to go ahead in full capacity, with their steak fry, pen show and trade show.

The steak fry was, as usual, well received, with many breeds participating with the goal of landing the coveted title of MHPS Steak Fry Champion.

Our **Southeast Zone** represented Alberta Beef Producers at the event and were able to have many conversations with producers at ringside and at the booth.

I look forward to visiting with everyone at our upcoming producer meetings at the end of January, the Camrose Bull Congress, Heartland Cattlemen's Classic, Alberta Beef Industry Conference (ABIC), as well as various producer and auction market sales, such as those featured in this issue. As I am out and about at various functions, I would love nothing more than to have conversations with any producer who has feedback, questions, comments or inquiries for ABP.



Whether calving has already started, or you're months away, it's a good time to revisit some behaviour and warning signs that a calving cow or heifer may need attention.

There are three stages to parturition (calving): stage one involves cervix dilation, and must be complete before any pull assist; stage two begins with the fetal membranes and fetus entering the birth canal, and ends with the delivery of a calf; and stage three is the shedding of the placenta.

PRE-LABOUR AND STAGE 1: CERVIX DILATION

There are, of course, signs that signal a heifer or cow could be nearing delivery – the swelling udder, the awkward swagger, and loose vulva. And it may appear that no one spot or position is comfortable.

"They show a restlessness often, and depending on the environment in which they're kept, they may seek isolation," says animal welfare and behaviour specialist, Dr. Joe Stookey.

"If there are places to hide, they will seek them and use them. If it's sort of a short-grass prairie or open-grass prairie, then you don't see the isolation attempts, probably because you get as much protection, or anti-predator behaviour [by staying] in the herd."

Often, as the animal nears the end of Stage 1, you'll see a raised and kinked tail.

WHEN TO INTERVENE: It may be hard to know when stage one begins, but if she appears extremely agitated, or seemed to be progressing and that has stopped, it may be time to check.

STAGE 2: FETAL MEMBRANES TO CALVING

It can be difficult to know when to assist in a cow's labour and delivery, especially if checks are infrequent or interrupted.

Tips for Pulling

- Check that the cow is fully dilated.
- Ensure correct presentation, or adjust malpresentation.
- Go slow pull when the cow pushes, rest when she rests.

"It can be hard to know when the bag first appears or breaks, but ultimately, you're looking for progress," says Dr. Claire Windeyer, assistant professor at the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM).

Recognizing that every scenario is different, the Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) suggests that once a water bag appears, a calf should arrive within 60 minutes for cows, and 90 minutes for first-calf heifers.

"If you do see the bag, then it should break and you should see feet by 30 minutes, the nose in another 30, and the calf in another 30 – max," says Windeyer. "There's more risk in waiting than in assisting too soon."

WHEN TO INTERVENE: It has been over 60 minutes for cows, 90 minutes for heifers.

- The cow is trying, but after 20-30 minutes you're not seeing progress.
- The calf is yellow, there's yellow birth fluid, or its tongue is swollen.
- The cow is bleeding severely.
- There is a sign of malpresentation.

STAGE 3: CLEAN-UP

After a calf is successfully delivered, it's on to stage three – clean-up. This usually occurs within six hours of calving.

WHEN TO INTERVENE: If fetal membranes are visible longer than 24 hours after calving, the cow may require medical treatment. While it used to be suggested to manually assist in the removal of the placenta, that is no longer recommended. Talk to your veterinarian about updated treatment protocols.

While calving assists can be low-stress, some interventions might simply be above your pay grade. Acknowledge new problems and difficult situations. That's where speed dial and a good vet-client relationship comes in.



Watch **ABPDaily.com** for the full audio interview with Dr. Joe Stookey. We'll also share this article, complete with links to the 2017 study, information on calf resuscitation, and an opportunity to participate in a cost of calving assistance study.

Studying Calving Assists on the Prairies

"There are multiple studies describing the incidence of calving assistance in Canada and while these studies do not include the same participants (and so cannot be directly compared to each other) it appears that the incidence of calving assistance is decreasing," says Dr. Jennifer Pearson, assistant professor at UCVM.

In 2017, Dr. Jennifer Pearson and her colleagues published a study entitled *Benchmarking calving management practices on western Canada cow–calf operations*. The study found that of the 97 prairie producers surveyed, the overall incidence of calving assistance was 4.9 per cent for the 2016 calving season – 13.5 per cent in heifers, and 3.2 per cent in cows.

Over 95 per cent of respondents assisted at least one of their heifers, and over 89 per cent assisted at least one cow.

Calves that are assisted, adds Pearson, are "often oxygen deprived, injured, or both which can lead to weak, less vigorous calves that do not get up and consume enough colostrum. This leads to higher risk of disease and death in the pre-weaning period."

Following up on this research, Pearson and her colleagues are beginning a new study, and one of the first in the country to look exclusively at the cost of calving difficulty at the cow and calf level.

"This cost analysis will compare assisted and unassisted cows and calves and include things like the cost of treatment of an animal, the cost of death of an animal, while factoring in the cost of production, income from weaned calves, and income from cull cows into the calculation," says Pearson, who will be accepting participants until March of 2022.

If you're interested in participating, email jennifer.pearson@ucalgary.ca.



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CANADIAN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Connecting Agriculture and Sustainability in the Classroom

The short documentary, Guardians of the Grasslands, has earned a wide variety of audiences through premieres across the country, national and international film festivals and on broadcast television through RFDTV. Now, thanks to a pivotal funding partnership with the Canadian Cattlemen's Foundation, the film will reach another vital audience – students.



Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC-C) has developed Guardians of the Grasslands in the Classroom, which complements the 12-minute documentary through viewing and reflection questions, an online scavenger hunt, and a student-developed board game based on their investigative research.

It also connects to further readings exploring the key topics of biodiversity, soil health, climate change, and land management.

"It is important for students to make the connection between the food they eat and the farmers and ranchers that produce it," explains Melissa Galay, Education Specialist with AITC-C. "Guardians of the Grasslands is an amazing resource as it explains the role that cattle play in preserving native grasslands and connects agriculture with sustainability in a way that is short and sweet."

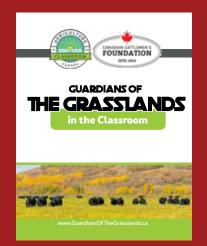
"While teaching agriculture in the classroom is important, it is even more imperative that the information is accurate and linked to curriculum outcomes in each province. Like all of us, teachers are busy, so we scanned all provincial curriculums to link these resources to the appropriate grade level and subject. For example, in the prairie provinces Guardians of the Grasslands in the Classroom fits well in the middle school years in social, food and science courses."

Galay is excited to see the uptake of the resources in this school year but has already identified future opportunities for expansion of the program. "One key opportunity would be identifying careers for students in those corresponding areas of agriculture."



INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Request access to Guardians of the Grasslands in the Classroom: bit.ly/32ahnIM





Check out Ag for Life (agricultureforlife.ca), the Alberta member of AITC-C.

Shake the Winter Blues with some Tropical BBQ

WITH MEL CHMILAR JR.

Even on the coldest January nights, BBQ pit master Mel Chmilar Jr. is still firing it, making tropically inspired meals to chase away the winter blues. He also offers unusual tips (including using welding supplies) to enhance your winter grilling experience.

In the November issue, we met Albertan Mel Chmilar Jr., who welds by day and grills by night, and shares his experiences socially as darksideofthegrill. Rather than letting a little winter weather bring BBQ season to a full stop, he suggests shoveling a path out to the BBQ to keep firing it up year-round. Here are some tips and recipes for others who may want to follow suit.

WINTER GRILL TIPS

When picking a BBQ with winter grilling in mind, look for something insulated, with a thicker steel or cast aluminum shell. "They retain heat a lot better than thin stainless," says Chmilar.

He cooks with a Big Green Egg ceramic grill, and recommends it. "It doesn't matter if it's plus 50 or minus 50, once they're warm, they run regardless of the temperature," he says.

To prevent the lid from freezing closed, use parchment paper, and put parchment over the gaskets when you shut the grill down to prevent those from freezing, suggests Chmilar. To keep your BBQ warmer, create wind blocks around it using whatever supplies you have available.

If you have a welding blanket, says Chmilar, throwing it over a pellet smoker will winterize and make it work more efficiently at the same time.

MENU: MASH-UP MEXICAN AND TROPICAL

Steaks and roasts are great year-round, but going tropical is a real treat mid-winter, and "a good way to shake that winter vibe," says Chmilar.

Photo by Mel Chmilar Jr.

Tropical pineapples are in season and inexpensive this time of year, and delicious when marinated before grilling. "My favourite thing is to marinate pineapple in fireball whiskey for a day or two in a Ziploc bag, and then grill it. It gives it a beautiful cinnamon flavour," he says.

For a family friendly version, marinate in maple syrup with heavy cinnamon. "It grills up fantastic," says Chmilar. "You can use it on skewers, in tacos, on salad, however you want to."

Skewers are a favourite of Chmilar's this time of year. "When it's minus 20, I really enjoy making kabobs.

I put marinated pineapple cubes in between beef cubes from a decent marbled cut, with mushrooms and purple onions. It's a hard win. Every time I serve it, people love it," he says.

Don't be discouraged by the weather.

Cold sucks, but that doesn't mean you can't still eat really good grilled steaks or roasts.

Another way to make pineapple great is to use it in tacos for a brilliant sweet and savoury flavour mash-up. "Slow cook a beef chuck roast on the grill heavily coated in taco seasoning. Once it's prepared, shave it for tacos, and serve it with grilled pineapple," he suggests.

TRY COLD SMOKED

Here's a winter pro-tip: "Winter weather makes cold smoking a breeze," says Chmilar. "You can cold smoke just about anything. Lightly smoking beef or a roast before you cook it gives it an amazing taste," he says.

Start with a steel smoking tube (available online or make your own with aluminum foil), fill it with pellets or wood chips, light up the end, and place it on one end of a cold grill with meat or cheese on the other end.

Chmilar suggests cold smoking salmon or cheese. "Any kind of cheddar, gouda or mozzarella is fabulous – pick a good brick cheese, and the bigger the brick the better," he suggests.



Plans to Light up the 2022 Grilling Circuit

A self-taught pit master and live fire cook with a large social following, Chmilar plans to both compete and judge on the competitive grilling circuit in 2022. He is a certified KCBS judge (Kansas City Barbeque Society judge), has taught live fire/BBQ classes, and was a chosen competitor at the World Food Championships.

"I love to go to these events as a judge because that way I get to taste everybody's food," he says. "But I also plan on doing at least one or two competitions this year myself."

On his must visit list for 2022 he includes Porkapalooza in Edmonton and BBQ on the Bow in Calgary.

Competitive cook-teams are usually three to eight people, and Chmilar says he hopes to shadow with a few bigger teams, in addition to putting together a team of his own. Wherever the competitive season takes him, he says, Alberta beef is always on the menu.

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From Field to Feedlot – Animal Welfare is a Top Priority

BY MEGAN MADDEN
Communications Manager, ACFA, NCFA

Five years ago, the National Cattle Feeders'
Association (NCFA), along with our federal packers,
Cargill, JBS and Tyson Foods, developed the
Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment Program.

This national feedlot program was created because our packers requested a way to develop verifiable welfare practices at feedlots, based on demands for verification from retailers. The program was built with input from Canadian feedlot producers, feedlot veterinarians such as Drs. Joyce Van Donkersgoed (NCFA Program Coordinator) and Sherry Hannon (Feedlot Health Management Services), animal scientists such as Dr. Karen Genswein (AAFC) and Jennifer Woods (currently AFSC), and the three aforementioned federal packers.

The audit program was recognized by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) a few years ago as meeting all requirements in the Canadian Beef Code of Practice, as well as meeting NFACC's assessment process.

Local Alberta cattle feeder Lyle Adams of 6A Cattle in Picture Butte got involved with the program because he saw the value to his own operation and the industry alike. "It is a way for producers to evaluate animal health and welfare practices and can identify areas for improvement. Healthy animals are more productive and are needed for a safe beef supply," he says.

National retailers, such as Walmart, Loblaws, Sobeys, Federated Coop and Overwaitea, requested that NCFA get the feedlot audit program reviewed and certified by PAACO (Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization) in the USA to ensure it met their welfare standards and was a sound audit program.

Five years ago, that certification was received, and the Canadian feedlot welfare audit program has met annual recertification standards since then. The Canadian Roundtable of Sustainable Beef (CRSB) also reviewed

NCFA's feedlot audit program and recognized it as fully meeting their requirements for animal health and welfare.

"Poorly treated and mishandled animals are a cost to feedlot production, so if they become sick and we treat them properly and give them a good environment to live they become more productive, which is important to our economic sustainability," adds Adams. "It's better for both the animals and the supply chain if they are happy and healthy."

Recently Tyson Foods indicated that they will be using NCFA's PAACO certified feedlot audit program, the Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment Program, as their audit standard when auditing Canadian feedlots next year.

"The audit process ensures to packers and retailers, that our cattle are raised with care and we can demonstrate that. As Canada is a net exporter of beef, it shows the international community of our standards when it comes to animal care and welfare," says Adams. "Most importantly it is a tool to prove to others that what we do we are actually doing."

Further information on the Canadian feedlot animal care assessment program can be found at https://nationalcattlefeeders.ca/feedlot. The website includes all program documents and training materials (available in English, French, and Spanish) including an easy-to-use eLearn training program to help feedlot producers and veterinarians learn how to use the audit tool themselves, to evaluate their own welfare procedures in their own yard.

The program was developed with grant support from the federal and provincial governments through Growing Forward, the Canadian Ag Partnership, and Alberta Livestock Meat Agency.



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ABIC is Back and Better than Ever!

BY MEGAN MADDEN Communications Manager, ACFA, NCFA

THAT'S RIGHT. A REAL LIVE CONFERENCE. WITH REAL LIVE PEOPLE!

Planning the Alberta Beef Industry Conference (ABIC) for 2022 has been a roller coaster of plans, policies, restrictions and emotions, culminating in our first live, in-person event in two years.

"We wanted to come back with a bang!" says event organizer Jennifer Brunette, Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association. "We went big with impactful names like Lord Conrad Black and Leonard Brody with even bigger topics like global economic recovery and timely Canadian politics."

"We know the social aspect of the conference is a significant draw for our attendees, sponsors, and partners alike so we want to make sure we have a good balance of valuable content and time to network and visit," she continues. "The Fireside Chat with Lord Conrad Black is an example of how we are making the speakers and presentations more personable and less formal now that we are all back together in person."

ABIC is one of Canada's largest beef conventions and tradeshows, hosted by five of Alberta's beef industry organizations: Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association, Alberta Auction Markets Association, Alberta Livestock Dealers and Order Buyers Association, and the Western Stock Growers' Association. These organizations recognize the importance of coming together to address issues and concerns of regional, national and international scope.



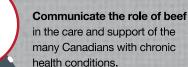
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WEARE LISTENING

Photo courtesy of Canadian Gelbvieh Association



IMPROVED TAGS = BETTER RETENTION

SHEARWELL RFID — An innovative one-piece wrap-around beef tag, the first of its kind. The microchip is overmolded in a plastic insert so readability and read range of the transponder are never compromised.

DESTRON DMR RFID — Upgraded version of the Destron eTag. Improvements include a fully molded outer tag housing for better durability and water resistance with an enhanced locking mechanism for greater retention.

ALLFLEX - Is continually striving for the improvement of their product and the new design and manufacturing methodology for their male tag stud is in response to tag retention issues reported by producers.

MORE RESEARCH = BETTER RETENTION

Tag retention is important to a successful traceability system and the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) has done our research. Ongoing tag testing trials, intensive research and direct producer feedback on their experiences have resulted in manufacturers improving their tag offerings. To learn more about CCIA's research activities visit https://www.canadaid.ca/traceability/research/

BEST PRACTICES = BETTER RETENTION

Better tag application practices mean better tag retention.
Always use the manufacturer recommended applicator with the tag and follow placement quidelines.



Check out our new and improved tag offerings at tags.canadaid.ca

or contact us directly at info@canadaid.ca | 1-877-909-2333

CCIA CANADIAN CATTLE IDENTIFICATION AGENCY

To provide feedback on your tag experience, fill out and return the Approved Indicator Quality Control Form found at: https://www.canadaid.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Approved-Indicator-Quality-Control-Form_fillable-2021-11-19.pdf