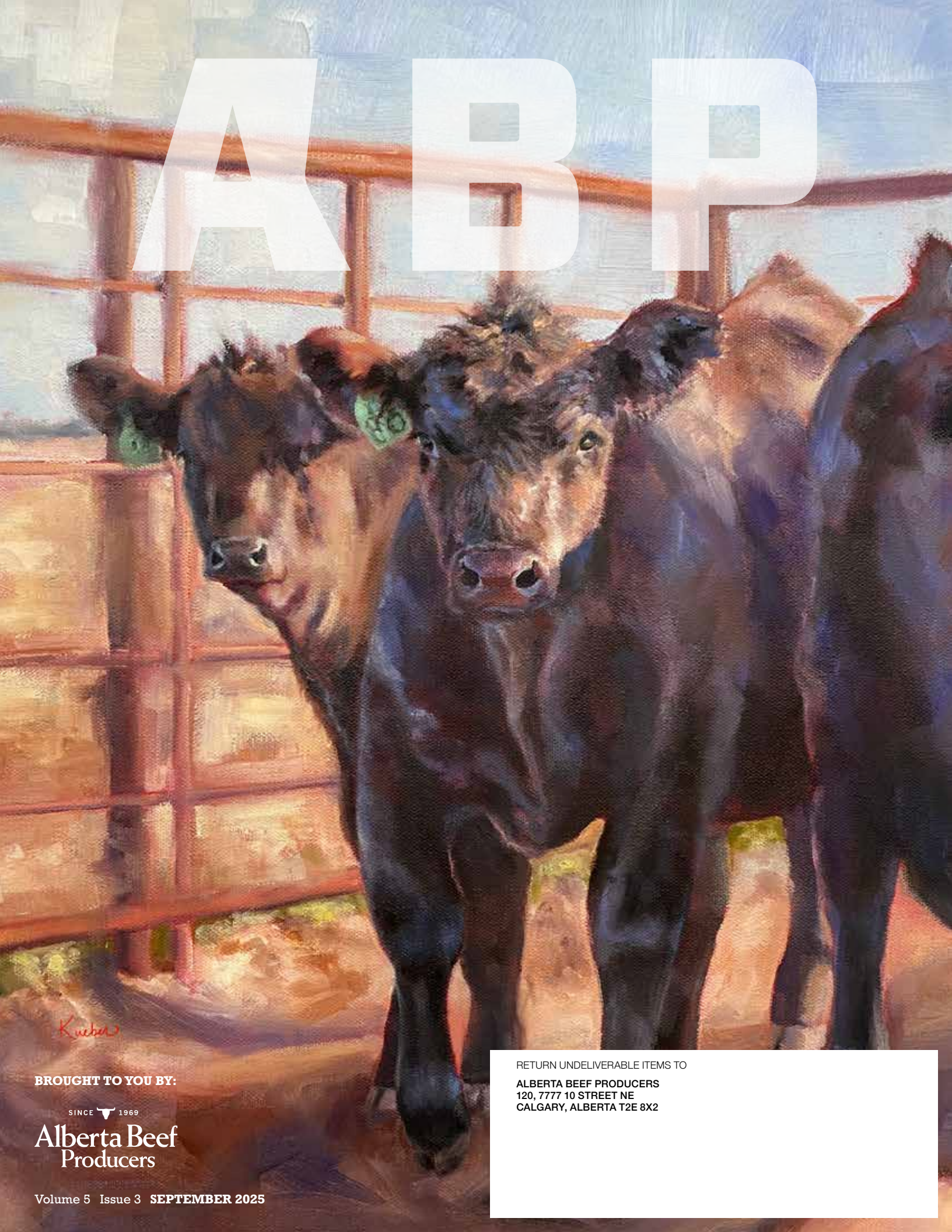


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Volume 5 Issue 3 **SEPTEMBER 2025**

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ON THE COVER
"The Sorting Pen"
Original oil painting by Alberta artist Kristin Kueber

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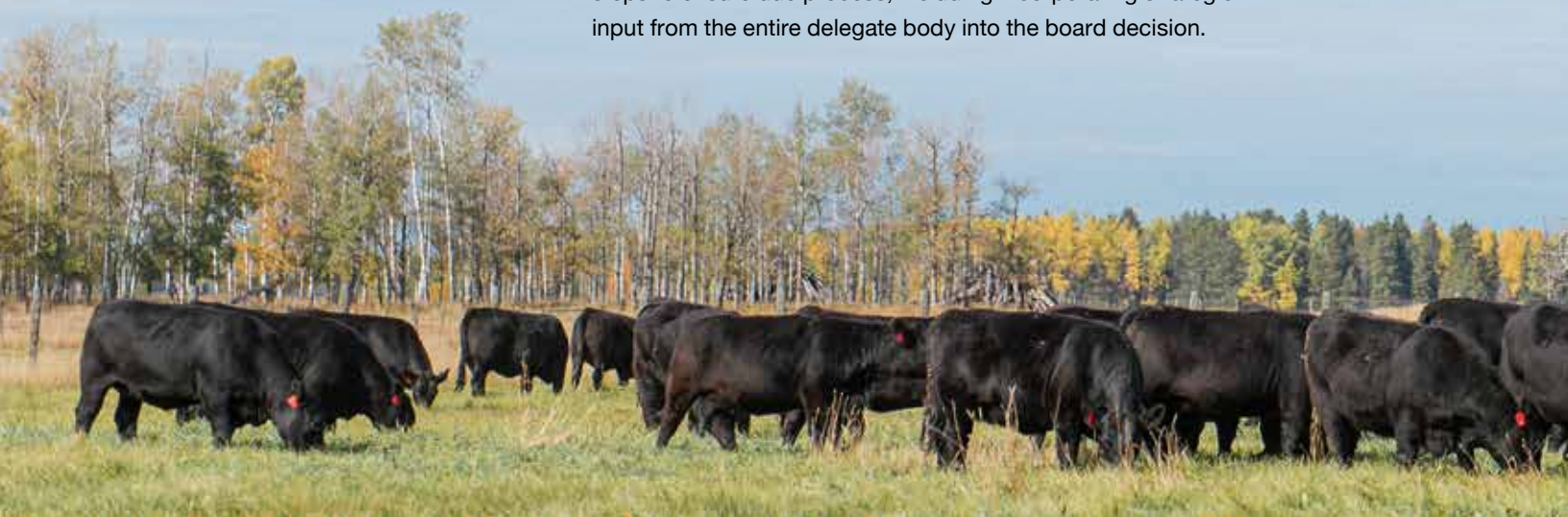
WITH BRAD DUBEAU



We've certainly had an active time as your beef cattle commission for the past few months.

The Alberta Beef Producers' board decision to withdraw from the Canadian Cattle Association dominates the horizon currently. While you'll find much more on the decision elsewhere in this magazine (see Page 16), I will say the key factors that led to this decision are not new to producers. Concerns about funding, representation, and governance have been surfacing, and raised with the CCA, for several years now, to no avail. At our AGM in March, there was a special resolution from the central zone, asking the ABP to request proportional representation based on a funding percentage of CCA or withdraw ABP's membership and support. That resolution was defeated during our AGM, as it was being debated just as tariffs were being announced. The delegate body appeared to feel the timing for such action just wasn't right. Still, it reflected the sentiment among many producers.

Boards and organizations are continually evolving, and at ABP we've been working on improving governance, finance and communication. We asked for the same evolution in our national organization, but didn't see a willingness to address those values, which ultimately led to the announcement. The board took deliberate steps to ensure due process, including incorporating strategic input from the entire delegate body into the board decision.



With more than nine months before the completion of the current agreement, there is still ample time for dialogue. We remain open to a constructive conversation with CCA, and remain hopeful that they are willing to engage.

As it was at the AGM, trade continues to be a dominant issue in the beef business. While there are many uncertainties yet in our trade relationship with the U.S., dialogue continues. In August I was honoured to attend an American Chamber of Commerce in Canada West roundtable at Miller Thomson LLP in Calgary, hosted with Alberta's Senior Representative in Washington, DC, Nathan Cooper. We talked about Alberta's vital economic partnership with the U.S., including the beef industry. As well, we were encouraged to see Canadian beef is officially back on Australian shelves for the first time since 2003. This long-awaited market reopening marks a significant milestone.

We were pleased to host another successful Stampede Summit. This year, we moved locations to the Sam Centre on the Stampede grounds, which was well received. The Summit was once again a powerful opportunity to engage and build relationships with decision-makers like Federal Agriculture Minister Heath MacDonald and Alberta's Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, RJ Sigurdson, as well as industry leaders and U.S. cattle representatives from Washington, Montana, Oregon, Idaho, California, and Texas. We were also delighted to interact with Stampede visitors through the Cattle Trail exhibit that week.

It was a relief to see rain fall in many parts of the province, to help with pasture growth, although it also made for some challenges putting up hay. However, there are some areas of the province still struggling with drought, both in the north and in parts of the south. There are even areas where moisture has come, but not enough to fill dugouts so water supplies are still a worry. For those affected, programs like Moisture Deficiency Insurance and Agri-Stability can help in times of drought or fire.

We strongly encourage beef producers to meet with their local AFSC offices to discuss how these programs can play a positive role in your operations.

Congratulations to Laura Laing and John Smith as our 2025 Environmental Stewardship Award (ESA) Winners. You'll find more on their operation, Plateau Cattle Co., in this magazine and online.

We are all encouraged by the cattle market prices continuing to look strong for this fall run, which is especially encouraging for cow-calf producers. But we also watch and share concerns with the feedlot and processing sectors about the ongoing downsizing of the cattle herd.

Remember, ABP staff and delegates are working on your behalf for the overall good of the beef industry. We value your feedback and input and look forward to connecting with you in January and February at Producer Meetings across the province. ▼

Photo credit: Christine Boake





Honouring Excellence

Clockwise from top:

The Top 5 Heifers at the Western Canadian Elite Bred Heifer Invitational from left to right: 5th Overall: Indy Fowler, 4th Overall: Aubrey Fraser, 3rd Overall: Jordan Frey, Reserve Champion: Blake Fisk, Overall Champion: Abby Rancier

Congratulations to Dean Edge, of Rimbey, Alberta, World Livestock Auctioneering Champion. Dean is only the third Canadian to win the Championship since its inception in 1963.

Reid Hunter's Grand Champion Steer at the Calgary Stampede Junior Steer Classic.

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2025 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD WINNERS

Plateau Cattle Co. Balances Cattle, Land & Legacy

BY LEE HART
FOR CANADIAN CATTLE ASSOCIATION



Photo credit: The Narwhal



“For us, doing our best to work with nature and protect the environment goes hand in hand with our objective to run an efficient cow-calf operation that produces high quality beef.”

For the owners of Plateau Cattle Co. in southern Alberta, applying the best management practices to raise cattle and doing their best to protect, maintain and enhance the environment is a seamless affair.

John Smith and his wife Laura Laing, who are the third generation on the 450-head commercial cow-calf operation based west of Nanton, about an hour south of Calgary, look for efficient genetics in their cattle and pay particular attention to applying a wide range of animal welfare practices all geared toward optimizing beef production.

At the same time, they apply recognized range management principles on their deeded land as well on community pastures and crown land grazing leases—that’s especially important as they manage their way through several consecutive years of drought. They do their best to enhance and protect water resources, pay attention to protecting wildlife habitat, and welcome opportunities to educate the public about the value and importance of the natural resources along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

“For us, doing our best to work with nature and protect the environment goes hand in hand with our objective to run an efficient cow-calf operation that produces high quality beef,” says John.

“It is important that everyone appreciates the value of native grasslands and water resources,” says Laura. “It’s not just important to the livelihood of the ranching



Watch ABP's feature on this year's ESA recipients on YouTube.



Photo credit: Debra Murphy

community that directly uses these resources, but also to the livelihood of dozens of communities and thousands of people across southern Alberta. If these resources aren't carefully managed and protected, it will have a tremendous negative impact that will affect several generations to come."

Their commitment to properly managing land and water resources which contribute to a sustainable ranching operation earned Plateau Cattle Co. recognition as the 2025 winners of the Alberta Beef Producers Environmental Stewardship Award.

"It is an honour to be recognized and to receive this prestigious award. We are humbled to have been nominated by mentors and awarded amongst peers," says Laura. "We apply these best management practices simply because it is the right thing to do. Looking after the environment and raising quality cattle has always been the foundation and heart of this generational operation. We

carry that legacy with great care, pride and determination in our stewardship to do our best so this range and native grasslands thrive for the next generation."

The ranch was started by John's maternal grandparents, John and Shirley Hay in 1959, who were long involved in raising purebred Hereford cattle. Their daughter Serena and husband Dan Smith carried on as the second generation operating Smith/Hay Herefords until 2016 when their son John and wife Laura took over the ranch, renaming it Plateau Cattle Co. after the nearby Plateau Mountain range.

Along with the home place that includes about 1,200 acres of mostly pasture and hay land, they also have a crown land grazing lease in the Mount Livingstone Range and are shareholders and board members of the Spruce Grazing Co-op and the Waldron Grazing Cooperative, located in the foothills south and west of the ranch headquarters. John's grandfather was one of the founders of the Waldron Grazing Cooperative, which, at about 88,000 acres, is one of the largest and most respected grazing co-operatives in North America.

With a herd today of about 450 head, Plateau Cattle Co. focuses on producing efficient and functional Black Angus and Black Angus cross mother cows that are genetically well suited to thrive on timbered and open range native grass pastures.

"We've paid particular attention over the years to apply proper animal welfare production practices and low-stress cattle handling practices, which all helps to produce a healthy and efficient beef herd," says John. From the development of thoughtful handling facilities, an openness to continued learning, and participation in scientific research and stress management trials for the betterment of not only their operation but the industry as well, Laura and John are on a relentless pursuit of low stress handling, stockmanship and stewardship. In 2023, John earned the title of Ultimate Stockmanship Challenge Champion.

"In addition to stockmanship we apply proper management of forage and water resources over our grazing land, not only to benefit our grazing operation but to benefit the environment and all that rely upon it as well," says Laura. "Applying these best management

practices allows us to optimize beef production. Our Leptin genetic selection for breeding bulls aims to enhance genetic efficiencies that support lower inputs, higher gains, and exceptional beef quality, as proven from field to plate in our carcass data.”

And with calves marketed through two quality beef programs—Benchmark Angus based near Warner, AB and Trails End Beef based near Nanton, AB—proper production practices are important.

“ We are proud to be able to tell our story about how we raise our cattle with care under humane and low stress production practices... ”

“Our beef is going into quality value-added programs landing on the plates of many top restaurants throughout Alberta, where consumers want to know not just how this beef was raised, but also by who,” says Laura. “We are proud to be able to tell our story about how we raise our cattle with care under humane and low stress production practices, in a grazing system designed to protect and hopefully enhance the natural resources. Our whole production system is not only the right thing to do but also has sound economics as well.”

Over the years, Plateau Cattle Co. has implemented a wide range of best management practices for cattle and range resources all geared to improve production efficiency.

With the beef herd for example, they installed a Bud Williams-inspired handling system to improve safety and reduce stress on cattle. From birth, techniques like tactile stimulation are used in a form of calf massage. Working alongside Olds College in a three-year trial project, the massage helps mimic the mother cow’s care and stimulation of the flanks and shoulders—helping the calf’s first experience with human handling and stress response. This tactile stimulation is reducing sickness in calves—improving gains and overall herd health and potentially safer handling.

Pursuing continued opportunities for lowering stress response and higher gains, Laura and John no longer use

hot-iron branding on their calves. John and Laura agree with case studies showing higher gains in calves that did not undergo traditional hot branding methods. In their first year without branding they noted 18–21 pounds more gain per head in their calf crop. They have also designed and installed custom mats that fit inside the squeeze chute, providing a calming effect for calves as they are restrained during spring processing.

They work closely with industry leaders and their animal health providers, Veterinary Agri-Health Services of Airdrie, as well as researchers at Olds College, remaining open to research and other progressive ideas to implement on their operation and keep current on technology and practices that enhance herd health and performance. (In fact, it was Veterinary Agri-Health Services that nominated Plateau Cattle Co. to ABP as candidates for ESA.)

To date, Plateau Cattle Co. has participated in four research trials, including heifer selection genomics research through the Canadian Angus and Canadian Hereford Associations. This research, which includes DNA sampling in newborn calves, aims to provide genomic evaluations and support insights for heifer selection, which will be utilized in the industry to develop management tools and refine beef cattle herds for optimal breeding. Plateau intends to further support advancements in the beef industry through additional research trials this fall and into 2026.

This fall, the ranch is working with Olds College to evaluate a relatively new product called FerApease, which mimics a natural pheromone found in lactating cows. Research shows that when this synthetic version of the pheromone is applied topically to calves, it produces a calming effect which can last up to 14 days. It reduces stress in cattle, improves handling and may even improve feed efficiency.

Following ranch succession, Plateau Cattle Co. has switched from a longstanding February start to the calving season, to an early April start to hopefully align calving with better weather conditions and Mother Nature. They have also adopted the Sandhill calving system during the calving season which involves moving cow-calf pairs to fresh ground shortly after calves are

born. Reducing the concentration of calves and keeping newborns away from older calves helps to reduce the risk of disease development and spread.

This year, they are implementing fence line weaning to further reduce stress on both cows and calves and to best support herd health and the bottom line through to their buyers and value chain partners.

On the environmental side, they've also implemented a wide range of management practices to protect and enhance forage, water and wildlife resources. One major move in recent years, as they faced several consecutive years of drought, involved reducing the size of their beef herd from 650 to 450 head.

"With extremely dry growing conditions during the grazing season, grass growth is reduced, and it takes native grasses that have been grazed longer to recover," says John. "By reducing herd numbers, we are better able to match cattle numbers with the carrying capacity of forages."

On their home place, they have eliminated annual cropping and returned all acres to perennial and pasture.

Over the years they have fenced off dugouts as well as riparian areas near natural water sources to keep cattle out of fragile environments. They are planting vegetation and planning beaver dam analogues (BDAs), structures built to replicate key features and benefits of actual beaver dams to restore and support wetland and riparian areas throughout their ranch.

They've also installed off-site solar powered watering systems, which help provide cattle with good quality water. New water developments also help to improve distribution of cattle over extensive range areas.

To protect beneficial insects such as dung beetles, they perform parasite egg counts in fecal material to determine the pest load. That monitoring technique has made it possible to greatly reduce the use of deworming treatments, which are now only used when medically necessary.

With calving starting in April, cow-calf pairs are moved onto summer pasture usually around the May long weekend. Turnout onto native grass community pastures and crown grazing leases is usually delayed until



ABP ESA judges take a walking tour of Plateau Cattle Company. Photo credit: Paula Campbell

mid-June and early July, respectively. The herd is split into three different groups for the grazing season. Cow-calf pairs are weaned in early October.

One environmental challenge they weren't looking for but has occupied a great deal of their time over the past five years, has been a decision by the provincial government to allow resumption of coal mining exploration on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, specifically one mining proposal which directly affects the Mount Livingstone grazing lands.

"If this project goes ahead, it doesn't just affect the Livingstone range area," says Laura. "It will threaten air and water quality for landowners and communities across a wide area of southern Alberta along the eastern slopes."

Working with others, John and Laura have worked tirelessly to raise awareness and advocate for the protection of the eastern slopes, and the land, watershed and agriculture.

They have educated and raised concern about threats posed by coal developments to the widest possible audience that includes government, beef consumers, urban and rural populations, environmental groups, Canadian and global media, and social influencers. "It is important to make all sectors of society aware of the implications that new coal development will pose to our landscape and watershed.

"As ranchers we are also environmentalists," says Laura. "In this case, land stewardship on our ranch means standing up for and advocating for our water, native grasslands and sensitive ecosystems. We have an instilled responsibility to protect the environment, water, land, and native grasslands for the next generation, as well as for the sustainability of our beef and agricultural industry".

For John and Laura, along with hoping for rain, future plans include continued efforts to improve overall



Tactile stimulation in a form of calf massage has been a successful technique implemented at Plateau Cattle Co. Photo credit: Debra Murphy.

management efficiency, optimizing herd genetics for improved beef production, and better management of forage resources.

"We are always open to having a look at new production practices and new technology," says John. "I am really interested in working with Olds College as they study virtual fencing technology. (That's technology that involves cattle wearing GPS-equipped collars to create virtual boundaries, allowing for remote management of grazing areas without physical fences.)

"It is really exciting technology that will make it possible to improve grazing management by directing cattle into range areas without the need for fencing. And these transponders open the possibility to not only be able to track cattle but also monitor aspects of herd health and performance. It is technology with a great deal of potential."

"Our goal is to continue our efforts to produce the best quality cattle we can, under low stress and thoughtful production practices, while at the same time protecting and hopefully improving the natural resources, for the next generation which all contributes to a sustainable and profitable beef industry in Canada for the future," says Laura. ▼

CANADIAN CATTLE YOUNG LEADERS

CYL Semi-Finalists from Alberta Head to Selections in Quebec

BY ELISE MOHLER
SUMMER INTERN, CANADIAN CATTLE ASSOCIATION

“One of the most powerful things about the CYL program is how it brings together people from different backgrounds, regions, and areas of expertise, all connected by a shared passion for the beef industry,”

says **Marissa Lemay**, one of the 24 semi-finalists for the Canadian Cattle Young Leaders (CYL) program. Lemay, along with 14 other Albertans, competed in September for one of the 16 spots for the 2025/26 program year.

The CYL program is a national program of the Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) that provides young people ages 18–35 with industry-specific training and mentorship opportunities. Each year, 24 semi-finalists are selected from submitted applications and are invited to participate in the selections competition, where they engage in judged roundtable discussions on industry topics. From the semi-finalists, 16 candidates are selected to participate in the Canadian CYL program in which they are matched with an expert in the delegate’s specific field of interest for a nine-month mentorship.

Denay Bjornson, another Alberta semi-finalist, is a primary producer transitioning from a commercial Angus-cross herd to a purebred Speckle Park herd. She was a semi-finalist in 2023 and again last year, but due to a farming accident she was unable to attend

selections. When asked about the opportunity to attend this year, she responded, “I’m here again and excited to learn and meet new people! If you get knocked down, dust off, get back up, and keep going. Whether I make finals or not I know I will learn and grow from this experience.”

Lemay grew up on a feedlot and commercial crop operation in central Alberta which developed her passion for cattle health, leading her to pursue a career as a registered veterinary technologist. Working for Merck Animal Health as an account manager, she works with beef producers to find science-driven solutions and innovative tools that help optimize herd performance.

As this was her first time applying to the CYL program, she was excited for the unique opportunity to grow professionally and as a leader within the beef industry. She has always had a strong belief that mentorship and strong industry relationships are foundational to progress, both of which the CYL program offers.

This year the semi-finalists from across Canada headed to Levis, Quebec to participate in a roundtable selection event during the CCA semi-annual meetings. Outside of selections, they were immersed in sessions about advocacy, leadership and mentorship with industry professionals.

Before selections were made, Lemay was most looking forward to the energy that came from being surrounded by other young people who care deeply about the beef industry. “Whether it’s learning from fellow participants,



Marissa Lemay



Denay Bjornson

hearing from past CYLs, or engaging with industry leaders, selections are sure to offer a chance to be challenged and inspired. It's a space where big ideas are welcomed, and everyone brings something valuable to the table," she noted.

Bjornson echoes the same sentiments, saying, "I think the networking alone in this program is very valuable." The program focus is to grow all aspects of the industry

through building connections with mentors as well as the network of more than 200 CYL graduates. The 2024–2025 CYL graduates will also be gathering in Quebec to celebrate their accomplishments over the past year with a graduation ceremony.

Congratulations to the 24 semi-finalists this year and the finalists announced at Selections in September! For more information about the Canadian Cattle Young Leaders program, visit canadiancattleyoungleaders.ca or contact Cailey Church, Youth Leadership Coordinator, at churchc@cattle.ca. ▼

These exceptional opportunities would not be possible without the generous support of program Platinum Partners, McDonald's Canada and Cargill; Foundation Partners, MNP, Elanco, and New Holland; and Gold Partners, Farm Credit Canada, Alltech, and RBC Future Launch.



Exploring ABP's Decision to Withdraw from the CCA

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS ANNOUNCED A SIGNIFICANT MOVE IN AUGUST, GIVING NOTICE THE COMMISSION WILL WITHDRAW ITS MEMBERSHIP FROM THE CANADIAN CATTLE ASSOCIATION (CCA) AS OF JULY 1, 2026.

Photo credit: Christine Boake



“Membership in national organizations like the CCA must deliver clear value to Alberta’s cattle producers,” said Doug Roxburgh, Chair of ABP. “We have a duty to Alberta producers to ensure their dollars are invested in organizations that reflect and advance our industry’s values.”

The notice follows careful deliberation and discussion between the Board and ABP’s delegate body and revolves around three primary areas of concern: funding and fiscal transparency; organizational structure and governance; and communications.

“This isn’t about stepping away from national collaboration,” says Roxburgh. “It’s about ensuring that collaboration is built on transparency, accountability, and shared priorities that reflect the needs of producers.”

ABP remains committed to strong representation at all levels of the industry, and believes that with meaningful reform the CCA can better serve its member provinces and the producers those member provinces represent.

“Our hope is for a strong national organization that ABP is a part of—that’s truthfully what we want to see.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

While the concerns raised are not new, ABP felt it was important to communicate them directly and formally to the CCA before sharing them more broadly. These issues, according to ABP, are foundational elements of a strong national organization. By taking action in these areas, CCA has a chance to improve how it serves members and strengthen its role as a voice for Canadian cattle production.

FUNDING AND FISCAL TRANSPARENCY

ABP appreciates that the CCA has an audit committee and engaged auditors. These are foundational elements of fiscal transparency and represent an important starting point. In addition to these pieces, ABP recommends regular reports from the Audit Committee and the establishment of an elected Finance Chair.

“With the national cow herd in decline, we recognize the potential for reduced marketings and consider this in

POSITION FROM THE PROVINCIAL MEMBERS

Provincial members held several meetings in September at the CCA semi-annual meeting in Quebec to discuss CCA representation, future funding, and governance matters in light of the concerns that have been raised by ABP.

While we do not believe there are governance or transparency failures within the CCA, we do have concerns and see value in a process of continuous improvement. Similar questions and concerns have been raised by a number of provinces beyond ABP, and it was felt that working together as provincial members would be the most constructive path forward for both the CCA and the broader membership across the country.

Provinces are aligned in their view that an independent, facilitated discussion among members on governance, structure, and funding would provide the best opportunity for thoughtful dialogue. This will allow provincial members to bring forward well-considered recommendations before further engagement with CCA leadership.

We respectfully ask that the CCA board and leadership place trust in the provinces to carry out this work. A provincial working group will begin its efforts as soon as possible, with the goal of engaging with CCA promptly following the completion of this initial phase.

BCCA, ABP, SCA, MBP, BFO, PBQ, NSCP, NBOP, PEIC

every update to the fiscal plan at ABP,” says Roxburgh. “We’ve reached out to CCA for insight into how they’re preparing for a possible decrease in funding, with limited response. That’s why we’re advocating for an elected finance chair at CCA—someone who can provide clarity on financial planning and spending priorities.”

EVOLUTION IS A CONSTANT AT ABP

Over the past several years, ABP has undergone significant organizational changes. These include streamlining operations, enhancing communications, and focusing on strengthening the producer-driven commission.

“These changes have positioned us to better serve Alberta’s cattle producers,” adds Dubeau. “We are committed to continuous improvement and progress, and we hope to see the same commitment reflected in the organizations we support.”

Dubeau explains that under the previous arrangement, ABP was required to fund CCA based on gross marketings, while operating on retained checkoff dollars. This mismatch meant dramatic budget cuts for ABP, weakening the commission’s ability to connect with both producers and consumers. The 2023 agreement enabled ABP to begin rebuilding.

“We reinvested in producer-facing communication through tools like abpdaily.com, the magazine, and social media. We also strengthened our efforts in government relations and research, expanded consumer marketing, and elevated our presence in beef producers’ communities.”

Another major priority for ABP was building relationships with other beef associations in the province.

“Now we’re fortunate to have Alberta Cattle Feeders’ Association, Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association, Alberta Auction Markets Association, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, Feeder Associations of Alberta, the newly formed Provincial Processors Association, and Western Stock Growers’ Association at our board table, as full participants and non-voting members. It is an opportunity to learn from each other, and part of our evolution as a commission in Alberta.”

An elected position adds a layer of democratic oversight to financial management and can provide a clear line of communication between executive leadership and board members. With a finance chair, CCA would be more equipped to provide financial details ranging from long-term spending priorities to specific line items such as travel.

Another important point ABP has raised is that provincial funding assessments be based on retained marketings across all provinces, with the assessment rate of \$0.53 remaining unchanged.

Historically, Alberta was required to remit funds to CCA based on total animal marketings. Following the plebiscite in 2018 and Alberta’s transition to a refundable model, the funding structure remained tied to gross marketings.

In 2023, ABP pushed for change and a three-year agreement was signed, enabling Alberta to send funds based on ‘retained’ checkoff dollars. That deal will expire next June 2026.

While refund requests in Alberta are decreasing, ABP maintains that provincial funding assessments need to be based on retained marketings across all provinces to ensure fairness and consistency. Unfortunately, despite efforts to work towards this, ABP Executive have reported no clear indication from CCA Officers that this approach would be seriously considered.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

ABP delegates and directors have significant concerns regarding governance at CCA. As part of their recommendations, they are calling for the establishment of a dedicated governance committee and a comprehensive organizational and governance review of CCA.

“Governance isn’t a one-and-done process—it requires constant evaluation,” says ABP General Manager Brad Dubeau. “We’ve just been through a significant review at ABP, and still find ourselves identifying areas for improvement.”

The CCA is comprised of nine provincial member cattle associations that provide representation to a national, producer-led board of directors. ABP contributes 50 per cent of CCA’s budget, yet, under the freeze

developed in the three-year agreement, holds only seven of 24 board member seats. As part of its list of withdrawal details, ABP is strongly urging the unfreezing of these seats and a revision of the representation formula.

Additionally, ABP would like to see CCA Executive engage a reputable third-party executive search firm to ensure strategic and unbiased leadership selection.

COMMUNICATION

ABP is encouraging CCA to continually strengthen stakeholder engagement by bringing member provinces into conversations earlier and more consistently.

“When provincial commissions are brought in early, we can help shape the message and the strategy, not just react to it,” says Roxburgh. “That kind of collaboration is key to building trust and alignment.”

“Effective communication between provincial commissions and the national body is essential as these groups regularly collaborate on key issues at the national level,” says Dubeau. “This communication helps build a unified message where possible, and ensures all parties can review, digest, and contribute meaningfully.”

CONSIDERING THE CONCERNS AND NEXT STEPS

The decision to withdraw from the CCA was not made lightly. It reflects a clear and growing call from Alberta producers to address longstanding concerns (see the resolution from Central Zone in Volume 3 Issue 2 as an example). With the current three-year agreement set to expire on June 30, 2026, the impasse became a more pressing issue over the months that followed the AGM.

“After several conversations where progress on our areas of concern with CCA stalled, the topic of withdrawal began to take on greater weight at the board table,” said Dubeau. “There was also a clear understanding that such a significant decision required full involvement from the delegate body.”

Lengthy delegate discussions followed, which gave everyone the opportunity to discuss a potential withdrawal from CCA. These discussions culminated in a special delegate meeting on August 11, with Alberta Marketing Council on hand to ensure all requirements were met for

such a meeting. A strong majority of delegates voted in favour of withdrawing. That was followed then by a board of directors meeting, with the same result.

“I know some producers have questioned the decision to make this public,” says ABP Chair Roxburgh. “ABP’s intention was always to engage directly with CCA through one-on-one conversations. We made every effort to do that and unfortunately have not seen meaningful change. Sharing this decision openly is part of our commitment to transparency and to keeping producers informed about where things stand.”

ABP will fulfill all financial obligations to the CCA through the conclusion of the current agreement on June 30, 2026.

“We essentially have between 8 to 10 months of runway to create meaningful discussions with the CCA to put something together to try and move things forward,” adds Roxburgh. “But producers can be confident that ABP has a well thought out plan that will ensure strong representation at a national level, if we get to that point. Right now, our focus remains on dialogue, with the goal of finding common ground.”

Currently, ABP funds 50 per cent of the CCA budget through the \$2.00 Alberta Service Charge. The decision to withdraw does not affect funding to the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off Agency (\$2.50 National Levy) or its service providers—Canada Beef, Public and Stakeholder Engagement, and Beef Cattle Research Council. ▼

PRODUCER ENGAGEMENT

ABP recognizes that producers hold a range of views on this decision and encourages everyone to take part in the conversation.

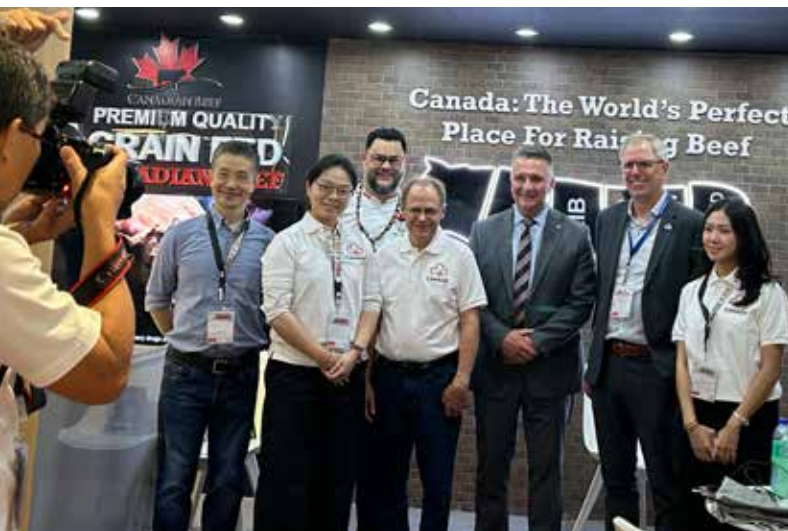
For specific questions, producers are invited to reach out to a delegate in their zone. For broader discussion, ABP welcomes cattle producers to attend the upcoming Producer Meetings in January and February. Sharing diverse perspectives will help support informed decision-making and contribute to meaningful progress.

Canada Beef Update

BY GINA TEEL,
DIRECTOR, STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS, CANADA BEEF

Canada Beef's recent market development activities in priority markets in Southeast Asia are resulting in more possibilities for Canadian beef.

Demand for Canadian beef was evident in the Indo-Pacific and parts of Asia, with high interest shown at Canada Beef's first booth at Food & Hospitality Indonesia 2025,



at market development initiatives in Vietnam, and during Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Heath MacDonald's trade mission to Indonesia, Singapore, and the Philippines.

Market diversification is essential to creating value for Canada's beef industry. Canada Beef initiatives, along with the care and commitment of Canada's beef producers, helps to make high-quality Canadian beef among the most trusted and in-demand products in the world.

Canada Beef welcomed recent news of restored access for Canadian beef to Australia. While it is unlikely that anything more than a limited amount of high-quality Canadian product will flow to Australia given current tight North American supplies and strong prices, the move is acknowledged for aligning with science and rules-based trade.

Canada Beef's social media channels receive many comments concerning the price of beef at retail. Due to the supply-demand situation beef prices are expected to remain high through to 2027.

The Canadian Beef Information Gateway (Gateway) launched in 2022 to help consumers get the most out of 70+ beef cuts and it remains an excellent resource. Crucially, the Gateway provides information on underutilized cuts—an important feature as beef loving consumers trade down to more economical cuts to keep beef on the dinner table.

Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence Executive Director Mathieu Paré used top sirloin cap, a favourite economical cut, to create Grilled Steak Dippables, a Gateway recipe which won Alberta Beef Producer's culinary competition at the Calgary Stampede Kitchen Theatre this year.





Beef demand in Canada has been strong since 2020 and was particularly resilient in 2024. As much as people love their beef, Canada Beef understands that consumers want assurances that it is also part of a healthy diet. To support this, Canada Beef established an Expert Advisory committee, comprised of recognized, independent health and nutrition experts who provide recommendations and guidance on diet and wellness communication initiatives.

Canada Beef's Health and Nutrition team regularly consults with the committee on the wording and direction of educational resources aimed at consumers, as well as technical resources for health professionals and industry partners. The committee has reviewed various documents on topics ranging from nutrition during pregnancy to nutritional brochures for consumers like *The Best of Beef*.

The committee has also been convened to assist in the development of special interest white papers, like the one Canada Beef developed on the National School Food Policy and its Healthy Aging strategy.

Committee members are also consulted on a case-by-case basis, based on their nutrition specialty. For example, a regulatory expert reviews any advertising work that contains nutrition messaging, and a pediatric dietitian expert reviews any nutrition messaging related to children.

These are just some examples of the work underway at Canada Beef to maintain mindshare for beef as demand pressures continue. 🍖



FerAppease for Cattle:

Hype or Hard Data?

JESSICA SPERBER, PH.D., M.S.

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As beef producers seek practical tools to improve animal health, productivity, and welfare, stress mitigation has emerged as a key focus—especially during high-stress periods like weaning, transport, and feedlot processing.

Among the newest strategies in stress management is FerAppease® (Fera Diagnostics and Biologicals), a maternal bovine appeasing substance (mBAS) marketed to reduce cattle stress responses. The product has garnered attention for its innovative mode of action and promising early research. But how consistent are the results, and is the hype backed by data?

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE PRODUCT

FerAppease mimics naturally occurring pheromones secreted by cows to calm their calves. These substances interact with the vomeronasal organ and olfactory receptors to signal a sense of safety, modulating stress perception in the brain. When applied topically—5 mL behind the poll and 5 mL on the skin directly above the muzzle—FerAppease is said to reduce cortisol concentrations thereby preventing the cascade of

immunosuppression and performance loss typically observed during stress events. This biological mechanism is supported by analogous pheromone products in swine, dogs, and even horses. But real-world production environments are more complex—and the research surrounding FerAppease reveals a mix of results that demand a deeper dive.

HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN RESEARCH AND WORD OF MOUTH

As a producer, it is often difficult to disseminate between “word of mouth” results vs. results rooted in sound experimental design from a controlled and randomized research experiment. When evaluating whether a new product or practice is worth implementing on your operation, look for the key hallmarks of a sound research experiment. Treatments (what is being tested) should be randomly assigned to animals or pens, and there should

be enough replication (number of pens and number of animals within pens) to give confidence that results aren't due to chance. Reliable research includes a control group (usually a baseline or group without the treatment applied) for comparison and measures outcomes in a consistent, standardized way. For cow/calf, backgrounder, and feedlot studies, the pen or the paddock/pasture—not the individual animal—are usually the correct experimental unit, since cattle within a pen share feed, water, and environment. If the research facility/operation can track individual feed intake on the cattle (i.e. GrowSafe, Calan Gates, Insentec), then individual animal may act as the experimental unit, but biological variation between animals should be accounted for and there should be a considerable number of animals in the study (experiments with 20 animals have more outcomes due to random variation than experiments with 2,000 animals). Ask if the study is applicable to your operation: were the cattle, diets, and management systems similar to yours, or so different that results might not translate?

Anecdotal evidence—stories or personal experiences shared without controlled testing—can be challenging in cattle production because it often lacks the rigour needed to separate fact from coincidence. What “worked” for one producer in one set of circumstances might have been influenced by countless uncontrolled factors, such as weather, cattle genetics, feed quality, variation in initial body weight or days of age of the animals,

or management style. Without proper replication, randomization, and statistical analysis, it's impossible to know whether a management practice or product truly caused the observed outcome or if it was simply a fluke. While shared experiences can spark new ideas, they should be backed by sound research before becoming part of your management program.

THE RESEARCH BEHIND FERAPPEASE

Let's dive into the scientific data that is available for FerAppease, beginning with a study that most reflects the quality and type of feedlot cattle typically fed in Western Canada. Dr. Jessica Sperber at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducted a feedlot study at a commercial feedyard in Nebraska utilizing 1,754 high-quality yearling steers of which half of the steers were administered 10 mL FerAppease on arrival and again at reimplant compared to steers that received a placebo mineral oil control. Steers administered FerAppease tended to have a four per cent improvement in carcass-adjusted feed efficiency due to no impact on DMI and a numerical increase of 0.10 lb/d in ADG. Carcass traits including HCW and marbling, morbidity, and death loss were not impacted by the application of FerAppease. Data from this research will be available in the 2026 Nebraska Beef Report accessible by visiting beef.unl.edu.



Study location and author	Cattle type	# of animals	Time of application ¹	Key outcomes ²
Texas Schubach et al., 2020	Calves	80	Weaning (42-day preconditioning)	mBAS improved feeding behavior and increased activity the day after weaning. No effect on ADG, DMI, or feed efficiency.
Montana Kvamme et al., 2024	Calves	90	Weaning (42-day preconditioning)	mBAS (5mL) applied on d 0, 14, 28 had no effect on ADG or DMI.
New Mexico Columbo et al., 2020	High-risk Angus-cross steers	342	Feedlot receiving (recently weaned, transported 800 km)	mBAS improved first-treatment BRD success rate, increased ADG by 0.34 lb/d, and improved feed efficiency.
Texas Pickett et al., 2024	High-risk calves	120	Feedlot receiving (castrated on arrival)	FerAppease reduced BRD treatment rate (17.6 > 2.9 per cent), reduced mortality; no difference in ADG or DMI.
Texas Mackey et al., 2025	Angus-influenced steers	107	Feedlot receiving and reimplant	FerAppease improved ADG +0.16 lb/d; no effect on DMI, death loss, or carcass traits.
Texas Kimbrough et al., 2025	High-risk heifers	552	Feedlot receiving	FerAppease tended to reduce BRD morbidity; no other performance or health impacts reported.
Texas Cooke et al., 2025	Angus-cross yearling steers	240	Feedlot receiving and reimplant	FerAppease increased DMI, ADG +0.2 lb/d, and HCW by 15 lb.
Nebraska Sperber & Loseke, 2026 (Nebraska Beef Report)	Low-risk yearling steers	1,754	Feedlot receiving and reimplant	FerAppease tended to improve carcass-adjusted feed efficiency by 4 per cent.

¹ Time of application: Refers to time/stage of production in which a generic maternal bovine appeasing substance (mBAS) or FerAppease (Fera Diagnostics and Biologicals) was administered to cattle. FerAppease administered as a 5mL dose behind the poll and 5mL dose on the skin above the muzzle unless otherwise noted.

² ADG = Average daily gain; DMI = Dry matter intake; Feed efficiency = ADG/DMI; HCW = Hot carcass weight; BRD = Bovine Respiratory Disease

At \$3 USD per dose, a two-treatment program (arrival processing and reimplant) costs \$6/head

These studies show that context matters. The benefits of FerAppease seem most reliable in high-stress situations. Results are inconsistent in low-risk or more resilient cattle and the length of the positive response may be limited to the number of days that the product is active (7 to 14 days).

COST-BENEFIT CONSIDERATIONS: IS IT WORTH IT?

At \$3 USD per dose, a two-treatment program (arrival processing and reimplant) costs \$6/head. Based on 2025 carcass prices: steers must gain at least 1.9 lb more HCW to break even. At lower cattle prices (i.e., 2018 cattle prices), break even weight gain jumps to more than 3 lb HCW. In weaned calves, a \$3 investment must yield ≥ 1 lb extra live weight—a modest but achievable target in some studies. While the economics may pencil out in high-stress groups, cattle responses are less certain in low-stress environments or yearlings. Producers should evaluate cost-effectiveness on a case-by-case basis, factoring in labour and timing.

BOTTOM LINE: A TOOL WITH POTENTIAL—BUT NOT A SILVER BULLET

FerAppease is not a replacement for good stockmanship, nutrition, or vaccination. However, it has shown potential to reduce the physiological cost of stress on cattle and support better outcomes during key transitions. The product has validity at weaning, especially in high-risk calves and as a complementary tool at processing, when used alongside BRD control programs (such as Metaphylaxis). The product has less consistent results when used on low-risk cattle or in herds where margins are tight and extra cost must be closely monitored. Anecdotally, some producers have described reduced vocalization at time of weaning and quicker approach toward the feed bunk following a stressful event, such as branding or castration.

FerAppease represents a fresh approach to an old problem, but as with any emerging technology, adoption should be strategic—anchored in data, economics, and the specific needs of your cattle. For producers seeking to stack the deck in favour of animal well-being and performance, especially in challenging environments, FerAppease might offer a valuable edge—but only when the context is right. ▼

References: Colombo et al., 2020. doi:10.1083/jas/skaa339; Cooke et al., 2025. doi:10.1093/tas/txaf022; Kimbrough et al., 2024. <https://wtamu-ir.tdl.org/items/5ff09ff4-23cd-4a6b-84fc-7421dd1a9d4c>; Kvamme et al., 2024. doi:10.1093/jas/skae151; Mackey et al., 2025. doi:10.1016/j.vas.2025.100457; Pickett et al., 2024. doi:10.1093/jas/skae221; Schubach et al., 2020. doi:10.1093/jas/skaa278.613



Trade and Government Relations

in a Shifting Landscape

BY MARK LYSENG

WRITING ABOUT TRADE AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS IN THE BEEF INDUSTRY IS A CHALLENGE RIGHT NOW. BY THE TIME THIS ARTICLE REACHES YOUR HANDS, THE LANDSCAPE COULD LOOK QUITE DIFFERENT.

Still, it's worth providing some context on what's been done, and some background on the current state of conversations.

Throughout July, Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) met with a range of U.S. officials, including representatives, senators, ambassadors, and producer organizations. During Stampede, we hosted and toured with several of these groups, and I can say that all of the meetings were positive. It was clear to everyone involved just how interconnected our beef sectors are and how both nations benefit from a stable, open border.

It was a good reminder of how much common ground we share. Many of the challenges facing Canadian producers are mirrored south of the border. While the specifics vary in the case of wild boar damage in Texas versus elk damage in Alberta, for example, the broader issues are familiar: reducing regulatory burdens, supporting rural economies, and strengthening producer resilience.

One offhand but noteworthy comment I heard more than once was that Alberta is regarded as having done the best job in Canada of building rapport with the Trump administration. While others may have taken a different approach, Premier Smith and her cabinet's engagement on trade policy has been noted and generally well-received by important U.S. officials.

At the same time, recent developments have prompted a broader conversation within ABP about the reliability of the U.S. as a trading partner. From increased protectionist rhetoric to sudden market access disputes, it's clear the U.S. is shifting from being a stable partner to a more unpredictable one, similar in some ways to the challenges we've seen with China. Over the past six months, it has become increasingly evident that relying too heavily on a single export market exposes Canadian producers to significant risk.

This reality is shaping ABP's approach as we look for ways to both protect and strengthen our industry moving forward. I likely don't need to tell you that these trade uncertainties aren't just abstract—they influence pricing, logistics, and long-term planning. Without strong risk management programs and a more diversified market strategy, the impact could ripple across every part of the beef value chain.

A key part of that conversation is improving risk management. July brought a major development with AgriStability: federal and provincial ministers agreed to changes to allowable expenses and inventory pricing. While these updates still require Treasury Board approval, they represent a meaningful improvement for cow-calf producers. This policy shift, after years of discussion and advocacy led by ABP, is a testament to the work of Minister Sigurdson and AFSC, and it will help deliver more stability to producer margins.

Another area of focus is expanding domestic market access, particularly through interprovincial meat trade. In Canada, meat inspection is managed at both federal and provincial levels. Federally inspected meat can move freely across provinces and be exported internationally, while provincially inspected meat is currently restricted to sales within the province where it was processed.

Approximately 97 per cent of Alberta's beef is processed in federally inspected facilities. However, for the remaining three per cent, there may be an opportunity to allow interprovincial movement. The challenge lies in the regulatory differences between provinces, which create significant barriers. Further complicating the issue is the concern that expanding trade of provincially inspected meat could be seen as a non-tariff trade barrier by some of Canada's international partners.

“...we are exploring options to expand domestic trade in a way that supports small processors and producers, without compromising food safety or triggering international concerns.”

ABP's position is that we must avoid undermining international trade relationships. That said, we are exploring options to expand domestic trade in a way that supports small processors and producers, without compromising food safety or triggering international concerns. This work includes research into producer readiness and the feasibility of a coordinated, practical approach.

Trade remains a cornerstone of Canada's beef industry. Our relationship with the U.S. continues to be critical, but the current environment demands a more diversified and risk-aware strategy. While the U.S. remains our largest trading partner, Canada Beef is also expanding access to new markets through agreements like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), including Japan, Vietnam, and others.

ABP is committed to supporting producers by advocating for stronger risk management, broader domestic market access, and continued engagement with both domestic and international partners.

As the trade landscape continues to evolve, we encourage producers to visit ABPDaily.com for the most current updates. ▼

An Unseen Advantage for Your Operation:

HARNESS THE POWER OF VIRTUAL FENCING WITH RDAR AND OFCAF

BY RICHARD HILTON
MANAGER OF STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS
& COMMUNICATIONS, RDAR

As an Alberta farmer or rancher, you understand that profitability and sustainability go hand in hand. Managing your pasture and livestock is a constant balancing act, and every day brings new challenges—from fluctuating market conditions to the unpredictable climate.



But what if you could have a game-changing tool that simplifies rotational grazing, boosts pasture health, and improves your bottom line?

RDAR is expanding its OFCAF rotational grazing BMP to include the latest virtual fencing technology. This is a unique opportunity to invest in your operation's future, enhance productivity, and reduce your environmental footprint with significant financial support.

WHAT IS VIRTUAL FENCING?

Think of it as an invisible, intelligent fence. Instead of relying on traditional posts and wire, virtual fencing systems use GPS-enabled collars and a network of base stations to create and manage grazing zones from your computer or smartphone. These smart collars train your livestock to recognize and respect virtual boundaries through a series of auditory cues and, if necessary, a mild corrective pulse.

BEYOND THE FENCE: THE BENEFITS OF A SMART GRAZING SYSTEM

Virtual fencing is more than just a replacement for wire. It's a comprehensive livestock management system that offers a host of advantages for your operation:

- **Precision Grazing:** Create and move paddocks in minutes, not hours or days. This allows you to graze with unparalleled precision, ensuring uniform forage utilization, preventing overgrazing, and promoting faster pasture recovery.
- **Reduced Labour and Time:** Say goodbye to the time-consuming and often strenuous work of moving portable fences. Free up labour hours for other tasks.
- **Improved Pasture Health:** By enabling more effective rotational grazing, virtual fencing leads to healthier soils, increased biodiversity, and improved resilience to drought.



- **Strategic Control:** Easily create exclusion zones to protect sensitive areas like riparian zones or newly seeded fields, all with a few taps on your device.
- **Enhanced Data:** The system provides valuable data on livestock location and grazing patterns, helping you make more informed management decisions.

FUNDING THAT POWERS YOUR INNOVATION

RDAR is committed to helping producers adopt the latest beneficial management practices. Eligible ranchers can receive up to **\$75,000** in funding for a complete virtual fencing system, which includes GPS collars, base stations, and other necessary rotational grazing infrastructure. A 15 per cent cost-share contribution is required, meaning you can adopt this transformative technology with significant financial support courtesy of OFCAF. Act quickly as funds for 2025 are limited.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for funding, you must be an active producer in Alberta with a minimum of \$25,000 in gross farm income. Applications must be for new projects that are not already a routine practice on your farm or field. You will also need to work with a Professional Agrologist (PAg) or Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) to develop a Beneficial Management Practice (BMP) Action Plan.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

The future of grazing is here, and RDAR is ready to help you embrace it. This is your chance to invest in technology that saves you time, enhances your land, and strengthens your business.

To learn more about the eligibility requirements and how to apply, visit rdar.ca/funding-opportunities/ofcaf. You can also contact a member of RDAR's OFCAF team to discuss your project and get started on your application.

Disclaimer: All applications are subject to a review and approval process. All payments received are considered taxable income. A 15 per cent cost-share contribution is required from the applicant.

The tour group after getting
"suited and booted" at Lammle's.



Influencing the Influencers:

**SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATORS SEE RANCHING
THROUGH A NEW LENS**

BY EMMA CROSS, PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In an ideal world, every Canadian would have the chance to visit a ranch and see the care Canadian beef producers offer their livestock and land.

Of course, the logistics of making that happen are not realistic, but that's where social media influencers come in. By inviting a few sought out content creators with big followings in key demographics, one ranch tour can reach so many more people. The Public and Stakeholder Engagement team hosted the second annual Influencer Ranching Experience in July during Calgary Stampede. Public and Stakeholder Engagement is funded by national check-off dollars and is jointly delivered by Canada Beef and the Canadian Cattle Association. The program seeks to build and maintain public trust in the way beef cattle are raised in Canada. The annual Ranching Experience brings together a group of social media content creators to a southern Alberta ranch to learn about the benefits of raising Canadian beef.

The day began at Lammle's Western Wear, where influencers were given a shopping budget to get "suited and booted" for the day. Then, the group boarded a private bus to head out to the East Longview Hall, where Chop Steakhouse catered a delectable prime rib beef dip lunch.

As the creators enjoyed their meal, they also took in Public and Stakeholder Engagement's newest short documentary, *Homes on the Range*. Set to be released this fall, the film highlights the important role of beef producers in preserving critical wildlife habitat on Canadian grasslands.

After lunch and a show, the influencers headed out to Robertson Ranch near Longview, Alberta. At the yard, Alex and Carol Robertson and their twin daughters Morgan and Taryn guided the group through a series of stations that let the influencers try their hand at being a rancher. Stations featured roping lessons from professional roper Steele DePaoli, leading Highland heifers, grooming the ranch horses, and hearing the history of the ranch.

With the ice broken and excitement high, the group set out for one of the Robertsons' picturesque pastures in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. On the way, creators watched Morgan work her border collie on some cattle and took in the scenery.



At the end of the road, the group heard from representatives from the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada, reinforcing the critical role of ranchers in preserving grasslands as one of the world's most endangered ecosystems. To really seal the deal, influencers spotted a fawn and a cow elk with her calf, letting them see biodiversity in action.

After many questions from curious creators and a break for some wildflower beauty shots, the group headed back to Calgary for an exclusive dining experience at Chop Steakhouse. Here, the influencers enjoyed a beef-centric supper featuring three different cuts of steak on a sample "butcher's board". With a side of good conversation, the creators were ready to tuck in for the night in a hotel room provided for them.

In return for the experience, influencers posted a series of Instagram stories throughout the day, as well as a summary reel highlighting their learnings from the day. With all the glitz and glamour of the day, you might expect the influencers to focus their content on western fashion or gourmet dining. But instead, the content from the day highlighted the creators' heartfelt appreciation for all that ranchers do to care for the animals and ecosystems in their care.

While the influencers appreciated the shopping, hotel, and meals as an incentive to provide their services, it was learning about the people and stories behind the beef on their plates that stuck with them. "I will remember the people," said one influencer. "I really had zero experience with ranching, so I learned an awful lot. I think I will remember how peaceful it felt out on their ranch and how important ranching is to maintaining those grasslands."

As influencers share what they learned with their audiences, their followers get to step into their boots as if they went on the tour themselves. Creators varied from foodies to lifestyle bloggers but were all selected for their followings in key urban centres.

Before and after the event, influencers were asked to complete a brief survey to gauge their perceptions of Canadian beef cattle farmers and ranchers. Prior to visiting the ranch, 70 per cent of the creators rated Canada's beef industry as "good" stewards of the land and water, with the remaining responding "unsure" or "acceptable". After the tour, 100 per cent of responses rated this category as "excellent".

Of course, personal experiences like the ranch visit have immense power to shape these perceptions. Fortunately, the broader population is experiencing the same shift in mindset. In July, the Public and Stakeholder Engagement program ran its annual key performance indicator questions as part of an omnibus survey of Canadians. 76 per cent of Albertan respondents indicated a positive perception of Canadian beef farmers, leading the nation and representing a nine per cent jump over the previous year's results. While not tied to any particular initiative, these results demonstrate the influence of sharing positive messages about beef cattle.

Thanks to the power of influencers, the stories from the Ranching Experience reach and impact consumers across the country. Check out some of the content from the day on Public and Stakeholder Engagement's [@raisingcdnbeef](#) Instagram. ▼



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Controlling Gophers

WITH ECOSYSTEM-INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

BY EMMA CROSS

BEEF PRODUCERS IN ALBERTA ARE KNOWN FOR BEING STEWARDS OF THE GRASSLANDS. WHILE CATTLE ARE PART OF A GREATER ECOSYSTEM, SPECIES LIKE GOPHERS CAN POSE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES TO PRODUCERS. FORTUNATELY, SOLUTIONS TO GOPHER PROBLEMS CAN BE FOUND WITHIN NATURE'S OWN PATTERNS.

Richardson's ground squirrels, more commonly known as gophers, are native to Alberta. While they can cause challenges, gophers are a keystone species, meaning they play a vital role in the prairie ecosystem. Besides being prey for grassland predators, gophers also dig burrows that provide habitat for other species, such as the endangered burrowing owl.

However, when natural patterns slip out of balance, gopher populations can grow out of control. Brad Downey, Senior Biologist at the Alberta Conservation Association, notes that we are currently seeing "an explosion of gopher populations", particularly in southern Alberta. With several major predators listed as species at risk in Alberta, predation on gophers is limited, Downey explains. Extensive gopher populations can also threaten grassland birds because of predation on nests.

"Right now, we're in the perfect storm for gophers," says Graydon Garner, Environment and Climate Change Coordinator for the Canadian Cattle Association. "Drought conditions over the past 5 to 10 years have created shorter vegetation that offers more open spaces for gophers to come in. We have fewer managers out there on the landscape with less time and ability to manage the problem."

When gopher populations reach extremes, producers experience greater losses that make control critical. "The main issue with gophers in the cattle industry is loss of forage," says Garner. "Gophers, being herbivores, will eat grass. At today's calf prices, the value of every blade of grass that a gopher eats is so much higher."

Research from the University of California, Berkeley determined that gophers eat an average of 119 grams of forage dry matter per kilogram of body weight every day. With just 32 gophers on a single acre, that translated to an eight per cent loss of forage. In drought-ridden areas where grass and hay are already scarce, gopher consumption can amount to huge losses for beef producers.

With gopher populations on the rise in Alberta, beef producers are looking for ways to protect their precious forage resources. In 2020, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency began implementing a phase-out of liquid strychnine for gophers, with use banned as of March 4, 2023. The decision was driven by concerns around the poison being compounded in non-target predator species scavenging on poisoned gophers, such as hawks and even producers' own working dogs.

[[A pair of ferruginous hawks will eat up to 500 gophers during the nesting season.]]

Fortunately, several options for managing gophers lie in the natural patterns of grassland ecosystems. One of the main control methods available is encouraging natural predators to occupy pasture and hay land. Just by encouraging natural predators, producers can make a big impact. “A pair of ferruginous hawks will eat up to 500 gophers during the nesting season,” says Brad.

“If you don’t have great existing habitat for hawks, you can install hawk poles,” explains Garner. “These are small rectangular platforms mounted on telephone poles to provide nesting or perching spots for hawks, raptors, eagles, or other large birds that prey on Richardson’s ground squirrels.”

Installing hawk poles comes with a few considerations. “Ideally, producers put up these nesting sites before March when hawks start coming back,” says Downey. “You can either put a pole into the ground or mount the pole to a corner post.” Downey explains that nesting platforms should be about 10-12 feet off the ground, with poles at least a mile apart, since most hunting occurs within 800 metres of the nest.

Beyond managing gophers, creating good habitat for predatory birds is a success story for the beef industry. “Encouraging predator habitat is something the beef industry has already done a great job of,” says Downey. “In the early 2000s, our ferruginous hawk population was around 600 pairs, and thanks to the ranching industry and a lot of landowners, there are now more than 1,400 pairs in the province.”

Other land animals can also be effective controls for gophers, such as snakes and weasels. Downey encourages producers to maintain trees and shrubs along field perimeters to create corridors for these species.





Badgers are another major predator for gophers but encouraging them to burrow in pasture and hay lands comes with a few more challenges. “Badgers are a very effective predator,” says Garner. “However, they come with increased damage to the ground, which can be a real hazard for folks using horses, machinery, or for cattle themselves.”

If producers can tolerate the implications of badgers on the landscape, they can have a massive impact on local gopher populations. Research indicates that badgers will eat two to three gophers each day, reducing the local population by half before migrating to a new gopher colony. Badgers will even eat gophers over the winter months while they are in torpor, similar to hibernation, underground. Like gopher holes, badger burrows also provide habitat for other grassland species, providing other ecosystem benefits.

As Downey explains, encouraging wildlife to stick around relies on more than just one parcel of land. “Maintaining connected corridors is important to attracting those natural predators,” he says. Working with neighbors to create wildlife habitat across a larger tract of land will create a more interconnected area of habitat that will better encourage wildlife to inhabit a target spot for gopher control.

Another method of gopher control involves managing the height of forages. “There have been a number of studies that show gopher numbers are reduced in taller

grass (15cm, 30cm),” says Downey. “Gophers like to stand up and see what’s around them, so they need shorter grass to do that.” Producers can manage grazing or plant specific species to encourage a taller forage stand that discourages gopher colonization.

For producers experiencing gopher issues on cropland, Downey notes that growing a buffer of oats or wheat around the edge of a crop can “create a dense barrier” that discourages gophers from getting into a higher value crop like canola.

Of course, certain forages aren’t suited to maintaining taller forage stands, particularly on native grasslands. “It’s up to producers to decide if they see a value in this practice and determine if they can manage it on their unique landscape,” says Garner.

A final option for gopher control is shooting, although it is worth noting that this option requires the most time and effort for the producer. Downey notes that shooting can be effective, but timing is critical to ensuring its effectiveness.



[[In April and May, the gopher population is going to explode by roughly eight times when females have their litters.]]

“I always tell landowners that if they are shooting gophers, to make sure they do it in February or March,” says Downey. “In April and May, the gopher population is going to explode by roughly eight times when females have their litters. If you hunt in February and March, you will have much more of an impact.”

Both Downey and Garner encourage producers to use multiple methods to develop an integrated pest management strategy that supports population control year-round. The specific combination of strategies will look different for each producer, and Downey notes that producers will have the best idea of their own land to capitalize upon predators and other control options that are already present.

While stewardship solutions are an important part of an overall strategy for gopher control, they take time to be effective. Predators won't inhabit land overnight, and producers need methods to control gopher populations in the short term as populations overrun their land. Garner explains that while there are some alternative poison options out there on the market, such as zinc phosphide, “specific scientific research on gophers in Canada is lacking”. Industry groups like Alberta Beef Producers and the Canadian Cattle Association are advocating for producers to have all options on the table, with a focus on methods that are scientifically proven to be effective in a timeline that is practical for producers.

Producers looking for more information on gopher control options are encouraged to engage with their local forage and grazing associations, which often host extension events on this topic. The Government of Alberta also offers a fact sheet on gopher control methods, including details about gopher life cycles to help optimize the timing of control. The Alberta Conservation Association can help producers with advice on how to set up infrastructure like hawk poles. ▼

Attention

Alberta Beef Growers, Ranchers and Farmers



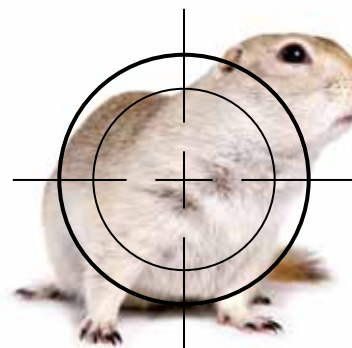
Do you have a gopher, coyote, groundhog, raccoon, rodent, pest bird or other varmint or vermin problem? Are these critters affecting your business, livestock or buildings? Do you lack the time to address the issue? I might be able to help.

My name is Rick Johnson. I'm a retired business executive, early 70s, former RCMP member, amateur deer hunter and volunteer Range Officer at my local rod and gun club.

My retirement hobby is targeting pest varmints, vermin and nuisance predators on private land along with rodents and pest birds in, on or near farm buildings and feedlots. I'm always conscious of pets, livestock and equipment, very mobile, able to travel and well equipped.

This is my hobby and not a commercial venture. No fees or game hunting involved. My use of firearms is insured through BC Wildlife Federation and various Canadian firearms associations. I use a high-end air gun near buildings and equipment, and small caliber varmint rifles in open fields.

Marksmanship is a perishable skill. The take-away here is that it gets me outdoors doing what I enjoy while keeping my skills up to speed. I get to meet and make friends with some very interesting people, and the rancher/farmer/landowner benefits through my success. If you see the potential for a fit or would like to know more, I would welcome your approach. I'll come to you for that all important face-to-face meeting.



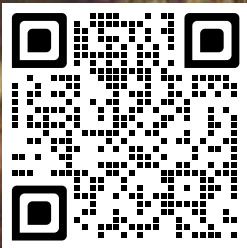
I can be reached by email, text or phone at **rjohnson.rdj@gmail.com** or **778-788-6221**.

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cleanfarms  **15**
YEARS

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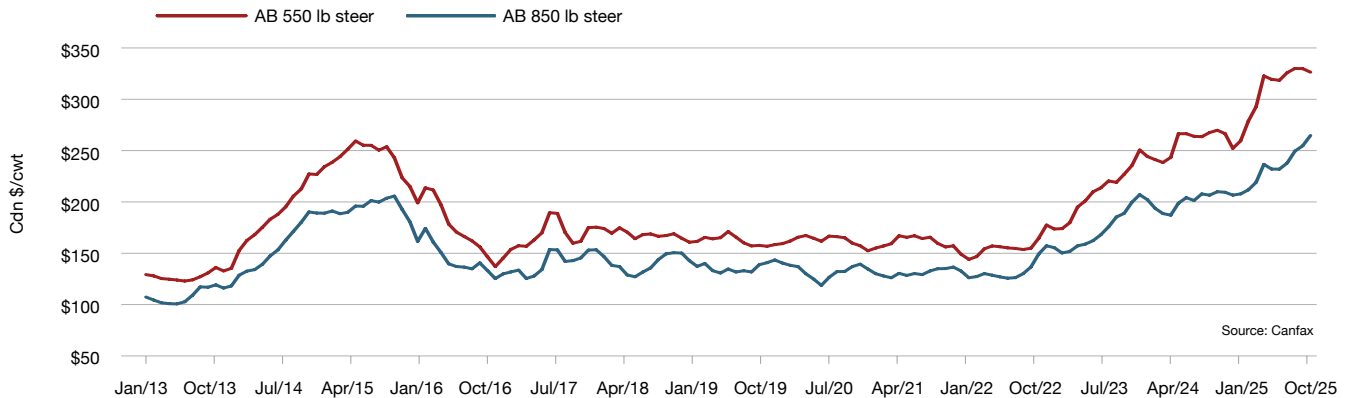


Alberta
Government

The pilot project is led by the multi-stakeholder Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group; funds were granted by the Government of Alberta and are administered by Alberta Beef Producers.

Elora Kiddle

Monthly Deflated Alberta Fed, Feeder and Calf Prices



A Hot Feeder Market

The best way to describe the feeder market in western Canada is ON FIRE, as steer calves and yearling look to find the top of their markets. This bullish market for calves and feeders is well into its fourth year, with the rally beginning in the fourth quarter of 2021 and only very small periods of correction since. The rally in this cycle is nearing twice the length of the 2013-15 cycle.

Alberta 550 lb steers averaged \$540/cwt in July, hovering near all-time highs set only a couple months earlier. These light-weight feeders were up \$102/cwt from July 2024 and \$242/cwt above the five-year average. Looking regionally, Alberta steer calves have been at a discount to the Ontario market since May after being at a premium for the first four months of 2025. Alberta steer calves have been at a premium to the U.S. since July 2024. Based on the five-year index, Alberta 550 feeder steers should find sustained momentum through to the end of the year with the possibility of a small seasonal decline during the height of the fall run in September/October.

Alberta 850 lb feeder steers averaged \$437/cwt in July, and have re-established new all-time highs for the past four consecutive months. These heavier feeder steers were up \$97/cwt from last year and \$193/cwt above the five-year average. Alberta 850 lb yearling steers spent the first quarter of 2025 at a small premium to their Ontario counterparts but moved to a moderate discount

in April and have remained discounted to Ontario for the past four months. The Alberta feeder market has largely been at a premium to the U.S. in 2025, only moving to a discount in March. Based on the five-year index, Alberta 850 lb yearling steers are projected to peak in September as the fall-run ramps up.

YTD auction volumes across western Canada are up three per cent from last year but down three per cent from the five-year average. Alberta saw a six per cent increase in auction volumes, with a smaller one per cent increase noted in Saskatchewan. Volumes are below a year ago in Manitoba (-three per cent) and B.C. (-28 per cent).

On a deflated basis (removing the effects of inflation) Alberta 550 lb steer calf prices averaged \$327/cwt in July, easing slightly from their May/June highs. Their 850 lb counterparts averaged \$265/cwt in July, re-establishing a new all-time high for the fourth consecutive month. Calf and feeder prices in July were 26-28 per cent higher than the 2015 high.

The price rally in this cycle has seen deflated calf and feeder prices climb 111-128 per cent from their late 2021 low to July 2025, with higher prices currently projected for 2026. The previous rally saw calf and feeder prices increase 106-112 per cent from their 2013 low to their 2015 high. ▼

CANADIAN CATTLE ASSOCIATION

Fall Update

BY TYLER FULTON, PRESIDENT, CCA



Photo credit:
Manitoba Beef Producers

The opportunity to communicate directly with Alberta producers is something that usually happens in handfuls at ABP meetings or other events through the year.

I appreciate the opportunity to reach many more at once through ABP magazine. CCA has a spot in many producer publications across Canada that allow me to regularly shine light on a few notable current events.

This month my phone has been lit up with questions about ABP's announced withdrawal from CCA. I was disappointed to receive that notice. As we were in the midst of figuring out the next period of CCA funding by ABP and all of CCA's nine provincial members it came as a bit of a surprise. The content is not a surprise; these are things discussed over time. The force of the withdrawal was a surprise.

The statement on CCA's fiscal transparency is one matter I am compelled to address. CCA has always followed Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and is audited annually. MNP is our auditor. Our audit committee chair is Arvid Nottveit. We are also audited regularly by the federal government as CCA and Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) both receive project funding from the federal government. Detailed financial statements are prepared monthly, and our Board of Directors review and approve our financial statements and investment portfolio at every regularly scheduled meeting.

Financial transparency is something we work on regularly. In my time involved with CCA the reports to the Board of Directors and to members have improved and any questions raised are promptly and thoroughly answered by our controller Caron Melin or the senior staff of any of CCA's divisions. It is worth acknowledging that CCA's organizational structure is complex and our work sometimes very delicate and nuanced that makes it difficult to communicate the value proposition to our funders, the beef producers across Canada.

We can also deliver on communications. I imagine if you are reading this article you also subscribe to CCA's biweekly Action News. The amount of content we push out via Action News along with articles in producer publications like Canadian Cattlemen Magazine, breed magazines, and provincial publications such as this is impressive to me. More emails in inboxes is not something I believe people are seeking but perhaps there are other tools. I enjoyed being on the Bovine podcast. Perhaps a discussion with the CCA president could be a recurring event.

The rest of the requests are really to be discussed between ABP and the other eight provincial cattle association members that make up the Canadian Cattle

Association. CCA does have some associate organization members (National Cattle Feeders' Association and Livestock Markets Association of Canada) to consider as well but the core funding and oversight are by the producer groups of each province. Representation splits, funding methods, governance and structure are all part of CCA bylaws. Bylaws are amended regularly at CCA.

I don't intend to pursue the coming discussions in public media, but I did think this opportunity to address ABP producers directly is timely. I've spoken to many of you directly about this. Our staff has as well. I encourage that outreach and discussion to continue. That said, final decisions about much of this will take place among the producer representatives of ABP and its like organizations around the table (BCCA, SCA, MBP, BFO, PBQ, NBCP, PEICP and NSCP). We all gain by working together.

We thank and congratulate the ABP officials and staff who have worked hard to achieve changes to the AgriStability program. ABP and CCA are among those who have been advocating extensively and consistently for years for improvements to the program, and it is gratifying to see changes tested in Alberta.

Trade risk and uncertainty prevail in our industry. Market conditions are strong and margins are high which provide an optimal opportunity to enhance tools like livestock price insurance and AgriStability with cost-shared premiums. The increase is significant, and if producers trigger a payment, more of the loss will be covered. Now is a good time to review the program and plan ahead for 2026.

We look forward to Parliament resuming for the fall session. The fast-tracked process of passing Bill C-202 in the spring was very frustrating. CCA invested significant resources campaigning against the previous iteration of the bill, Bill C-282. Bill C-202 was exactly the same, and we let Members of Parliament and the Senate know that we view this bill as bad trade policy that pits Canadian

agricultural sectors against each other. CCA did not publicly share every phone call, letter or meeting about Bill C-202, but I am confident that we did everything that we could to try and stop this harmful legislation.

CCA's commitment to advocacy and good relationships helps to secure CCA an invitation to participate in important conversations. It is a significant privilege and responsibility. We were invited to share recommendations as Prime Minister Mark Carney's government prepared their first budget. Our budgetary recommendations are the same priorities that we outlined in our election document and include:

- Ensure continued duty-free trade of live cattle and beef with the U.S.A.
- Update Canada's Specified Risk Material (SRM) removal requirements to align with the U.S.A.
- Investment in Business Risk Management programs—Livestock Price Insurance (LPI), AgriStability and Advance Payments Program (APP)—to make the programs affordable and effective

CCA was fortunate to be invited to participate in an Indo-Pacific trade mission with Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Heath MacDonald. This was also Minister MacDonald's first international trip, and he is focused on growth in the region.

While there, Australia re-opened to Canadian and American beef imports. While Australia is unlikely to begin importing large amounts of Canadian beef, this is a very positive development. A few other Asian countries still have some BSE restrictions in place, and we hope that they will soon follow Australia's example and we can further expand our export markets. Increased demand for Canadian beef around the world only increases the demand for more Canadian cattle which will further strengthen our industry. 🍷



Photo credit: Sam Wirzba,
Last Light Photography

The Foundation for Market Access is Built On-Farm

BY KARIN SCHMID

ALBERTA'S BEEF SECTOR HAS BEEN RELATIVELY FORTUNATE, COMPARED TO POULTRY AND SWINE, HAVING EXPERIENCED FEW INCURSIONS OF RAPIDLY SPREADING DISEASES WITH HIGH RATES OF MORTALITY. THAT SAID, WE ALL REMEMBER BSE AND THE DEVASTATING, LONG-LASTING, IMPACT IT HAD ON OUR INDUSTRY.

We are a sector that relies on trade. Around 40-50 per cent of our total beef production is exported every year, with little room to absorb more production domestically. While the U.S. is certainly our largest export market, we cannot discount the importance of other international destinations for our beef products, especially with the current volatility in the U.S.

To maintain our access to these critical markets, we need to ensure that other countries have confidence in our production systems, animal health protocols, food safety standards, and product quality.

Beef producers aren't perfect. Our biosecurity practices can be an afterthought, we sometimes don't have the recordkeeping practices that support the level of detail required to trace animals through our fragmented value chains, and we tend to forget about the next part of the chain once our calves are sold. We face a lot of challenges with weather, rising input costs, competitiveness, consumer perceptions, and so on. But we produce some of the highest quality and safest beef worldwide, and it's in high demand thanks to producers—and thanks to government policies that ensure we consistently meet the high standards of production that are expected by trading partners.

CANADA MEETS INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND PROVES IT

On a global scale, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) sets standards that aim to improve the prevention and control of disease, including those animal diseases transmissible to humans (zoonoses). The World Trade Organization (WTO) recognizes WOAH as the only authorized organization to develop standards related to animal health and zoonoses. WOAH standards are designed to ensure animal health and food safety while avoiding unjustified barriers to trade.

WOAH has official status diseases, such as foot and mouth disease (FMD) or BSE, that have very strict protocols that must be followed in the event of an outbreak to regain a disease-free status. Other diseases are monitored under a self-declaration framework, or rigorous domestic policies may be applied. In all cases, countries need to have demonstrated and scientifically supported prevention, surveillance, reporting, and response measures in place to declare freedom from disease.

This is where the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) comes in. CFIA enforces food safety and animal health regulations to protect animal and human health, the economy, and trade. They are responsible for reporting to WOAH and other countries, as well as maintaining the rigorous standards that support market access, such as demonstrating freedom from disease through surveillance and ensuring that any incidence of trade-limiting disease is thoroughly investigated and eradicated as soon as possible. This helps to maintain the confidence of our trading partners—something our industry depends upon.

CREATING CHANGE TOGETHER

Mention the letters “CFIA” to producers and you're likely to spark feelings of anger, frustration, or fear. The hard truth is that the measures CFIA takes during a disease investigation have both immediate and lasting impacts, not only on an operational level, but on an emotional one. Our herds are our pride and our way of life.

There's a feeling that producers are treated like a number. That CFIA doesn't understand the impact their actions have. That they don't appreciate the realities of beef production. That their decisions don't make sense. That they have a goal to make producers' lives more difficult. And let's face it, no one reacts well to having someone come in, upend your day-to-day activities, and create uncertainty for your future. It's easy to see why CFIA personnel are often greeted with distrust and suspicion by producers.

Together we can change that.

“I'M FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND I'M HERE TO HELP”

The beef industry is made up of people. CFIA is made up of people. Learning to see each other as people first and institutions/industry second will go a long way to creating shared understanding and empathy. I've consoled a beef producer in tears over the loss of his herd. I've also comforted a CFIA employee in tears who had to deliver that news after exhausting all other possibilities.

Beef producers have a job to do, and so do the people within CFIA. And while it may not seem that way in the heat of the moment, we have the same end goal—to guarantee



the sustainability of our industry well into the future. It isn't "us vs. them," it's "all of us, together."

Producers and cattle industry representatives can help CFIA employees understand our industry, our challenges, and our production systems better—without getting angry, throwing up our hands, and saying, "they just don't know anything!" and hoping they go away. CFIA personnel can provide more transparency about why decisions are made, the justification for those decisions, and improve their communication with producers—without arrogance or dictating "this is how it will be, and you will comply." We can help each other find common ground and compromises that lessen the burden on producers without jeopardizing disease control and eradication.

TOMORROW'S FUTURE BEGINS TODAY

Sometimes we are forced to do uncomfortable and unpleasant things to protect our future. Producers involved in a disease investigation, who undergo financial and emotional hardships during the investigative process, who end up under quarantine and testing, who may lose their herd if infected, are safeguarding the industry for the rest of us.

Sometimes, you can do everything right and still get caught up in a terrible situation. It's not fair that some producers must shoulder this responsibility for the benefit of the rest of the industry, and they should be applauded and supported—not avoided or penalized. Next time, it could be you, or me.

Industry organizations like ABP and CCA are consistently working with CFIA and other government departments to improve policy, operational procedures, and compensation, but we can't suggest positive changes without the help of those producers most directly impacted, and we certainly make better headway when CFIA or those government departments perceive our industry as constructive.

If a disease like FMD ever hits Canada, we're going to need every ounce of cooperation, collaboration, and compassion we can muster. There's a lot of bad blood and past mistakes to overcome on both sides. Creating trust, changing perceptions and attitudes, and learning to work together will take a lot of willingness, time, and effort from everyone. The best time to start trying was yesterday, the second-best time is now. ▼

**SCAN THE QR CODES TO ACCESS THE FULL
RESOURCES ONLINE AT ABPDaily.com:**



For more detail, including testing procedures, compensation information, and guidance for affected farms.



For an update on the evolution of key details during the process, including recent modifications to the trace-in period for the current investigation.

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ACTIVELY PREVENTING FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

SUBMITTED BY THE BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL



AS CANADIAN BEEF PRODUCERS, WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR DISEASE-FREE STATUS AND THE GLOBAL REPUTATION OF OUR LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY. CANADA HAS BEEN FREE OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) SINCE 1952, AN ACHIEVEMENT THAT HAS ALLOWED US TO MAINTAIN VALUABLE EXPORT MARKETS AND CONSUMER CONFIDENCE. BUT THIS SUCCESS SHOULDN'T BREED COMPLACENCY—IT SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO STAY PREPARED.

FMD is one of the most contagious animal diseases affecting cloven-hoofed animals, including cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats. While it's not a threat to human health or food safety, an outbreak would be economically devastating. An FMD outbreak in Canada could cost between \$22.6 billion and \$75.8 billion depending on outbreak size, severely disrupting animal and meat product exports to international markets.

The disease is currently present in 77 per cent of the global livestock population across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and limited areas of South America. The FMD virus was recently detected in parts of Europe normally free of the disease and the continent is now experiencing its worst outbreak since 2001. With increased global travel and trade, the risk of introduction is real, making prevention and preparedness essential.

WHY ACT NOW?

The absence of FMD in Canada creates the perfect opportunity to learn and prepare without the pressure of an active outbreak. Emergency preparedness isn't about expecting disaster—it's about being ready if it happens to limit the damage, just like car insurance. Understanding FMD helps protect our livelihoods and industry.

KNOWLEDGE IS PROTECTION

Recognizing FMD symptoms could be the difference between containing an outbreak and facing industry-wide devastation. Key signs include fever, depression, excessive drooling, lameness, and blisters on the mouth, teats, and feet. Animals may also show reduced feed intake and milk production.

If you suspect FMD, immediately stop all animal movement and contact your veterinarian. Early detection and rapid response are critical to limiting the spread and economic impact.

If you suspect FMD, immediately stop all animal movement and contact your veterinarian. Early detection and rapid response are critical to limiting the spread and economic impact. It's better to call and be wrong than it is to ignore symptoms that could lead to a multi-billion-dollar cost to our industry.

PREVENTION IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND YOUR SHIELD

The FMD virus easily hitchhikes on contaminated surfaces, making vehicles, equipment, and footwear prime carriers of the disease between farms. The virus can survive on inanimate objects (called fomites) and organic material for extended periods.

Doing these things can significantly reduce risks:

- **Make it a habit to wash vehicles, trailers, equipment, and boots when moving between operations.** Anything that comes into direct contact with soil, manure, and animal areas where the virus concentrates create a direct pathway for disease spread across multiple operations. Someone walking or driving through an infected area can carry millions of virus particles to the next location.
- **Keep track of who's coming and going on your operation and set some basic rules for farm visitors.** You can implement appropriate precautions (such as boot change or vehicle wash) based on the visitor's recent activities. Detailed visitor logs enable rapid identification of potentially exposed farms, allowing authorities to implement containment measures quickly and prevent further spread.
- **Keep accurate records of animal movements and farm activities.** Without accurate records of where your animals went (sales, shows, other farms), investigators lose precious time reconstructing animal movements in the case of an outbreak which

allows the disease more opportunity to spread.

Complete records enable faster implementation of movement controls and quarantine zones, preventing further spread while maintaining industry operations in unaffected areas.

These measures work together as layers of protection—if one fails, others provide backup security to protect your herd and the broader industry.

For those travelling internationally, especially to FMD-positive countries:

- avoid livestock contact abroad,
- don't bring back cured or uncured meats, wool or hide,
- clean and disinfect clothing and footwear, and
- wait appropriate periods before contacting animals upon return—five days from any country, or 14 days from FMD-positive regions.

INDUSTRY-MADE RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

The Beef Cattle Research Council, with support from Animal Health Canada, has developed practical materials specifically for Canadian beef cattle producers. These include videos, graphics, travel guidelines, and a symptoms poster—all designed to help you understand, prepare, and respond effectively. Find them at beefresearch.ca/FMD.

FACING POTENTIAL CHALLENGES FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH

Our FMD-free status is a collective achievement requiring ongoing vigilance from every producer. By taking time now to understand the disease, implement preventative measures, and prepare response plans, we protect not just our individual operations but our entire industry. 🍷

Alberta VBP+ Update

Since the last issue of the Alberta Beef Producers magazine, Cale Place has stepped into the role of Alberta VBP+ Coordinator. Cale looks forward to continuing to work directly with producers across the province to help them integrate the VBP+ program on their operations.



Helping producers apply for the ABP+ Incentive program is part of my role at ABP. This initiative allows eligible beef producers to access funding to support adoption of best management practices on their operations. The program was made possible by \$1.9 million in funding for the VBP+ program through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, recognizing the efforts of producers to improve their on-farm practices and strengthen public trust.

The Alberta VBP+ Incentive has been available to producers since it launched in August, 2025. Since then, just over \$500,000 has been dispersed to 182 producers. This payout accounts for about half of the funding available. I encourage producers to apply to access the remaining dollars.

Producers who have completed the VBP+ training since 2016 can apply for up to \$2,500 in funding, and operations who have completed VBP+ certification can apply for an additional \$2,500 for a total of \$5,000. Projects are funded at 50 per cent, with a minimum claim of \$500 and a minimum rebate of \$250. Producers can submit multiple projects up to the maximum program payout if they have several improvements they would like to make on their operation.

A list of eligible project expenses can be found on ABP Daily.

To apply, producers must have installed or completed a project that improves biosecurity or animal welfare on their operation. Examples of eligible expenses that have been submitted by producers are free-standing panels for segregation pens, upgrades to cattle handling systems that facilitate improved cattle flow, load cells for scales, and maternity pens. Producers can also apply for funding towards their VBP+ certification fees or voluntary veterinarian assessments. Expenditures cannot have been made prior to April 1, 2023 to align with the term of the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

A list of eligible project expenses can be found on [ABP Daily](#). While this list covers many of the projects that have been submitted by producers to date, operations are welcome to submit alternative ideas of biosecurity and animal welfare improvements for pre-approval under the Incentive program. Each operation is unique, and producers are encouraged to implement solutions that work best for them.

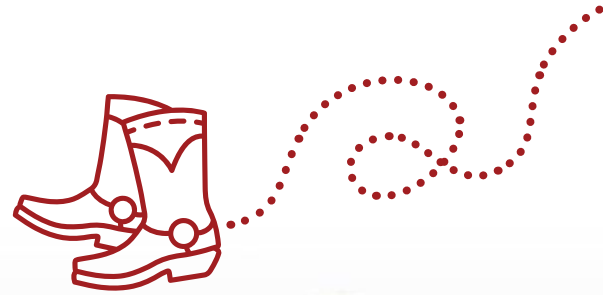
Applying for the Alberta VBP+ Incentive is simple. Producers fill out a brief online or paper form, which includes some basic information about the operation to facilitate payment. Then, the form asks producers to upload invoices or receipts for the costs being submitted with a brief description of the project undertaken, including any photos. The form is designed to be easy to follow and quick to complete. Questions about the application can be answered by emailing abgrant@verifiedbeef.ca.

I strongly encourage producers who are not yet trained or certified to reach out to me at calep@albertabeef.org. I would be pleased to assist with accessing VBP+ online training, preparing your operation for certification, or answering any questions you may have. ▼



Photo credit: Terri Mappin

Out and About with Alberta Beef Producers





Opposite page, top: ABP, in partnership with the Canadian Cattle Association, hosted Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, The Honourable Heath MacDonald, on a ranch tour west of Longview. Photo credit: Seven D Media

Left and centre bottom: American state legislators, including senators and representatives, toured Westway Farms near Didsbury to deepen their understanding of Canadian beef production and strengthen cross-border dialogue on shared challenges and best practices. Photo credit: Seven D Media

Right bottom: ABP branding took centre stage at the Rangeland Derby, as Cruise Bensmiller's demo chuckwagon carried ABP colours and the Land and Legacy commercial was broadcast to television and live audiences.

Above, top row: ABP's Kitchen Theatre lit up The Range in the Big Four Building with a high-energy cook-off. Top Canadian chefs had one hour to create dishes with premium Alberta beef, while the crowd sampled and voted for their favourites.

Centre row: The 4th Alberta Beef Industry Stampede Summit welcomed producers, political leaders, and industry stakeholders from across Alberta and abroad. The event served as a platform to highlight Alberta's beef sector and included the announcement of this year's Environmental Stewardship Award. Photo credit: Seven D Media

Below: In collaboration with the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA), ABP welcomed members of the Texas Farm Bureau for a tour of a cow-calf operation and a feedlot. Photo credit: Seven D Media





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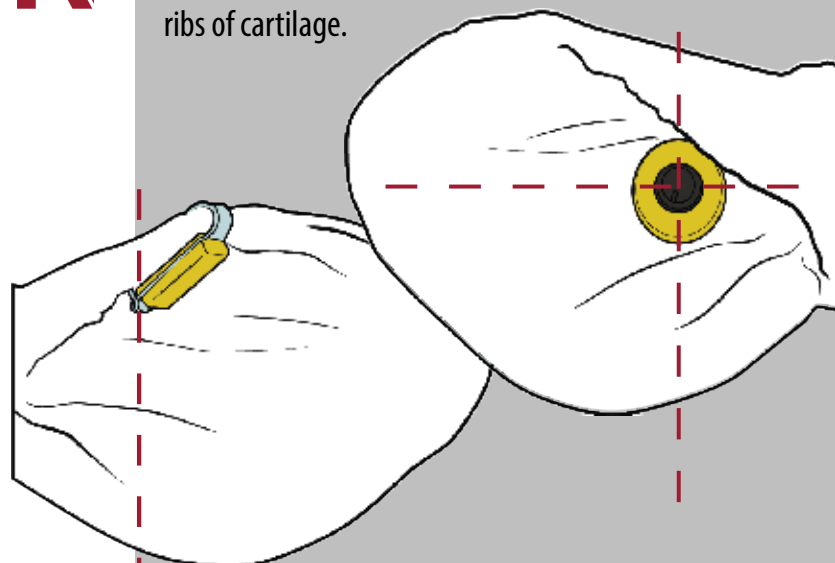
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With the number facing forward, apply $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ ear length from the head and between the two ribs of cartilage.



LOOP STYLE

With the yellow plastic placed inside the ear, apply $\frac{1}{3}$ ear length from head on the top of ear. Be sure to leave $\frac{1}{4}$ " gap from ear border when applied to young stock.



HEADS UP, PRODUCERS:

Check-Off Collection Rules Changed in August 2025

Starting August 1, 2025, changes to Canada's beef check-off collection rules took effect in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan to bring greater consistency and fairness to levy collection across Canada.

Under the new guidelines, the check-off rate applied to a cattle sale will now align with the **seller's home province**, regardless of where the sale occurs. This change ensures that beef producers' contributions continue to support the programs and initiatives of their own province—even when cattle are sold outside of it.

In other words, if you're an Alberta producer selling in Saskatchewan or other provinces, the Alberta rate will apply. There is no change to the Alberta check-off rate.

"This is about fairness and alignment," says Trevor Welch, Chair of the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency. "Producers, provincial cattle associations, and other stakeholders have been asking for a more consistent system that reflects their home province's priorities, especially as interprovincial marketing and transport become more common. This change delivers on that."

If you market cattle through **auction markets or dealers**, no action is required on your part—those businesses will handle the changes. It's simply important to be aware of the update.

If you market cattle **directly to other producers across provincial borders**, you will need to ensure the correct provincial rate is applied when deducting and remitting check-off.

For auction markets, dealers, and processors, the change affects the remittance chain, requiring adjustments in how sellers' home provinces are identified and how provincial rates are applied. These rules apply to **all interprovincial sales**, whether through auction markets, dealers, or direct farm-gate transactions. ▼

What it Means to be an ABP Delegate

WITH FRED LOZEMAN

BY LAURA LAING

FRED LOZEMAN OPERATES A MIXED FARMING OPERATION AND FEED YARD NEAR CLARESHOLM, ALBERTA. FRED SERVED AS AN ABP DELEGATE FOR NINE YEARS, RECENTLY RETIRING IN MARCH 2025. FRED REMAINS INVOLVED WITH ABP IN A NON-DELEGATE ROLE AS CHAIR OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE.

Becoming an ABP delegate is a great way to provide leadership to the beef industry, expand personal and professional networks and stay informed on topics affecting the beef industry. A delegate contributes to decision-making processes, attends and participates in ABP meetings and events and is a key liaison

between the organization and producers in their zone. With ABP delegate nominations this Fall, we sat down with Fred Lozeman, a former ABP Delegate who served for almost 10 years, to share his experience and insights about what the role meant for him.



Photo credit: Seven D Media

“I became an ABP delegate for the Southwest zone in 2016 and recently retired in March of this year (2025), serving just shy of 10 years. I became a delegate at ABP for multiple reasons, but the most significant factor initially for me was that I was very interested in how our check-off dollars were allocated.

I attended producer meetings for several years and was always keenly interested in the organization. As a new delegate coming into ABP, I wasn’t sure what to expect. It was an incredible experience for me.

When I started, it was all new. I found it exciting to learn how commissions work, as well as the expectations and responsibilities of you as a delegate.

Being a delegate is an individual experience—an experience that reflects your skillset and interests. Delegates are encouraged to find a place within the delegate body of the organization to serve, and for me, that was research.

I was trained as a scientist before coming back to the farm. So that’s what really resonated with me, and I was surprised by the opportunity that I was given in my role as a delegate to engage in research. For others, it might be an interest in marketing or in government relations. During my time as a delegate, I was surprised to find that I had a strong interest in the governance of organizations as well. I took advantage of the opportunities available through ABP at the time to gain better experience and knowledge on the governance of commissions and other organizations. That has helped me develop those skills for myself and, in turn, other organizations that I have become involved in.

There is a community when you become a delegate too—it’s a sense of community—I have built friendships and a network stemming from my time as a delegate with ABP.

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

“When you get involved with a commission like ABP, there is an overwhelming opportunity—it’s surprising where it can lead you.

As a delegate, you get a front row seat at the decision-making table on significant issues affecting our industry and the producers we serve. It definitely provides you

with those opportunities, as well as extensive support and guidance, should you get the opportunity to engage with elected officials or their staff. There is an opportunity to attend meetings, receptions and special events. Ninety per cent of your time is simply being present. That seat at the table, your engagement, and interaction will undoubtedly have a resounding impact that can help our industry.”



Lozeman receiving the King Charles III Coronation medal from RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, in recognition of his work with ABP and his efforts as a delegate and subsequent contributions to RDAR and the Beef Cattle Research Council, and Western Crop Innovations, a direct result of his time and journey as a delegate.

OPENING DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY

“Because of my particular interest and skillset as it pertains to research, I was chosen as the Chair of Research in my second year as a delegate. ABP was granted about three and a half million dollars from the provincial government to help for feed use and feed development (feed stuffs and forages.) ABP organized the research investment into several research projects in short order. We had three years to accomplish this, and our research committee at ABP, alongside ABP staff, worked hard and accomplished this. It is an accomplishment that is directly benefiting producers today and into the future. It remains a highlight for me during my time serving as a delegate.

Being a delegate and director at ABP opened many doors of opportunity for me as well. I am currently involved in Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR), which is a big opportunity to invest taxpayer funds into impactful ag research for all of agriculture, not just in cattle. In addition, I was asked by our provincial Ag Minister Sigurdson, along with two other farmers from Alberta, to help set up Western Crop Innovations, which was the former Field Crop Development Centre in Lacombe. It was formerly operated as a provincial government crop breeding centre, but it has now turned into a not-for-profit corporation funded through the Government of Alberta, RDAR, and Industry Members (including ABP, and Alberta Grains). It's an initiative that is receiving support across



How to Become an ABP Delegate

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS' DELEGATE NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN.

Becoming a delegate is a great way to provide leadership to the beef industry, expand personal and professional networks, and stay informed on topics affecting the beef industry.

Candidates, along with the person nominating them, will need to fill out the 2026 nomination form and sign a declaration. The nominee must be 18 years or older, have paid check-off in the last two years, and be an eligible producer or representative of an eligible producer. The nominator must belong to the zone for which the nominee is being nominated to hold office as a delegate. Delegates represent the needs and ideas of producers in their local area and keep them informed on the latest from ABP.

For more information about becoming a delegate, reach out to your local zone representative or visit ABPDaily.com.

our agricultural sector. Participating and helping to lead this initiative was intensive and rewarding. And, of course when you get involved with a commission like Alberta Beef Producers, you make lifelong long friendships and connections throughout the experience.

A personal highlight for me was receiving the King Charles III Coronation medal in recognition of my work with ABP, as well as my subsequent contributions to RDAR and the Beef Cattle Research Council, and Western Crop Innovations. All of which are a direct result of my time and journey as a delegate.

What I tell producers considering becoming an ABP delegate is that they absolutely should! It is an overwhelming opportunity. You never know where serving as a delegate will take you, the doors it will open, and the difference and benefits you can make for yourself, fellow producers, and our agricultural industry.” ▼

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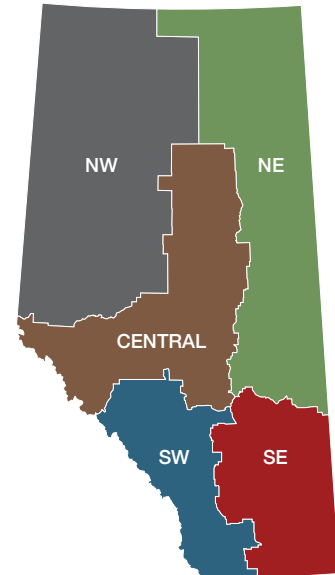
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Country Christmas Marketplace**



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Research Round-up

Two recently completed projects are offering fresh insights for producers:



Alberta AgriSystems Living Lab Field Day at Stamp Seeds, June 2025.

NEW DRUG CANDIDATES FOR *MYCOPLASMA BOVIS*

Researchers screened nearly 3,000 compounds to find ones that could disrupt *M. Bovis*' unique cell membrane or inhibit its growth. Several candidates, including drugs used in human medicine, showed promise for disrupting the bacteria or slowing its growth. While not ready for immediate use, these findings open the door to new ways of managing this costly disease.

Scan to read more:



Triticale and wheat root growth at Western Crop Innovations Field Day, July 2025.

LONG-TERM COSTS AND BENEFITS OF FORAGES IN CROPPING ROTATIONS

A 40-year study at Alberta's Breton Plots found that crop rotations including forage and manure amendments build more soil carbon, improve soil stability, and deliver stronger long-term economic returns than continuous grain. The research underscores the dual benefits of forages for soil health and farm profitability. ▼

Scan to read more:



About the Cover Artist

Kristin Kueber is an artist from Killam, Alberta. Growing up on her family's purebred Simmental cattle and grain farm, she draws endless inspiration from the beauty, grit, and quiet joy of rural life.



Specializing in livestock and wildlife paintings, Kristin's work ranges from bold, saturated colour to soft, dreamy hues. Bold brushstrokes paired with softness guide the viewer's eye and invite them into the heart of the scene.

Beyond the studio, Kristin is a wife and a busy sports and 4-H mom, balancing family life with her passion for capturing the spirit of the prairies on canvas.

Her original paintings are available on her website, kristinkueber.com, and she welcomes commissions for those seeking a custom piece. You can follow her journey, new releases, and behind-the-scenes stories on Facebook and Instagram (@kristinkueberartist). ▼

Your on-the-go source for news and information
that matters to Alberta beef producers.



The {B }VINE

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