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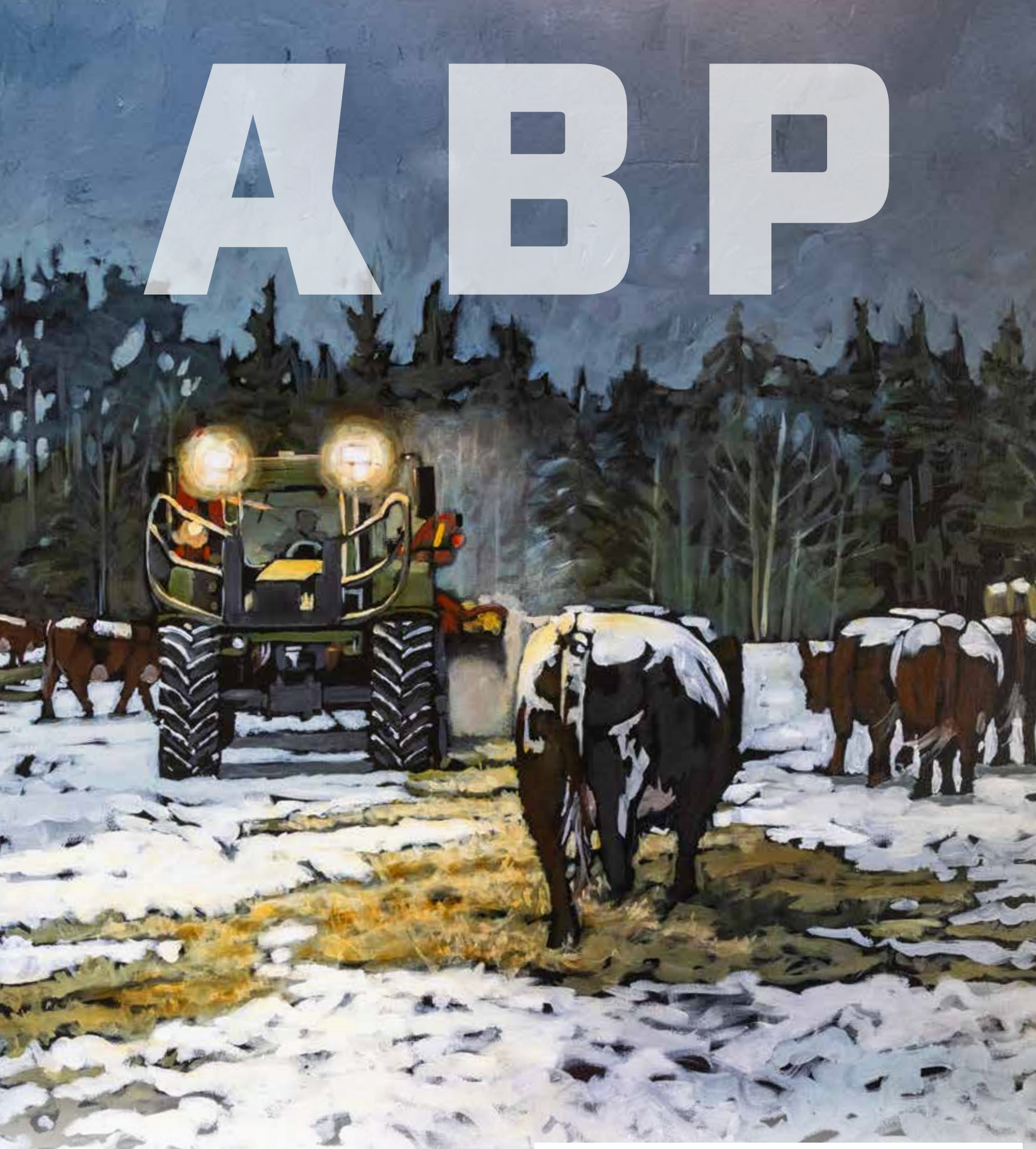

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Published by:

Brad Dubeau,
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Editor
Katie Songer

Creative
Tracy Irving

Front Cover Painting
Sharon Johnston

Copy Editing
Laura Laing

Writing
Brad Brinkworth
Emma Cross
Dianne Finstad
Elizabeth R. Homerosky
Jamie Kerr
Mark Lyseng
Lindsye Murfin
Deanna Nelson-Licking
Cale Place
Karin Schmid
Katie Songer
Gina Teel
Heather Smith Thomas

Printing
Burke Group

CONTACT

Advertising Opportunities
Katie Songer
katies@albertabeef.org

Editorial
Katie Songer
katies@albertabeef.org

Publisher
Brad Dubeau
bradd@albertabeef.org

Subscription/Contact Information Updates
Kathy Jardine
kathyj@albertabeef.org

To read ABP online:
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ON THE COVER
Morning Feed painted by Sharon Johnston, based on a photo by Katie Songer.

#AllForTheBeef

WITH BRAD DUBEAU

Happy New Year!

As we move into 2026, it's clear there will be interesting conversations ahead for Alberta beef producers.

At the beginning of December, we saw the start of an influx of feedback surrounding traceability regulations and the now paused proposed changes. Our initial response was to host a meeting with the Alberta Beef Producers board of directors, Saskatchewan's board of directors, and representations from numerous other provinces and associations from Western Canada. At that presentation, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) shared a high-level overview of what to expect in the proposed new traceability regulations. That was followed by the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) doing a presentation on tools being developed to help accommodate the new rules.

Both of those presentations were recorded and are available on **albertabeef.org** and **ABP Daily**. Scan the code to view.

Producers across the province are sharing diverse opinions on how those traceability regulations are going to affect them, and our annual Producer Meetings have provided an opportunity to engage with producers on the issue. While there is official ABP business we still need to conduct at these meetings required by the Commission under our bylaws, we have been starting off every Producer Meeting with a traceability conversation, where producers can share their thoughts on the issue. Once all the meetings wrap up, we'll compile the information gathered to have a discussion at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on March 3. We've had strong attendance at the meetings so far, and we look forward to sharing producer views with our national organizations. The discussions will help us formulate how ABP develops its consultation going forward on the new regulations.

Trade is another key topic for the year ahead with the Canada-U.S.-Mexico (CUSMA) Agreement up for review. Over the last several years, ABP delegates attending the National Cattleman's Beef Association's annual meeting, have been developing relationships with various states. At this year's meeting in

Nashville, we were excited to have conversations regarding our integrated cattle industry. This included a meeting hosted by Alberta Beef Producers, with representatives from state cattle organizations, along with major processors, and some of our provincial counterparts. We discussed how trade affects the processing sector, which impacts the feeding sector, which impacts the cow-calf sector. Our goal throughout these trade meetings is to identify common ground in beef trade regarding CUSMA/USMCA. This will help us develop a grassroots narrative that we can share with our national groups as they advocate to our federal governments.

We're getting a strong feeling from most of these states that they are very interested in seeing a renewed trade agreement. There's a recognition that our beef industry is very integrated, which is a good example of a trade deal that is effective in encouraging commerce. Our Canadian industry works with the United States and Mexico, and together, we provide a strong North American market for the beef industry.

We look forward to giving you an update on the meeting in the spring magazine, and at the AGM. We are optimistic that this could be the first of potentially many discussions to come where state and provincial cattle organizations can come together and help our federal governments pave a successful path forward.

On another trade note, we are pleased to see China finally removing its ban on Canadian beef exports, and we look forward to seeing the details on how that market can be accessed again.

In our last issue of the ABP magazine, Chair Doug Roxburgh talked about the provincial working groups' efforts to propose changes to the national organization. I'm pleased to report we had very good conversations in Toronto, where the member provinces of the Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) discussed some updates that we feel could be very beneficial. We look forward to continuing to meet with our provincial counterparts over the next several months.

Once the provinces have a document for the CCA modernization plan, that document will be put forward to the ABP board of directors. If they feel comfortable taking that back to the delegate body, we will have, as a group, a discussion about the suggestions. Those talks will determine if there is a re-entry path for ABP into the CCA. Just a reminder that as of July 1, we are out of the CCA, so the delegates and the board of directors will need to go through the process of a vote if there's a decision to renew membership in the national organization at some date in the future. But that won't happen until there is a feeling of comfort that the concerns of ABP have been addressed.

We would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Andrea Brocklebank, who will become the Canadian Cattle Association's Chief Executive Officer in early March. We also want to acknowledge and thank retiring Executive Vice-President Dennis Laycraft for his many years of service to the Canadian beef industry.

The interesting conversations of 2026 have begun, and it's been good seeing and talking with many of you already at our ABP Producer Meetings across the province. We'll be eager to see where the communications take us as we head toward our AGM in March.

We look forward to 2026 hopefully bringing some more moisture and continued strong beef prices for Alberta producers.

Join Us Online

FOR THE ABP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MARCH 3, 2026

Attend our AGM to hear organization and industry updates, and to connect with cattle producers, delegates, staff and industry representatives. Listen to ABP delegates discuss pressing issues, review financials, elect board members, and vote on resolutions that shape the future of the industry. ABP's AGM is free to attend though registration is required.

The AGM will be held ahead of the Alberta Beef Industry Conference, happening March 4-5 in downtown Calgary. **We hope to see you there!**

SCAN THE CODE TO REGISTER

The AGM will be livestreamed via DLMS. To join, visit dlms.ca and create a free account. When the event starts, click Enter Live Event (a link that will appear at the top of the home page).

For more information visit **ABP Daily**.

For assistance with DLMS and livestream access, call Mark Shologan (780-699-5082) or the Purebred Team (780-991-3025).

AD INDEX

Table of Contents

14

HEALTH & PRODUCTION

Beyond Bull Selection: Other Factors Affecting Calf Birth Weights

20

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

The Leptin Gene

28

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Replicating Genetic Merit: Cloning as a Reproductive Technology

46

CHECKING IN WITH ABP

2026 Grazing Lease Rates Explained

49

BUSINESS TOOLS

Production Benchmarks for Commercial Cow-Calf Producers

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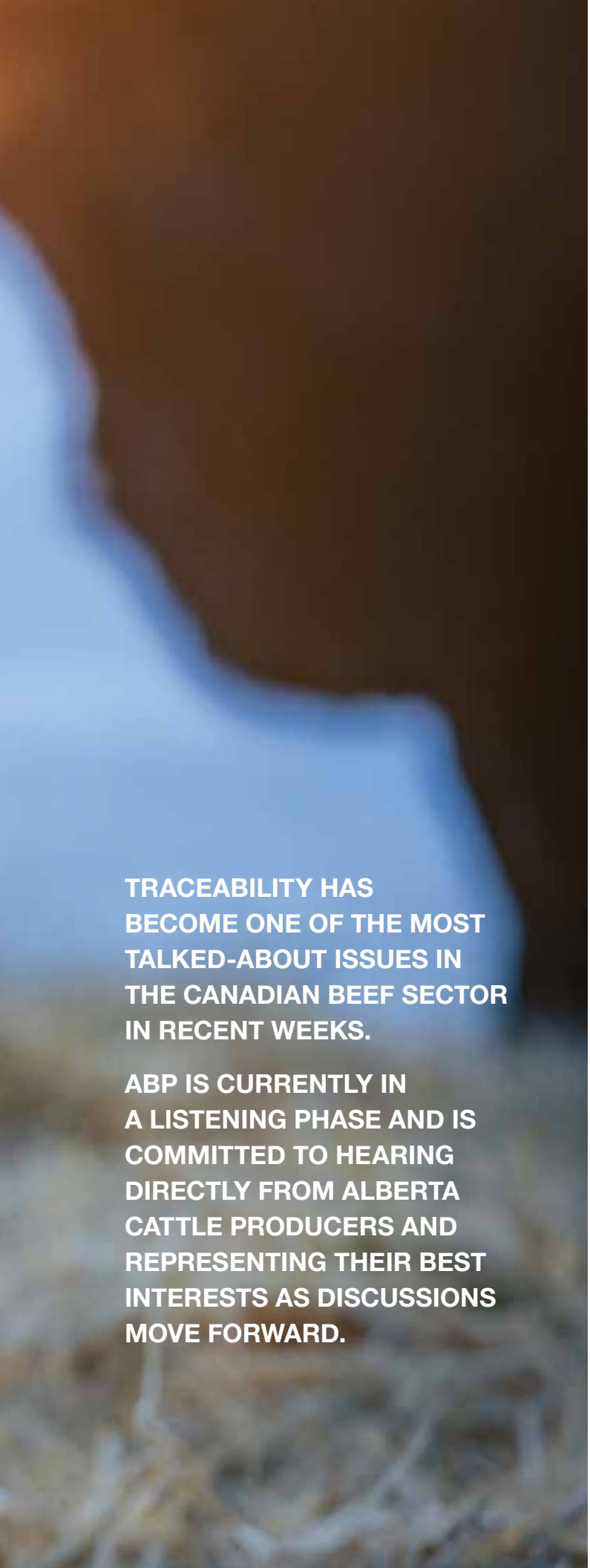
Traceability Discussions Underway



TRACEABILITY HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT ISSUES IN THE CANADIAN BEEF SECTOR IN RECENT WEEKS.

ABP IS CURRENTLY IN A LISTENING PHASE AND IS COMMITTED TO HEARING DIRECTLY FROM ALBERTA CATTLE PRODUCERS AND REPRESENTING THEIR BEST INTERESTS AS DISCUSSIONS MOVE FORWARD.

The proposed traceability amendments are not in force and have not been finalized.

BACKGROUND

Proposed federal amendments to Canada's traceability regulations have generated significant reaction across the industry.

For many producers, concerns focus on whether the proposed changes are necessary and whether they would work in practice at the farm and ranch level. Others are raising questions about cost, complexity, and the potential for government overreach. At the same time, producers are seeking clearer information about what the proposed changes involve and what they would mean for individual operations.

ABP, along with other cattle commissions, industry organizations, and government representatives, responded to concerns expressed by producers by issuing a statement calling for a halt to the amendments. One day later, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) announced it would pause publication of the proposed regulations.

The CFIA has indicated this pause will remain in place until the proposed changes are more widely understood, and producer concerns are heard and taken into consideration. The agency has also clarified that the amendments are not currently in force and have not been finalized.

Discussion around traceability has continued across the beef sector and has been a recurring topic at ABP's annual Producer Meetings, held across the province throughout January and February. ABP adjusted the structure of the meetings to address traceability early in each agenda. This allowed producers to raise concerns, ask questions, and bring forward related resolutions at the outset, while ensuring the remainder of each meeting proceeded with the commission's regular business.

THE ROLE OF ABP

As a producer-funded, not-for-profit commission guided by a volunteer board of cattle producers, ABP's role is to represent the interests of Alberta's beef sector. This includes listening to producers and representing their views on whether any change is necessary, while advocating that any policy and regulatory decisions support a strong, competitive, and sustainable industry.

The strong turnout at Producer Meetings this year was an encouraging sign of increased producer engagement. While a diverse sector will not always agree on every issue, broad participation helps ABP reflect the priorities and realities of producers across Alberta.

ABP will continue to listen to producers and carry their feedback forward as the commission engages with governments and industry partners on traceability and other issues affecting the beef sector.

To support producers seeking more information, ABP has developed traceability FAQs and created a dedicated traceability resource page, available through **ABP Daily** and at **albertabeef.org**.

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Beyond Bull Selection:

Other Factors Affecting Calf Birth Weights

BY DEANNA NELSON-LICKING

WE HAVE ALL BEEN THERE, TWO IN THE MORNING PULLING A HUGE CALF OUT OF A COW THAT REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD THIS PROBLEM. THE BULL HAD A LOW BIRTH WEIGHT EPD SO WHAT WENT WRONG?

Genetic heritability of birth weight accounts for about 45 per cent with the remaining 55 per cent being caused by environmental conditions. The bull plays a smaller part than the cow, with the general rule being that the calf will weigh at birth about seven to eight per cent of its mother's body weight. Larger framed cows will on average have larger calves than more moderate cows.

Expect a pound more for each degree below average winter temperature and an increase of calving difficulty by 2.6 percentage points per additional pound.

Long cold winters also impact birth weight. According to a long-term study conducted by the University of Nebraska (Deutscher et al., 1999) the temperature during the last three months of gestation will impact the birth weight. Expect a pound more for each degree below average winter temperature and an increase of calving difficulty by 2.6 percentage points per additional pound. This is because the cow's body keeps more of the blood flow to her core during cold times increasing the nutrients being carried to the calf. The same holds true for summer and fall calving herds as the calves will be smaller due to the blood flow being kept near the extremities to keep the cow cooler.

According to this study many other factors also affect calf birth weight and calving difficulty, including cow age, her weight, body condition, nutrition, cow pelvic size, genetics, gestation length and calf sex.

A study conducted by the University of Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine analyzed 29,970 full term births from 203 privately owned cow–calf herds across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Northeastern British Columbia during the 2002 calving season.[1] The lowest risk of calving problems was found in mature cows (5–10 years old), while dystocia increased in twin births, male calves, and calves born earlier in the season (December to February).

One of the key findings from this Canadian field study was that pre-calving body condition score (BCS), measured on a 9 point scale, strongly influenced stillbirth and dystocia risk. After accounting for other risk factors, including assistance at calving, cows with a BCS of 3 or 4 were more likely to have calves dead at or within one hour of birth compared with cows calving at a BCS of 5. Cows with a high BCS (6–7) before calving were more likely to experience severe dystocia than cows calving at BCS 5. A gain in BCS from pregnancy testing to calving was associated with lower odds of dystocia, suggesting that cows on an improving nutritional plane experienced fewer calving difficulties.

This study identified additional stillbirth risk factors: twin pregnancies; retained placenta; uterine prolapse; low precipitation during the previous growing season, which affects forage quality; and early season calving. Using birth records from the previous year, the study found that if a cow or heifer had experienced a difficult birth or a hard pull, her risk of calving issues—including stillbirth—was greatly increased in the following year.

The age of the cow has a profound effect on incidence of calving difficulty. Findings from the Western Canadian study showed that replacement heifers had about 6.5 times the odds of needing assistance compared with mature cows, while second and third-calving cows had 1.6 and 1.24 times the odds, respectively. For severe dystocia, heifers had 4.6 times the odds of mature cows, with progressively lower risk in second and third parity cows. Stillbirth risk was also higher in both first calf heifers and cows over 10 years of age compared with mature cows.

Pelvic size also matters. Gene Deutscher, extension beef specialist with the University of Nebraska, authored Beef Handbook Bulletin BCH 2130, *Pelvic Measurements for Reducing Calving Difficulty*. He stated, "Calving difficulty results in a major economic loss to beef producers."

Large framed cows tend to have wider pelvic areas but also carry proportionately heavier calves, which offsets any advantage. Selecting a cow on size alone seems ineffective. Heifers with small pelvic areas have an 85 per cent difficulty rate compared to those with

[1] Waldner, C.L. (2014). *Cow attributes, herd management and environmental factors associated with the risk of calf death at or within 1 hour of birth and the risk of dystocia in cow–calf herds in Western Canada*

larger pelvises. He recommends obtaining pelvic measurements before breeding; a 600-pound heifer should have a pelvis that measures at least 11 centimeters wide and 12 centimeters high to deliver a 63-pound calf.

Calving difficulty increases calf death loss, cow mortality, labor and veterinary costs. It delays the return of estrus to cows and reduces conception rates. It also results in lower calf weaning weights and market values from breeding young heifers to easy calving bulls to reduce calving difficulty. Studies have shown that calf losses of four per cent within 24 hours for unassisted births jump to 16 per cent for calves requiring birth assistance. As producers select bulls for more growth, larger calves at birth and more calving difficulties can be expected.

“Gestation lengths also affect the calf size in the last few days of the gestation,” says Rolland Kramer, D.V.M., Stockman’s Veterinary Clinic in North Platte, Nebraska. “A calf will gain between a pound and a pound and half a day, so just a couple of days will add five pounds to the calf. There are gestation length variations between cattle breeds and also within breeds. Gestation length is a maternal trait, cows that tend to calve early will pass that trait onto their daughters.”

He also mentioned Fetal Programming Studies showing the impact maternal nutrition has long-term on the calf, both for replacement heifers and even how the feeder carcass will yield. A cow’s body condition score especially in early gestation makes a huge difference on the calf.

A beef cattle handbook bulletin BCH-2120, a product of the Extension Beef Cattle Resource Committee, authored by Harlan D. Ritchie, Michigan State University and Peter T. Anderson, University of Minnesota: *Calving Difficulty in Beef Cattle: part 1* cited a long-term study with a group of Hereford cows that were moved from Miles City, Montana to Brooksville, Florida and the Florida herd was moved to Montana. Ten years later the birth weights of the Montana herd that had been moved south had declined from 81 pounds to 64 pounds. The birth weights of the relocated Florida herd increased from 66 pounds to 77 pounds. This supported other studies that calves of comparable genotypes will be born lighter in the south than in the north.

Kalyn Waters, former SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialist, in *Factors Affecting Birth Weight* (3/25/2013) said restricting maternal nutrition to decrease birth weight is not a sound management practice. Extreme feed reductions such as feeding less than 70 per cent of the cow’s nutritional requirements will result in a smaller calf but increases calving problems as the cows are too weak and undernourished to deliver the calf and her milk supply and quality are greatly affected.

Pete Anderson, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, authored a paper for the University of Minnesota Extension: *Minimizing Calving Difficulty in Beef Cattle* (2012). His conclusions are, “Mate virgin heifers and small cows to bulls that will sire small calves. Feed heifers well enough to weigh at least 85 per cent of their expected mature weight at first calving. Use pelvic measurements and do not retain daughters of cows that have a record of calving difficulty. Begin breeding heifers 21 to 30 days earlier than cows so they can be observed, and feed late in the day. Record a calving ease score for all calves that are observed at birth.”

Purebred producers record birth weight and calving ease on their calves which is something commercial producers might also implement for their own records. Our goal as beef cattle producers is to have unassisted births and a high breed back ratio so considering all the factors affecting calf birth weight is important in our business.

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LOOKING FORWARD TO **LEVI** CALVES IN 2026!

Research Update

BY KARIN SCHMID

ABP's producer-led Research Committee once again invested producer check off dollars into research in 2025 to improve the competitiveness, sustainability, and profitability of beef producers.

In this funding cycle, proposals were considered through the Agriculture Funding Consortium and Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund. Each proposal undergoes a scientific technical review and then are evaluated by the producer representatives on the ABP research committee. Decisions are guided by the Five-Year Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy and consider scientific merit as well as benefits for the beef sector in the short, medium or long term.

ABP committed $228,000 to seven projects with a total project value of over $2.5 million, for a leverage ratio of over $11:1, meaning that every dollar spent by ABP was matched by over $11 from other funding sources.

Project topics include:

- Development of new diagnostic tests to improve external parasite control
- Two forage breeding projects—one focused on hybrid bromegrass and one on sainfoin
- Two vaccine development projects using novel platforms
- Novel testing strategies for ergot toxicity
- Evaluating different technologies to measure forage intake and pasture utilization

ABP also continues to support Western Crop Innovations, Canada's only barley breeding program focused on feed and forage barley variety development.

The research page of albertabeef.org is newly redesigned, be sure to check it out!

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Producers across Alberta and the Peace region of B.C. are invited to take part in a new survey conducted by the Alberta AgriSystems Living Lab.

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The survey is designed to track how the adoption of beneficial management practices has changed since the Living Lab started in 2022.

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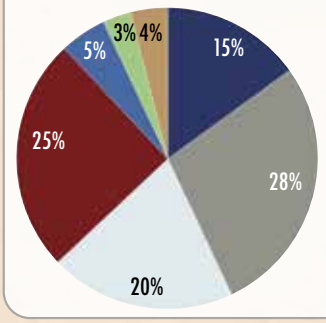
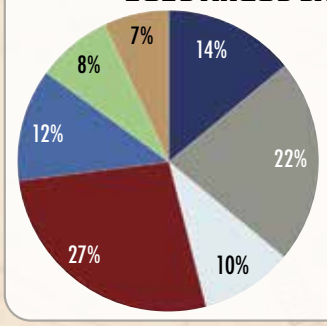


58% Under $10,000
195 Head under $11,000
137 Head from $5,000-$9,000

- $5,000-$7,000
- $7,001-$9,000
- $9,001-$11,000
- $11,001-$15,000
- $15,001-$20,000
- $20,001-$25,000
- $25001 +

2025 Angus Sale Stats



50% Under $10,000
150 Head under $12,000
97 Head from $5,000-$9,000

- $5,000-$7,000
- $7,001-$9,000
- $9,001-$11,000
- $11,001-$15,000
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The Leptin Gene:

WHAT IT DOES AND HOW WE USE IT IN SELECTING BREEDING STOCK OR SORTING FEEDLOT CATTLE

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS

The leptin gene in mammals is called the obese gene and was first discovered in mice.

This gene produces a protein/hormone created by fat cells. The hormone signals the brain to regulate hunger and body weight, and is often called the "satiety hormone" because it helps you feel full and tells your body it has enough stored energy so you can stop eating.

In humans and animals, leptin helps maintain a specific body weight by regulating appetite and energy expenditure. When body fat decreases, leptin levels fall, signaling increased hunger and lower energy expenditure to prevent further fat loss.

In cattle, this gene and the hormone it produces regulates metabolism, fat deposition, and affects reproduction. Variations in this gene are associated with important production traits, including milk yield, milk fatty acid composition, and beef quality like marbling and back fat thickness. DNA sequence variations (alleles)—at the same gene location can be potential markers for genetic selection to improve cow herds and the calves produced, and some feedlots use these tests to determine the performance potential of cattle. The three possibilities for leptin are homozygous "normal" (CC) with lower levels of leptin, homozygous mutant (TT), and heterozygous (CT).

Leigh Marquess, President of Quantum Genetix Canada Inc. (a company that researches and provides genetic testing services, says variations in important production traits are important for feed yards, purebred breeders and commercial cow-calf producers as well as dairies. "The main function of the hormone produced by the leptin gene is to optimize longevity. This hormone circulates in the blood and goes to the hypothalamus

(in the brain) which modulates food intake and metabolism to ensure a long and healthy life. If the brain doesn't see enough leptin in the blood, when the body doesn't have much fat and is starving, it signals for more appetite—to increase intake—and reduces metabolism, to try to build fat stores. This helped cattle survive," he says.

"Researchers found, first in mice, then in nearly every mammal, that there can be mutations in these genes," says Marquess. This can make a difference in how cattle perform in terms of feed consumption.

IN THE FEEDLOT

"Let's say we have two steers in a feedlot that each weigh 1500 pounds. They are fat, eating a lot of corn, barley, etc. One has a mutation in that gene and one doesn't. In the one that's normal (without the mutation) the body does its best to regulate intake and metabolism. That's one reason why toward the end of the feeding period when animals become fat, you'll see intake decrease," says Marquess. They don't continue to gain as much weight.

"We try to overcome those hormonal feedback mechanisms, and nutritionists do an excellent job of counteracting this situation. In an animal with the mutation, however, it changed the structure of the hormone. There is a lot of hormone circulating but the brain can't see it, and thinks the body is still in a time of scarcity as opposed to a time of plenty, so the animal keeps eating," Marquess says.

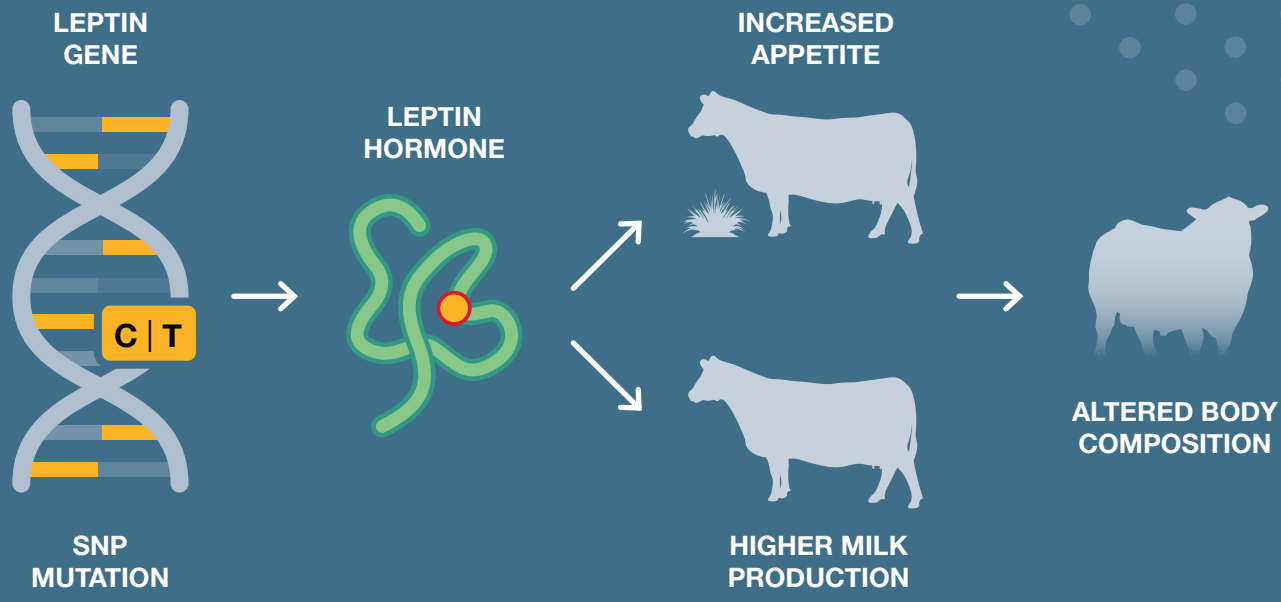
"The animal with that genotype for leptin will have about 10 more pounds of carcass weight if killed in exactly the same conditions as the normal animal. It ate about one pound more of dry matter per day and produced more carcass weight, along with subcutaneous fat and intramuscular fat—more marbling and more back fat."

There are breed differences in marbling and back fat.

The grading systems in the U.S. and Canada reward more marbling and penalizes too much back fat. "But if the body has more energy than needed for maintenance it puts it into storage like subcutaneous fat. It's difficult to achieve extra marbling without the other fat storage," says Marquess.

There are breed differences in marbling and back fat. Wagyu have very little back fat (subcutaneous fat) and look lean, but have the most intramuscular fat (marbling) of any beef breed. Holsteins in a feedlot put on significantly less back fat than beef breeds. Due to their dairy genetics, Holsteins are not programmed for laying down subcutaneous fat (back fat) and tend to accumulate more marbling, with greater frame size and muscling. Most beef breeds are genetically predisposed to add subcutaneous fat, which often needs to be trimmed off by the packer, representing a cost and time-saving when dealing with Holsteins.

Knowing which traits beef animals possess is useful. "Since we know that in a pen of animals there will be some that 'get fat' at different times, we can use that genetic information, along with phenotypic measures like body weight. We can sort those cattle and use this to predict the most optimal time to harvest them when they will make us the most money," Marquess says.



Steers that came into the feedlot the same day might have about the same weight. Yet there might be a two to three week difference in when they are ready to slaughter. "We use genomic information and things like leptin to help us predict the daily feeding margin."

Roger Effertz, a rancher in North Dakota, has been testing for leptin for many years and says this helps explain why one animal might perform better than another. He visited a feedlot in Alberta that checked every set of cattle that came in. "The TT cattle were put in one pen, the CTs in another pen and CC cattle in another. When the manager fed those cattle there was a difference. A graph on his computer showed gains, consumption, etc. These were almost the same for all three groups until they got to the last third of the feeding period," says Effertz.

"If cattle perform differently in the final period, it can affect how you feed and harvest them. That feedlot operator started checking them all, and any CC cattle were fed until they began to stall on consumption. He'd sell them on the rail and not mess with them any longer." It didn't pay to keep feeding them.

IMPORTANCE FOR COW-CALF HERDS

A cow with the right genotype will stay in the herd two or three more years, on average. This has been demonstrated in several university studies in the U.S.

"The cows that have a little more feed intake all through the grazing season are likely to have more energy to support milk production and body condition as well as fertility—less apt to come up open," says Marquess.

In addition to these benefits, that cow tends to wean a calf 10 to 30 more pounds heavier because she has more milk production. "Purebred breeders can use this tool to select females and sires to raise cattle with the best intake, best ability to gain more carcass weight, marbling, etc. and stay in the herd longer. You don't need to get rid of a normal cow; you've already made the investment to get her into the herd. This is mainly a tool to make sure she gets bred to a bull that will sire a calf with the right genotype. Then you can start to change your herd, in the next generation," says Marquess.

"We've weighed and ultrasounded beef cows in the spring at pasture turnout and when they come back with a calf in the fall. In any population of animals with the two different genotypes, the good ones come back in the fall in better condition and their calves are heavier. Leptin is one way to help achieve that goal."

CONVINCING STUDIES

Todd Hill, a Texas rancher, (Diamond H Braunvieh), has been utilizing these tests for over a decade. "Selecting exclusively on EPDs doesn't work here, where cattle must travel in big range pastures. A bull must be able to

> One of the things Palmer told me is that cattle don't have to be homozygous (TT) to see a benefit; a heterozygous leptin animal (CT) has almost the same benefit in performance.

travel and be an easy keeper, which is difficult to select with EPDs," Hill says.

"When I heard about the leptin gene, I called Jim Palmer, one of the founders of Quantum Genetix and he answered my questions. One of the things that got my attention was studies on leptin—many done in feedlots."

Many companies ask Cactus Feeders to let them do studies in their feedlots because they feed large numbers of cattle. Paul Engler founded Cactus Feeders in 1975 and it became the largest cattle-feeding operation in the world. "They didn't open their feedlots to very many people to do studies, but they did a large extended study on the leptin gene and the results were undeniable; the leptin cattle are better doers," Hill says.

"They are easier fleshing and don't stall out toward finish. There are many advantages. When I learned that Mr. Engler would pay to leptin test any cattle he partnered on (because he believed in it so much) that was all the motivation I needed to give it a try," Hill says.

"One of the things Palmer told me is that cattle don't have to be homozygous (TT) to see a benefit; a heterozygous leptin animal (CT) has almost the same benefit in performance. I observe that in my own herd," Hill says. Cattle with the leptin gene maintain body condition when other cattle are losing weight, and maintain fertility, and milk enough to raise a good calf. They have better longevity.

Studies with the leptin gene are dramatic and convincing. "By contrast, I don't know of any large double-blind studies on the benefits of the 100K or 50K tests. Awhile back there were three studies on nearly 150,000 head looking at the leptin gene, and about 80 per cent had superior performance on the studied traits," he says.

Daniel Doerksen, one of the owners of Gemstone Cattle Company based in Gem, Alberta, says when they started testing their Hereford cows for leptin they were surprised that a high percentage were TT. He looked at some studies with more than 150,000 cattle genotyped and a high percent had the leptin allele either as TT or TC. "Of the 136,286 cattle in one study, 92,112 were analyzed for back fat and 53,189 were analyzed for body weight. Results showed a significant positive relationship between the T allele frequency and animal back fat," he says.

"The TT animals had roughly 6.79 millimeters of back fat, the CT animals had 6.49, and the CC animals had 6.28. Calculations showed that animals with CC genotype would require more days to finish and reach 12 mm of back fat (45 days) than animals with CT (42 days) and TT (38 days) genotypes."

Animal weight was also associated with genotype; animals of TT, CT and CC genotypes weighed 484.2 kg (1067.5 pounds), 488.0 kg (1075.8 pounds) and 487.3 kg (1074.3 pounds) respectively. Significant amounts of research have also shown that CT and TT cows wean heavier calves, compared to CC cows. The TT cows also have higher rebreeding rates and a longer productive life.

CT and TT cows have more back fat at lower body weight. Back fat has a direct correlation with body condition, which affects reproduction rates. CT and TT calves have higher weaning weights and daily gains than CC calves. Using a TT bull guarantees that his calves are CT or TT, depending on genetics of the dams. Selecting replacement heifers from those calves ensures that their calves will have higher weaning weights.

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Pursuing Opportunities at Canada Beef

BY GINA TEEL,
DIRECTOR, STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS,
CANADA BEEF

As geopolitical forces intensified and threatened to further redefine the global trade order, Canada Beef actively pursued opportunities for Canadian beef.

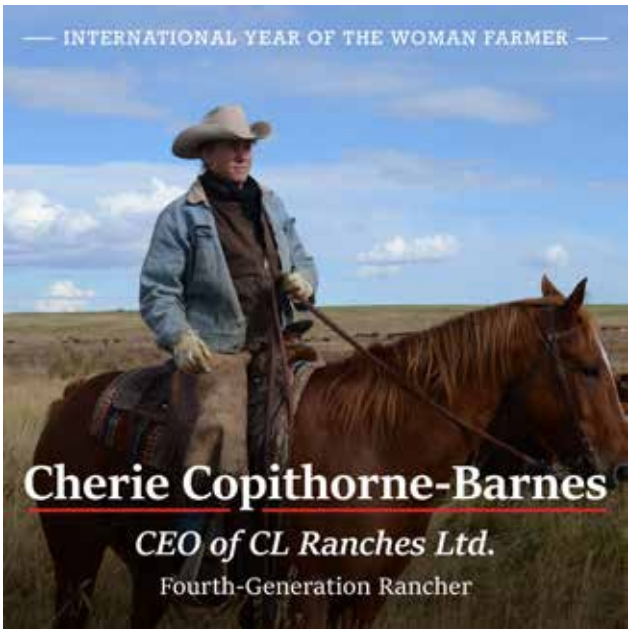
Eric Bienvenue and Christophe Rouleau, Vice-Consul and Second Secretary (Commercial), Embassy of Canada to the Kingdom of Thailand, in Bangkok.

Canada Beef President Eric Bienvenue travelled to Thailand in December as part of a market diversification initiative in the region. At the Canadian Embassy in Bangkok, Bienvenue met with Christophe Rouleau, Vice-Consul and Second Secretary (Commercial), Embassy of Canada to the Kingdom of Thailand, to discuss market opportunities, access and competitiveness, along with future marketing initiatives and broader strategic priorities. Additionally, Ping Kitnikone, Ambassador of Canada to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, conveyed her recognition of the importance of a strong Canadian beef industry as well as its commitments to the region and market diversification.

Canada Beef participated in Gulfood 2026 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in January and hosted a demand building event on the sidelines of the trade show. The 2026 show, billed as being the largest in the event's history, took place in both the Dubai World Trade Centre and the Dubai Exhibition Centre. Canada Beef will pursue opportunities for Canadian beef in the upcoming Supermarket Trade Show in Tokyo, Japan, in February, and Food and Hospitality Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in March.

To learn about the high opportunity markets on Canada Beef's radar, check out the International Market Intelligence video series available here: cdnbeefperforms.ca/international-market-videos/. The latest addition to the series features the Philippines market.

Canada Beef deployed bold marketing approaches to strengthen demand, maintain consumer loyalty and reinforce the Canadian beef brand promise this fiscal year. This includes TV commercials to build awareness of Canadian beef quality grades featuring professional athletes, Canadian farm families who produce beef and the value chain that helps bring beef to the family dinner table.



A campaign featuring women owner/operators across the Canadian beef industry launched in the January 2026 edition of Canada Beef Performs. With a nod to the United Nations declaring 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF), the Meet the Farmer: IYWF 2026 campaign will feature a different operator each month on Canada Beef's social channels and in our newsletters.

The initial Meet the Farmer: IYWF 2026 post featured Cherie Copithorne-Barnes, a true trailblazer who credits being mentored by notable women in Canadian agriculture with spurring the industry involvement and leadership she is recognized for today.

Follow along on our producer Facebook [CanadaBeefInc], X [@CanadaBeefInc] and Canada Beef Performs monthly newsletter as we share the leadership, sustainability efforts, and impact of Canadian women across the beef supply chain.

The collaborative campaign between Alberta Beef Producers and Canada Beef, "Every Cut Makes the Cut," spotlights the shared commitment to quality, versatility, and producer excellence. The campaign blends storytelling with recipe-driven content to strengthen consumer trust and reinforce Canadian beef leadership among Canadian consumers.

Burger it Forward 2026 launched February 1 with more than 340 participating restaurants—surpassing its engagement goal—and a first ever expansion into Quebec. *Burger it Forward* continues to make a meaningful impact across Canada. Canada Beef streamlines participation by offering the program free of charge. Canada Beef and provincial cattle associations handle food bank donations on behalf of participating restaurants, eliminating financial and administrative barriers.

Burger it Forward runs Feb. 1–28. Visit burgeritforward.ca to find participating restaurants near you.

Finally, Canada Beef's fiscal fourth quarter sees the team attending producer association annual general meetings across the country, to ensure beef producers in each province have the opportunity to hear first-hand the latest activity updates. The team looks forward to engaging with producers at the upcoming Alberta Beef Industry Conference in Calgary.

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Replicating Genetic Merit:

CLONING AS A REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR BEEF CATTLE

BY EMMA CROSS

Photo credit: Maureen Tubman for ShowChampions

Over the past several decades, reproductive technologies like artificial insemination and embryo transfer have gained popularity in the beef industry by allowing producers to magnify the impact of high-profile genetics.

Lately, the suite of reproductive services has evolved to offer cloning as another option for producers to further their use of top performing cattle.

While commercial cloning is new to the beef cattle world, the concept of cloning has been around for around a century. Scientists first started cloning amphibian species in the early 1900s, but the first mammals were cloned in the 1980s. 1996 marked the first mammal, Dolly the sheep, being cloned by a method called "somatic cell nuclear transfer," which is still the method commonly used in cloning livestock today. Since then, other livestock species like cattle, pigs, and horses have been cloned.

Cloning has gained recent interest in agriculture media because of proposed changes to food regulations. In 2025, Health Canada proposed delisting food derived from cloned cattle and swine, or their progeny, as novel foods. In short, this would mean that beef from cloned cattle would not require a pre-market safety assessment and would not be identified as coming from a clone or its progeny. A scientific review concluded that food products from clones and their progeny are equally as safe as food products from traditionally bred livestock. Health Canada has since paused the publication of this change in November 2025 due to public pushback.

In essence, somatic cell nuclear transfer involves taking the DNA from the animal being cloned and inserting it into an "empty" egg from any donor cow. This cell is then cultured in the lab to the early stages of an embryo and implanted into a recipient cow to be carried to term. Apart from the actual nuclear transfer, most of this process closely resembles modern in vitro fertilization embryo transfer.

Cloning live animals is different from lab grown protein. To create lab-grown meat, stem cells are taken from a live animal and cultured in the lab with nutrients to produce muscle and fat tissues. This process takes place on scaffolding to form the replicating cells into the shape of a cut of meat. In the case of cloning, after producing an embryo, a calf is carried through normal gestation and birth.

"Cloning is generally nowadays done using somatic cell nuclear transfer," says Dr. Lawrence Smith, a professor at the University of Montreal who specializes in livestock reproductive technology. "You take tissues from animals that have already gone through their normal life, or it can also be done from cells recovered from different stages during development before birth."

As Dr. Smith explains, collecting these "somatic cells" that form the body of an animal is not very invasive. "We mostly use tissues from the skin, or occasionally also from the blood." These cells are the source of the genetic material, meaning that the animal that provides the tissue sample will be the animal that is cloned.

"To do a nuclear transfer, we also require the use of an oocyte, or a female gamete," says Dr. Smith. "In most cases, at least in cattle, this is obtained from processing plant materials. We recover the ovaries from a cow or heifer at a processing plant and aspirate the oocytes from the ovarian follicles." This part of the process is similar to the first stage of in vitro fertilization for embryo transfer. For embryo transfer, unfertilized eggs, or oocytes, are collected from a live cow, whereas for the purposes of cloning, the same procedure is used to collect eggs from a recovered ovary.

After collecting eggs, technicians enucleate them, meaning they remove the DNA. This step is why cull cows are used as egg donors—the genetic material in the egg is not used in the cloning process, so it is most cost effective to collect eggs from the ovary of a cull cow instead of a live donor.

Next, it's time to take the nucleus from the somatic cell, where the DNA from the animal to be cloned is located, and insert it into the unfertilized egg. "With the enucleated oocytes, we can initiate the process of in vitro culture in the incubator," says Dr. Smith. "Usually it's a 24-hour preparation of that gamete to get it to a stage where it will be used for a nuclear transfer. After that, we use either nuclear injection or nuclear fusion to introduce the nucleus of the somatic tissue into the oocyte."

After the combination of the cloned animal's DNA and the "empty" egg, the process of cloning becomes similar to embryo transfer. "The gamete is then activated to initiate development," says Dr. Smith. "Usually in beef cattle, we culture them for seven or eight days in the incubator, and then once they reach the stage of a blastocyst, or the early development stage of the embryo, we can then transfer it into a recipient cow that's been synchronized."

"From then on, it's basically following normal gestation and seeing that embryo attach and produce the fetus," says Dr. Smith. "And after nine months, we should be able to get a calf."

While artificial insemination and embryo transfer offer cattle breeders the chance to use high profile sires and dams, they don't guarantee that the genes you want from that animal make it into the calf. When two animals are mated, naturally or artificially, the calf receives half of its DNA from the dam and half from the sire. Which 50 per cent of each parent's DNA the calf receives is random, hence why full siblings are not genetically identical. The appeal of cloning is that it offers a breeder the chance to create an exact genetic replica of a high performing animal.

Photo credit: Jenna Loveridge Photography

Since cloning produces an exact genetic copy of an existing animal, it's important to note that cloning is "not producing anything new in terms of genetic advancement," says Dr. Smith. "So it doesn't increase genetic value. It just copies something that's already available in nature." Replicating high quality genetics may still offer value, but it's important for breeders to know that it is not technically generating genetic progress.

Several breeders have cloned high end sires or dams to increase the production potential from that combination of DNA.

Because cloning requires specialized equipment, personnel, and laboratory setups, it is a relatively expensive process. As a result, cloning isn't likely to be used for large scale breeding purposes. Instead, cloning can appeal to seedstock producers managing very high value genetics, where the value of preserving or expanding the impact of genetics might justify the cost of cloning.

Several reproductive technology companies in North America now offer cloning as part of their suite of services. Seedstock producers have found appeal in cloning for two main reasons. First, several breeders have cloned high end sires or dams to increase the production potential from that combination of DNA. For certain markets, cloning has even appealed to replicate the genetics of a winning show steer into an intact bull, allowing them to produce more successful show steers.

Another opportunity from cloning is a sort of "insurance policy" on top end breeding stock. Breeders can collect tissue samples from a top end animal during their lifetime so that in case the animal dies or is injured and cannot breed, they can be cloned to preserve their genetic merit.

While cloning offers opportunities, it is also known to be relatively inefficient, which can add to the cost of the technique. "The efficiency of cloning is low because there are some developmental problems that happen during gestation," says Dr. Smith. "The issues are mostly related to the development of the placental tissue, so the tissue that interacts with the recipient dam and calf. Because of that, a lot of these fetuses end up dying during gestation or coming to term with some sort of anomaly, such as large size or umbilical cords that are larger than normal."

"These are situations that can happen in nature also, but they happen more often when you are talking about cloned gestations," says Dr. Smith. "Ideally, you would have these calves surveyed during birth. Sometimes the calf has immature lungs, so if you have access to veterinary care that can follow this animal for the first week after birth, then that will usually sort the problem."

Producers should also understand that just because two animals are genetically identical does not mean that they will develop or produce exactly the same. "Not everything that the animal produces is related to genetics," says Dr. Smith. "There's also the other portion coming from the environment. So, it doesn't mean that all clones will be exactly the same in terms of production because obviously it depends a lot on the environment they're exposed to."

This concept differs a little bit between male and female clones. "If you're talking about the genetic contribution as a breeding animal, then you can assume that if it's a male, the semen of a cloned bull will be exactly the same as its original," says Dr. Smith. "On the female side, it's a little bit different. There are other genes that are present in the cell, outside the nucleus, called the mitochondrial genes. The mitochondrial genes of clones come from the oocytes that we get from the cull female. So, there is a very small percentage of the genetic background of a female animal that is different from one clone to another."

While not a fit for every operation, cloning is now a part of modern reproductive biotechnology available to Canadian beef producers. For breeders of high value genetics, the benefits of replicating top performing animals may outweigh the costs of cloning, helping magnify the genetic influence of prolific seedstock as artificial insemination and embryo transfer have.

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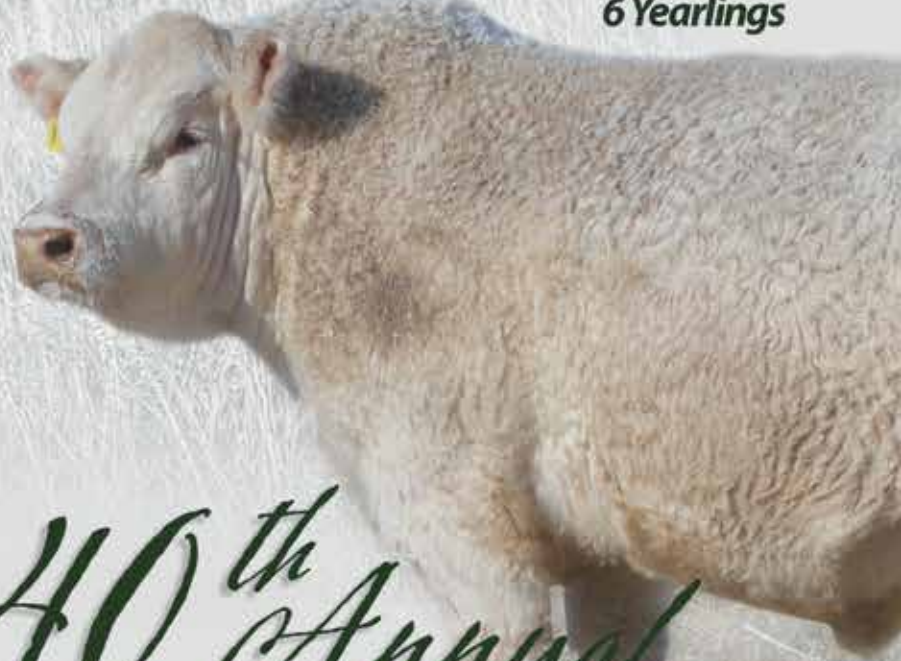

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Government Relations and Policy Update

BY MARK LYSENG

As we head into 2026, trade is front and centre for ABP, and for good reason. More than half of the beef produced in Canada is exported, and Alberta alone represents nearly half of the national cattle herd.

For decades, trade between Canada and the United States has been more than just selling beef across a border. It is a deeply integrated supply chain, with cattle, feed, and beef moving back and forth every day.

When that system works, cattle move, packing plants run efficiently, and costs stay manageable. When it doesn't, producers feel it first and feel it hardest.

With CUSMA/USMCA coming up for renewal, there is increasing pressure to reopen or "improve" an agreement that has allowed the North American cattle and beef industry to function and grow. ABP is very clear on this point: disrupting an integrated system would create serious short- and long-term harm for producers on both sides of the border.

Trade is usually handled at the national level, but Alberta's share of the cattle herd and its role in exports mean we cannot afford to sit on the sidelines. Our focus has been on protecting the conditions that allow this industry to function and ensuring that decisions about market access are grounded in how the cattle business actually works, not theory, and guided by producers who live with the outcomes.

> ABP is not relying solely on federal-to-federal conversations. Instead, we are working directly with cattle-producing states and their cattle commissions.

Recent events in the USA have shown just how sensitive this system is to disruption. The closure of a Nebraska packing plant has forced local producers to ship cattle much farther, adding real cost and cutting directly into margins. Loss of processing capacity doesn't just show up on paper, it shows up in producer cheques.

Canadian cattle play a key role in keeping many American packing plants operating efficiently, particularly in northern states. That availability helps lower per-head costs and maintain throughput. At the same time, Canadian feedlots rely on American calves, adding value to cattle from northern states. This two-way flow works because it benefits producers on both sides of the border.

What we are hearing is that the current American administration has limited appetite to engage directly with other countries. Knowing that, ABP is not relying solely on federal-to-federal conversations. Instead, we are working directly with cattle-producing states and their cattle commissions. These are producer-led organizations that understand integrated trade for what it really is: feed being sourced, cattle being bought and sold, packing plants running, and markets staying open.

The message from these groups has been consistent: Canada and the USA rely on each other and disrupting that relationship hurts producers first.

This relationship-building matters. When trade discussions inevitably become political, having aligned producer voices already at the table is far more effective than reacting after decisions are made.

In January, ABP attended the State Agricultural and Rural Leaders (SARL) Summit. This conference is made up of senior agricultural legislators, including Ministers of Agriculture and leading members of American congressional and senate agriculture committees. One of the clearest takeaways was how many of the challenges facing ranchers are shared across both countries, and in some cases, how those pressures are even more severe south of the border.

There was broad recognition of the strain created by overregulation, competing land-use pressures, and decisions made far removed from day-to-day farm and ranch realities. These are familiar issues for Alberta producers. There was also shared concern about what happens when policy is disconnected from what actually works on the land.

The value of attending SARL was not about forcing agreement where it doesn't exist. It was about understanding where interests overlap, where they don't, and making sure ranchers are not spoken for without being part of the discussion.

ABP's Board of Directors has finalized its provincial budget priorities. These include defending CUSMA/USMCA renewal, pushing for meaningful improvements to AgriStability, addressing drought response and long-term water infrastructure, continued support for the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, and improving wildlife compensation.

Each of these issues ties directly back to producers' ability to manage risk, whether that risk comes from markets, weather, wildlife, or policy decisions. Programs and policies only matter if they work when producers actually need them. These priorities will continue to guide ABP's government relations and policy work going forward.

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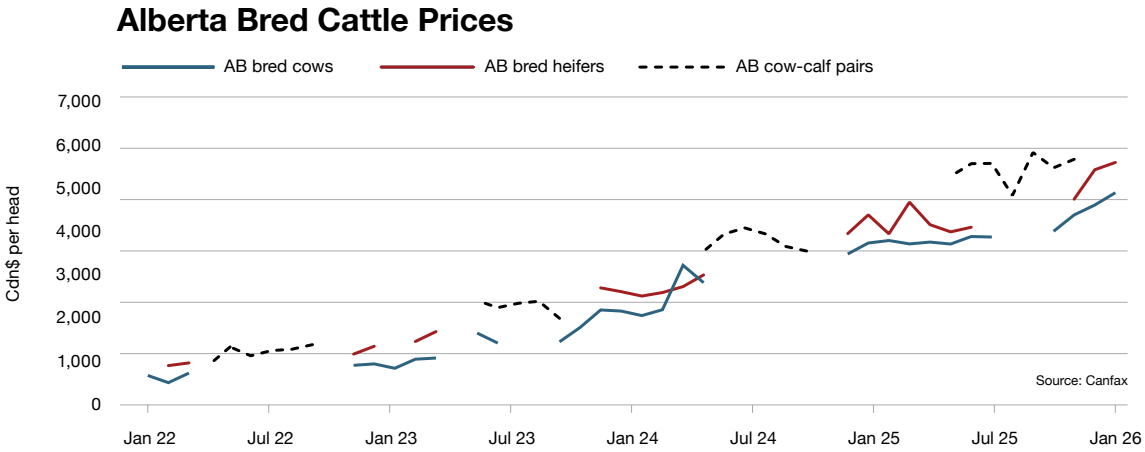

Bullish Fundamentals Within A Roiling Market

BY JAMIE KERR, MARKET ANALYST, CANFAX

Western Canadian auction volumes (live and electronic/forward delivery) at 2.5 million head in 2025, were down seven per cent from the prior year and down 14 per cent from the 2023 high. Of note, this is also the smallest annual volume on record going back to 2005. Total volumes were below a year ago every month except January when tariffs were first threatened against Canada, and June/July as producers looked to take advantage of a rapidly climbing calf and feeder market.

Electronic/forward delivery volumes were steady with a year ago, accounting for 15 per cent of total auction volumes, up slightly from 2024 and just shy of the high set in 2023 at 16 per cent. Volumes spiked in June, setting the high for the year as producers looked to take advantage of what was assumed to be the top of the market.

Alberta feeder and fed markets came under pressure to end the year. Futures markets appeared to be trading news headlines as much as fundamentals. The elimination of U.S. tariffs on Brazilian beef and the expected re-opening of the U.S.-Mexican border moved live and feeder cattle contracts lower. Between October 16 and November 25, the January feeder cattle futures contract dropped $71 per cwt. Since its most recent low, the January contract clawed back almost 80 per cent of the drop and was above $362 per cwt by the first week of January.

Alberta 550 lb steers averaged $579 per cwt in 2025, up $149 per cwt from last year and up $283 per cwt from the five-year average. A mostly steady market during the first half of the year averaging $531 per cwt gave way to summer and early fall optimism as prices topped at $680 per cwt. The calf market eased lower to end the year, finding support near $632 per cwt.

The Alberta calf market was the premium North American market in the fourth quarter. Alberta steer calves averaged a $46 per cwt premium to their Ontario counterparts and a C$47 per cwt premium to same-weight U.S. (all area average) calves. For 2025, Alberta steer calves averaged a $27 per cwt premium to both the Ontario and U.S. markets, as feedlots bid aggressively to procure feedlot replacements.

Alberta D2 cows averaged $215 per cwt in 2025, up $42 per cwt from 2024 and $102 per cwt above the five-year average. After finding some counter seasonal strength in the third quarter, Alberta D2 cows followed seasonal trends in the fourth quarter. Alberta D2 cows averaged a $22 per cwt premium to the Ontario market and were at a premium for 11 of 12 months. However, the Alberta market averaged a C$23 per cwt discount to U.S. Utility cows, running at a discount for the entire year.

Alberta bred cows averaged $4,900/head in the fourth quarter of 2025, up 25 per cent from last year and more than double the five-year average, climbing steadily right through to December. Bred cows were priced at 1.4 times the price of a 550 lb steer calf in 2025. This is steady with 2024 and an improvement on the last cycle, when bred cows spiked to 1.52 times the price of a 550 lb steer calf. At the top of the market, it's important to maintain discipline, providing the best chance at recouping costs.

Record high calf prices have shifted the mindset of some producers. There have been anecdotal reports that bred cows with conformation/udder issues that would otherwise be sent for slaughter are being kept back.

The Canada-U.S.-Mexico agreement is up for renewal in 2026. All three countries have begun their respective consultation process in advance of the review, which is set to begin in July. Several industry stakeholders on both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border have expressed a desire for CUSMA to remain in its current form.

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LUCKY SPRINGS FARMS

Solar Grazing

BY DIANNE FINSTAD

AGRIVOLTAICS MAY BE AT THE 'TIP OF THE ICEBERG' STAGE IN ALBERTA, BUT EXAMINING THE CONCEPT 'BELOW THE SURFACE' IS WELL UNDERWAY.

The term is new to the vocabulary for many in agriculture but it simply means the dual-purpose use of land—for both solar energy and agricultural production. It turns out the two streams are not mutually exclusive, and momentum is building to prove the benefits of co-existing, including exploring the potential of cattle grazing as one of the options.

"The end game is how to optimize dual use of the land," explains Dr. Semeton Amosu, a research associate and soil scientist with the Olds College Centre for Innovation, who's been focusing on agrivoltaics.

"I just think we have such a good story," said Patrick Gossage, Founding Director and President of Agrivoltaics Canada. "There's benefit to the land itself, to the health of the soil, to water retention. We've proven that there's a massive benefit to the farmer."

Gossage describes Agrivoltaics Canada as a farmer-first 'voice' for agrivoltaics projects and research.

"Ultimately, what we're looking to do as an organization is push government policy to create more 'fertile ground.' I use that with the pun intended for agrivoltaics."

While a wide variety of agricultural production is being done with agrivoltaics, lower-set ruminants like sheep and goats have often been the first choice for grazing options. But Gossage says cattle are high on the list.

"People refer to it as the Holy Grail of agrivoltaics. So it's pretty damn big, and we're seeing it work at scale in the U.S. My for-profit company, Good Energy Partners, has two cattle voltaic projects in the works, one in Alberta and one in Ontario. And we've been working with a group out of the U.S. called Huwa, who are operating hundreds of megawatts of cattle voltaic projects. So we've been leaning on them to help us with the design of cattle-friendly agrivoltaic systems. According to them, there is a much smaller requirement of additional capital expenditure than most people would think," adds Gossage.

Amosu explains for cattle, it's all about how panels are configured and spaced, as well as the height of the racking system. The global growth of the solar energy industry has greatly reduced the costs of the initial infrastructure, giving some wiggle room to accommodate cattle-friendly designs.

With more questions than answers yet about cattle and agrivoltaics, Amosu sees an urgent need for research. Olds College of Agriculture and Technology

Bradley envisions projects with an Adaptive Multi-Paddock Grazing system using either high tensile electric fencing or ultimately, collared invisible fencing technology…

hosted Agrivoltaics Canada at a conference on the topic last June. The result showed the interest of many companies, but also the complexities—everything from policy, to insurance, to racking configuration. It ended with the decision to do more data gathering.

"We need to compare before and after. Once we have the data coming up, it will be easy to convince the stakeholders these things work. Nobody's taking agricultural land away from you," says Amosu.

"One of the ways I look at it is that it's not an 'either/or' conversation," adds Jason Bradley, CEO of SunCycle Farms. "It's 'both/and'."

SunCycle is unique because its sole focus is on agrivoltaic design and operation. The firm has been contracted by an Italian based solar developer for several projects. That includes a cattle enterprise on 600 acres in Rich Valley, near Legal, which is in the design phase.

Bradley's ramp to agrivoltaics comes from his own background, including past experience as manager of the Bar 75 Ranch on the Eastern Slopes.

"'I've spent 20 years on the back of a horse, and I know both ends of the cow pretty well. So I'm coming at it from that perspective. I'm also coming at all of this from a regenerative agriculture perspective. How do we make the soil better? How do we grow higher nutrient dense food, and how do we make sure that everybody's profitable, first and foremost in all of this?"

Bradley envisions projects with an Adaptive Multi-Paddock Grazing system using either high tensile electric fencing or ultimately, collared invisible fencing technology, to rotate the animals to different sections under the panels. A company called Nextpower already has the software capability for a rotational grazing approach. He also points to Eric Steeves, implementing a similar grazing system with a rapidly growing sheep flock on his land, which is part of the 3300-acre Travers Solar Project at Lomond, the largest solar farm in Canada. Along with the regular lease payments from the solar company, Steeves is paid for his vegetation management services. (yetwoodfarms.ca)

SunCycle has an agrivoltaics demonstration farm by the town of Cardston's solar facility, to showcase related technologies. That included grazing nine bred cows around the panels, and Bradley says it didn't take them long to figure out how to navigate the tighter spacing and rows for both regular and bale grazing.

Concerns about cattle damaging panels is an area of study the Olds College has proposed in a project with Azgard Solar, which makes racking systems. It would see a row of solar panels installed at the college's feedlot.

Other ongoing work looks at the viability of forages in agrivoltaics, with hay production already started at the Sollair Solar facility near Airdrie. Bradley and SunCycle hope to demonstrate increased forage production under panels with their research.

Another project just underway involving the Olds College and the University of Alberta is a survey on producer awareness of agrivoltaics, and perceived concerns. That will shape the research, keeping in step with the industry application focus of the OCCI.

There are some existing image challenges with landowners.

Amosu believes that goes back to shared use of agricultural land for oil and gas production, where decommissioning of wells has often been lacking.

Bradley acknowledges since there weren't any early requirements for solar players to keep agriculture in place, lack of proper land management contributed to weed issues, and perceptions of solar projects as 'land wasted'.

Both point out Alberta Utilities Commission Rule 007 will set the stage for better results from energy and agriculture on the same land. It requires an agricultural operation on any Class 2 land to achieve at least 80 per cent of former yield, in order to get AUC approval for an agrivoltaics project.

> "We've seen lots of reports that cattle under are less stressed because they've got shade on high heat days, and they're producing more milk."

"You actually have to have a design that proves the operational capability of whatever crop you're going to grow there. You have to show the business case and truly demonstrate an agriculture first approach," explains Bradley. He also notes solar developers also have to put up a large reclamation bond for projects, which guarantees the money is there for cleanup, and is actually restricting some of the investment.

So what's the future for cattle agrivoltaics in Alberta?

"I am one hundred per cent…maybe for the sake of emphasis…150 per cent convinced the potential is there,"

smiles Amosu. “I have seen it work, and I know it can work here. I know what is slowing us down—the concerns and questions that haven’t been answered properly.”

What Amosu would like to see to advance the industry is the creation of a first-in-Canada Agrivoltaics Research and Learning Center at the Olds College.

“The average solar developer doesn’t want to experiment with their projects. The landowner is also unsure, wanting to know what crops can be grown, and not relying on experiences in the U.S. or other places.”

“The biggest thing is going to be education and demonstration,” confirms Bradley. “As farmers and ranchers, we all want to be first to be second. So we have to demonstrate the practices that we know already work, but in a live situation, so that producers can look at that and go, ‘Okay, I get it—it isn’t just a PowerPoint presentation. You’re actually showing it’.”

“Cattle voltaics at scale I believe is much closer than we think,” states Gossage. “I think that there’s just going to be a realization that this works. It helps the animal. We’ve seen lots of reports that cattle under are less stressed because they’ve got shade on high heat days, and they’re producing more milk. They’re yielding more protein. I think once this data starts reaching people and people see it with their own eyes, I think it’s going to happen really, really quickly.”

Photos supplied by interviewees.

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Image credit: Sam Wirzba

Unauthorized Construction at Confined Feeding Operations on the Rise

BUILDING WITHOUT A PERMIT COULD COST YOU MORE THAN YOU THINK

The National Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) is seeing a concerning trend: unauthorized construction at confined feeding operations has increased significantly. Complaints have increased by approximately 32 per cent from 2024, and enforcement actions have jumped by about 125 per cent.

Under Alberta's *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* (AOPA), it is illegal to begin construction of a confined feeding operation, manure storage facility (such as an earthen manure storage or manure lagoon), or a manure collection area (such as a barn floor, feedlot pen, or catch basin) without first obtaining the required NRCB permits.

Constructing before your permit application has been approved or building something different than stated in your permit are both also considered unauthorized construction.

Constructing without a permit is a serious offence.

Consequences can include:

- enforcement orders
- prosecution
- additional costs, such as depopulating livestock from unpermitted facilities.

Financial institutions are also asking for NRCB documentation before approving financing. If you have started building before getting a permit from the NRCB your financing may be delayed or denied.

The NRCB wants to help you avoid these consequences—consult with an NRCB approval officer or inspector before starting any construction.

NRCB FIELD OFFICES

Morinville: 780-939-1212
Red Deer/Airdrie: 403-340-5241
Lethbridge: 403-381-5166

2026 Grazing Lease Rates Explained:

WHAT'S CHANGING AND WHY

BY LINDSYE MURFIN, ALBERTA GRAZING LEASEHOLDERS

Over the past three years, grazing lease rental rates have climbed sharply. While record calf prices certainly played a role, much of the increase was driven by problems baked into the rental rate formula itself.

The formula was doing exactly what it was designed to do—but in today's market, it was reacting too quickly and pushing rates to levels that many leaseholders felt didn't reflect reality on the ground.

Recognizing this, the minister stepped in for the past two years and used ministerial orders to dial rates back, providing some much-needed relief. In the spring, the minister committed to a full review of how grazing lease rents are calculated.

To support that process, AGLA commissioned an independent review of the formula in the spring, conducted by the Department Head of Economics at the University of Lethbridge. That report proved to be extremely valuable. It confirmed many of the concerns leaseholders had been raising and gave everyone a solid, credible starting point for discussing improvements.

The Government of Alberta contracted Serecon Inc. to formally review the rental rate formula and rebuild the calculator using updated assumptions. A committee was struck to advise on the process, with one representative each from AGLA, NAGA, WSGA, and ABP, alongside government representatives. The committee met throughout the summer and wrapped up its work in October, allowing time for the minister to review the recommendations and set the 2026 rental rates by mid-November.

From the start, beef industry representatives were clear: the formula didn't need a complete overhaul. What it needed were targeted fixes that addressed volatility while keeping the system based on profitability and defensible for trade purposes. Serecon did an excellent job breaking down the existing formula, laying out the data, and presenting realistic options. The final recommendations focus on smoothing out extreme swings while staying true to the original intent of the policy.

On January 5, Minister Loewen approved four key updates to the model. These changes modernize the formula while preserving its core goal: providing a fair return to the province that reflects market conditions. Without these changes, 2026 rental rates would have jumped to $17.89 per AUM in the South and $14.80 per AUM in the North—numbers that would have been extremely difficult for most operations to absorb.

The approved changes include:

- adopting the Alberta Farm Input Price Index to better reflect real production costs,
- moving to a five-year weighted average for steer prices and returns on capital to balance stability and responsiveness, and
- updating the tier system so increases happen more gradually as profitability rises. Minimum rents were also updated to reflect inflation and current land valuation policy, setting new minimums of $5.00 per AUM in the South and $3.50 per AUM in the North.

With these updates, rental rates should be more predictable, easier to explain, and better aligned with actual economic conditions. Serecon also ran historical back-testing and sensitivity analyses to show how the formula will respond when calf prices rise—and when they fall.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LEASEHOLDERS

The updated rental rate formula is designed to smooth out extreme swings, better reflect real production costs, and make rates more predictable. When cattle prices rise, rents will increase more gradually—and when markets turn down, rental rates will also come down, providing fairer and more stable pricing over time.

Under the updated formula, 2026 rental rates will be $9.94 per AUM in the South Zone and $6.97 per AUM in the North Zone. Calf prices have increased over the past year, which explains why rates are higher than in 2025. When the market inevitably turns—as it always does—the formula guarantees that rental rates will come down as well.

Leaseholders with questions are encouraged to contact Lindsye at the AGLA office. Department representatives will be available to answer questions at the AGLA AGM on February 25 at the Red Deer Resort and Casino starting at 1:00 pm.

Built by Industry for Industry

Who is CCIA?

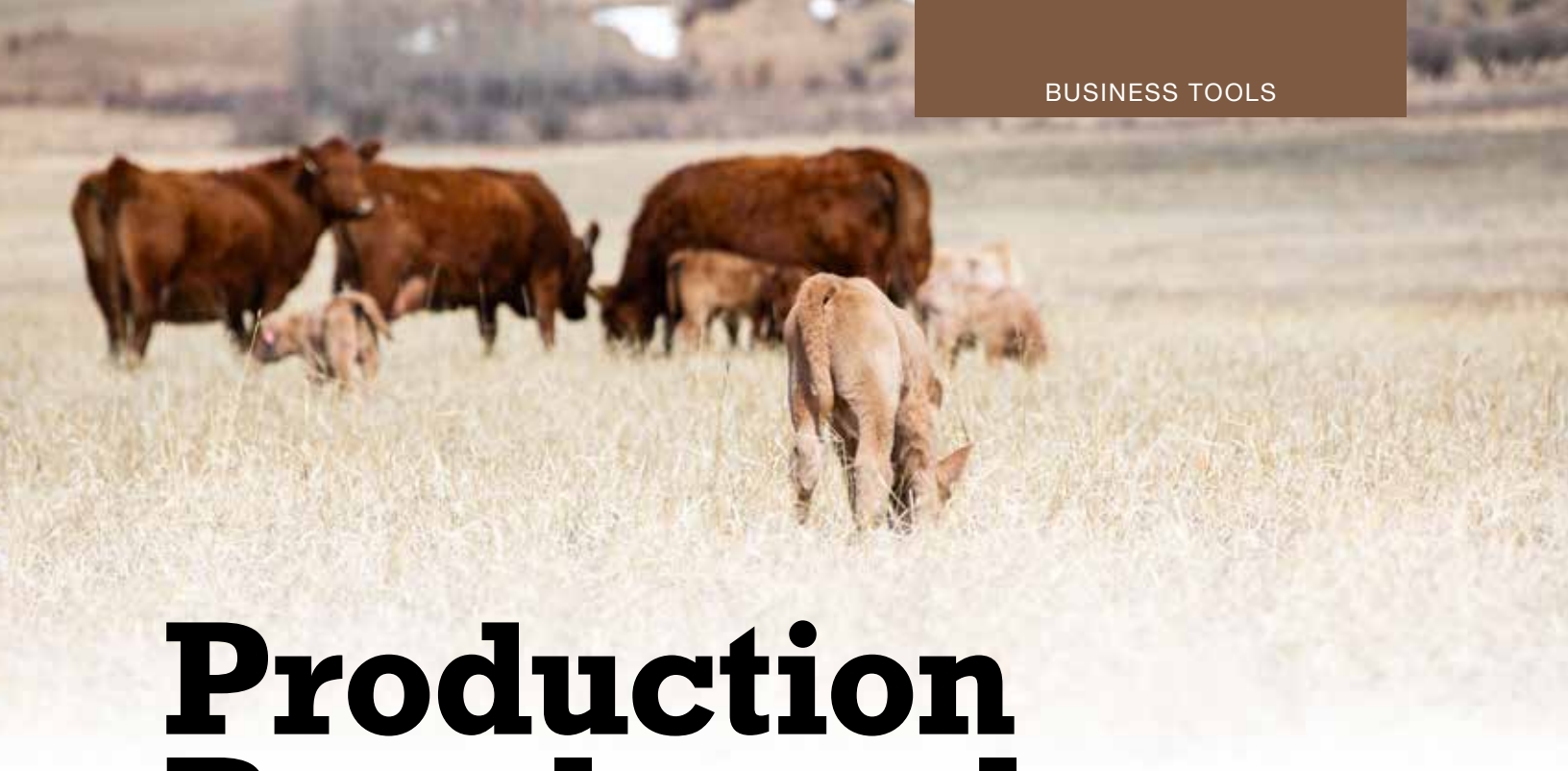
The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) is an industry initiated and led, not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1998 to establish a national livestock identification program to support efficient traceback and containment of serious animal health and food safety concerns in the Canadian livestock industry.

CCIA is the Responsible Administrator of the animal identification and traceability program for beef cattle, bison, sheep and pending regulatory amendments, farmed cervids and goats in Canada.

CCIA maintains and manages the Canadian Livestock Tracking System Database (CLTS), which is secure and accessible for traceback. We ensure producers understand how and where to purchase approved indicators (tags) while providing industry stakeholders access to the tools and education needed to meet federal traceability requirements when using the CLTS.

CCIA
canadaid.ca
CANADIAN CATTLE IDENTIFICATION AGENCY

canadaid.ca
support.canadaid.ca



Production Benchmarks for Commercial Cow-Calf Producers

Numbers that make dollars and sense

BY ELIZABETH R. HOMEROSKY, DVM, MSC., DABVP

I was quite young when I first observed that our cows always formed a line when trailing to water or a new pasture. Like any inquisitive ranch kid, I asked my father, "Why do they do that?" He jokingly responded, "Well, everybody follows the cow in front of them because they assume she knows where she's going. But, you see that cow out in front? When she looks back and sees the entire herd following her, she assumes she is headed in the right direction, so she just keeps on going as well."

> "I've heard countless stories from producers that scour outbreaks are "normal" and just something to be dealt with or that a handful of C-sections in heifers is to be expected each year."

After all my years in this industry, I'm still no expert on cow psychology, but it's safe to say there's probably a little more to it than that. Regardless, what always amazes me is how often the behaviours we readily recognize in our livestock are also present in people. Some accept the path they're on and rarely look up to evaluate where they've been or where they're going. I've heard countless stories from producers that scour outbreaks are "normal" and just something to be dealt with or that a handful of C-sections in heifers is to be expected each year. Others calve in February, cull every cow over 10, or wean the third week of November, simply because that's the way they've always done it. That's fine if you are truly happy with your how your business is performing and you get to do what you want to do, but what if that isn't the case?

Benchmarks are a great tool to help decide if your herd is on the right path or if it's time to potentially change direction. Depending on the goals and profit drivers in your operation, the benchmarks below may need to be adjusted up or down to find a good balance. So rather than using them simply as a target, use them to identify gaps and drive continuous improvement. Perhaps the most valuable part of this exercise is crunching the numbers and objectively assessing your operation.

Don't make the mistake of assuming you're headed in the right direction just because you are on a well beaten path.

PRE-WEANING CALF MORTALITY = LESS THAN 4.5%

Let's shoot for less than 4.5 per cent across the entire herd, recognizing that the average for Alberta is 4.4 per cent in cows and 6.2 per cent in heifers according to the 2023 Canadian Cow Calf Survey. There's a lot of variation around this one and non-disease factors such as predation can have a big impact.

CALVES WEANED/COWS EXPOSED = MORE THAN 86%

This is a big one and perhaps the most accurate representation of overall herd efficiency and productivity rather than the traditional "calves weaned/pregnant cow" calculation. Our first benchmark is built into the overall equation along with an allowance for a 6.5 per cent open rate following 60-day breeding season (non-drought years), a 1.5 per cent abortion rate, and 1.5 per cent cow mortality/cull rate following preg check (6.5+1.5+1.5+4.5% = 14%). This number is critical as in almost every scenario, a higher weaning percentage puts more money in your pocket than a lower weaning percentage with heavier calves. It also allows for give and take in several keys areas. Herds with a high twinning rate may have an artificially high number. Herds that strategically operate on very low inputs may have a lower number but still be economical.

1ST CYCLE REBREEDING RATE IN COMING 2ND CALVERS = MORE THAN 65%

A high open rate in lactating first calf heifers significantly increases your cow depreciation costs. The Cow-calf Cost of Production network reported cow depreciation accounts for about 11 per cent of a cow's annual costs. This cost is often underestimated compared to more obvious cash costs such as feed and labour (yes, we are supposed to pay ourselves!). So, if you can make sure your heifers are managed properly and on a rising plane of nutrition going into their second breeding season you will positively impact rebreeding rates and thereby reduce depreciation costs. This translates into better longevity which plays in nicely to our final benchmarking parameter.

AVERAGE COW AGE = 7–8 YEARS

Many cow calf economists have calculated that it takes five calves for a heifer to recover her development costs and ongoing maintenance costs. If we expect the "average" cow to fully pay for herself then our average herd age should be at least seven years. To achieve this, you need to maintain an annual replacement rate of about 14 per cent or less. Allowing average cow age to creep higher may mean you have years with ultra-high replacement rates in your future which could prove costly in a year like this. It's important to note this number may fluctuate drastically following certain management decisions, such destocking due to drought, expansion of the herd, or if one of your revenue streams is selling bred females or pairs over the age of two.

Ask to sit down with your veterinarian, nutritionist, etc. at least once a year to work "on" the business, not just "in" the business.

After crunching the numbers, if you find yourself confident in the path you're on and leading the masses, great! If you are at the back of the herd, and its negatively impacting your profitably, now is the time to reevaluate where you want to go. Don't make the mistake of assuming you're headed in the right direction just because you are on a well beaten path.

This is where your relationship with your professional advisory team comes into play. Ask to sit down with your veterinarian, nutritionist, etc. at least once a year to work "on" the business, not just "in" the business. Critically evaluate the numbers, but also make them aware of your short- and long-term personal goals as those should ultimately steer the direction your operation is headed. Don't ever be afraid to ask yourself or anyone on your team, every child's favourite question, "why?"

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Canadian Cattle Young Leaders (CYL) 2026-27 Applications Now Open!

BY CAILEY CHURCH, YOUTH LEADERSHIP COORDINATOR, CCA

THE PROGRAM WELCOMES YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 18 TO 35 FROM ACROSS CANADA, INVOLVED IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE BEEF SUPPLY CHAIN.

2025 Canadian Cattle Young Leaders graduates

Through mentorship, networking, and travel, the Canadian CYL Program acts as an industry succession planning tool to equip the next generation of leaders with the skills and tools they need to continue to drive the growth and profitability of the Canadian beef industry. Since established by the Canadian Cattle Association in 2010, the program has seen over 200 CYL graduates.

Each year, 24 semi-finalists are selected from an impressive pool of applicants from across the country and invited to the annual CYL Selections event where they are judged in roundtable discussions centred around timely industry topics. From this event, 16 program participants are chosen to participate in the program and paired with a hand-picked industry leader for a nine-month mentorship in the participants specified area of interest in the beef industry. Participants also receive $3,000 to use towards learning opportunities of their choosing. Along with industry networking opportunities, participants often form strong relationships within their peer group in the program who are equally passionate about the success of the Canadian beef industry and serve as meaningful contacts and friendships for years to come.

If you are a young person looking to take your career in the beef industry to the next level, or you know of a young industry leader who would excel in this program, please visit our website at canadiancattleyoungleaders.com to learn more and apply.

Applications for the 2025–2026 program year are open from January 5, 2026, to March 31, 2026, at 11:59 pm MT.

The opportunities offered to the next generation through the Canadian CYL Program would not be possible without the generous support of its Platinum Partners, McDonald's Canada and Cargill, Foundation Partners MNP and Elanco, and Gold Partners Farm Credit Canada, Alltech, and RBC Future Launch.

Canadian Cattle Association Announces Andrea Brocklebank as CEO

BY TYLER FULTON, PRESIDENT, CCA

Photo credit:
Manitoba Beef Producers

ANDREA BROCKLEBANK WILL BECOME THE CANADIAN CATTLE ASSOCIATION'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER IN EARLY MARCH. ANDREA HAS SERVED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL (BCRC), A DIVISION OF THE CCA, SINCE 2009.

Almost a year ago, CCA Executive Vice President Dennis Laycraft informed the board of his decision to retire. We took time to discuss if and how we wanted the role to evolve to ensure our organization is prepared for future challenges. We determined that the description of CEO more accurately reflects the role of our senior staff member.

An executive recruitment firm conducted an extensive recruitment process and CCA's directors enthusiastically accepted their recommendation. We are excited to welcome Andrea to the role. She has a proven track record of strategic decisions and collaboration, critical skills that will ease the senior leadership transition and help ensure CCA is well positioned for the future.

At BCRC, Andrea managed the delivery of research through the BCRC and Beef Science Cluster to fund research in areas of importance to the industry. She oversaw the administration of funding received through the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and other sources to deliver research programming, knowledge mobilization activities, and the Verified Beef Production Plus program. She was also responsible for leading the development and implementation of the Canadian Beef Research and Knowledge Mobilization Strategy and advancing collaborative funding partnerships aligned with the strategy.

We are confident that with Andrea leading us, CCA is well positioned to navigate continued global market uncertainty as we work towards renewing the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) and other priorities.

As we look ahead, trade and market access will be priorities for CCA this year, especially trade and market access with our largest trading partner and closest neighbour. Canada is an agri-food exporting nation, and a strong trade policy is essential for opening and maintaining market access.


Andrea Brocklebank

CCA ended 2025 working with other industry stakeholders to provide input before the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review deadline. We continue to support a tariff-free integrated North American beef and cattle trading market.

Volatility continues with U.S. trade, and while CCA continues to focus much of our energy behind the scenes on U.S. market access, there are also other areas of focus for our staff and elected officials such as tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers, trade and market access, regulatory burdens, and the need for regulatory alignment with the USA and other international trade partners.

Our provincial member associations are having conversations with the goal of reaching a new funding agreement with commitments from all provinces past June 30. After Alberta Beef Producers served CCA with notice of withdrawal, I committed to not negotiating through the media, and I will uphold that commitment, but I do think it's important to share an update on the progress that has been made. The provincial members have created a working group and are moving forward in a direction that will ensure a strong national organization that will advocate on behalf of producers. I am optimistic about the discussions that have taken place and the progress we have made, and I look forward to sharing more when we have more concrete updates.

When it comes to producers, CCA supports reduced regulatory burdens for producers, and while progress has been made with a commitment to reducing interprovincial trade barriers and harmonization of Canada's BSE enhanced feed ban with U.S. requirements, there is always room for improvement.

CCA continually advocates with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, both operations in the field and with Ottawa management. CFIA is important to market access, animal health, disease management, animal transport and of course food safety. CCA puts a lot of effort directly with CFIA on all these fronts. This type of work does not show publicly; we don't work via the media. Rest assured we are direct in communicating needs, shortcomings and appreciation when it is warranted, but directly to decision makers and leaders, rarely publicly. Ongoing advocacy to CFIA on behalf of producers remains a priority this year.

CCA would also welcome improvements to business risk management programs for producers, and faster implementation and response times when those programs are needed.

Finally, we are concerned about funding cuts impacting research. CCA will be advocating for investments in long-term research and research capacity that support improvements in producers' economic sustainability and productivity. Key areas of focus include animal health and welfare, antimicrobial resistance, forage and feed production and utilization, and environment and climate change.

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Out and About with ABP and VBP+

Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) and Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) have been busy, attending two major regional events since the last issue went to print.

THE MEDICINE HAT PEN SHOW

The Medicine Hat Pen Show took place December 19–20, 2025. ABP and VBP+ shared a trade show table that saw steady traffic throughout both days. On Friday the 19th, the luncheon was a crowd favourite—ABP Director Sheila Hilmer served beef-on-a-bun to well over 100 people. That evening's annual steak fry saw ABP's own Craig Lehr, joined by his family and CCA delegate Brodie Haugan, serving steaks that were expertly cooked by Craig's brother Scott. Saturday's junior show was another highlight, showcasing the skilled and passionate youth we are fortunate to have in this industry.

Alberta Beef Producers participates in the popular steak fry at the Medicine Hat Pen Show.

PEACE COUNTRY BEEF CONGRESS

January 9–10 brought a trip north to the Peace Country Beef Congress, which features a junior steer and heifer show, pen show, and open show. While the event is less known outside the region, organizers consistently do an excellent job. Not surprisingly, many conversations throughout the two days revolved around proposed traceability requirements. The banquet delivered once again—a great roast beef supper that was every bit as impressive as the cattle on display.

Events like the Medicine Hat Pen Show and the Peace Country Beef Congress are wonderful opportunities to break up the winter while giving producers a local stage to showcase their cattle. They also play an important role in bringing young people in the industry together to learn, network, and spend time visiting with like-minded peers.

Best of the Peace Supreme Champion, MMWK Maximum 354N, exhibited by the Klassen family of Willow Creek Simmentals.

Advancing the Canadian Beef Industry

Through Innovation and Knowledge

SUBMITTED BY BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL

Research and knowledge mobilization work hand in hand to move the Canadian beef industry forward. By turning new ideas into practical tools and information, they help beef producers make informed decisions and strengthen their operations.

The Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) supports this progress by funding proof of concept (POC) projects and knowledge mobilization initiatives that connect science with on-farm impact.

PROOF OF CONCEPT RESEARCH

"Proof of concept projects help get new ideas off the ground—testing innovations, technologies and practices from other sectors or countries that could benefit Canada's beef industry," says Dean Manning, BCRC chair. "These small, targeted investments use a modest portion of Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off dollars to evaluate potential solutions and generate the evidence needed to support larger-scale research and long-term industry progress."

POC PROJECTS FUNDED UNDER THE 2025 CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

All projects funded by the BCRC address the priorities laid out in the Five-Year Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy.

Are Maternal Vitamin Levels More Reliable Than Fetal Levels for Diagnosing Nutritional Deficiencies in Abortion Cases?
Project lead: Dr. Yanyun Huang, Prairie Diagnostic Services Inc.

Enhancing Cicer Milkvetch Germination Rate Through Ultrasound Scarification
Project lead: Dr. Erick Santos, University of Alberta

Wearable Electrochemical Biosensor Patch for Real-Time Cortisol Monitoring in Cattle
Project lead: Dr. Amir Sanati Nezhad, University of Calgary

Evaluation of Ocularly Delivered Bovine Adenovirus Vectored Vaccine for Pink Eye
Project lead: Suresh Tikoo, Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization

Nasal and Blood Transcriptomes in Feedlot Calves Using a Bovine Coronavirus (BCoV) Challenge Model
Project lead: Stacey Lacoste, University of Saskatchewan, Western College of Veterinary Medicine

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION INITIATIVES

"Connecting science with on-farm practice ensures that research doesn't stay on the shelf—it drives real improvements in productivity, sustainability and profitability for Canadian beef producers," says BCRC Vice Chair Lee Irvine on funding knowledge mobilization initiatives. "The success of innovation depends on building producer awareness and fostering adoption of research, technologies and beneficial practices across the beef industry."

Through a new pilot initiative, the BCRC opened a call for proposals in 2023 to support regional knowledge mobilization activities with preference given to new and innovative engagement ideas. This funding call was renewed for the second time in 2025. Eight activities were funded beginning in fall 2025 and all activities will wrap up in summer 2026.

INITIATIVES FUNDED BY THE 2025 KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION CALL:

Beef Cattle Production Seminar
November 5, 2025.
Project lead: Alaina Archibald, Peace Country Beef & Forage Association

Rancher's University
December 5-6, 2025
Project lead: Shelby Robinson, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Protecting Your Herd: Practical Biosecurity Implementation for Enhanced Cow and Calf Health
February 6-7, 2026
Project lead: Rachel Kehoe, Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance

'Bos' Ladies Round Up
Project lead: Dr. Carling Matejka, Veterinary Agri-Health Services

Animal Health Workshop
December 11, 2025
Project lead: Cindy Jack, Manitoba Agriculture

Producer Engagement Leverage in Eastern Canada
November 8, 2025
Project lead: Amy Higgins, Maritime Beef Council

Fence-O-Rama: Rotational Grazing Boot Camp
May 2026
Project lead: Amy Higgins, New Brunswick Cattle Producers

Livestock Water Source Management Strategies
Project lead: Alyssa Krawchuk, Lakeland Agricultural Research Association

- **Summer Water Quality and Water Systems Tour**
  September 11, 2025
- **Winter Water Systems Tour**
  February 2026

The 2025-2026 Beef Cattle Research Council members include, front row L–R: Vice Chair Lee Irvine, AB; Chair Dean Manning, NS/Atlantic; Outgoing Chair Craig Lehr, AB; Graeme Finn, AB, and Jeff Braisher, BC. Back row L–R: 2024-2025 Outgoing Chair Matt Bowman, ON; Lyle Adams, AB; ex-officio member Nathalie Côté, QC; Michael Spratt, SK; Tara Mulhern Davidson, SK; Fred Lozeman, AB; Trevor Sund, MB, and Finance Chair Melissa Atchison, MB. Not pictured are Phil Hamar, AB; Roger Meyers, SK; Kim Jo Bliss, ON, and Nick Martin, ON.

The BCRC is Canada's national industry-led funding agency for beef, cattle and forage research. Its mandate is to determine research and development priorities for the Canadian beef cattle industry and to administer Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off funds allocated to research. A division of the CCA, the BCRC is directed by a committee of beef producers from across the country. The BCRC is funded in part through a portion of the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off which is then leveraged with government and industry partner funding.

Birds, Bees, & Beef Cattle:

SHORT DOCUMENTARY *HOMES ON THE RANGE* REACHES CANADIANS' SCREENS

SUBMITTED BY PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

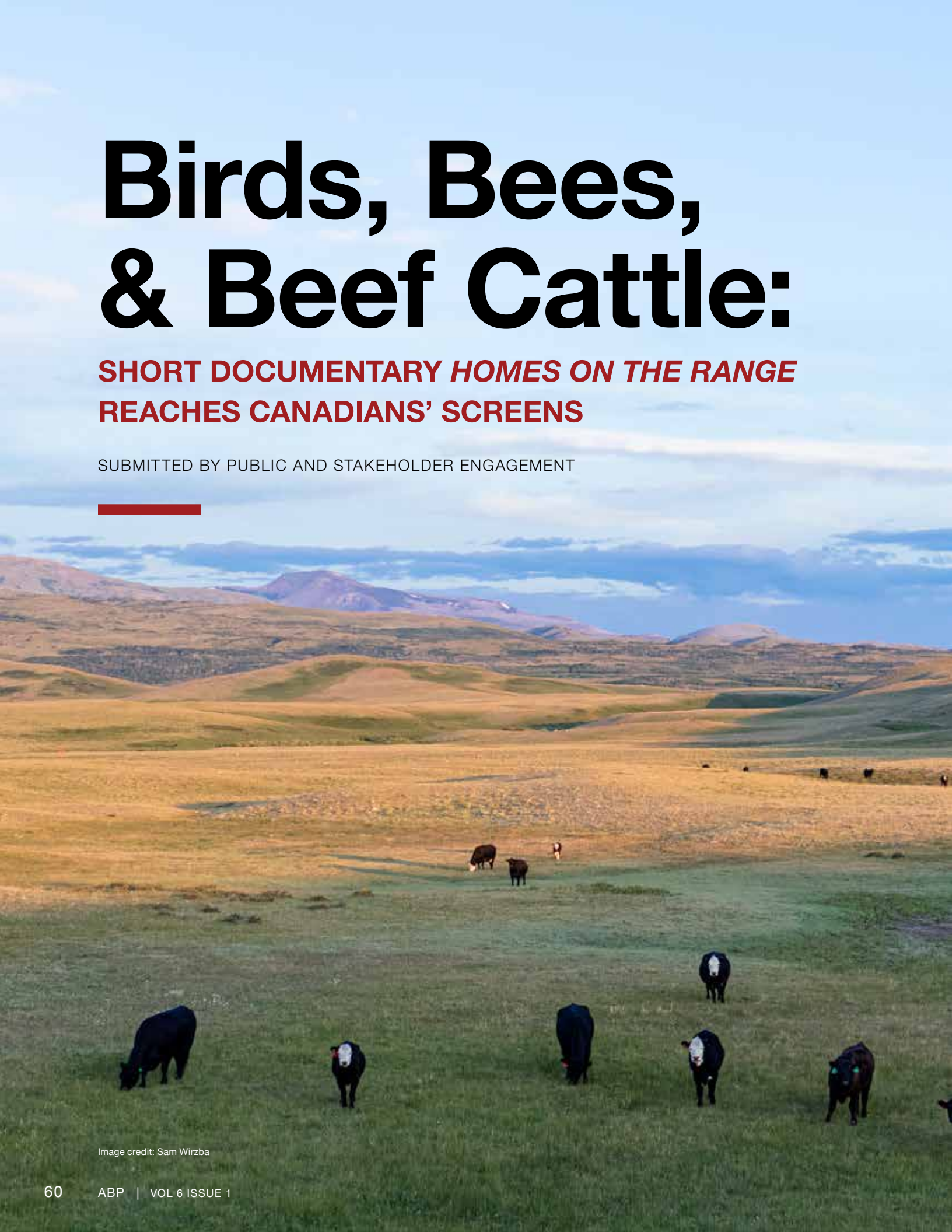

Image credit: Sam Wirzba

Beef cattle farmers and ranchers manage some of the most critical wildlife habitat in Canada. By grazing cattle, these producers help maintain intact grassland ecosystems for wildlife to thrive. To recognize the environmental benefit of raising Canadian beef, the Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE) program released its newest short documentary, *Homes on the Range*, on World Wildlife Day in September 2025.

Produced by Story Brokers Media House, the film explores the important role of Canadian beef producers in wildlife conservation, both as a result of the grazing practices they already implement on their farms, as well as the ways they go above and beyond to attract wildlife. By consulting conservation experts from the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, *Homes on the Range* presents a third-party perspective on the key role of the Canadian beef industry in conservation work.

Throughout the documentary, beef producers from across Canada are highlighted to share their role in preserving wildlife habitat. Alberta rancher Adrienne Herron is featured in the film discussing the wildlife species she sees sharing the land with her cattle, including a blue heron that returns year after year.

Homes on the Range is aimed at a public audience to drive awareness of the environmental benefits of raising beef cattle on the Canadian landscape. Dr. Carolyn Callaghan, Senior Terrestrial Biologist for the Canadian Wildlife Federation, says in the film that beef producers maintaining extensive grazing practices need to be recognized by society as providing “a public service.”

82 per cent of Albertan respondents rated the Canadian beef industry as good stewards of the land and water.

Since its release, *Homes on the Range* has been selected for eight film festivals, including The Homegrown Short Film Showcase in Calgary and the Central Alberta Film Festival in Red Deer. On the festival circuit, the film won Best Canadian Documentary at the Vancouver Indie Film Festival and Best Nature/Wildlife Documentary at the Canadian International Film Festival.

Homes on the Range also won Best of Show – Digital and received the top prize in the non-specialty video category at the Canadian Agri-Food Marketers Alliance awards. This event recognizes the very best in agricultural marketing, publicity, and industry relations campaigns every year.

PSE staff member Emma Cross presented case studies from the film at The Wildlife Society's 2025 international conference in Edmonton in the fall, along with some of the latest results from the 2024 National Beef Sustainability Assessment. Results from this research indicated that on Alberta's crop and pasturelands, areas used for raising beef cattle provide nearly 88 per cent of the habitat that wildlife use for nesting and raising their young. The presentation was included as part of a session highlighting grassland conservation efforts, and conference attendees were excited to see beef producers at the table as key players in wildlife habitat conservation. The film was also screened at the Latornell Conservation Symposium in Woodbridge, Ontario and at the University of Saskatchewan.

Each year, the PSE team conducts consumer research to assess perceptions of how beef cattle are raised in Canada. In 2025, 80 per cent of Albertan respondents agreed that beef is an environmentally friendly food choice, an increase of 11 per cent over the past two years, with a major portion of that increase being driven by younger demographics and women. 82 per cent of Albertan respondents rated the Canadian beef industry as good stewards of the land and water. These results demonstrate the impact that positive campaigns like *Homes on the Range* can have on consumer trust.

Homes on the Range is available to the public on YouTube, where it has earned over 128,000 views so far. Short form content from the film has gained over one million views on the PSE program's Raising Canadian Beef social media channels.

The PSE team is happy to help coordinate screening requests for stakeholder groups and events. Reach out to raisingcdnbeef@cattle.ca for more information.

HEJ Charolais

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2026 - 21ST ANNUAL

BULL SALE

CFC 9712 CUSTOM 16K

MAIN PRECISION 45H

HEJ NEW YORK MINUTE 2N

SIRE: MAIN WHITE LIGHTNING 1J BW: 85 ADJ WW: 944 ADJ YW: 1281
EPDS CE: 6.9 BW: -2.8 WW: 82 YW: 150 MM: 34 MTL: 75

NINA NAMASTE 11N

SIRE: CFC 9712 CUSTOM 16K BW: 82 ADJ WW: 962 ADJ YW: 1310
EPDS CE: 7.9 BW: -5 WW: 80 YW: 129 MM: 27 MTL: 67

HEJ NITRO 38N

SIRE: HVA VIPER 381K BW: 108 ADJ WW: 881 ADJ YW: 1333
EPDS CE: -1.5 BW: 3.7 WW: 64 YW: 113 MM: 25 MTL: 57

HEJ NIGHT MOVES 50N

SIRE: HVA VIPER 381K BW: 97 ADJ WW: 901 ADJ YW: 1220
EPDS CE: 2.8 BW: 0.8 WW: 67 YW: 119 MM: 20 MTL: 53

HEJ KNOCKOUT 57N

SIRE: MAIN PRECISION 45H BW: 83 ADJ WW: 922 ADJ YW: 1268
EPDS CE: 9.1 BW: -2.4 WW: 75 YW: 157 MM: 23 MTL: 61

HEJ NACHO 63N

SIRE: HEJ LIMITED EDITION 70L BW: 82 ADJ WW: 873 ADJ YW: 1180
EPDS CE: 13.7 BW: -4.2 WW: 59 YW: 111 MM: 32 MTL: 61

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About the Artist

Sharon Johnston grew up in Athabasca, Alberta.

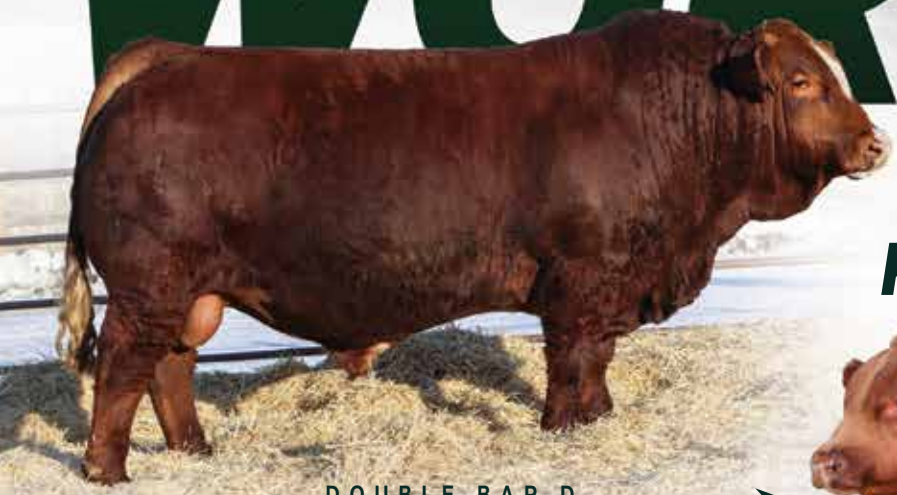
Drawing from her academic background—which includes a Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta with a major in Mathematics and a minor in Art—she integrates mathematical principles into her artistic practice. Concepts such as perspective, scale, formulas, and ratios, which are fundamental to both disciplines, inform her artistic expression and lend a sense of precision to her work.

Currently residing in Rimbey, Alberta, Sharon finds inspiration in the local environment, which provides a rich tapestry for her artistic interpretations. She is actively involved in fostering the local arts community through the Rimbey Art Club. She has immense respect for the farming community she lives in and appreciates the opportunity to showcase her depictions of Alberta farm life.

The original cover painting will be featured in Sharon's booth and available for purchase at the Lacombe Encore Art Show on April 17 and 18, 2026.

100+ HEAD SELL // TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026 // AT THE FARM, GRENFELL, SK - 1:00 PM

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS



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DOUBLE BAR D

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Layne Burton
PHONE 403-682-7545
EMAIL layne.e.burton@gmail.com

Graeme Finn
PHONE 403-312-2240
EMAIL graeme@southerncrosslivestock.ca

Sheila Hillmer
BOARD MEMBER
PHONE 403-394-5798
EMAIL Sheila.hillmer@gmail.com

Lee Irvine
BOARD MEMBER
PHONE 403-671-4878
EMAIL lee@irvinefamily.ca

Dorothy Thengs
PHONE 587-444-0118
EMAIL dthengs@hotmail.com

NORTHWEST ZONE

Bernie Doerksen
BOARD MEMBER
PHONE 780-841-1769
EMAIL raffi.resort@gmail.com

Braydon Gough
PHONE 780-274-0099
EMAIL b.g@gomackredangus.com

Jolene McDermott
PHONE 780-219-5375
EMAIL Jcoates357@gmail.com

NORTHEAST ZONE

Aydon Almberg
BOARD MEMBER
PHONE 780-209-0211
EMAIL almbergaydon@gmail.com

Kaylee Chizawsky
PHONE 780-632-1982
EMAIL chizawsk@ualberta.ca

Jay Hager
BOARD MEMBER
PHONE 780-753-4375
EMAIL 07jaybar@gmail.com

George L'Heureux
PHONE 780-689-8036
EMAIL georgelheureux1@gmail.com

Josie Pashulka
PHONE 780-787-0077
EMAIL kenpashulka@hotmail.com

Kailey Wirsta
PHONE 780-614-5255
EMAIL kwirsta2@gmail.com

Miles Wowk
PHONE 780-210-2501
EMAIL wowkmiles@gmail.com

SOUTHEAST ZONE

Kent Holowath
VICE CHAIR
PHONE 403-820-6352
EMAIL holowath@telusplanet.net

Craig Lehr
PHONE 403-581-7242
EMAIL craiglehrsgr@gmail.com

Brad Mappin
BOARD MEMBER
PHONE 403-740-6547
EMAIL bradmappin@gmail.com

Wacey Manning
PHONE 780-753-4578
EMAIL wacey.manning@hotmail.com

Ryan Slenders
PHONE 403-363-7906
EMAIL ryan.slenders@gmail.com

Tim Smith
PHONE 403-575-2246
EMAIL tntsmith_40@hotmail.com

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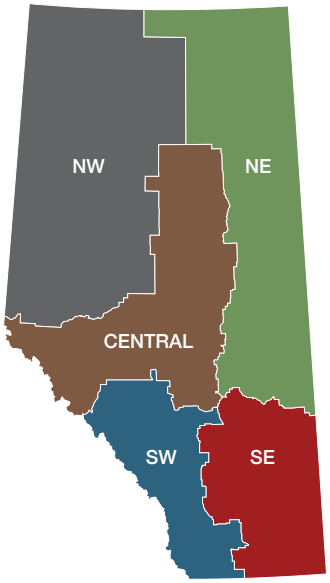

CENTRAL ZONE

Kale Chessor
PHONE 587-679-5995
EMAIL chessorkale@gmail.com

Phil Hamar
PHONE 780-515-1482
EMAIL philhamar@gmail.com

Colin Rice
BOARD MEMBER
PHONE 403-318-2464
EMAIL colinrice@gmail.com

Brenda Rosadiuk
FINANCE CHAIR
PHONE 780-542-1186
EMAIL rosran4@gmail.com

Doug Roxburgh
BOARD CHAIR
PHONE 403-352-2568
EMAIL doug.roxburgh@bullseyefeeds.ca

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