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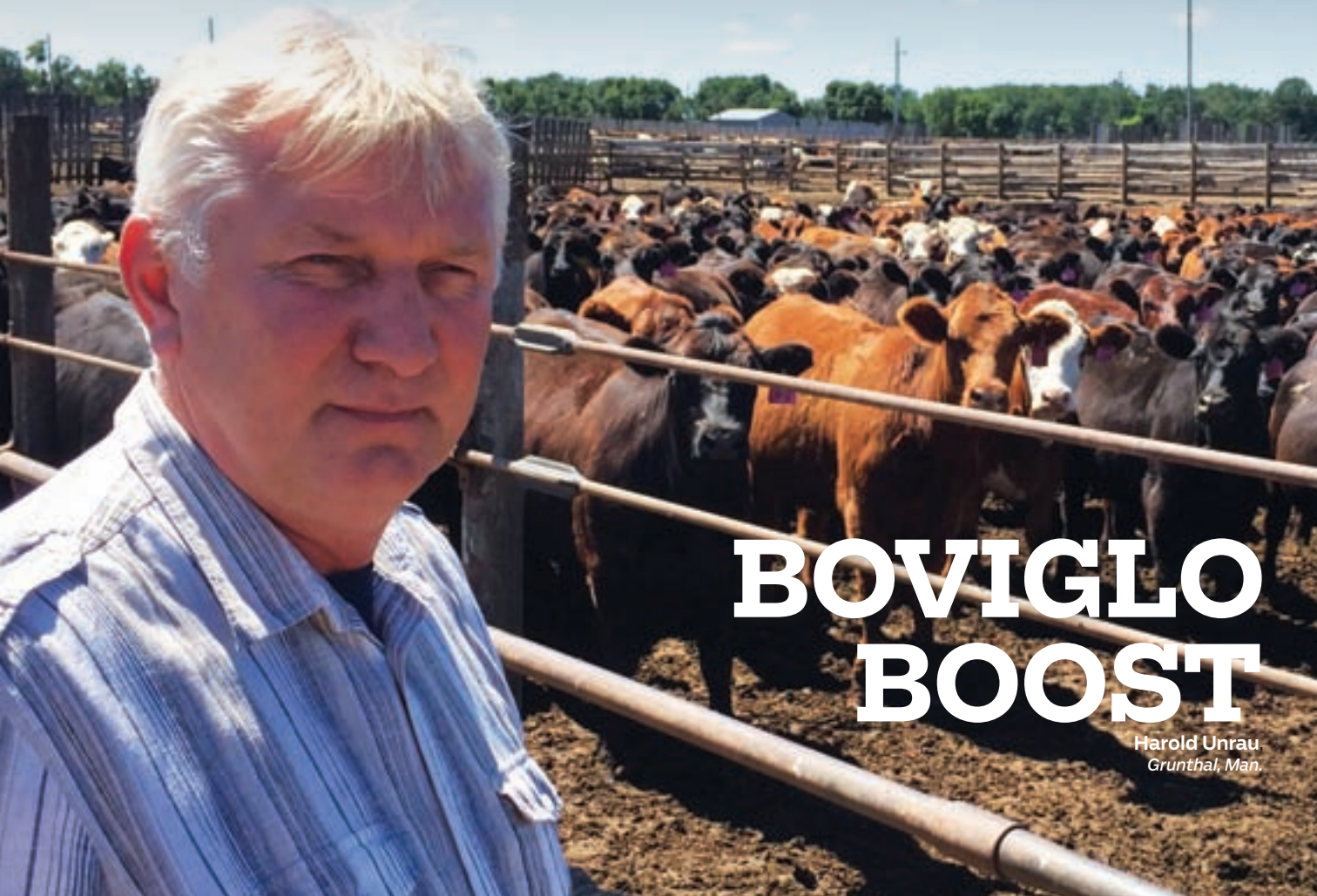
# Canadian Cattlemen

THE BEEF MAGAZINE



OCTOBER 23, 2017 \$3.00

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Harold Unrau  
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## Congratulations!

To our fall survey winner, Ken and Judy Johnson, Williams Lake, B.C.  
This month's survey is on page 64.

Cover photo: Karen Emilson

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# TAKE THE LONG VIEW ON CETA

**A**s this issue arrives in your mailbox the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union will have been in force for about a month.

Not much has happened since it came into force on September 21, at least as far as the beef industry is concerned, but that's not surprising. Exporting Canadian beef to Europe has to be viewed as the epitome of the long game... very long.

Canada was immediately granted a duty-free quota of 9,300 tonnes of fresh beef and 2,500 tonnes of frozen for the remainder of 2017. On January 1 our quota jumps to 14,400 tonnes of fresh and 5,000 tonnes of frozen, and it steps up each year from there until it tops out at 35,000 tonnes fresh and 15,000 frozen in 2022.

According to the material put out by Ottawa, this agreement can potentially increase our agri-food exports by \$1.5 billion per year, with a \$600 million boost in beef sales, \$400 million in pork and \$100 million more for grains and oilseeds.

That's the long view. The short view is very little of this quota will be filled by Canadian producers or Canadian companies over the next couple of years, perhaps longer.

In 2016 Canadians marketed 156 tonnes of beef to France for \$1.68 million. It was our largest European customer by volume that year. The Netherlands bought another 136 tonnes for \$2.64 million, and that was pretty much it for our shipments to the EU in 2016. So you can see that we have a ways to go before we meet those predictions or worry about overfilling our quota.

While CETA has given us unprecedented access to one of the richest markets in the world, it will almost certainly remain tantalizingly out of reach until a dependable supply chain is established and filled with EU-certified steers and heifers. And that will take some time. Just how long is something for the future and enterprising producers and packers to sort out.

The challenges of servicing the European market are well documented.

First, it won't accept hormone-treated beef and that is never going to change. The Canadian government officially recognized that fact earlier this month when it ended its decade-long dispute with the EU and withdrew its complaint from the World Trade Organization, giving up any right to retaliate against this policy.

In actual fact, that issue was buried some years ago. According to John Masswohl, the Canadian Cattle-men's Association (CCA) director of government and international relations, the cattle industry signed off

on this change back in 2009 in exchange for added duty-free tariff rate quota that was added to a similar quota agreed to by the U.S. and shared amongst all beef-producing countries.

During the CETA negotiations the EU agreed to add Canada's portion of the shared quota to a new quota that can only be used to import Canadian beef. Now that the CETA has been implemented and the new quota is operational, Canada simply recognized that prior agreement and withdraw its complaint.

The other major hurdle is the EU's refusal to recognize the safety of the carcass washes North American packers use in conjunction with steam pasteurization and hazard management to control bacteria in their plants.

The industry is sponsoring research to prove the safety of these washes, and the results will be added to applications to have this technology recognized by various European health and safety officials. The prediction is that it will take at least two years to complete this work. As to when the European officials will respond, we have no way of knowing.

If these predictions are accurate, the CCA is hopeful that larger plants may start purchasing EU-eligible cattle by later 2019 or early 2020. One hopeful note along this line is that the JBS plant in Brooks was added to the EU list of eligible establishments to slaughter and process beef in August of this year; Cargill's High River plant was scheduled to be approved this month.

Previously only the Bouvry plant in Fort Macleod and Premier Meats in Lacombe were on the approved list of federally inspected plants, although a recent CCA release suggested smaller regional packers are also looking at this market.

The only thing missing now is the cattle. That too is not unexpected. There are a lot of rules to raising beef for the EU market. To be eligible the cattle must be enrolled with the CFIA and certified by a veterinarian selected by CFIA from birth to feedlot and into the approved plant. In other words, calves born and enrolled this coming spring wouldn't be market ready until 2020.

The details for this program are too involved for this space but can be found on the CCA website at [www.cattle.ca/eu](http://www.cattle.ca/eu).

At one time this would have seemed too much of a gamble to bank on, but today, with a growing number of cattle being raised under select regimens for integrated supply chains, it doesn't seem that far-fetched. Like most things, it will depend on the money.

But you can see what I mean by the long view. 🍁





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# NewsMakers



Dr. Joyce Van Donkersgoed

**Dr. Joyce Van Donkersgoed** of Coaldale, Alta., has been named the 2017 recipient of the Metacam 20 Bovine Welfare Award for her leadership in the Canadian beef industry to improve the welfare of feedlot animals. The award is presented annually by the Canadian Association of Bovine Veterinarians (CABV) in partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada). She received the award at the 50th annual conference of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners in Omaha, Nebraska. **Van Donkersgoed** operates a private feedlot practice in southern Alberta where she provides emergency, herd health and production services, and research and regulatory services to her clients. She was also instrumental in developing the Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment tool for auditing animal welfare, which has been certified by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization. It is the first certified audit designed for the feedlot segment of the food production industry.

Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) has awarded six \$500 bursaries to members, or the children of members, who are attending university, college, other post-secondary institutions, or training for a trade. Preference is given to students who are pursuing a career related to agriculture. This year's winners are: **Naomi Best** from Harding, **Bethan Amy Lewis** from Kirkella, **Cassidy Gordon** from Sonns, **Allison Sorrell** from Kenton, **Connor English** from Rivers and **Kaitlyn Davey** from Westbourne.



Dr. David Christensen

The Saskatchewan Forage Council has honoured **Dr. David Christensen** as the 2017 recipient of its Forage Industry Innovation Award. **Christensen**, an emeritus professor at the University of Saskatchewan, has been a visible presence on the forage scene in Saskatchewan for the past 56 years.

At its annual meeting the Saskatchewan Forage Council elected **Tamara Carter**, a beef, forage and grain producer from Lacadena

as its new president. She replaces **Dave Kerr**, a beef producer from Lashburn. Joining her on the board are researchers **Bruce Coulman** and **Greg Penner** from the University of Saskatchewan, **Mike Schellenberg** with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, producers **Aaron Ivey** of Ituna, **Steve Pylot** from Meadow Lake, **Nathan Siklenka** of Glaslyn and **Mark McNinch** of Mervin, **Trevor Plews** with Ducks Unlimited, **Sarah Sommerfield** with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, **Allan VanCaesele** with Brett Young Seeds and **Garret Hill** of Duval representing the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association.

Alberta Barley has named **Tom Steve**, the general manager of the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC), as its interim manager. The appointment may be a first step in amalgamating the two associations. The respective boards of AWC and Alberta Barley are currently assessing the feasibility of amalgamating their entire management teams over the next four months.

Earlier this month the board of directors at Alberta Farm Animal Care were still reviewing applications for a new executive director as a replacement for **Dr. Angela Rouillard** who finished the term of her contract in June.

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency has become the administrator for traceability records for the National Goat Federation on the assumption that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will include meat, dairy and fibre goats in its traceability regulation when they are published. The CFIA is expected to announce the final version of its proposed regulations in 2018.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) celebrated Animal Health Week October 1 to 7 by drawing attention to the important role animal owners play in animal welfare through sharing the five animal freedoms they require to survive and thrive: adequate shelter, proper nutrition, appropriate veterinary care, proper socialization, and the ability to exhibit normal behaviours. 🍁

The Canadian Angus Association has named Kolk Farms Ltd. of Iron Springs, Alta., as its 2017 Western Feedlot of the Year. Kolk Farms is a family-owned feedlot operated by Leighton Kolk, his wife Elinor and their children Jordan, Devan, and Megan. They operate three feed yards with a total capacity of 18,000 head and produces roughly 20 million pounds of beef per year on 4,000 acres of dry and irrigated farmland.



Brian Good (l) of the Canadian Angus Association presents the award to Jordan and Megan Kolk.

The family incorporates low-stress handling into its operations to maintain a high standard of animal welfare.

Kolk Farms is one of five feedlot operations that joined together to feed 100,000 cattle designated for the Certified Angus Beef program.

The Canadian Angus Association introduced the Feedlot of the Year award in 2010 to recognize feedlots that feed Canadian Angus-tagged cattle.



Year End ❄️  
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RETHINK PRODUCTIVITY



# BUNKHOUSE PHILOSOPHY



By W.R. Cochrane, Crowley, Alta.

Abridged from the *Canadian Cattleman*, September 1950

**T**hings have changed quite a bit since the old days when it was the accepted custom either to drive your beef to the nearest railway point and ship them yourself to one of the central markets in this country, or if you were willing to take a chance and speculate on what the market might be after a long haul, to export them to one of the U.S. markets or if shipping space was available, across the pond. As an alternative you could get in touch with some of the buyers and make arrangements for them to come out to the ranch and look over your offerings and make a bid on them.

We reckon that most cattlemen who have been in business any length of time have employed all of these methods at one time or another without arriving at any fixed conclusions as to which was the best. Sorting up the beef, making the drive to the shipping point, loading up, consigning them to your favourite commission firm, hopping on the caboose and going along, was always an interesting experience and highly educational too, as we always had a lot of admiration for the way in which the commission men sorted up cattle and priced them. On the other hand we always enjoyed having the buyers visit the ranch and wrangle out such things as shrink, grade, cuts, price and numerous other things a-sitting on the top rail of the corral with us and sampling each other's tobacco, to see which brand would carry furthest against the wind.

We reckon they always bid them as they saw them and by the time most of them had made the rounds we could generally form a fair estimation as to how much coin of the realm we might expect to have when the shipping season was over.

From time to time plans were put forward to make improvements over the old systems of marketing beef but none of them seemed to be very satisfactory or to meet with much approval amongst the cattlemen. However, some of the more enterprising producers wishing to try and make some progressive improvements in the old system and believing in the old saying that "The Lord helps those who help themselves" got together and figured that if they could assemble a lot of cattle at a given point and advertise the fact to some extent that it might be possible to get the Packing and Feeder interests to send out

their buyers and let the cattle go to the highest bidders by public auction.

Consequently, what we believe to be the first community auction sale for the handling of beef cattle (on a large scale in Alberta) was launched by R. P. Gilchrist, H. G. Minor, George Ross, Chas. Franklin and J. B. Linder, with Wilbur McKenzie as Secretary in August 1939. A charter was obtained under the name of the Community Auction Sales Ltd. Later in the same year some of the original shareholders disposed of their holdings to J. S. Smith and Stanley B. Earl of Cardston, W. C. Cooper, Nanton and D. E. Ball, Edmonton, and in December Max Bradshaw was elected President with H. G. Minor Vice-President and J. S. Smith Secretary, and they immediately made application to the C.P.R. for leases on sites for stock yards adjoining the yards of the railway at key points in the south country. It took a lot of organizing to get this new idea over and much credit is due to the early officers and members for their perseverance and stick-to-itiveness for they believed they had something that would eventually be recognized as an outstanding sales organization servicing a large section the range country of Alberta.

In 1939 with Chas. Franklin as manager, sales were held at Rain, Cardston, Pincher Creek and Lundbreck. The shareholders considered their operations to be satisfactory enough to continue on the next year when a total of 4,483 head of cattle were sold for \$278,830, and in 1941, 5,121 head were put through the ring. But in 1942 the total number dropped back to 3,217, which was a trifle discouraging but still quite a lot of cattle. The Company, however, kept persevering in their efforts to put the auction sales idea over and instead of restricting their operations added to the points where sales were to be held and in 1943 they held 16 sales and sold 7,198 cattle for \$597,540.52.

Walter Jenkins had been elected to the presidency for that year. He also managed the sales and devoted a lot of valuable time, assisted by the directors at the various sales points in getting new members, for in 1942 the original company had been reorganized under an act respecting Cooperative Marketing Associations with shares open to the patrons at \$5 per share.

It is very interesting to note that the popularity of the idea has increased so much that the returns from 26 sales held in 1945 showed 11,583 cattle sold for \$897,050.87 and the sales

in 1949 showed a total of 49 sales held and 22,792 head of cattle sold for the huge total of \$3,326,580.21.

After many years of faithful service Mr. J. S. Smith retired as Secretary-Treasurer in 1945 and Mr. A. E. Ryan was appointed and the head office of the Association was moved from Cardston to Pincher Creek where a year round office is maintained.

The pressure of such increased business necessitated the development of a speedy system of handling cattle which has been perfected to a high degree of efficiency over the past number of years under the supervision of Walter Jenkins and the directors at various sale points. A. E. Ryan has worked out a system of accounting that enables both buyer and seller to get their settlements through with a minimum of delay. It takes a heap of handling and figuring to assemble several hundred cattle, sort them up, weigh them, have the brands inspected, auction them off, get settlements, load them up and get them on the way to their destinations all in one day.

The auctioneering staff is composed of Warren Cooper of Nanton and Don Ball and M. F. Jacobs of Edmonton. Ball and Cooper are pioneers with the Association and Jacobs has joined the staff in recent years. That the selling of beef cattle by public auction was a worthy idea is borne out by the patronage in evidence at all the sales both by buyers and sellers. All the leading packers have their representatives on hand and feeder buyers both in Canada and States are taking a steadily increasing interest in this mode of obtaining their replacements and it is worthy of note that this method of selling has spread to the leading central markets where auction sales are now held regularly.

The boys who pioneered the sales in the country can now look with a great deal of satisfaction at the magnificent results of a lot of hard work and perseverance. Auction sales of live stock are a great meeting place for people engaged in the industry both as growers and purchasers and folks attending one for the first time are generally impressed by the friendly manner in which the whole affair is conducted. 🌟

*For more of the past from pages of our magazine see the History Section at [www.canadiancattleman.ca](http://www.canadiancattleman.ca).*





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# A SAFE SPOT FOR REMOTE LOCATIONS



Canadian farmers are big users of smartphones, more than the general population, according to a 2015 Ipsos Canada study. That should be no surprise. Aside from the regular uses for an array of ag-related apps, smartphones also provide a lifeline for many rural residents facing emergency situations.

But what of those who have no cellular service or only a weak signal across large swaths of their farms and ranches?

For Al and Bev Madley their answer for the past several years has been SPOT GPS Satellite Messenger that runs on the Globalstar satellite network. At the push of a button, the device sends a preprogrammed “I’m ok” message to their designated contacts for regular safety checks. Having



The SPOT GPS messenger provides a way for people out of cell range to check in.

this SOS button offers them some peace of mind by knowing that first responders could find them in an emergency.

The Madleys run their ranching and guiding businesses out of their home at Canyon Ranch near Alexis Creek, B.C. It’s a remote location with no access to cellular service. They have to drive a good hour and a half to the nearest town, Williams Lake, to be within range of a cellular network in this remote region of the B.C. interior.

The Madleys know their land well — the family has been stewarding this rugged range since the late 1800s — but, as Al says, anything can happen when you’re riding horseback, particularly after dark. Al or Bev and both of their two adult children, Garrett and Brooke, regularly ride out on the range alone to check on the cattle.

“We have tried satellite phones in the past but coverage was hit and miss,” says Al. “SPOT works without a hitch. In cloudy weather, cold weather, any time of year, from mountains, valleys, out on the ocean, a helicopter, the messages have always gone through. It’s foolproof.”

SPOT is a one-way messaging device with a built-in GPS chip and satellite modem. Contacts receive the OK message along with GPS co-ordinates by text and/or email. They can’t reply to the message, but at least they know the whereabouts of the person and that they are safe and sound.

Each OK-message includes a link to Google Maps so they can view the location. The GPS is accurate to within a couple of metres.

They also like the fact that each OK message is stored on their computer at home for future reference. This allows Al to record precise locations for spots to be avoided on Google Map, or places where extra caution is needed such as where a predator has made a kill.

“So SPOT marks where we are when we send an OK message and I hit OK every hour or two to check in. We discuss our daily plan in the morning and might discuss codes, like sending three OK messages, five minutes apart from the same location, to mean ‘I’m broke down, or stuck’ so I need assistance, but not medical,” he explains. “It is a useful device. We don’t have a texting model, or the newest one by any means, but have made it work for us.”

The SPOT messenger currently available is the SPOT Gen3, which has a built-in “assist/help” button. Pressing it sends the user’s pre-set custom message by text and email to contacts every five minutes for an hour or until cancelled.

The Gen3 model now features motion-activated tracking. When the tracking button is pressed, GPS co-ordinates are sent to the linked web-based SPOT account when the person is moving, and stop sending to conserve battery power when the person stops moving. The service plan for the tracking function allows users to select reporting intervals of 2.5, 5, 10, 30 or 60 minutes. Contacts with

*Continued on page 12*





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*Continued from page 10*

access to the user's account or the URL to a shared page are able to monitor the person's footsteps on the SPOT live map as they go. There is also a SPOT app for track viewing.

The Madleys are very thankful to not be among the 5,000-and-counting people worldwide, including more than 1,500 Canadians, who have had to use the SOS button.

This button is strictly for emergencies because the SOS with GPS co-ordinates goes directly to the GEOS International Emergency Response Coordination Center near Houston, Texas. The team at the emergency centre uses the GPS co-ordinates to find and dispatch the nearest emergency services to the site of the incident.

The connection with emergency headquarters is embedded in all SPOT messengers. Users program their contacts for safety check-ins and their custom message for assistance into their own web-based SPOT accounts ahead of time using any device connected to the internet. The contacts and message can be changed in the account as needed.

Along with their own email address, the Madleys have designated three contacts off the ranch with internet and/or cellular service who are familiar with their operation and trail networks. At least one of the outside contacts is almost always aware of their daily plan and watching for SPOT messages in case nobody from their own family is in the house to monitor the computer for messages.

Al's final and potentially life-saving tip is to carry the SPOT messenger on your person in an armband, belt clip, pocket or backpack because you may not be able to get to it in an emergency if it has been left behind in your saddle bag, truck or ATV.

## RELIABILITY

There are approximately 65,000 SPOT messengers in use in Canada.

Fintan Robb, senior marketing director with Globalstar Canada Satellite Co. at Mississauga, Ont., says the device is popular among outdoor recreation enthusiasts whose activities take them into areas with no cellular service or where the signals are too weak to be reliable. For this same reason, SPOT is also helping businesses meet provincial regulatory requirements and/or company policies for worker safety in remote locations.



Al Madley checks in with SPOT several times a day from remote pastures.

Remote, in this case, is more a matter of distance from a cell tower than working in faraway locations that people typically associate with industries such as forestry and energy. In agriculture, remote could be working in the corrals or bin yard on your home place if cell service can't be trusted, or out of range altogether in distant pastures and fields.

Speaking to the SPOT messenger's reliability, Robb explains that it's the combination of SPOT technology and Globalstar's upgraded satellite network that ensures dependability.

Globalstar launched 24 low-earth-orbiting satellites from 2010 through 2013 to complement the existing satellites launched in 2007. The satellites are placed to pick up signals from more than 80 per cent of the earth's land and water surface, orbiting at an altitude of 878 miles above the ground, whereas older technology orbits much higher.

System maintenance and repairs can be handled quickly because the software is now located on the ground at the gateways. These are where satellite dishes receive the messages with the GPS co-ordinates from the satellites and seamlessly switch them to the local communications network.

Every SPOT message and call from a Globalstar satellite phone is picked up by

several satellites to reduce the chance of dropped messages. Additionally, SPOT messengers have what Robb calls "built-in redundancy," meaning that the device sends messages multiple times. SOS messages are automatically sent every five minutes to the emergency response centre or until cancelled by the user.

SPOT Gen3 retails for around \$170 with the Globalstar service plan for each costing US\$200 annually as of this summer. Multiple units can be managed under one SPOT account to monitor check-in messages and tracking on a single map, he adds.

Satellite phones are an option for people who need to carry on two-way conversations, texting and emailing to conduct business from locations without cellular and internet connections. The phones, airtime and data plans cost more than a SPOT Gen3 with a service plan and don't offer the one-touch check-in, SOS and tracking features.

Globalstar's Sat-Fi modem is a relatively new offering for people in areas without internet service. It creates a satellite hot spot to connect tablets and computers to the internet as well as smartphones for calling, texting, and compressed browsing.

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# SOME DOS AND DON'TS WHEN TREATING CATTLE IN COLD WEATHER



This veterinarian keeps light oil handy on cold days for sticky catches and levers and a heater on the side of the hydraulic tank to keep the oil warm.

**I**nclement weather creates challenges when processing cattle, whether preg-checking, vaccinating or weaning in the fall, or giving cows pre-calving vaccinations, or delousing treatments in midwinter.

Dr. Eric Laporte of Nagel and Company Veterinary Services, Cow-Calf Health Management Solutions in Crossfield, Alta., says one of the main challenges in cold weather is keeping your vaccines from freezing.

Freezing inactivates modified-live vaccines so they lose their potency, and freezing the adjuvants in killed vaccines may create certain compounds that could actually make the animals sick. So there is a

need to keep vaccines at a safe temperature when working cattle.

Many people put a jar of warm water in the box or cooler with the vaccines and syringes to keep the temperature above freezing. "A friend told me about using containers that windshield-washer anti-freeze fluid comes in. They come in a box of four, so you can have four of those bottles that you partially fill with hot water. The All-flex multi-dose syringe guns fit in there perfectly; this can keep the vaccine in the syringes from getting too cold," says Laporte.

Others use heat lamps or electric blankets, but this may create spots that are too warm. Jugs of hot water keep the interior

of the cooler warm for quite a while and when they eventually cool down you just freshen the hot water.

"You could put a heating blanket underneath the cooler to keep the water warmer and the heat won't be directly on the gun," he says. If it gets too warm, the heat can start to kill the modified live virus.

You also need a container for your extra vaccine, a place where it can remain cool but not in danger of freezing.

In cold weather, needles freeze up too, so syringes need to be protected when not in use. The body heat of the animal usually thaws a frozen needle but it may take a second or two, and the plug of frozen



vaccine won't be viable if it was frozen for very long.

In some instances it may be best to thaw the needle first and push out a bit to ensure you have fresh vaccine in the needle, or just change needles.

"When vaccinating, we also don't want to forget to change to a new, clean needle every time we refill the syringes," says Laporte.

It's also important not to mix up more modified live vaccine than you will use within the next hour.

When mixing vaccines, you don't have to shake them aggressively. "You can just roll them between your hands to mix them," he adds.

Cold temperatures create a whole other set of challenges for pour-on dewormers or delousing products.

"The product will generally not be harmed by the cold, and some of them contain alcohol which will keep it from freezing. The product in suspension may gel, however, which can make it difficult to run through the tubing for application onto the animal. If it forms a gel, the product is fine, but it may plug the tube when trying to apply it."

When it is very cold the product may gel as it is applied to the hair, and that can affect how well it works. That, says Laporte, may be a sign that you would be better off to wait for a warmer day to treat. "If it stays in gel form for a while on the hair it might not be effective."

"You also don't want to apply these products to a wet animal. If cattle have a lot of snow or ice on their backs, take time to scrape that off, using something like a curry comb, then make sure you pour the product as close to the skin as possible. Then follow the directions and try to apply a long line from poll to tail head, and not just a puddle in the middle of the back."

If there is a lot of snow on the top rail of your running chute it would be wise to knock it off before you start to put the cattle through. Also, watch for ice on the walkway and the end of the squeeze chute. Some gravel or sand may be needed to ensure safe footing, particularly with concrete, which gets slippery in cold weather.

Frozen manure left in the chute can have some sharp edges until the cattle break it down, but the first few animals through may suffer a cut to their feet or legs, leaving them open to foot rot.

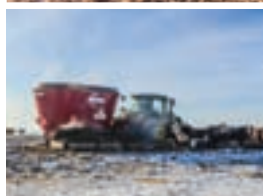
"We sometimes see injuries and lameness," says Laporte. "Manure buildup that freezes may also impair movement of gates that are low to the ground."

"I had an experience with a gate that was supposed to latch over a cross-bar at the bottom. There was so much manure accumulation down there that it couldn't close properly and a wild heifer put her nose down and popped the gate open. I was inside the chute palpating

the heifer in front of her and I was stuck between the two animals. She was determined to come on through, to get out of there!"

"I usually bring a few chains and if there is a side panel on the chute that opens I may chain it shut. The last thing I want is for it to open at an inopportune moment. If I am suspicious of the latch I make sure

*Continued on page 18*



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*Continued from page 15*

we have safety chains or pins. When cold, metal tends to be more brittle and some things may break,” he says.

He also suggests working a hydraulic chute beforehand to warm it up, same with the headcatch.

“Lighter grade oils can be used during cold weather. Here in Alberta it’s not uncommon to have cold weather when we are running cattle through, and it helps to have lighter oil and a magnetic heater to go on the side of the hydraulic tank to keep the oil warm. If the oil is cold it slows the chute and it won’t operate efficiently,” he says.

He says it pays to be patient when working cattle in cold weather to avoid stressing them.

“If you start overcrowding them, they

might get sweaty from stress and exertion and then chill when they go back to their pens or pastures. This may set them up for respiratory disease. Allow them adequate room and work more slowly. If you are bringing them in from a field that has hills and slopes, footing may be slippery so you don’t want them hurrying and falling down.”

It also pays to do your sorting ahead of time before you run them through the chute. “Some vets will charge extra while they are sitting there waiting for you to sort cows, so it’s a good idea any time of year to have that done already,” he says.

“If cattle balk and don’t want to move, it may be because of ice and snow or reflection off something that has them worried. We talk about minimizing use of electric prods, yet at the same time I don’t think a person should be standing

there striking the animal repeatedly with a cane. If you are beating animals with a plastic cane on their cold backs, it would be more humane to just give them a little snap with the prod to encourage them to move forward. If we are just using a cane or a paddle we still need to use it judiciously,” he says.

If cattle refuse to move forward, take a closer look at why they are balking. “In winter the sun angle is different. There may be a reflection off something they haven’t experienced before, or it may be bright everywhere but dark inside the snake leading to the chute, or the crowding tub. Don’t overload the crowding tub.”

## HUMAN COMFORT

When working for a long time on a cold day, Laporte says it’s nice to have some heat near the working chute. “I use a 20-pound propane tank with a heater mounted on top. I don’t advise using this for keeping vaccines warm, but it could be a source of heat for the people working at the chute, if they need a short break to warm their hands. If people are comfortable and not miserable they tend to take less shortcuts and do a better job. It also raises their spirits if someone has supplied donuts and hot coffee. Don’t forget to feed the volunteers!” says Laporte.

You may need extra lighting as well. “If it gets to be 5 o’clock and it’s already dark before you finish the last bunch and you can’t see what you are doing, it’s wise to have a generator and some extra fuel and some lights. This is when you are getting tired and just want to get done and if you can’t see very well you are not going to do a very good job.” You might make some mistakes and mix the wrong vaccines or fill the wrong syringes.

“We always assume the cattle will move forward but if it’s dark you may need a light at the back of the chute pointing forward so they can see where they are going, even in the snake if it’s dark in there and they don’t want to move ahead.”

“I always carry a battery-powered light and a head lamp because you never know what you might experience. Canadian Tire sells a really nice head lamp that’s very bright. It goes through batteries a little faster, but I’d rather carry extra batteries and have bright light than try to do things in the dark,” he says. 🍁



Cold weather doesn’t usually bother deworming or delousing products but they can be harder to apply properly if they start to gel, and it may hinder their effectiveness.



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# FINALLY, A SHIRT-POCKET TAG READER THAT TALKS TO YOUR SMARTPHONE

A smartphone tag reader and app that the Canadian Cattlemen's Association has had bubbling on the back burner for several years is being field-tested and could become commercially available next year.

Mark Klassen, the CCA technical director, says CCA has partnered with software developer Cannon Smith of Synergy Farm Solutions, Hill Spring, Alta., to take their "Herdly" iPhone app, and companion desktop software for Mac and Windows to market in time for the 2018 calving season. An app for Android phones will follow in time.

Cow-calf producers are currently testing a prototype tag reader developed in collaboration with researchers at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in Calgary.

Once the test phase is completed the CCA will approach manufacturers of such devices with a proposal for a partnership arrangement to commercialize the Herdly phone-linked reader.

In the meantime, the app and desktop software is being tested for use with wand readers. Once a tag number is scanned, or manually entered, the app can transmit the data directly to the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency's (CCIA) traceability database. When working in areas without cell coverage, the data is stored on the phone for later transmission.

"The design of the reader and app has taken into account the preferences of cow-calf producers," says Klassen.

Indeed, this entire project began as a search for simple answers to producer complaints about handling tag data, after former CCA president Travis Toews identified cost and difficulties uploading data to the CCIA's database as major issues standing in the way of a user-friendly traceability system.

As technology advanced, Klassen came to realize his best hope to find a solution was to design something from scratch with input from cattle producers. That became possible in 2014 when they received a grant from the former Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (now part of Alberta Agricul-



ture) to determine exactly what cattle producers needed to efficiently read ID tags.

Running with producers' ideas, the design team at SAIT developed a reader that attached to a smartphone. Using a smartphone to supply the microprocessor seemed the most feasible way to reduce the cost seeing this is the most expensive component in wand readers. And who doesn't carry a smartphone these days?

Smith, a former cow-calf producer turned custom software developer, drew up a software program and the prototype was ready for a test run.

Two hundred cow-calf producers across Canada gave the first prototype a passing grade but provided some suggestions for improvements.

Most said they would prefer to have a reader that connects wirelessly with a smart-

phone rather than one directly attached to the smartphone, to protect the phone.

Momentum was building in other quarters, too.

Smith partnered with the CCA to further develop the iPhone app and desktop software. His vision was to enable cow-calf producers to hold their ranch in their hand with all of their management and traceability information easily accessible at any time.

The Canadian Beef Breeds Council, Canadian Angus Association, Canadian Hereford Association, and Canadian Simmental Association lent their support to this project because they saw the potential for breeders transmitting herd data directly from their phone.

*Continued on page 21*



Continued from page 20

By 2016, with financial support from Alberta Agriculture, the team began building a fully functional hand-held reader that connects wirelessly to smartphones, along with the accompanying app for the phone and desktop software. This is the model cow-calf producers are currently testing.

Scott and Brandy Schiffner put it to work on their herd at Strathmore, Alta.

"There is a real need for a lower cost solution to help cow-calf producers with their verification requirements, including record-keeping for programs such as Verified Beef Production," says Brandy.

Scott likes the fact that the reader fits in his shirt pocket yet has the functionality and a read range close to a full-sized reader. He also likes the instant feedback he gets from a light and vibration that tells him a tag is successfully read. The vibration level can be increased when wearing work gloves.

Klassen says the current device can read a tag within six inches and transmits the number via Bluetooth at least 100 feet to the phone app. The reader itself is water resistant and has multiple points to attach a lanyard for easy handling.

Separating the reader and the phone helps keep the phone out of harm's way, but both can be operated independently. For example, one person could be scanning tags while another is in a nearby truck or building with the phone, which can be connected to a tablet or laptop.

The phone's camera can be used to attach a photo of the animal to its record. Enabling GPS will pin its location to the record as well.

All of the data on an animal stored in the smartphone is accessible onsite without cell or internet service. By syncing the phone app to the Cloud files are updated whenever the phone goes online, easing concerns about losing data when a phone is damaged or lost.

Another advantage to storing the data on the Cloud is that everyone on the farm authorized to use the app is able to enter or review the data day or night. Each user's phone is automatically updated with the most current information entered by other users.

The companion desktop software offers the option of working on a larger screen for those who want to do more with their information than transmit various events to the CCIA database to update traceability records.

Murry Toews of Bar T Cattle Co. was already convinced that there was no future for paper records in their cow-calf operation when he agreed to test the new smartphone reader.

"We can now enter the data once and then use the software to format it for multiple purposes," he explains.

What's next? Klassen says producers have indicated they would like a longer reading distance, say 20 feet. Even if the reader could be engineered to do that, it would require the use of ultra-high-frequency (UHF) tags capable of transmitting data over greater distances than the low-frequency (LF) tags currently approved for use in Canada's traceability system.

With an eye to future needs, the CCA is working toward developing a dual-mode reader for smartphones that would read UHF and LF tags for the time when UHF tags are approved for traceability, or for producers who want to use UHF tags for management records along with LF tags.

Updates on the Herdly app, software and tag reader will be posted on the CCA's web page at [www.cattle.ca/tech](http://www.cattle.ca/tech) as details become available. 🍁



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### PARTNERS



# PRODUCERS PAY ATTENTION TO BODY CONDITION

Everyone views it a bit differently, but manage for the proper body condition for their operation



Ross Macdonald uses condition scoring as a tool for selecting females suited to conditions on his south Saskatchewan ranch.

**B**eef producers across Canada appreciate the benefits of keeping cows and heifers and even feeder cattle in good condition, particularly over winter, for a variety of production and economic reasons.

With cold temperatures and winter rations it can take a lot of feed to improve animal condition over the winter feeding period, so many aim to have cattle in good shape heading into fall. Borrowing a bit from the Goldilocks school of management for optimum performance you don't want cattle too thin or too fat — it's recommended that somewhere in the middle is just right.

And what is good condition? Most produc-

ers understand the concept of Body Condition Scoring (BCS) — which on the Canadian BCS system ranks cattle on a scale from one to five (one being thin, five being fat). The U.S. has a wider scale ranking cattle on a scale of one to nine. There is plenty of good information on the internet describing body condition scoring. And the Beef Cattle Research Council has developed a video that explains the process: [www.beefresearch.ca/resources/videoaudio/videos.cfm](http://www.beefresearch.ca/resources/videoaudio/videos.cfm).

While each beef operation has a different approach, the message from producers is that it requires some management to keep cattle in proper condition for optimum performance, but it pays dividends.

**Darren Bevans**  
Deseret Ranches  
Raymond, Alta.

With largely a year-round grazing operation, Darren Bevans, general manager with Deseret Ranches in southern Alberta, says it requires more management to keep cattle in optimum condition, but allowing cattle to do most of the harvesting does save on feeding costs.

As a large commercial cow-calf operation, the ranch has followed a year-round grazing program for many years in the Chinook belt south of Lethbridge. Cow-calf pairs are on spring, summer and fall pasture right up until December and then



are moved to swath grazing in January. The ranch produces straight stands of oats and triticale to be cut for swath grazing.

"Once we get into late fall we monitor cattle very closely," says Bevans. All ranch employees are properly trained in condition scoring (BCS). Deseret Ranches follows the U.S. BCS system. They aim to keep cows and heifers in the mid-range, scoring about five. (That would be about a 2.5 to three score on the five-point Canadian BCS scale.)

The herd is monitored and visually scored "with a very practical applied system" every week during winter. If it appears that condition is slipping, particularly under severely cold and windy conditions, cattle are supplemented with good alfalfa hay.

"We just can't turn them out on swaths and assume they will do well," says Bevans. "That is a risky assumption. A wreck can happen very quickly. So we do have to watch it carefully, and supplement as needed. But compared to having cattle on full baled feed all winter it sure helps to reduce costs."

Cows and bred heifers are managed separately, he says. Bred heifers that are still growing themselves have higher nutrient requirements and may need more feed supplements over winter. "We could run the cows and heifers together but in meeting the feed requirements of the bred heifers, the cows might be overfed," he says. "So it saves on feed and costs to run them separately."

With their carefully managed system, cattle are in good condition for May calving and in good shape for rebreeding a few weeks later. "The reproductive performance is very good," says Bevans. "Like any ranch there is always room for improvement, but we have very healthy rates. But again, the whole system has to be properly managed because it doesn't take much to fall off the edge."

**Ross Macdonald**  
**98 Ranch Inc.**  
**Lake Alma, Sask.**

For the past dozen years, Ross Macdonald has focused on selecting cattle that perform best under the environmental conditions and feed resources they have on their southern Saskatchewan ranch.

Macdonald manages the 75 per cent native and 25 per cent tame forage pastures for a 10- to 11-month grazing season and selects, for lack of a better term, for "easy keeping" cattle. On the ranch south of Regina near the U.S. border, he runs a

small herd of purebred Hereford cattle, as well as a Hereford/Angus cross commercial herd. Cow-calf pairs are out on pasture until the Saskatchewan winter settles in, usually in late December and January. Animals are then moved onto a bale grazing system, closer into the yard where there is more shelter. Cows and heifers are managed as one herd. He buys all the hay for winter bale grazing — usually a blend of wheat-grass/alfalfa or meadow brome/alfalfa hay.

"We actually use the conditions here as part of our selection process to improve and build the herd," says McDonald. He monitors body condition of cattle closely in late fall and early winter. Anything that shows sign of slipping in condition is pulled out and eventually culled.

"December of 2016 was a good example," he says. Cows and heifers were still out on

*Continued on page 24*



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Producers across the country appear to have a flexible view of the ideal BCS for their herds.

*Continued from page 23*

pasture — on a good stand of stockpiled grass. Then came an early blast of winter.

“Once conditions settled down we evaluated the cattle and anything that had lost condition during that period was pulled out,” he says. Nothing was suffering, but any older cows or heifers that had slipped in condition were culled. He uses a visual body condition scoring system to evaluate cattle.

“What we are selecting for is those cattle that continue to do well on the feed we have available under the conditions we have in southern Saskatchewan,” says Macdonald. “We are looking for that handful of cattle that are genetically predisposed to do well on the least-cost forages we have available.” When they started building the herd about 16 years ago, they sought advice from other ranchers who had selected cattle to match ranch resources.

As cattle are on the early-winter stockpiled forage as well as on bale grazing, they also have access to protein mineral tubs and free-choice salt. The Macdonald herd begins calving in late May through June — about a 30-day calving period for heifers and 40 days for cows — with calves staying with their mothers until being fenceline weaned in February or March. He wants calves to be exposed to the protein tubs well before weaning so after weaning they are already familiar with the feed and supplements.

#### **Brian Pelleboer** *Wyoming, Ont.*

With a diversified farming operation, Brian Pelleboer says his biggest concern with his commercial cow-calf herd is to try to keep them from being over-conditioned.

Pelleboer, who farms with family members at Wyoming, about 40 minutes west of

London near the U.S. border, says in running beef cattle along with a dairy goat operation he’s developed a feeding synergy that benefits both classes of livestock. He also produces corn, soybean and wheat cash crops.

“My beef cattle do go out to pasture, but in reality they are on feed year-round,” he says. “I want a good fresh feed supply of haylage and corn silage in front of the milking goats each day. So the beef cows clean up the haylage and silage so I can give the goats fresh feed.”

Pelleboer currently runs a herd of about 75 head of Angus/Simmental/Gelbvieh cross beef cattle and is milking about 400 head of goats, although is looking to more than double that with an expansion of the goat dairy.

“This isn’t your traditional beef operation,” he says. “I don’t have to worry about cattle being under-condition. I have to watch that they don’t get over-conditioned.”

The livestock ration, which is fed as a total mixed ration (TMR), will vary depending on the time of year and availability of feed stuffs. It can include haylage, corn silage, ryelage, oatlage, or dry distillers grain, for example, as well as dry hay and straw.

“Many of the feeds or blends are way too strong for beef cattle so I have to look at slowing it down with hay or straw,” says Pelleboer. “But with the TMR I can put together anything I want.”

He doesn’t perform a formal body condition score on the beef herd, “but subconsciously I am always watching.” If cattle are showing signs of laying down too much fat, he backs off on feed quality. He’s aware of issues that can develop particularly at calving with over-conditioned cows. With a fall calving herd, the cows aren’t getting as much exercise, the cow might be fat, and on the high-quality ration that unborn calf has also been growing and can be big, so all factors can lead to difficulty.

Pelleboer does want cows to produce a decent sized calf, because he will be raising calves to finish in about 14 months.

Over-conditioning isn’t a concern among replacement heifers as they are maintained on rented summer pasture. Although he has to manage carefully to prevent over-conditioning in the beef cattle, he says conception rates are very good. Many of the cows over a 12-month period are calving twice so they are breeding back in a timely manner.

#### **Jack McCoubrey** *London-area, Ont.*

Jack McCoubrey says his “high production” Simmental and Angus cowherd performs very well on the high side of body condition.

With a fall calving season that begins in mid-October, those cows with calves at their side will overwinter partly on corn stalk grazing and, later, on a sweet corn waste and hay in total mixed ration. Then they go out to pasture first week of May the following spring and wean 800-900-1000 pound-plus calves come mid-August. And cows are maintained at a pretty consistent 5.5 to six body condition score.

“I like looking at my cattle and I like looking at something that has some appeal,” says McCoubrey who farms in Middlesex County just west of London. The 60-head cow herd, that is out on native grass pasture most of the summer, has the genetics designed to maintain their condition.

McCoubrey has been developing the herd since 1994. He produces seedstock of both red and black Simmental and Angus, and has also developed a market for crossbred bulls and replacement heifers.

The cow herd is out on spring, summer and fall pasture until about November 1 and then moves in to clean up about 200 acres of corn stalks. The herd is brought into the yard in about mid-January and put on a TMR ration including sweet corn waste, second-cut hay and/or straw for about 150 days.

Even though body condition is on the high side of what some research recommends he says the herd doesn’t have an issue with calving difficulty or conception rates, targeting a 45- to 50-day calving interval.

#### **Nathan Phinney** *Sackville, N.B.*

Looking at the overall benefit to the New Brunswick beef industry, Nathan Phinney says it is important for beef producers to



## MANAGEMENT

pay attention to keeping animals in good condition, and managing grazing systems to optimize rates of gain.

Phinney, who is a fourth-generation beef producer, says as he owns and manages a 2,000-head backgrounding and custom feeding operation, it isn't hard to tell the difference between cattle that have been managed in good condition and those that haven't.

"When you buy cattle you can just tell the calves that are 200 to 250 pounds lighter haven't had the same management as those that come in the sale ring at 550 to 600 pounds," he says. "And for many producers in this part of the country it is about learning to do a better job with pasture management."

Phinney says producers in New Brunswick and other parts of Atlantic Canada are moving away from season-long grazing practices and just learning to develop more intensively managed grazing systems, which can improve condition and rates of gain on both cows and calves.

"With our summer growing conditions in New Brunswick we can handle a stocking rate at a ratio of 1:1 (animal/per acre) over the grazing season," he says. "So we have that potential and natural advantage. We are just starting to see more cross fencing used and more intensive grazing systems used. With improved management those calves and cows can come off pasture with heavier weights and in better condition, without supplementation. And that's a benefit to the whole beef production chain."

He says he would like to see the New Brunswick beef industry develop to be able to supply more of the regional beef demand. 🇳🇸

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# THE BOVIGLO BOOST



Harold Unrau looks in on his brother's feedlot where Boviglo is given on arrival and in the ration for the first 90 days on feed. PHOTO: KAREN EMILSON

**T**he results of a backgrounding and finishing trial at Lethbridge Research Centre appear to reflect what producers who supplement their cattle with Boviglo have been seeing over the past year or two.

Harold Unrau of HU Livestock at Grunthal, Man., took on the Western Canada distributorship of Boviglo and Eberglo because Boviglo is the first supplement he has seen in his 25 years of feeding cattle that contains a complete lineup of prebiotics and probiotics, vitamins, minerals and plant enzymes that work to build immunity first and then promote gut health.

The all-natural ingredients in Boviglo are in readily available forms for quick absorption. The 12 vitamins are water-soluble; the minerals are chelated; the plant enzymes are naturally occurring from barley extracts; and the prebiotics and probiotics derived from *Lactobacil-*

*lus acidophilus* are in a fermented, dormant state. The guaranteed analysis is available on his website.

During the initial on-farm demonstration in Western Canada at his brother's custom feedlot, Rocking U Feeders near MacGregor, Man., one of the first changes they noticed was that calves that received an oral dose of Boviglo at processing on arrival went to water right away.

It could be the taste, Unrau says, but whatever the reason, rehydration of tissues and blood cells is the all-important first step in mending the effects of stress from weaning, transport, commingling and new surroundings. When calves drink, they eat and when they are eating they are much less likely to get sick.

Fewer calves showed signs of digestive problems, such as diarrhea, when Boviglo was added to the daily feed, suggesting that it helps smooth the transition from milk

and fresh forages to the unfamiliar feedlot ration. Most calves started gaining right away, which is another good sign that the digestive system is functioning as it should to make the best use of nutrients in the feed.

When weak calves that received Boviglo on arrival and in their feed did go downhill, they perked up right away when given an antibiotic to treat overall illness, he adds. They saw fewer re-treats, chronics and deaths among calves on Boviglo.

The ingredients in Boviglo were selected by Eli Ebersol, a horse breeder from Milverton, Ont., and Murray Bast, founder of Bio-Ag Consultants and Distributors of Wellesley, Ont., who set out to formulate a supplement to improve the overall vitality of Ebersol's horses. Bast fine-tuned the formula and their first product, Eberglo, was licensed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for horses in 2013 and for swine and poultry



in 2016. Boviglo was formulated along the same line specifically for ruminants and licensed in 2015. Both products are made at the Bio-Ag facility and distributed in Canada and the U.S. under the Nature's Wave banner.

### STICKING WITH IT

Norman Unrau continues to use Boviglo at Rocking U Feeders and in his cow-calf operation.

Newly weaned calves receive an oral dose of 10 ml of Boviglo on arrival and he mixes it at a rate of five ml per head per day in the total mixed ration (TMR) for the first 90 days on feed. The pull rate is about half of what he'd expect when following his usual protocol calling for an injection of antibiotic on arrival for high-stress calves. During the first 90 days, the calves on Boviglo held their own and then gained better than those not receiving Boviglo.

When he ups Boviglo to 20 ml on arrival and eliminates the antibiotic, the pull rate is about the same as with the use of antibiotic. The deciding factor is that it's a lot more economical to bump up Boviglo than to give an antibiotic.

His feedlot veterinarian suggested that with all of the vitamins in Boviglo, it would be okay to eliminate the usual vitamin A/D and selenium shots on arrival as well.

On the cow-calf side, he has done away with the same two needles when he gives each newborn five ml of Boviglo in the mouth at tagging. Of the 380 calves born this spring, only one calf was treated for scours and two for coccidiosis, in which case he doubles the dose for two days in a row.

Boviglo has also been very effective and economical for treating cows with retained placentas. The cleanings are expelled within 36 hours of receiving an 80 ml oral dose.

"It all boils down to gut health. With a balance of vitamins and minerals and fed the right things, the body has a better chance to heal what's gone wrong. These calves are bouncing back from things we fought for years," Norman says.

"I've lived with cattle all my life and I can see these things change in front of my eyes so, yes, I am pleased with the results all around on health and gains. I think it's working and it is cheaper than antibiotics. I've really noticed we are using less antibiotics and without a needle that has to be better."

Sid Wilkinson at Wilkinridge Stock Farm near Ridgeville, Man., runs purebred Maine-Anjou and Red Angus and was one

of the first beef producers out west to try this new product in 2015.

It was the semen test results after starting the bulls on Boviglo partway through that first winter that really caught his attention. They had better averages, measured better and a higher percentage passed on the initial test.

Last year, he fed Boviglo to all of the bulls and replacement heifers starting from weaning when he mixed it with the

grain, and continuing with it through winter by mixing it with the corn silage in the feed wagon.

The calves had very few health issues at weaning last year, which he says could very well be attributed to Boviglo and, or picking a period of good weather between rains for weaning.

He also gives an oral dose of seven ml

*Continued on page 28*

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Warren Graydon gives Boviglo to his newborn calves and now feeds it at weaning time as well.

PHOTO: KAREN EMILSON

## ► RESEARCH

### Boviglo shows positive results

A nine-month feeding trial at Lethbridge Research Centre shows that average daily gain (ADG) during the 110-day backgrounding period for steers that received Boviglo was 1.11 kilograms per day (kg/d). This was a bit better than that for the control group and a little less but not statistically different from the group that received an implant and the group that received an implant plus antibiotic and Monensin in the feed. All groups received vaccinations but no injection of antibiotics on arrival.

During the 112-day finishing trial, the ADG of 1.64 kg/d for the Boviglo group was right in line with that for the steers that received the implant plus antibiotic and better than that of the control and implant-only groups.

It took another 44 days for the steers to finish to slaughter weight. From the start of the finishing trial to day 156, the ADG for the Boviglo steers was 1.53 kg/d and they finished out at 671 kg. The control group gained 1.47 kg/d finishing out at 657 kg. The implant-only group averaged 1.40 kg/d finishing at 677 and the implant-plus antibiotic group gained 1.46 kg/d finishing at 676 kg.

While the difference in the final numbers isn't statistically significant in scientific terms, the 14-kg difference in final weights between the control and Boviglo steers would be significant for cattle feeders, explains ruminant nutrition research scientist WenZhu Yang.

Yang says this is really positive for beef producers because they could very well see more improvement with the use of Boviglo in commercial settings where conditions can be quite variable and challenging compared to the ideal, controlled conditions of the research setting with each of the 15 animals in the four treatment groups housed in its own pen.

The length of this study reinforces the positive findings, he adds, confirming that there were no detrimental effects associated with Boviglo.

There were no real differences in carcass quality, except the marbling score for the Boviglo steers was a bit better. Likewise, there were no important differences in the liver scores, manure analysis or blood tests, other than Boviglo had somewhat of a positive antioxidant effect.

*Continued from page 27*

of Boviglo to any spring calves that look off or slow and those treated for scours or pneumonia.

When treating an older animal, such as a cow that hasn't cleaned after calving, he simply mixes Boviglo with its individual silage ration.

"Boviglo is an all-natural product, but we don't have anything against antibiotics. We just try to do as many things right as we can to keep our cattle healthy. When the rumen is working, they get the full value of what they eat and their general health will be better," Wilkinson says.

Also near Ridgeville, Warren Graydon, runs his dad's Walking Plow Charolais herd with his own commercial herd and has put Boviglo to the test in almost every way possible over the past two years.

Graydon's interest in the product stemmed from a scours problem in spring 2015 when he gave it a try, but didn't use it full out. Now he faithfully gives each calf five ml of Boviglo in the mouth after it has had colostrum. Any calf that show signs of being off gets a 25 ml oral dose to bring the gut back into balance.

In his experience, Boviglo does boost immunity because the treatment rate for scours dropped from around 12 per cent in past years to four per cent and this spring, only four calves had to be treated. Of those, only one ended up having to be given antibiotic and fluids intravenously.

"It doesn't work on everything, but when I look at the cost of an IV treatment plus the trouble of having to bring the mom into the barn versus Boviglo, even if Boviglo doesn't work it only costs me \$1.25 for the 25 ml to give it a try," Graydon says.

He has also done away with the traditional routine for newborns, which costs about \$9.50 per calf for the BioMycin, vitamin A/D, selenium and Vitamaster injections. Now the calves receive their Boviglo orally and only selenium by injection. On pasture, he continues to provide Deccox with diatomaceous earth for the calves to help control coccidiosis.

All of the feeder heifers, steers and bull calves receive Boviglo in a total mixed ration throughout the winter. Free-choice minerals are available year-round and the ration topped off with Boviglo to feed the rumen bugs to make better use of the minerals and feed ingested, he explains.

*Continued on page 30*



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## FEEDING



Sid Wilkinson was one of the first in Manitoba to use Boviglo on his herd.

PHOTO: KAREN EMILSON

*Continued from page 28*

Graydon claims Boviglo also seems to have a calming effect on those cows that lose all respect for people after calving. It's easy to mix 25 ml into a bucket of water and after two waterings the difference in temperament is noticeable. By the next day, he feels at ease watering and feeding as usual.

He also appreciates the long shelf life of the product without the need for refrigeration. He buys his supply in five-gallon containers each fall and stores them in a heated room in the barn. Boviglo can withstand temperature fluctuations, but letting it freeze solid could damage the live plant enzymes.

"Boviglo is definitely not a snake oil, but it's not a miracle cure for everything. It definitely has its place. I won't quit using it because it is relatively inexpensive and so far it is working for me," says Graydon.

GENEX representative Allan Malenko of Winnipeg says a dozen of his dairy customers have started using Boviglo within the past year since GENEX became a dealer.

Typically, each calf receives three ml per day in its milk for the first 30 days and then again for a couple of weeks leading up to weaning when the calf moves into group housing. At that point a measured amount of Boviglo is hand sprayed onto the total mixed ration in the feed bunk each day. Overall, Malenko says, these dairy clients report the calves have shinier hair coats and seem more aggressive in that they drink more and eat more.

It is also used on show cattle. Oftentimes it's difficult to convince cattle to drink city water, but an oral dose of 15 to 20 ml of the supplement before leaving seems to keep them drinking and eating.

Unrau continues to add retailers across the West and the list is available on the website at [www.hulivestock.com](http://www.hulivestock.com), or contact him at 204-871-0250.

The list of dealers in Eastern Canada and the U.S. is available on [www.natureswave.ca](http://www.natureswave.ca), or by calling 1-800-591-9404. 🍁

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# THE ECONOMICS BEHIND BALE GRAZING



**I** started bale grazing in 1999 and have had many producers over the years thank me for sharing my bale grazing information with them. The usual comment is that they will never go back to the traditional method of feeding cattle. For me, bale grazing was a no-brainer once I looked at the cost savings.

I want to look at the economics today, but let's first define bale grazing. There are a few different ways to bale graze; however, the key to any type of feeding is to reduce the yardage cost. Waste is usually such a small cost compared to yardage. Yardage costs can be a lot harder to see than the visible "waste" that's left behind by the cows.

Some years, I place most of my winter supply of hay across a pasture in the fall like a checkerboard. The truckers deliver it right out onto my pasture and I only have to spread the bales out across the paddock. I calculate out for the number of cows and the pounds per day and the number of days required and try to put that many bales per row. The twine is removed in the fall when the weather is nice and the twine is not frozen. I then ration off a four- or five-day supply of feed using an electric wire for the entire winter. I am providing stored hay to the cattle but I am strip grazing them through the paddock. Some would argue that bale grazing is not really grazing. You can decide after you have finished reading this.

Other years it works out best for me to purchase hay from a local producer who is willing to deliver the hay with their own tractor and wagon. I pay them to deliver it, but instead of stacking it in a hay yard, they unload out in my pasture for me. With this

method, I never touch the bales with a piece of equipment. I usually get them to place a five-day supply of bales in each paddock on end. They are placed on end because in the wintertime, the twines are a bit easier to pull when frozen with ice on them than if they were placed on their sides. The neighbour will usually deliver once a month or whenever it is convenient for them. They just keep moving across the paddocks that we have already grazed to spread the fertility. If I can use five or six paddocks, I can have quite a few weeks worth of feed delivered at a time.

Let's look at the economics now. There are two types of costs when feeding livestock. The first is the actual cost of the feed (hay and delivery) and the second is the yardage costs. Yardage is the labour and equipment costs that occur in the act of feeding (time, fuel, repairs, depreciation and opportunity costs).

I look at things a little differently than what a lot of people teach. The market sets the price for the hay and it may change from year to year. Most people would call this a variable cost, but I disagree. I can't control it, so I believe that cost to be fixed. I cannot control this and have to pay market value. Yardage is usually considered a fixed cost in most teachings, yet I have the ability to change it! So to me this is my variable cost. I don't mean to confuse things but I want to prove a point. Just because someone calls it a fixed cost does not mean that you cannot change it on your farm. You can control your yardage.

I've spent years trying to figure out how to reduce my yardage costs. I am usually under 10 cents per cow per day with bale grazing. According to the statistics, the average yardage on an Alberta farm is about 70 cents/

head/day. Yardage is traditionally quite complicated to figure out because a lot of your business overhead costs should be included — fuel, repairs, etc. To simplify yardage, I charge out my equipment at a reasonable hourly rate of \$75/hour. That should cover all of the fuel, repairs, labour, depreciation and opportunity costs associated with that equipment. Let's say you have 120 head and it takes one hour a day to feed them. One hour at \$75/hour divided by 120 head gives you a yardage cost of \$0.63/head/day (remember the average in Alberta is \$0.70). Now add in the \$1.25 for feed costs, (plus or minus depending on that crazy fixed/variable cost dictated by your market) and you end up with \$1.88/head/day.

Be honest with yourself. Time yourself from the time you turn the key to when you turn it off again. The true cost of feeding includes both your feed costs and your yardage costs. Throw in your numbers and see what you get.

Now with bale grazing, I have the bales delivered right to the field. If I place bales with my bale truck at 100 bales/hour (\$75/100 = \$0.75/bale), I hire students to pull twine at 35 bales/hour (\$15/35 = \$0.43/bale) and I need to feed three bales a day (120 cows x 35 lbs./day = 4,200 lbs./1,400 lbs. bales = 3 bales/day. I also spend about two hours a week moving electric fence. In a week I need to feed 21 bales so two hours x \$25/21 bales = \$2.38/bale. A total of \$3.56/bale x 3 bales a day/120 cows. Total yardage of \$0.09/head per day, \$1.25 for the feed plus \$0.09 gives me \$1.34. The more cows I feed, the lower this yardage can get. Is that as clear as mud?

The biggest concern for most producers is the thought of all of that wasted feed;



however, when fed in the right spot, it is not a waste at all. And once you have had some practice and get better at bale grazing there's very little "waste" anyway. No more than using a bale ring. At Greener Pastures, every day that a dry cow is bale grazed with imported feed, I charge out \$0.30/head/day in fertilizer costs to my grazing profit centre, payable to my feeding profit centre. That is the fertilizer value that I calculated benefits my pastures.

So is my feed cost \$0.30 cheaper than I think ( $\$1.25 - \$0.30 = \$0.95/\text{head/day}$  plus yardage)? You decide. I have seen the pasture improvement. I have seen the production of a paddock covered by bale grazing more than double the following year compared

to an non-bale grazed paddock. And that improvement continues on for years.

Let's look at the "waste." I want to leave some feed on the ground. That is the whole point, as I want to give the pasture extra water-holding capacity and added nutrients. Water is by far the most limiting nutrient that our soils need. This is the big benefit that bale grazing can provide to your pastures. For the \$0.54 I can save on yardage, I can waste a lot of feed and still be ahead economically. Even if I waste 15 per cent of the bale (which I think is quite high), that only costs me about \$0.20 cents/head/day in waste. ( $1,300 \text{ lbs.} \times 15\% = 195 \text{ lbs.} \times 3 \text{ bales} = 585 \text{ lbs.}$  at  $\$0.04/\text{lb.} = \$23.40$  divided by 120 cows =  $\$0.20/\text{head/day}$ .)

But that \$0.20 is fertilizer for the next five to

10 years (and does not include all the manure and urine that is also added to the soil). This is assuming we waste no feed with our alternative method of feeding, something that we all know is not at all the case. Let's see, 120 cows at \$0.30/head/day for 200 days equals \$7,200 worth of fertilizer value. *For Free*. Multiply that by at least five years and you have \$36,000 worth of fertility added to your pastures. It was only a management decision that caused it. Like I said, a no-brainer! ★

Steve Kenyon runs Greener Pastures Ranching Ltd. in Busby, Alta., [www.greenerpasturesranching.com](http://www.greenerpasturesranching.com), 780-307-6500, email [skenyon@greenerpasturesranching.com](mailto:skenyon@greenerpasturesranching.com) or find them on Facebook.

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# COMPETITIVE CATTLE FEEDING AGREEMENTS

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Proper custom feeding agreements protect both the client and the feeder, says risk management specialist Bruce Viney.

**P**eople looking to place cattle with custom feeders are motivated to get the best deal on rates. That's the nature of the business — they need to bank a return on their investment in the cattle to stay in business.

It's equally important for custom feeding and grazing operators to see a return on their labour and investment, and yet some custom operators sell their services short accepting cost-per-pound-of-gain (COG) agreements that leave them struggling to stay afloat, says Bruce Viney, a risk management specialist with Alberta Agriculture for 12 years before taking a position this summer as director of the rural utilities section.

A custom operator's ace in the hole is the ability to manage production risk. Viney says experienced cattle-feeding clients know how to use all of the tools to manage price risk, but they have no control

over production risk beyond their choice of where to place the cattle. They totally depend on custom operators to take care of the production side and even though they will squeeze for the lowest possible COG, most investors do know the value of production risk management.

"If there is one thing you can do for clients, it is to better manage production risk and you'll be one step ahead of the competition. How, is by making better cost-of-gain and yardage estimates and better forecasting. I say better, because there is always room for improvement," Viney explains.

"Risk is defined as 'uncertainty that matters.' Uncertainty about feed conversion and average daily gain and death loss are things that matter to clients," he says. At the end of the day, they want results close to your initial forecast, acceptable death loss, and the highest-value cattle

that have the weight and flesh conditions to hit their target market.

"What clients don't want is bad surprises," he stresses. Be conservative in your forecasts, spend time analyzing interim performance data and keep in touch with your clients to reduce the risk of having to deliver bad surprises at the end of the feeding period.

Agriculture is different from other stock and commodity markets where price volatility is the measure of price risk. In agriculture, volatility is only part of price risk where predictability and prediction-error are another important measure. The theory is that if the future price can be accurately predicted then the pen of cattle should be low risk.

The same logic can be applied to production risk. If, for example, you use your best knowledge to predict COG and death loss, then the pen of cattle should be low risk.



On the other hand, the very common practice of asking neighbours or others in the industry to try to get a handle on a going COG rate for custom feeding might work for your clients, but it's risky business if it doesn't happen to cover your needs.

Knowing your goals, financial position, and cost of production underpins custom feeding agreements that are in the best interest for you and your clients whether you use a COG or cost-plus formula. It's about meeting or exceeding expectations to build relationships and trust, Viney sums up.

### COST OF PRODUCTION

The Ranchers Risk and Return (RRR) calculator, a free download from Alberta Agriculture's website, works equally well for custom feeding operations to figure out cost of production and break it down into cost per pound of gain.

Following are some of the tips covered in Viney's 2017 publication, *Business Fundamentals for Better Feeding Agreements*, which includes example tables from the RRR calculator and outlines points that should be covered in COG and cost-plus agreements.

Start by importing your expenses from your accounting program. If yours is a grain and cattle operation, use your best judgement to decide on enterprise splits for each expense line. For example, if you designate wages as 60 per cent for cropping operations and 40 per cent for feeding operations, the calculator will split the total wage expense accordingly and show the dollar value transferred to the yardage calculation. Expenses related to growing and landing hay, silage, and grain in the feed yard need to be split out to the cropping side to calculate feed costs in a later step.

The yardage calculation is based on your entries for the number of animals you plan to feed and days on feed. Line expenses transferred from the financial statement include items such as fuel, machinery repairs, building/corral repairs, utilities, custom and consultant work, paid labour and benefits, interest on operating and capital loans, taxes/licences/insurance, non-paid management, equipment and building depreciation. The calculator breaks each expense into dollars per head for the feeding period and dollars per

head per day to arrive at totals for each of these columns.

It's not wrong to include the cost of bedding, veterinary/medical and other services in the base yardage amount, but these consumable types of expenses are most often added when the prices for them can be better estimated at the time of making an agreement.

Death loss and medical expenses are significant risks in forecasting, and working through some what-if scenarios will give you a better understanding of those risk levels. Your past records are a starting point, but it's important to know the source of the cattle and a potential client's reputation. It's best to make reasonable forecasts on the high side to reduce the odds of having those bad surprises.

The feed cost calculation begins with knowing feed quality and cattle type to formulate the rations.

Clients need to tell you the type and quality of cattle they plan to place with you and what they expect for average daily gain (ADG). From this, you will be able to forecast dry-matter conversion.

*Continued on page 38*

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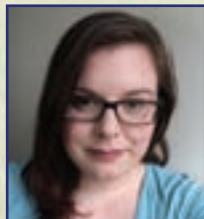


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Continued from page 35

Let clients know right away if the calves that arrive aren't what they said they would be. All new arrivals should be weighed after they've had time to eat and drink. Ask your clients for pay weights for comparison and consider rejecting stressed cattle with shrinks over three per cent because they are likely to be poor doers right off the bat that could add up to a bad surprise for your client at the end of the feeding period.

CowBytes, a ration-balancing program available for \$50 from Alberta Agriculture, is great for initial feed-cost budgeting.

"Play around with it and learn from it," Viney says, "but never ever bypass the services of a nutritionist to fine-tune the ration. They can shave pennies off the cost of gain and can help manage health and performance risks."

Forecasting performance is the biggest risk when estimating COG and many nutritionists have firsthand knowledge of the relationships between ADG, dry-matter conversions, types of cattle, and feedlot systems.

Again, run what-ifs for possible gain and conversion to decide whether a client's proposed COG rate is high enough to account for some of the bad what-ifs.

RRR will calculate the feed cost per pound of gain from your entries for all feed ingredients in the ration, prices for each, moisture contents and amounts to be fed.

The final step adds together feed costs, base yardage costs and other charges, giving you the grand total and breaking that down into dollars per head for the feeding period, dollars per head per day, and the dollars per pound of gain.

The cost and performance summary table includes your feedlot break-even per pound fed.

"If you can accurately forecast all of these things, you are doing your client a good service," Viney says.

The calculator does get into financial risk management with a price and profit forecast table that requires entries for futures, exchange rate and basis to predict a market price per pound, break-even futures price, maximum purchase price of calves to break even, and hedgeable profit. These are important if you are buying calves or pen sharing with a client to decide on price insurance or hedging strategy.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

Cost-plus agreements, with clients paying the actual cost of feed, yardage and other fees regardless of weight gained, are often used by full-service feedlots with equipment to weigh feed and cattle and because the owners tend to have their cost of production pinned down.

## ► SEVEN STEPS

# Backed by a business plan

Former Alberta Agriculture risk management specialist Bruce Viney spoke with heart at the Western Canadian Feedlot Management School earlier this year telling about his own experiences in cattle feeding as he covered points from his new publication, *Business Fundamentals for Better Feeding Agreements*.

He got his start as a cattle feeder when he leveraged scholarship money he had earned for his studies in agriculture business management to get a loan from the cattle feeder association and have his first pen of cattle fed at a custom yard. He and his wife went on to own and operate a grain and cow-calf farm for 16 years, custom fed cattle for a while, and he remains active as an investor placing cattle in custom yards.

He discussed risk management from the perspective of the seven things successful farm managers do as identified in a 2015 survey commissioned by Farm Management Canada.

Successful managers never stop learning. On the whole, he'd say the beef industry is pretty good at this with many organizations putting on events, providing resources, and being active on social media.

He feels cattle feeders are right up there on the second point of seeking

help from advisers and consultants, such as veterinarians, nutritionists and accountants. These connections and even those with clients are learning opportunities as well.

Where producers start to fall short is on point three: writing down a business plan, following it and reviewing it annually. This might seem like a daunting task at first with financial, production and risk management aspects alongside interrelated parts that might include environmental, safety, animal care, sustainability and succession plans.

Successful managers know their cost of production and what it means to their profits. The beauty of spreadsheet-style programs available today is that they make easy work of running what-if scenarios to see the differences that changes in input costs and market prices would make to your bottom line. Weigh one thing against another and think about alternatives when trimming costs, he advises. Labour, for example, is the top expense at many custom yards, but if you cut a staff position, what would that mean for demand on your time or for animal health and death loss?

Tied to that, successful managers do risk assessments and strategize on ways to manage business (financial) and

production risk, taking into consideration uncertainties that can't be accurately predicted such as weather and trade issues, and always with an eye on ways to seize opportunities.

They develop budgets and financial plans and they keep their books up to date and use their own numbers to make business decisions.

"All of this can be rolled into a business plan," Viney says. "This is something you can do yourself. Take a three-ring binder with a divider for each section and start with the basics. It doesn't have to be done in a day. Get started on it and it gets easier as you go. You might need help from your accountant for bits and pieces, but most of it comes from you — your vision, goals, strategies, opportunities, what you want for your family and employees, your financial statements and performance records. These are absolutely critical to convince yourself, your partners and bankers that you are going to make money. Use your advisers, ask questions, keep learning, do your business plan."

Be clear on your vision, goals and priorities, he adds. This first part of your business plan might seem rather touchy-feely, but it is so important to guide your business decisions during the best of times and the worst of times.



Viney says COG agreements are very common among smaller feeding operations because they are easy and don't require sophisticated on-farm equipment. The downside is that the client transfers all of the performance risk to the feeder. Operators who don't know their own true cost of production to cover that risk in the rate they charge can easily be left on the short end of the stick.

He knows many of those horror stories, but says there are also many success stories. Here are a few additional tips for establishing positive relationships and better feeding agreements.

Keep accurate feed and production records to help improve future forecasting and settle disputes that may arise.

Learn from your successes and failures. Don't waste time on clients who don't appreciate your good work. Figure out your cutoff line and if a COG rate proposed by a client; isn't going to cover your costs and the production risk you are taking on for the client, there's always the option of letting some pens sit empty and waiting for a better opportunity. Better

yet, go out for business by arming yourself with records of past results and approaching potential new clients.

Agreements should be simple and straightforward. If you need a lawyer to assess a client's proposal so be it, but instead you might be better off looking for a new client.

Do consult with your lawyer about technicalities if there is a possibility that a client will default on feed bills and if a client asks you to sign off on rights under your province's animal/livery/stable-keepers act to comply with a lender's conditions. Viney recommends not waiving your rights because these acts provide a way to recover costs of boarding, feeding and caring for another person's livestock in the event of payment default. There are various types of waivers in use by feeder associations and your lawyer will be able to advise you on the most suitable option or alternatives.

Keep communication lines open. Aside from letting your clients know incoming weights on their cattle and sending your feed bills out on time, stay in touch by occasionally giving them a call.

Attention to detail helps build client confidence. The state and cleanliness of the bunks, watering bowls, penning, feed storage, handling and hospital areas, equipment and even your offices will leave a lasting impression with clients. Always pay attention to drainage to prevent buildup of ice and mud, which cattle owners take very seriously because of its negative impact on performance.

Clean and well-maintained can have limits when it comes to equipment because seeing too much old equipment in use could shake clients' confidence. On the flip side, they know that a lot of new equipment means higher costs that will ultimately be passed their way. Try to strike a balance between keeping up with capital improvements and not stretching your finances too thinly.

The quickest way to find *Business Fundamentals for Better Feeding Agreements*, the Rancher's Risk and Return calculator, and the CowBytes ration balancing program is to search for them by name, or call the Alberta Ag-Info Centre at 403-742-7901. 🇨🇦



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# BRSV (BOVINE RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS) IS A DEADLY VIRAL CAUSE OF PNEUMONIA

**I** am sure most cattlemen have had the odd diagnosis of BRSV in their herds over the years, either individual animals or outbreaks, generally in cattle under one year of age.

BRSV is suspected with pneumonias that do not respond to antibiotics or produce lots of fluids and frothing as well as runny eyes. Temperatures can be very high and these cases are often acute. In the feedlot they often appear as sudden deaths with the post-mortem diagnosis providing the final answer.

On the post-mortem the veterinarian will often find various levels of edema and emphysema throughout the entire lung. Once we see how quickly it comes on and the damage the lungs undergo it is not surprising that mortality is so high.

Usually it is more evident in the fall with the stress of weaning or during times when temperatures flit below or above freezing leading to pulmonary edema (fluid in the lungs), thus providing a great medium for the virus to grow. Stress from weather changes or poor ventilation can also bring on BRSV. Morbidity can range up to 10 per cent to 20 per cent but generally only a few cases are seen at one time.

The vast majority of our vaccination programs include BRSV as one of the key viral components, which means most calves should get an initial vaccination at two to three months of age followed by a second dose at or before weaning. This is included in the classical preconditioning shots.

Cows are often boosted annually in a viral program that also includes IBR, BVD, and PI3. As with all vaccination programs increased stress or exposure to the organism can still result in disease. Five-way vaccines also contain BRSV, so cows on this program should pass some colostral immunity off to the calves.

In these cases where the herd is previously vaccinated, especially with BRSV, I always feel there is a greater likelihood of saving the calf.

The BRSV virus is very sensitive so even though one suspects it as a cause of sick-

ness, a veterinarian may be unable to get a positive confirmation from lab tests. Experienced veterinarians will make their diagnosis based on clinical signs, and gross autopsy findings, if they do a post-mortem. I always say to veterinarians and producers, if it acts and looks like BRSV, there is a very good chance that's what it is.

Treatment is much more frustrating as we often see some of these cases during the cattle show season when cattle are being watched intently and producers notify us within a few hours of sickness appearing. With BRSV causing damage so quickly, you treat the symptoms with anti-inflammatory drugs to reduce the inflammation and the fever.

**The advent of many anti-inflammatory drugs has gone a long way to helping you and your veterinarian treat BRSV cases but prevention remains our primary goal**

I have had success using antihistamines as well as diuretics to try and reduce the fluid in the lungs. Antihistamines help dry out the lungs and make breathing easier. Other than allergic reactions this may be one of the few times veterinarians prescribe antihistamines.

Getting the calves out into a fresh, cool area is also critical. This is difficult to do in dairy calf and veal barns so good ventilation is critical for prevention in housed cattle. Veterinarians will often prescribe antibiotics, as well, more because pneumonia is a definite possibility with damaged lungs.

Initially fluids may need to be given to ward off dehydration. The newer immune stimulants may be another tool your veterinarian may prescribe in the future. One must treat these cattle gently as even the stress of treatment or catching in a chute can push them over the edge. I have found with better vaccination for bacterial pneumonias and antimicrobial therapy, we vastly reduced those types of pneumonia, but the viral ones, especially BRSV, are our nemesis.

I have found that even in recovered cases there has been enough permanent damage that they may do poorly. In commercial cattle I would not recommend keeping them as replacements. Even valuable breeding stock may end up being poor breeders as they don't grow as well and have trouble keeping weight on.

BRSV can be a costly disease both in terms of the high mortality and the chronics it can create. As with other respiratory diseases keep the vaccinations up to date. Some companies tout a one-shot BRSV but that is a moot point as you always combine it with the other viral vaccines anyway. Minimize stress and worry about ventilation in housed cattle.

I recommend that show cattle get a booster shot a week before show season with either injectable or intranasal vaccines to booster immunity to all types of respiratory disease including BRSV.

I have seen severe cases of BRSV turn around and other cases relapse in a few months resulting in mortality. This is one of the biggest reasons show cattle have lots of air blown over them to minimize heat stress and susceptibility to all types of pneumonia, but BRSV is one of the most difficult to treat.

The advent of many anti-inflammatory drugs has gone a long way to helping you and your veterinarian treat BRSV cases but prevention remains our primary goal. 🍁

*Dr. Roy Lewis is an Alberta-based veterinarian specializing in large-animal practice. He is also a part-time technical services vet for Merck Animal Health.*



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# PERITONITIS AND ITS CAUSES

**P**eritonitis refers to the inflammation or infection around the peritoneum which is the inside lining of the abdomen. Any infection involving the abdomen receives the nondescript description of peritonitis. This could be an infection around the intestines, stomachs, liver or uterus in cows and heifers. What is most important here is there are many causes of peritonitis and if your veterinarian can diagnose it and determine the cause it may in some cases prevent future infections. Some cases aren't really preventable but at least you can be comforted in the thought there was nothing you could have done.

Common signs of peritonitis are increased temperature, depression and grunting from a painful abdomen. Your veterinarian may take blood for a blood count and fibrinogen levels, which are an indication of inflammatory material collecting in the abdomen. The abdomen is painful on palpation and a veterinary test is the grunt test with a withers pinch.

The disease entity talked about most by producers is *hardware disease*, which is a form of peritonitis. This is caused by something sharp, mainly metal, penetrating though the reticulum (first stomach) causing leakage of contents and infection. This may even involve infection around the heart.

If more cases are noted treatment can be started earlier and your veterinarian may in certain circumstances advise putting magnets in the cattle. The magnets stay in the reticulum for the life of the animal and any iron metal compound sticks to the magnet to keep it from penetrating the first stomach.

Magnets have come down in price over the years and the good ones are very strong. Intense feeder operations, including dairies, where lots of equipment is used and silage fed has metal getting into the feed and hardware disease can be a recurring problem. If caught early anti-inflammatory drugs and antibiotics, which get into the abdomen, are what your veterinarian may prescribe.

A good many causes of acute diffuse peritonitis result in a fairly sudden death (over one to two days) and that is why autopsies on these cows may give you very usable information.

These deaths can be posted under the BSE testing program in many of the cases as long as they are greater than 30 months of age and meet the other criteria.

A post mortem is absolutely critical to help determine the exact cause of the peritonitis. Sometimes the history may give it away such as a hard calving or head back or a breech birth that was corrected and all these problems may lead to a torn uterus if one is not careful. Then the placenta and uterine contents leak into the abdomen and peritonitis is the result.

In major infections the whole abdomen may be infected and it may actually be very difficult for the attending veterinarian to determine the initiating cause of the infection. Cattle have an amazing ability to wall off the infection minimizing its spread, which is why they can take the most of any species when it comes to abdominal infection.

This is why C-sections can be performed in barns with surprisingly good results as long as some degree of hygiene is performed.

Peritonitis can be caused by such other things as rupturing of abscesses on the liver or the vagina of a heifer from a traumatic breeding by a large aggressive bull.

Grain overload can lead to peritonitis especially around the rumen.

The rectum may rupture at calving or another phenomena called the scissor effect when the cow's small intestines get trapped between the pelvis and uterus. This happens more with a backward calving. As the calf is expelled the pressure on the intestines creates a cut from the cow's pelvis. Ingesta spills out internally and the cow usually dies within 24-36 hours. These can happen from a pull or even when a cow calves naturally. Post mortems in these cases identify the cause, and while it generally can't be prevented the PM rules out other causes of sudden death in cows such as blackleg or grass tetany, which could be prevented.

Two times in my long veterinary career I have had the rectum rip clear through from palpating. This would have caused this same death but in one instance I had the heifer emergency slaughtered and in the other instance I was able to suture the tear back up. This is why in tough calvings or when malpresentations are corrected we check the uterus after to make sure there are no tears. If you discover them have your veterinarian out, as they may be able to suture them up and save the cow.

When treating cows for milk fever and

other metabolic disorders certain products are approved for intraperitoneal use but many are not, so be careful. If giving products this way, make sure the needle is new and is given into a clean area. There once was a rumen injector for administering a deworming product directly into the rumen and it was very soon pulled from the market because of the peritonitis it was causing. This could be an infectious process or a chemical peritonitis from the sensitive internal organs having a reaction to the product. Regardless, in either case you have a very sick animal. We must be careful and at first do no harm, so think twice about injecting anything into the abdomen unless advised by your veterinarian.

The newest trend in pregnancy testing is using an ultrasound with an introducer. Your veterinarian must use lots of lubricant on this tool and introduce it carefully if the cows have dry manure. I have heard of two instances where the colon has been perforated by an introducer resulting in a dead cow. Unlike when I did it manually the veterinarian had no idea this had happened. After handling, processing or preg checking it is good to get any sudden deaths posted so any injury or perforations during processing can be recorded and steps hopefully taken to prevent it from happening again in the future.

Peritonitis in young calves can result from perforated abomasal ulcers, blocked intestines, navel infections gone internal, so always keep these conditions in mind when dealing with sick calves. Many methods are used to prevent navel infections and surgery may be done on the other two problems if they are caught early enough.

Work with your veterinarian by posting unexplained deaths as the incidence of many of these causes can be reduced and you may even find a disease you never expected.

A diagnosis of peritonitis on post mortem would be very hard for trained veterinarians to miss but the key is what really caused it in the first place. 🌟

*Dr. Roy Lewis is an Alberta-based veterinarian specializing in large-animal practice. He is also a part-time technical services vet for Merck Animal Health.*



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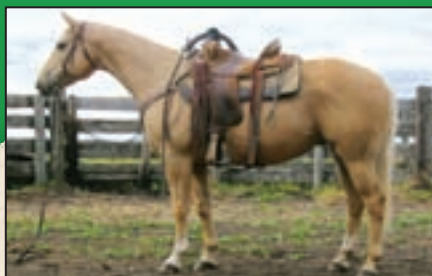
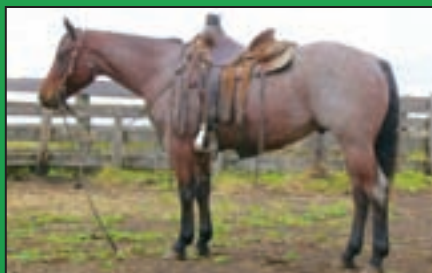
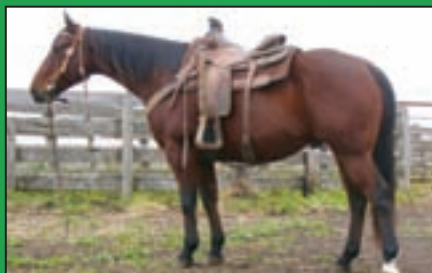
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# STRIVE FOR CONSISTENCY



John McKinnon is a beef cattle nutritionist at the University of Saskatchewan.

**S**triving for consistency may not sound like the most exciting goal, but when it comes to feeding cattle, it should be one of our golden rules! Consistency is essential if we want to keep cattle on an even keel and prevent wild swings in intake. This includes consistency in when we feed; how we load, mix and deliver rations; in how cattle are brought onto feed and how ration changes are made. It is a simple fact that cattle are subject to going off feed. This is due in large part to the nature of the ruminant's digestive system. The rumen is the primary organ responsible for feed digestion. Feeds are fermented in the rumen by the activity of bacteria, protozoa and fungi. The makeup of this microbial community is dependent in large part upon the nature of the diet. For example, when cattle are on high-forage diets, the rumen bacterial community is very efficient at digesting fibrous feeds. When the diet is primarily grain, the rumen bacteria population shifts to organisms responsible for digesting starch. If dietary changes are carried out gradually, as in the case of feedlots that utilize step-up feeding programs, the shift in the rumen microbial population is gradual with little effect on the animal. Issues arise when this dietary shift is too rapid, or when there are disruptions in feed delivery (i.e. diets are changed too quickly, missed feedings, wrong diet fed, etc.). Such abrupt changes cause disruptions in the rumen microbial population, the rumen becomes more acidic (low rumen pH), the animal goes off feed. In serious cases we see animals suffering from sub-acute or acute acidosis (dehydration, loose manure, lame animals).

If one looks at successful commercial feeding programs, they are not only designed to meet nutrient requirements, but also contain a core set of management principles designed to minimize digestive upsets and optimize feed efficiency. As this year's feeding season is starting, it is a good time to review some of these core management principles.

One key to a successful feeding program is communication. Whether it's between the manager and the feeding crew, within the feeding crew or between the feeding crew and other units such as the health crew, clear communication can prevent mistakes or allow preventive steps to be taken to minimize the impact of mistakes when they occur. A classic example is when the wrong diet is fed to a particular pen or when the health crew pulls a pen for re-implanting and forgets to tell the feeding crew. Both situations can throw cattle off feed or, in worst-case situations, lead to acidosis.

Successful feeding programs also have protocols in place to ensure that the feeding is done right. For example, feed truck drivers should have protocols that ensure the right

ration and right amount of feed is delivered to each pen. Today, most feedlots rely on computer-based feed delivery programs to provide drivers with the ration to be fed and the amount of each ingredient that needs to be loaded, as well as the ingredient sequence for loading. Typically, large inclusion items such as grain or silage are added first, while smaller inclusion items such as supplement are added last.

Understanding the mixing capacity of the feed wagon is also important. Over-filling can result in a poor mix or increased mixing time, while under- or over-mixing can lead to a poorly mixed ration. Many feedlots will have a protocol in place that stipulates mixing time or the number of revolutions of the mixer, starting from the point of the last ingredient addition.

A common feeding error, particularly with new drivers, is uneven distribution of feed in the bunk, typically at the far end. Such distribution issues lead to a buildup of feed and feed spoilage. Other issues that can lead to spoiled feed include poor mixing, bunk access issues, manure in a water bowl and/or feed bunk, as well as poor pen conditions. In such cases a protocol for bunk cleaning needs to be implemented.

**Consistency is essential if we want to keep cattle on an even keel and prevent wild swings in intake**

Computer-based feed delivery programs not only dictate the ration to be fed, but also which pens receive the ration and how much is to be delivered to each pen. The amount of feed delivered will ultimately be the responsibility of the bunk reader. How bunks are managed (i.e. slick bunk, limit feed, full fed with carryover) will be a management decision; however, the feeding philosophy should be clearly communicated to the entire feeding crew such that there is consistency in bunk management, no matter who is feeding or calling bunks. Similarly, there should be a protocol in place that is clearly communicated to all involved that dictates how rapid cattle are brought up on feed (i.e. magnitude of feed increases) and when rations are changed.

While I have tried to highlight some of the core components of a successful feeding program, space limits me from going into more detail. If you have not already done so, now would be an excellent time to sit down with your nutritionist and review in detail all aspects of your feeding program. 🍷



# RAISING THE BAR ON CATTLE CARE

Pain management is becoming easier and cheaper, and pays dividends in animal performance and welfare



**Y**ou wouldn't want to have surgery without something to manage the pain, and the livestock industry has realized that animals should have the same consideration.

"The industry identified pain management in livestock as an issue that it wanted to address," says Dr. Robert Tremblay, DVM, a bovine specialist with Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health. "As tools were developed to measure pain, research began to look for ways to manage that pain. Animal health companies followed and began making treatments available for use in livestock management. And producers and veterinarians began to see the positive impacts of managing pain in their herds."

Researchers started looking at pain in cattle almost 20 years ago. "It was difficult then because we didn't have the measurement techniques established," says Tremblay. "If you are wanting to show a benefit you need to be able to quantify that — how much pain? What is the benefit?"

Research has since identified signs to measure pain, such as metabolic levels and behaviours such as tail twitching or mothering up.

Pain management is among the latest revisions to the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle. Dr. Roy Lewis, DVM, an Alberta large-animal vet and part-time tech services vet with Merck Animal Health, feels most producers have come to see the code as practical and developed for them with industry input.

"There are a lot of appendices that are fantastic resources — I keep it as a bit of a mini-Bible for animal care and suggest producers do the same."

The code stipulates the need for pain mitigation in situations such as castration and branding.

Both Lewis and Tremblay say the producers are ahead of the code. For example, it sets a standard for castration of six months but many producers Lewis sees are completing this at two to three months. He believes 40 to 50 per cent of producers are using the code of practice in some way, and many are ahead of the guidelines.

## EASIER AND CHEAPER

Animal health companies are making it easier and cheaper to administer cattle pain medication such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

The price is coming down with increasing competition, and less product is needed when applied to younger animals, as recommended in the code of practice.

"The beautiful thing right now is that you have an arsenal of pain medication available and you can select what works best for the situation," says Lewis.

NSAIDs can also be used in feedlots, as most have short withdrawal times and can be used before slaughter.

Most NSAIDs are approved for use in specific conditions so it is important to work with a vet and follow the label.

Both Lewis and Tremblay say they have seen the benefits of NSAIDs first hand.

"We have really upped the bar on what we are giving pain medication for today. We always felt when we were doing procedures like a caesarean or treating cancer eye, that we were managing pain because we froze the area in advance of the procedure," says Lewis.

But he says he realized the benefits of NSAIDs when he was at a vet college class and one of the students wanted to use one for a caesarean.

"It made a phenomenal difference in recovery time; she was back on feed almost right away. That case proved the value of pain management to me."

Tremblay says he has seen similar examples when working with researchers and producers to identify benchmarks for pain.

"One example was during spring processing of a large herd and the vocalization of calves. With the use of NSAIDs, the producer saw it reduced significantly, and the calves got back on their moms quicker. That was an amazing example to me."

Reduced pain means quicker recovery, maintained appetite and continued weight gain. Calves are also less susceptible to disease,

and mother up more quickly after treatment. But Tremblay cautions that NSAIDs treat symptoms, not the disease.

"So if you are treating for scours you still need to address the underlying condition. When treating a sick animal, pain medication will be part of the treatment and should be part of the plan and discussion with your veterinarian."

## MORE ACCOUNTABILITY

While most producers acknowledge that keeping animals healthy is a good investment and the right thing to do, it's also important to demonstrate proper animal welfare practices to consumers.

"The public realizes certain things cause pain, and that there are certain things we have to do," says Lewis. And while methods are improved for castration and branding, and the need for procedures like dehorning is reduced, there is also a need to manage related pain.

Another benefit is managing the possible resistance to antibiotics as a result of overuse.

"There are some cases where you might try an NSAID to bring a fever down and might not need antibiotics," Lewis says. "Producers see lameness in the field and often assume foot rot which requires antibiotics. But it may be any number of other things, which can be left or treated with a non-steroidal."

Tremblay identifies spring processing and feedlot arrival processing as areas where the effects on animal health aren't fully understood.

"Today producers will likely not treat an animal if they didn't brand, castrate or dehorn but is there still an impact to the animal in the process that might warrant treatment to avoid negative consequences? Is there a way to reduce the impact?"

The beef industry is currently looking at what the future holds and the discussion includes sustainability.

"The OIE (an international animal health organization) has defined sustainability to include animal welfare which addresses the social responsibility piece coming from outside the industry," says Tremblay. 🍁

By Annemarie Pedersen



Because farm animal well-being works





# YO-YO DIET STRATEGIES

**G**etting weaned calves on feed can be a challenge. This is often attributed to the change from a forage-based diet to unfamiliar feedlot rations and feed bunks, distress from recent weaning, illness, etc. To compensate for this, some feeders use a relatively high-energy receiving diet, the rationale being that if they're not going to eat much, each mouthful better pack a nutritional punch. But part of the challenge these calves face may be complications from feed deprivation during marketing and transportation. Recent research led by the University of Saskatchewan's Greg Penner suggests that the rations fed both before and after feed restriction affect how well cattle cope with and recover from these challenges (*J. Anim. Sci.* 91:4730-4738 and 91:4739-4749).

**What they did:** This study used 20 spayed, ruminally-cannulated, individually-penned heifers averaging 1,050 pounds. These obviously weren't freshly weaned calves, but using older animals allowed the researchers to avoid confusing the effects of feed restriction with the effects of weaning stress, disease challenge, new diets, etc. Ten heifers were fed a high-forage (92 per cent) diet and 10 were fed a moderate-forage (60 per cent) diet for two weeks. For the next five days their intake was restricted to 25 per cent of what they had been eating. Then they were allowed to resume eating as much as they wanted for three weeks. During this recovery period, half of the high-forage heifers were switched to the moderate-forage diet, and vice versa.

Rumen microbes digest the animal's feed and produce short-chain fatty acids. These short-chain fatty acids influence rumen pH, and are absorbed through the rumen wall into the bloodstream, where they provide up to 75 per cent of the animal's energy needs. Some short-chain fatty acids also stimulate cells in the rumen wall to grow, divide, and function properly. Because of their important roles in digestive health, the researchers collected very detailed rumen pH and fatty acid measurements throughout the study. They also measured non-esterified fatty acids in the bloodstream. These are fatty acids that have been released due to fat breakdown in the body in response to an energy shortage.

**What they learned:** Average rumen pH didn't differ between the two diets during the initial two-week pre-restriction period. Rumen pH increased in both groups of heifers during the feed restriction period, partly because there was less feed for the rumen microbes to digest. The rate of short-chain fatty acid absorption also dropped by nearly 20 per cent in both groups during the feed restriction period, but specialized techniques were used to confirm that slower absorption wasn't just caused by less food fermenting in the rumen. Non-

esterified fatty acid levels in the bloodstream rose in both groups of heifers during feed restriction, but more in the high-forage group than in the moderate-forage group. This suggests that the forage-fed heifers were burning more body fat to meet their own energy needs during the feed restriction.

The effects of the pre-restriction and post-restriction diets on intake and rumen function during the three-week recovery period were compared. Pre-restriction diet: The heifers that had started the experiment on the high-forage diet took longer to increase their feed intake to the expected level than those that had been on the moderate-forage diet. The heifers that had started on the high-forage diet also spent over three hours per day at a pH below 5.5 during the first week of the recovery period, nearly twice as long as those that had started on the moderate-forage diet. Short-chain fatty acid absorption rates during the recovery period were the same regardless of which diet the heifers were on before restriction. Post-restriction diet: Unlike the pre-restriction diet, heifers fed the moderate-forage diet increased their feed intake more slowly than heifers fed a high-forage diet during the recovery period. Heifers fed the moderate-forage diet during the recovery period also spent over 4.5 hours per day at a rumen pH below 5.5, compared to less than 15 minutes for heifers fed the high-forage diet during the recovery period. Short-chain fatty acid absorption rates during the recovery period were the same regardless of which diet the heifers were on after restriction.

**What it means:** Assessing the real production, health and economic effects of these diets would require a larger study using weaned calves moving from the farm to the feedlot. But the results of this experiment suggest that calves adapted to a moderate-forage diet before leaving the farm may be better equipped to cope with feed restrictions imposed by marketing and transportation than calves weaned straight off grass, regardless of the receiving diet at the feedlot. It also suggests that regardless of the pre-arrival diet, calves fed a high-forage diet may recover more quickly from feed restriction than calves fed a moderate-forage receiving diet, regardless of what they were eating before they arrived.

The Beef Research Cluster is funded by the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with additional contributions from provincial beef industry groups and governments to advance research and technology transfer supporting the Canadian beef industry's vision to be recognized as a preferred supplier of healthy, high-quality beef, cattle and genetics. 🌾

*Dr. Reynold Bergen is the science director of the Beef Cattle Research Council.*



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# ROOTING THE DIETARY GUIDELINES IN SOUND SCIENCE



Steve Dittmer is the CEO of Agribusiness Freedom Foundation, a non-profit group promoting free market principles throughout the food chain. He can be reached at [steve@agfreedom.ag](mailto:steve@agfreedom.ag).

**T**here's a lot of stuff in the Guidelines that was right 40 years ago but that science has disproved. Unfortunately, sometimes, the scientific community doesn't like to backtrack."

That was David McCarron, nutrition researcher at the University of California-Davis nearly two years ago, commenting on the U.S. Congress ordering a comprehensive review of the way the Dietary Guidelines for Americans have been developed ("Congress: We need to review the Dietary Guidelines for Americans," *Washington Post*, December 18, 2015). The Dietary Guidelines have been issued since 1980 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to set dietary standards for school lunch and military meals, as well as set standards for American food producers and meal providers that affect other countries.

We would agree with McCarron that the scientific community doesn't like to backtrack. We would disagree with the premise that a "lot of stuff" in the Guidelines was right 40 years ago. Unfortunately, it has taken 40+ years to get to the point where nutrition professionals questioned the lack of science, compared the theory with the overall problems of obesity, diabetes and heart disease and convinced Congress that the federal government's methods of developing Dietary Guidelines needed overhauling.

Last May, we talked about the book by Nina Teicholz, *The Big Fat Surprise: Why Butter, Meat and Cheese Belong in a Healthy Diet*. Teicholz explained how the low-fat, high-carbohydrate, fewer-animal-products theory came to be, based on faulty science and big political influence. Soon after the book's release, she began warning animal agriculture about the next set of Dietary Guidelines being finalized in 2015. Her information was that this Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) was very radical and was considering more restrictions on — or even elimination of — red meat in the Guidelines.

When the Guidelines were issued, the fears of many nutritionists and health experts were realized. The lack of scientific rigour, inappropriate handling of data and stubborn adherence to old theories created controversy, especially in the U.S. and Great Britain. The uproar brought on a congressionally mandated study of the process.

The National Academies Committee validated the concerns of scientists and food industry people. The report found shortcomings in scientific rigour. Conclusion: The process needs to be redesigned.

The process really breaks down into three parts: updating and enhancing the Nutrition Evidence Library with all the relevant research and clinical data, the selection of the Dietary Goals Advisory Committee and the deliberation on the issues deemed most important. In the past, while biases and conflicts of interest were obvious, they were not officially acknowledged or addressed.

The National Academies Committee recommended that both financial and non-financial conflicts of interest be identified and noted for nominees; and transparency and proper management be followed in handling conflicts of interest. The committee further recommended a third party be hired to review the normal 150-200 nominations and reduce the list to 30-40. USDA and HHS departmental review would reduce the provisional list down to as many as 17 to be subjected to public comment.

Another key criticism up to now has been potential bias on the part of staff who decide which studies are entered in the National Evidence Library. Many more recent studies have not been included. First, the committee recommends a Dietary Guidelines Planning and Continuity Group for strategic planning, ongoing monitoring of evidence and topic prioritization. Second, technical expert panels should be used to provide content and methodological consultation during evidence evaluation.

That last point is likely poorly understood and a critical cog. During the National Academies Committee presentation of the report, committee member Bruce Lee from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health several times made the point that evaluating meta-studies, where the data is gathered from dozens of smaller studies, requires a modern, systematic approach using sophisticated software to account for the multiple factors and variations from multiple streams of data.

The third party would be a Dietary Guidelines Scientific Advisory Committee to interpret the scientific evidence, draw conclusions and write Dietary Guidelines. There should be explicit and transparent standards for developing evidence-based guidelines and recommendations. Rationale for decisions should be clearly stated and omissions or deviations should be explicitly outlined by the secretaries of USDA and HHS.

The report also acknowledged that diet constitutes an extremely complex system of exposure that is known to influence health, and modeling can help to make sense of that complex system. Food pattern models should be enhanced to better reflect the complex interactions involved as well as the range of health diets.

The National Academies report did not make any comment on the 2015 Guidelines themselves. But by separating out control of the evidence library and topic selection, separating out the screening of Advisory Committee members and putting real teeth into bias and conflict of interest disclosures and forcing some scientific standards onto the Scientific Advisory Committee, should Congress and the departments adopt these recommendations, we have a much better chance of having scientific, evidence-based Dietary Guidelines and clues to a healthier population. 🍷





# STRETCH FEED, PROTECT YOUR HERD IN A TOUGH YEAR

Nutrition drives profitability says this experienced specialist



Nutrition anchors a well-run beef operation says Melissa Atchison.

Any coach whose team hits a tough stretch knows turning things around takes a combination of new approaches and recommitting to critical basics.

Melissa Atchison expects a lot of beef producers will face those kinds of challenges on the feed front this year after some unusual weather. She applies that same coaching logic in stretching feed supplies. Look for new options and double-check core basics.

Atchison has lots of experience in the area. Her professional training is in animal nutrition. She spent time with Manitoba Agriculture as a livestock specialist. Today she works with the Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+)

program and helps manage a family-owned 850-cow-calf and backgrounding operation at Pipestone, Man.

"The No. 1 thing affecting profitability is fertility and the No. 1 thing affecting fertility is nutrition," says Atchison. Here is her checklist of key ways to stretch feed supplies and fundamentals that will protect the bottom line:

**Know options.** There are many standard options in tough years like straw or native plants like cattails and bulrushes. But you can get creative.

Drought years often lead to failed annual crops. For example, sunflower silage is two-thirds the nutritional quality of corn silage. Grain farmers may be willing to let you graze annual crop land. Potatoes make great feed if you are near a plant. Distillers grains or chaff are options.

Ammoniating straw works if handled with care and dramatically

improves intake and digestibility. So does molasses top dressed on bales, or liquid supplements. "A caution. There is a misconception that with the right supplements you can feed anything to cows, but the fact is no amount of protein can make up for inadequate energy," she says.

**Contamination.** Check spray applications and product withdrawal times, noxious weeds and invasive species. Watch moulds. Some are benign, some very dangerous in small quantities to reproduction and herd health. Ergot can occur in cereal crops and screenings. It can be nasty but can be blended out.

**Feed test.** "Testing is huge especially with novelty feeds," says Atchison. "There are lots of ballpark figures for conventional feeds but feed test novelty to pinpoint nutrition."

**Minerals critical.** Some minerals can tie up absorption of other minerals. Consider some independent professional advice for building your mineral program.

**Preg check, wean early.** Consider bumping up time of weaning and preg checking to lighten the load on pastures and feed supply, and help out the cows.

**Know body condition.** Scoring is critical to feeding decisions. Consider asking your vet to body condition score when they preg check. It's a fresh set of eyes and a way to objectively check scoring. Use feeding groups to save the best feed for heifers and older cows.

**Consider selling.** If feed is short at preg check, consider culling the bottom five per cent to 15 per cent of cows and anything over the age of 10 years to free up feed resources.

## VBP+ A COACHING TOOL

"VBP+ provides a solid coaching framework for management," says Atchison. "And it positions you to participate in programs like the new Cargill Canadian Beef Sustainability Acceleration Pilot. It's worth considering."



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# THANK YOU K.D. LANG

**W**hen k.d. lang entered the world of the beef industry, she did so full on. A talented young girl from the little town of Consort, Alta., lang had grown up with cowboys, dust and the soothing voice of Patsy Cline. She originally played small gigs around Alberta and especially in Edmonton at the Sidetrack Café. The blue-collar haven loved her energy and outrageous fashion and she is especially remembered for her cut-off wedding dress and cowboy boots.

After teaming up with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in 1990 with the Meat Stinks campaign she hit resistance and country radio stations stopped playing her music. The beef industry went on a rampage against her. She shocked carnivores by saying she was a vegetarian and the general public by coming out as a lesbian.

The cattle industries rift with lang attracted attention to her music and was more costly to them than to her records. By going into the controversy on the defensive, it also gave PETA the momentum it wanted and Meat Stinks was consequently one of their most successful campaigns. But, it was lang who took the reputation hit for the campaign backlash. When her show in Owen Sound was cancelled in 1992 because of farmer protests, it was labelled a vegetarian controversy as though being a vegetarian was aligned with some sort of satanic cult. PETA sat back and let the donations roll in.

It is true that lang remains a vegetarian and that choice is hers alone. Industry does not have the right to tell folks what to eat. We don't know what drives this desire or need in individual persons. It may start in childhood. Some children are sensitive to animals and cannot see themselves eating meat. Some have had a bad or traumatic experience. Some digestive systems don't work and other bodies do not properly metabolize. The reasons for eating specific foods are private and the choice is simply that — a choice.

What began as a campaign for animal rights became an attack on an individual and took the heat off of PETA for scripting, filming and broadcasting the advertisement. Only 10 years old at the time, PETA was looking for shock value, an avenue they use to this day, and they got it with a rising star and fresh-faced country girl in lang.

I would imagine if one looks in their closet of skeletons we could pull out a time when we wished we didn't do what we did or said what we said because we had not thought about the consequences to others, or expected a backlash to our personal beliefs. But these things happen and can cause regret and as lang expressed in a 1992 interview with the *New York Times*: "It hurt my mom and nothing is really worth that."

To this day, lang has never lashed back at the industry who chewed her to bits. Rather she is a quiet person who goes about her business of writing and singing songs while being a human rights and animal rights supporter, raising awareness of AIDS and an advocate for the LGBT community. A proud Canadian, lang has sung at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and has earned both Grammy and Emmy Awards. Funny, quick and likeable, lang brought a new normal forward to rural Canada.

In 1992 when lang came out as a lesbian the *New York Times* branded her a "politically radical vegetarian lesbian defender of wildlife." A title like that today might garner you votes and a huge Twitter account but in reality the descriptives of vegetarian and lesbian are not relevant to the talents or actions of the individual. In the 1990s this was a rude call that infringed on every aspect of her human rights, and which today is spelled out under the United Nations call for the end of discrimination based on gender and sexual identity. The press attention did open the door to the discussion of sexual orientation and lang stands as an instrument of change towards acceptance and has paved the way for our boys and girls to be free in owning their sexual identity.

The "meat-hating lesbian" as she was titled in Alberta was by the day's standards outspoken and seemingly outrageous, but it led the industry to higher ground. Thank you lang for your voice: the voice that ignited the beef industry to better their message and consider the improvements we employ today with regard to animal welfare and handling. Thanks to lang, the beef industry ramped up defining the eating quality and nutritional attributes of beef and geared that message toward the urban consumer to which PETA was pitching.

As producers of food the goal of the beef industry is to do its job well so the PETAs of the world have nothing to say and stop exploiting people for their own cause. It is likely lang may have felt played in the end, but regardless of how she felt, in true Canadian fashion she exercised tolerance and grace against those who were so angry at her position, a position she has the right to express in a free and democratic country.

The wedding dress has been replaced by a black suit and she sports bare feet on stage — her voice is hauntingly sure. Recently back home — lang has been filling concert halls across the nation with her amazing gift; and by her presence lifting the veil of intolerance for those who eat differently, dress differently, believe differently and live differently. 🌸

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Contact Brenda through her website: [www.brendaschoepp.com](http://www.brendaschoepp.com).  
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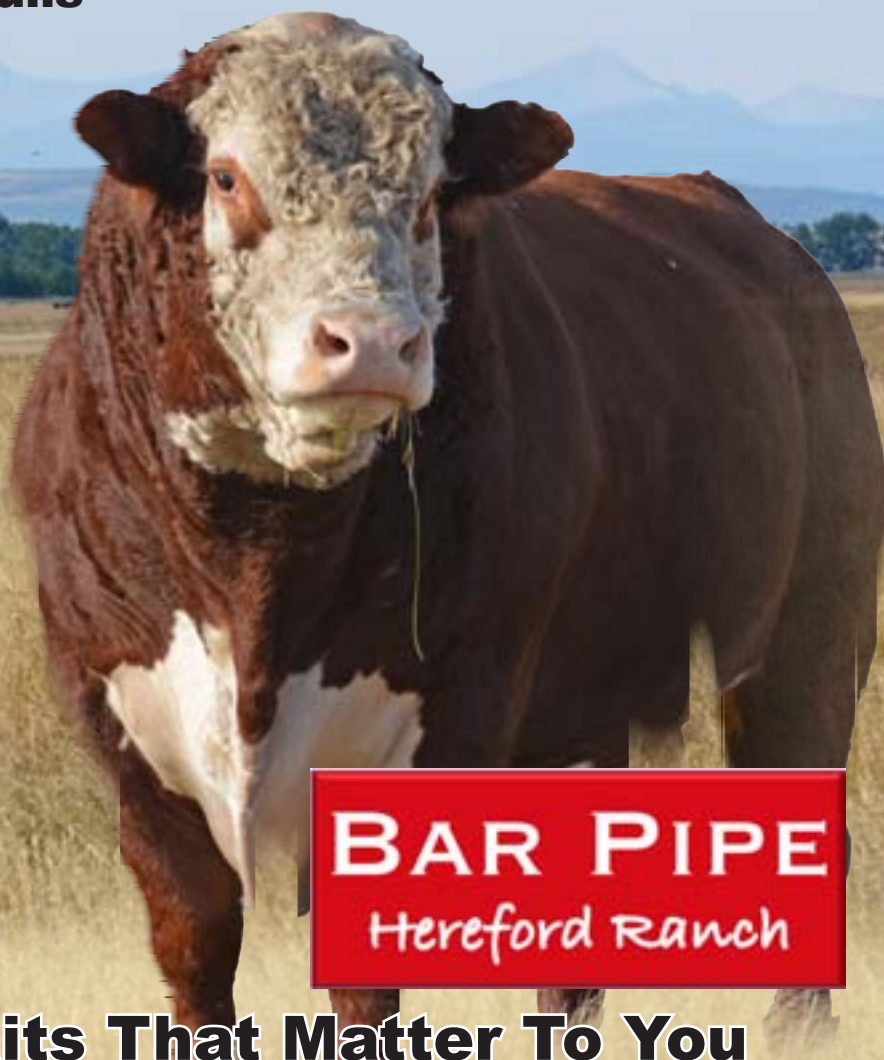
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# SWEET CLOVER POISONING — AN OLD PROBLEM PERSISTS

**M**ouldy sweet clover poisoning in cattle is caused by the ingestion of sweet clover hay or ensilage containing dicoumarol. Poisoning is characterized by extensive hemorrhages into tissues throughout the body and severe blood loss after injury, surgery or parturition.

Coumarol, a normal constituent of many sweet clover cultivars, is converted to dicoumarol through the action of moulds common in sweet clover. Not all sweet clover contains dicoumarol and the degree of spoilage does not reflect the degree of toxicity in feed. Varieties of sweet clover differ in the content of coumarol they contain and their potential toxicity. The only way to know for sure what risks exist is to have feed tested.

Wet-hay seasons increase the incidence of spoilage, which is often accentuated by storage conditions. The presence of dicoumarol in feed does not diminish with time. The shortage of feed during drought means bales get pulled from older stacks and used for feed. Managing the risk of toxicity means managing sweet clover-based feed appropriately.

All ages of cattle are susceptible. Yearlings and calves are more susceptible than mature cows. Sweet clover poisoning is insidious, often becoming a herd problem that may involve 25 to 30 per cent of animals consuming affected feed. Clinical signs might appear spontaneously, but uncontrollable and life-threatening bleeding often follows procedures like dehorning and castration. Cows on feed containing dicoumarol during calving season are particularly at risk. New calves may succumb to hemorrhage during the first few days of life without the cows showing clinical signs. Animals already prone to bleeding often show severe bruising and fatal bleeding during transport. In cattle already suffering prolonged bleeding times, parasites can initiate serious hemorrhagic episodes.

During the process of spoiling, coumarin in sweet clover is converted to toxic dicoumarol, a potent vitamin K antagonist and anticoagulant. The weathered, outer portions of large round bales usually contain the highest concentration of dicoumarol. Dicoumarol alters proenzymes required for synthesis of vitamin K-dependent coagulation factors like prothrombin, and factors VII, IX and X, constituents necessary in the biological cascade of clotting. Dicoumarol concentrations of 20 to 30 mg/kg of hay ingested throughout several weeks are required to cause poisoning. The toxic agent crosses the placenta in pregnant animals, affecting the newborn. All species of animals studied are susceptible, but instances of poisoning are most common in cattle and, to a limited extent, sheep, pigs, and horses.

## CLINICAL FINDINGS AND LESIONS

Cattle develop bleeding problems as early as two weeks and as late as three to four months on feed containing mouldy sweet clover. Pockets of spoilage in bale stacks or silage pits influence the amount of dicoumarol consumed by animals.

Hemorrhage causes clinical signs. Preliminary symptoms often include stiffness, lameness, dullness, and swellings beneath the skin (hematomas or blood clots) primarily over the hips, brisket, and neck. Mucous membranes are often pale — indicating anemia. Because hemorrhage decreases the quantity of red blood cells available to

transport oxygen, respiratory distress is not uncommon. Feces, urine, and milk frequently contain blood and blood often oozes from the nostrils. Parturition is often accompanied by extensive hemorrhage. Dicoumarol crosses the placenta causing hemorrhage in the fetus leading to fetal reabsorption and stillbirths. Newborn calves often become weak during the first few days of life due to internal bleeding. Calves can die suddenly without displaying noticeable signs.

The first indication of dicoumarol poisoning may be the sudden death of one or more animals. Animals showing clinical signs display stiffness and lameness due to bleeding into muscles and joints. Death caused by massive hemorrhage after injury, surgery, or parturition is a definite warning sign. Neonatal deaths rarely occur without noticeable signs in mother cows.

Sweet clover poisoning is easily diagnosed on post mortem examination by identifying signs compatible with widespread hemorrhage and prolonged clotting times. Producers need to be working with a veterinary practitioner at the first suggestion of dicoumarol poisoning. Disasters can be prevented through early treatment and prompt changes in herd and feed management.

## TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

Immediate removal from the affected feed is the first step in minimizing losses. New cases may appear for up to six days because of the persistent effect of ingested dicoumarol. The journey from this point onward needs to be discussed and co-ordinated with a veterinarian.

Intravenous administration of whole blood (10 ml/kg b.w.), though not always practical, is a consideration in the case of individual animals. Parenteral administration of natural vitamin K1 (expensive) is one option, the other being the use of synthetic vitamin K3, available as both injectable and premix.

## LONGER-TERM OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Use of sweet clover cultivars of sweet clover low in coumarin.
- Mouldy portions of hay and silage can be discarded; however, the absence of visible spoilage is insufficient evidence of safety.
- Feed should be submitted for analysis of dicoumarol content. Animal health professionals can provide guidance on sampling and testing.
- Alternating sweet clover hay suspected of containing dicoumarol with other roughage such as alfalfa or grass-legume hay mixtures can be used to avoid severe poisoning. A seven- to ten-day period on sweet clover hay, followed by an equal time on alternative hay mixtures, will prevent poisoning in most situations even though bleeding times remain prolonged. Animals in higher risk categories (surgical candidates, pending parturition) should not receive sweet clover hay or silage for a minimum of three weeks (preferably four weeks), before surgery or parturition.
- Stack or bale sweet clover only when it is well cured and dry. 🌳

*Dr. Ron Clarke prepares this column on behalf of the Western Canadian Association of Bovine Practitioners. Suggestions for future articles can be sent to Canadian Cattlemen (gren@fbcpublishing.com) or WCABP (info@wcabp.com).*



# RETAIL PRICES DRIVE SALES



A North American view of the meat industry. Steve Kay is publisher and editor of *Cattle Buyers Weekly*.

**T**he North American beef industry lives or dies by how well beef sells in grocery stores and in restaurants. Retail demand right now, at least in the U.S., is stronger than it has been in quite a number of years. Sales have more than recovered from the challenges in 2014 and 2015 when retail prices reached record-high levels because of tight cattle and beef supplies.

That's especially important as restaurant sales have been weak all year. Various indicators show that traffic at U.S. restaurants remains mixed. Traffic at high-end restaurants and hamburger chains is robust but traffic is down at mid-tier chains. This is also mixed news for the beef industry. It depends on white tablecloth restaurants to buy its most expensive cuts and burger chains to buy its grinds. Beef sales as a proportion of total food sales at mid-tier restaurants vary considerably. But the industry depends on barbecue chains to buy briskets and ribs, and on sandwich chains to buy other cuts.

Food-service traffic in the second quarter remained tepid, according to information from NPD Group's restaurant industry research. The latest quarterly negative trend represented the sixth consecutive quarter of weak traffic. The U.S. food-service industry has not experienced six quarters in a row of no traffic growth since the recession of 2008-09, says NPD.

The hardest hit segment was among the mid-scale/family dining restaurants, with mid-scale concepts seeing a four per cent decline in traffic for the quarter versus the same quarter last year, according to NPD's CREST data. Likewise, casual concepts reported a three per cent drop in visits for the quarter compared to the previous year. Even quick service restaurants (QSRs) reported lackluster traffic that was flat overall. But this was offset by robust traffic increases across QSR burger

and fast-casual restaurants, as quarterly visits spiked by 13 million and 77 million, respectively, for the quarter, says NPD.

Retailers, though, have featured beef aggressively since the start of August, in large part because wholesale beef prices fell below year-earlier levels. This showed up in August retail prices. USDA's All Beef price for August averaged US\$5.79 per pound, down three cents from July and the same as in August last year. But Choice beef prices averaged US\$5.97 per pound, down 13 cents from July and down 0.8 per cent from last year.

This might not seem a big decline but it's important when one considers that Choice beef accounts for 73-74 per cent of all the graded beef the U.S. industry produces. September and October average retail prices were likely to be lower again, as retailers continued to feature beef strongly because sharply lower wholesale prices had maximized their beef margins.

Strong Labor Day (September 4) retail beef sales, in fact, offered the industry a springboard for a modest recovery in cash live cattle prices which had been languishing in the US\$105-106 per cwt range. The third week of September, just before I wrote this, saw a welcome rally to an average US\$108.50 per cwt, basis USDA's 5-area steer price. Retail beef sales will be even more important the rest of the year, as the U.S. industry is forecast to produce slightly more beef in the fourth quarter than last year.

If you want cheap meat; however, you should visit South Africa, which I did last month. One retailer had rump and Porterhouse steaks at C\$5 per pound, fillet steaks at C\$9.61 per pound, and Texan (flank) steaks at C\$3.74 per pound. Lamb ribs, meanwhile, were priced at C\$5 per pound. But just like in the U.S. and Canada, pork and chicken were even cheaper. ★★



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# A BUSY SEPTEMBER



Dan Darling  
is president  
of the Canadian  
Cattlemen's  
Association.

**F**all is certainly off to a hectic start, with numerous trade and policy matters on the table. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) annual fall picnic took place on September 26 in Ottawa, following the third round of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) trade talks. The CCA was among two dozen agriculture groups providing input during the meetings. In addition to maintaining NAFTA's terms of trade for beef, the CCA seeks to improve the flow of trade for beef and cattle through greater regulatory alignment. We will have representatives on site at every negotiation round to provide expert advice where needed.

The Canada-European Union (EU) Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) came into effect on September 21, 2017. European beef is now duty free in the Canadian market and new duty-free quotas will be available for Canadian beef entering the EU market.

The provisional implementation of CETA is an achievement on the tariff side, creating new duty-free access on nearly 65,000 tonnes of Canadian beef. Longstanding technical barriers remain, however, and the CCA continues to work with the Government of Canada and the Canadian Meat Council to achieve meaningful Canadian beef access to the EU. The CCA anticipates a timeline of approximately two years to complete the efficacy research in Canada and achieve formal recognition by the EU of Canada's meat safety protocols. The CCA remains confident that through working together and with a commitment of resources and transitional assistance from government, we can get the job done.

Once these issues are resolved, the EU market has potential to become a \$600 million annual customer for Canadian beef, compared with \$6 to \$10 million in annual beef exports to the EU.

Cattle to be used for EU beef exports must be enrolled in the Canadian Program for Certifying Freedom from Growth Enhancing Products which is the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) supervised program for the EU. Interested producers should be taking steps now to have EU-eligible cattle when packers are looking for them, which we estimate to be in about two years' time.

The CCA has prepared videos to help cow-calf producers and cattle feeders better understand the requirements of producing EU-eligible cattle. Producers are encouraged to watch the CCA videos and then contact CFIA or a CFIA-approved veterinarian from industry that can work with producers to enroll them in the program. The videos are on the CCA website at [www.cattle.ca/eu](http://www.cattle.ca/eu) along with a list of CFIA-approved veterinarians. Additional information will be added to the site including examples of the required records.

Also in September, I appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture to discuss the Food Policy for

Canada. The CCA has been actively engaged in the Food Policy consultations to ensure the interests of the beef industry are represented in the policy-making process.

Our recommendations include ensuring farmers and ranchers play a meaningful role in developing this policy. We ask that the governance structure or council that provides guidance to FPT governments developing the policy have strong representation from agriculture producers.

Additionally, Canada's Food Policy must be science-based and utilize the best available data and research. It must also recognize that innovation and technology help our industry, and other commodities, remain efficient in using resources, while keeping costs of production down, which in turn allows for food to be affordable to the consumer. The food policy must acknowledge the beneficial role of cattle in terms of conserving soil, improving grassland health, and ensuring the preservation of important rangelands. Keeping grasslands that are utilized by cattle intact also provides public goods such as carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, increased biodiversity and improved water quality.

Recognizing that raising cattle and supplying beef to consumers can play an important role in achieving the policy goals will be essential in a Food Policy that we can support. We are confident that if designed and implemented properly, this initiative has the potential to bring the public and farmers and ranchers together to find shared values in Canada's food and agriculture systems to enhance public trust.

Finally, the CCA thanks the Government of Canada for providing \$4.4 million in funding for industry projects geared towards increasing innovation and managing business risk in the beef cattle sector. The CCA received \$839,500 for a Growing Forward 2 AgriRisk Initiatives project to explore remote sensing as a tool to insure pasture production. The project began in 2015 and will run until March 2018. The primary focus of this research project is to define an "X to Y" relationship between satellite-based remotely sensed data and actual pasture production (by weight) with sufficient robustness and accuracy to form the basis for a pasture insurance program that is identical in concept to that available for annual crops.

If successful, there is hope that this study will further contribute to the creation of risk management tools that can protect ranchers against the extra costs of buying feed or transporting cattle to a better area during an area-wide production shortage.

A long-standing policy of CCA's is to improve forage and pasture insurance programs across Canada. The CCA is hopeful that this research can move forward under the Canadian Agriculture Partnership and be expanded nationally, covering all types of forage and pasture production across the country.

Until next time. 🍁



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# NewsRoundup

## FEED

### Albertans urged to test winter feeds

Albertans are being advised to test their winter forage supplies this fall.

"Livestock feed supplies are going to be tight in some areas of Alberta, while in other areas, quality may be an issue," says Andrea Hanson, beef extension specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

Testing identifies the nutrients available so the ration can be formulated properly.

"Using last year's feed tests, or even worse, using a provincial average for a feed's nutritional content, isn't realistic or useful," says Hanson. "While physical attributes are part of feed quality, they don't tell the whole story. A bright green colour does help indicate the feed was put up with little or no rain, and that the mould level is

little to none, but it doesn't tell much more than that. Protein and energy content of the same hay field can vary greatly depending on when it was cut. Brome cut very early in the year could reach 18 per cent protein while that same forage may only be five to six per cent protein if cut late."

Forage and beef specialist Barry Yaremio says the protein requirements of a cow in second trimester of pregnancy is a minimum of seven per cent and is significantly different than when she reaches the third trimester (nine per cent) or lactation (11 per cent).

The key information, says Hanson, is protein, energy and fibre.

A basic forage analysis will list the moisture content of the feed stuff, energy as total digestible nutrients (TDN), net energy (NE) and/or digestible energy (DE), crude

protein values as well as calcium, and phosphorus, magnesium and potassium. A basic analysis should cost less than \$50, which is much less than the cost of a round bale of feed, let alone the possible savings from using fewer bales of hay mixed with lower quality forages.

More advanced analytical packages are available when more details are required.

"If an early frost or crop stress has been experienced in an area, for example, a nitrate test may be very beneficial as would a toxin test," he says.

Getting a representative sample of the feed to test is important in feeling confident with the analysis, says Hanson. "If sampling bales, samples need to be taken from a number of bales, at least 15-20, from different areas in the field and then mixed into one sample. Using a commercial forage

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sampler makes the process much easier, and often local agriculture service boards or forage associations have equipment available for loan.

“Use plastic bags to ship the feed so that an accurate moisture level can be determined. If sampling from a silage pit, rub the loose material off the face before taking the sample from packed material from the freshest part of the silage face, and from several locations in a ‘W’ or ‘M’ pattern. Mix the samples and pack tightly into a plastic bag with as little air as possible. If the samples won’t get to the lab right away, freeze to prevent any change to the silage characteristics. Finally, if you want a sample of swath grazing feed, take a tub and scissors out to the field and pull various samples from the swath from locations

all over the field. As the samples are pulled, cut the feed into two-inch lengths and mix in the tub. From the total sample, stuff a large zip-lock bag with a representative sample of the feed for analysis.”

## FEED

### Straw cautions

Travis Peardon, the regional livestock specialist in Outlook, Sask., says few producers were reporting an abundance of hay this year, so he presumes many will be stretching what they do have with straw to get their cows through the winter. That being the case, Peardon recently prepared a short primer on straw-bolstered rations for producers in his area.

Straw can make up a large portion of the ration when hay is in shortage as long as it is accompanied with a concentrate such as oats, barley or grain screenings pellets. It is important to plan a winter feeding ration, since straw does have its limitations when used in beef cattle diets.

One of those limitations is that it does not contain enough energy, protein, minerals or vitamins to be the sole source of winter feed. Cows cannot eat and digest enough straw to meet their nutritional requirements. Since straw is digested at a slower rate than hay, cows consume less straw than hay on a daily basis. Grinding or processing increases intake, but without

*Continued on page 58*



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# News Roundup

Continued from page 57

proper balanced supplementation of energy and protein, problems can appear. Malnutrition, impaction, reduced milk output and lowered conception rates are just the big ones that can hit your herd if you put too much emphasis on straw to carry the cows through.

In most cases, Peardon says, straw has lower energy content than grass hay and quite a bit less digestible protein. Adequate protein levels are necessary to avoid impaction on a straw-rich diet. Rumen microbes need a certain level of crude protein just to maintain their ability to digest fibre. Diets low in protein lead to lower dry matter intakes and lower fibre digestibility.

Due to its higher fibre content, straw takes longer for a cow to digest than it does to digest hay or grain, which results in limited intakes. For example, a 1,200-pound cow may be capable of eating 25 or 30 pounds of straw in a 24-hour period but the microbes in her rumen are only capable of digesting 15 to 18 pounds in that same time period. Impaction can and does occur.

Feeding limited amounts of hay, even poor- to medium-quality hay, will improve any straw ration. The cheapest source of protein will likely be alfalfa or alfalfa-grass hay. It is advisable to feed cows

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## NEWS ROUNDUP

hay instead of straw starting at least six weeks prior to calving and throughout the lactation period until the cows are turned out to spring pasture.

A mature cow can safely consume about eight to nine pounds of concentrate such as grain or pelleted screenings at one feeding. If the level of concentrate being fed each day exceeds that amount, consider dividing the concentrate and feeding equal portions twice a day. Ionophores can be added or mixed with the concentrate to reduce the incidence of bloat.

Ensure that adequate and balanced levels of the main minerals, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium and sulphur plus trace minerals copper, zinc, manganese, iodine, cobalt, selenium and vitamins A, D and E are incorporated into the ration. The requirements for minerals change throughout the various stages of pregnancy and lactation.

Developing a balanced ration is the key to successfully feeding straw, Peardon adds.

### TRADE

#### TPP gets a shot in the arm

On September 30 Global Affairs Canada gave the cattle industry a shot in the arm by officially opening consultations with the Canadian public over a renewed agreement with the remaining countries in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

The original agreement among 12 Asian-Pacific countries — Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam — concluded on October 5, 2015, and signed February 4, 2016, was sent off the rails in January when the incoming Trump administration served notice the United States was pulling out of the agreement.

Even without the U.S., total trade among the remaining 11 countries added up to \$404 billion in 2015, and together they create a market of 494 million people, with a combined GDP of US\$10.2 trillion, or 13.6 per cent of global GDP.

Given recent developments Canada still sees an opportunity to re-evaluate what opportunities may exist for Canadians, particularly small and medium-sized businesses, and for Canada to set the terms of trade in the region.

Ottawa is looking for feedback on interests and issues of importance to stakeholders regarding trade and investment with these countries, particularly Japan.

*Continued on page 62*

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# News Roundup

Continued from page 59

The deadline for submissions is October 30, 2017.

For much of this year the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has been urging Ottawa to remain in a retooled TPP or enter into bilateral negotiations on a free trade agreement with Japan, to put Canadian beef back on a more even footing with Australia. According to the CCA Japan has indicated a preference for a multi-national solution, such as the TPP over bilateral arrangements.

Those discussions took on an added note of urgency this summer when Japan triggered an increase in the 38.5 per cent tariff on frozen beef imports to 50 per cent from all countries except those with which it has a free trade agreement.

## BREEDING

**The not-so-sexy side of genomics** By Mike McMorris

New technologies are sexy if they meet three criteria: they open doors to new and wonderful things, they are disruptive, and they are profitable. Genomics is proving to be one of the sexiest technologies in history. All living things are based on DNA and so genom-

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## NEWS ROUNDUP

ics, the study and manipulation of that DNA, can have an impact on all of life. How does the beef industry fare?

Genomics is firmly established in some sectors of agriculture, with dairy being a good example. Traditional genetic improvement using pedigrees and performance records has allowed milk production to triple in the past decades. By using genomics, or the study of the DNA of individual animals, an impressive rate of progress is appearing and now includes several more important traits.

Genomics can benefit farmers directly. With just a DNA sample you can identify bad recessive genes that put an animal on your list to be culled, and identify the parentage and understand the level of hybrid vigour in an animal due to heterozygosity or lack of inbreeding.

When DNA results are married to a traditional system of genetic evaluation you get to evaluate animals at a younger age since you don't need as much information on the animal's own production or that of its daughters in the case of milk. The evaluations are more accurate, and are now available for new and important traits.

Over the past two years there have been discussions within the Canadian beef industry about an initiative that would help realize the potential of genomics. This really isn't a choice anymore, since competing proteins are well down the genomics road, making their products more desirable and affordable for consumers. The only real question is how to get it going in the beef sector.

Often times, genomics within the beef industry is compared with the dairy sector. That is an interesting, but dangerous comparison. Simple comparisons could send the beef sector down the wrong

*Continued on page 65*



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Clear breeding objective.	Increased yield of milk with desired components, healthy cattle.	Highly fractured goals different at seedstock, cow-calf, feedlot and processor levels.
Information flow.	Supply chain is short and connected.	Supply chain is long with very little flow of information up or down.
Reward for positive change.	Clear payment grid based on milk volume, components and quality.	Limited grids at carcass level, worsening backward through the supply chain.
Data on traits (farm and other levels).	High data collection on farm and in processing.	Data collected at seedstock level on some traits; very low level of data collection in cow-calf sector; data collected on some traits in feedlot. Grade data collected but of little use while some plants collect highly valuable camera data on yield and marbling.
Make use of existing genetic evaluations.	High use in sire selection, data on many traits.	Very low use, data available on few traits.
Selection indexes.	Lifetime Productivity Index (LPI) updated regularly by industry.	Available (e.g. BIO\$) but used little.
High use of AI.	Over 90%	Under 10%
Large data set of genotypes.	Very significant data set for Holstein, main breed.	Limited and weighted toward Angus.
Co-ordinated sharing of genotypes and performance data.	International	Limited
Limited breeds.	Mostly purebred cattle; vast majority being Holstein.	Mostly crossbred cattle; many breeds: important since genomic effects differ by breed.
Organization to do genetic evaluation.	Canadian Dairy Network (CDN)	Seedstock sector served through breed associations. BIO provides genetic evaluations on both purebred and crossbred cattle.



## ANSWER OUR SURVEY — and have a go at winning one of our caps

We have a goal to be the best beef cattle magazine in the business. But we need your help. If you could just fill in this survey and return it to me, you would be helping us set the future editorial direction for CANADIAN CATTLEMEN. All you have to do is tell me what you like about the magazine, and what you don't like. There's also some space for you to tell us what you would like to see in future issues.

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☐ I'm ranching or farming

Enterprise	# of head
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Registered cows	
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Commercial cows	
Horses	
Calves on feed/pasture	
Other livestock	

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Continued from page 63

road (see table on page 64). Many of the elements needed for the benefits of genomics to be realized differ greatly between the sectors.

The beef sector needs genomics to compete. Getting there will not be sexy. There are many deficiencies that need to be addressed and a lot of work to be done. What will it take?

All sectors must acknowledge that their futures are codependent... one does not survive let alone thrive without the others. Successful implementation of genomics is part of that equation. This will require an entirely new way of working together.

Everyone along the supply chain needs to capture and share data including pedigree, reproduction, weights, health, feed intake, detailed (camera) carcass data. DNA samples need to be collected and analyzed as well.

There is still critical research that needs to be done with a focus on the barriers identified above. A critical component will be knowing how individual (SNP) differences affect merit for traits by breed.

A new leadership model among vested parties will need to emerge. This is difficult since no single entity will be able to take on that role.

The whole beef industry must catch up in making genomics an integral part of the entire beef supply chain. That in turn will begin the transformation to a value chain in which data, market signals and increased profitability are shared amongst everyone. To fail to do so would mean continued struggles and diminishing share of consumer protein purchases. 🍖

Mike McMorris is the general manager of BIO based in Guelph, Ont.

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Wayne Hughes receives an award for 50 years of consecutive membership in the Canadian Angus Association from senior director of business development BC/AB Brian Good.

■ Two B.C. families have been honoured for 50 consecutive years of membership in the Canadian Angus Association. Congratulations go out to the Hughes family of Tafika Angus and John Urquhart of Bramblebrook Ventures.

Wayne, Gillian and Bryce Hughes own and operate Tafika Angus. Wayne and Gillian, in partnership with their son Bryce and his wife Jody, play integral roles in the day-to-day operations of the farm. Located near Lumby, B.C., at the edge of the Monashee Mountains, Tafika Angus is home to approximately 250 purebred Black Angus females. The herd has been heavily influenced by an extensive A.I. program. The Hugheses will host the 18th annual Angus Advantage Bull Sale at the B.C. Livestock Co-op Yards in March.



B.C. Angus Association director and past president Lance Savage presents John Urquhart with an award for 50 years of consecutive membership in the Canadian Angus Association.



Youth team at the World Angus Forum (l to r): Brett Wildman (Alta.), Kelsey Ribey (Ont.), Wade Olynyk (Sask.), Michaela Chalmers (Ont.), Travis Hunter (Alta.), Maguire Blair (Sask.), Raina Syrnyk (Man.), Katie Wright (Sask.), Bailey Dietrich (Alta.), Cole Dodgson (Alta.), Meghan McGillivray (B.C.), Kelly Sommerville (Ont.), Macy Liebreich (Sask.), Brian Good (Alta.).

John Urquhart bought his first 30 female Black Angus cattle from Alex Turner of Turner Meadows on Vancouver Island. In 1972, Red Angus were added. The last of the red cattle were sold in August leaving Urquhart with a small herd of Black Angus cows to look after. Urquhart was active in the B.C. Angus Association for 12 years as a director and also served as vice-president. He is the current president of the Fraser Valley Angus Club. He was a member of the RCMP for 23 years. Following his retirement from the force he was the coroner in Chilliwack for 14 years. Urquhart and his wife Betty, who died in 1995, were host to many Angus events throughout the Fraser valley. For many years a Chilliwack Fair did not happen without a brunch at the Urquharts. Today with his wife Barbara, Urquhart is still a great host.

■ I recently had a chance to sit down with Canadian Angus Association's senior director of business development Brian Good, along with juniors Macy Liebreich of Merit Cattle Co. and Raina Syrnyk of Syrnyk Farms, about their experiences at the World Angus Forum in Scotland this past June.

One hundred Canadians joined breeders from 32 different countries at the forum, the largest delegation next to Australia. This was the first time in 45 years that Scotland has hosted the World Angus Forum. As part of the program delegates toured Angus herds in England, Scotland and Ireland, and cattle shows in all three

countries. The biggest was the Royal Highland Show and it was a sight to see. It's a massive show with agriculture taking centre stage. Agriculture is very important in the U.K. and agriculture shows attract much larger audiences from the general public than we see in Canada. Good, Liebreich and Syrnyk also liked the popular Royal Highland grand parade where all the cattle and sheep breeds are marched out in front of the spectators. They especially liked being able to see some of the smaller rarer breeds that didn't have a breed show but still wanted the exposure.

The Royal Highland show was an eye opener to both Liebreich and Syrnyk who saw lots of saddle soap still being used to fit cattle for the show. There were a number of differences in terms of the products and clipping styles used in Canada.

Both Liebreich and Syrnyk were part of the Canadian junior contingent that competed at the Royal Highland show. Three junior teams of four represented Canada. They stayed in dorms where they got to know the juniors from the other countries and learn about how they did things in their operations. All the juniors brought some new ideas home with them and a new appreciation about keeping an open mind to new ideas and different ways of looking after cattle.

Even though they were all on different teams, friendships were formed within the Canadian team and with all the other juniors. Of course, there was some rivalry and lots of lively discussion, especially





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between the U.K. and New Zealand teams. One hot topic focused on ways to get more youth programs established. There is no junior program in the U.K., partly because of the distance between Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England while Australia and New Zealand associations are turning to junior programs to get more youth involved in agriculture. The Portugal contingent reached out to Liebreich and Canadian Angus delegates for ideas of how to establish their own junior program using the Canadian program as a benchmark. All three agreed that what sets all Canadian junior programs apart is the amount that our livestock industry invests in its youth, and the value they place on their contribution to the breed.

All the Canadian Angus team took part in the Agri Olympics at the Borders Fair Grounds. They started by manoeuvring JCB equipment around a course, driving a quad around an obstacle course while towing a trailer, and backing it up. Then they had to build a stone wall, catch heifers and put them in front of their respective pedigrees, identify flags from representative

countries and put a name to old veterinary equipment Building a stone fence was a bit of an ice breaker for the juniors. Their instructor had been doing it his whole life. Everybody discovered a new-found respect for the people who built all the stone walls they saw in the U.K. At the previous World Angus Forum in New Zealand four years ago they learned how to put up a New Zealand wire fence. That experience wasn't much help this time around.

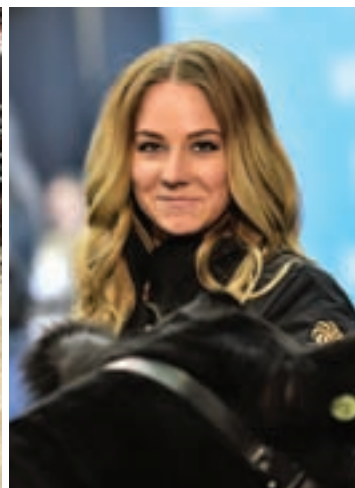
They went to 34 herds on their tour, often seeing two to three a day. Willie Robertson of Nightingale Farm in England had bought cattle from Brian Good's dad in 1974 and still had descendants from those cattle in the herd. One farm they stopped at had clipped every animal in their 200-head herd. Part of the tour included a couple of auction marts and what was noticeable was how clean they were. Because of health regulations the auction marts were made of steel and concrete. They would sell 5,000 sheep one day, take a day to wash down and then roll over into 3,400 beef the next day.

*Continued on page 68*



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## PURELY PUREBRED

Continued from page 67

Between species and every day, the whole facility is washed down ready for the next sale.

Scottish cattle tend to be larger than Canadian cattle but it looks like the cattle are changing in the U.K. to get away from the bigger sizes and trying to compete with the continental breeds.

One day they had to judge live steers and guess their weight. The next day they went to the ScotBeef plant and saw how the cattle were graded. The U.K. uses a 1-5 scale on fat and E.U.R.O.P. on conformation and muscle shape. For instance, a traditional Limousin steer would be an E for muscle shape and as you progressed through the letters the muscle becomes less pronounced. Carcasses weren't cut at the 12th and 13th rib to judge the ribeye.

Marbling was not a factor as they market beef differently in the form of stew meat and other smaller cuts. After they were shown the proper technique, juniors tried their hand at cutting up different cuts of meat and wrapping them. As they start to put a grading system in place and move away from straight pounds and what they are using now, Good expects the U.K. will look to Canada for its expertise and genetics. Optimistically, that may happen within three to five years.

One takeaway message for Good was how much international cattlemen depend on shows such as Canadian Western Agribition, the Toronto Royal and Farmfair International to see and acquire the latest in Canadian beef genetics. We need more, not fewer, shows in Canada to promote our genetic advantage to the world.

Macy Liebreich and Raina Syrnuk, speaking on behalf of all the juniors involved in World Angus Forum 2017, agree it was the trip of a lifetime and both said it would not have been possible without the support of the Angus foundation's board and the efforts of Belinda Wagner, Canadian Junior Angus Association co-ordinator and Canadian Angus Foundation executive director. Liebreich is currently enrolled in the commerce program at the University of British Columbia and Syrnuk is taking finance and accounting at the University of Manitoba. Both plan to keep building their herds and pass on the opportunity to pay it forward for upcoming youth. The words of Macy Liebreich say it all, "I expected wonderful and got so much better, more than you can ever imagine!"

The next World Angus Forum is in Sydney, Australia, in 2021.



■ Connor Roger submitted the winning name for the first ever Canadian Junior Limousin Association heifer donated to the association. CJLA Echo 1E will sell in the First Annual B Bar Cattle Bull and Female Sale on Tuesday, December 12 at Saskatoon Livestock Sales in Saskatoon with all proceeds going to the CJLA. 🍁





# TheMarkets

## FED CATTLE

The fed cattle cash trade hovered near \$133-\$134/cwt for the first three weeks of September, dropping to \$131.63/cwt during the last week, still \$1.10/cwt higher than last year. At that point it was uncertain if it had reached a seasonal bottom but given the drop from the spring high it's possible. The fed basis remains strong although the cash-to-cash basis had moved into negative territory again at -\$2.83/cwt versus +\$5/cwt just two weeks earlier. The cattle-on-feed in Alberta and Saskatchewan on September 1 were up five per cent at 607,176 head, due to a combination of light feeder cattle exports and the largest August placements since 2013, putting the total above the five-year average for August. Placements in August were 56 per cent larger than last year, made up primarily of heavier feeder cattle as grass yearlings were pulled from pasture due to deteriorating grazing conditions. Placements of cattle over 800 lbs. were up nearly 37 per cent.

Feedlots have remained current as evidenced by a four-pound drop in steer carcass weights to 924 lbs. compared to 2016. Year-to-date cumulative carcass weights are 31 pounds lighter for steers and 26 pounds lighter for fed heifers.

Domestically, fed steer marketings have been larger with Canadian slaughter up three per cent to 1,121,130 head while fed heifer slaughter is 10 per cent larger at 603,941 head. Even with the higher Canadian dollar and stronger basis, the fed cattle export numbers remain above a year ago, totalling 226,530 head or a nine per cent increase.

## FEEDER CATTLE

In September feeder cattle prices started showing some improvement. Although the Canadian dollar is six per cent stronger and barley prices near 18 per cent higher than a year ago the Canadian feeder prices held above year-ago levels. Risk management options don't favour placing cattle at the current levels; however, feedlots were profitable over the past year and remain

optimistic for 2018. Auction volumes increased toward the end of our reporting period, but demand remained strong for light-weight feeders, with 550-lb. steers averaging \$218.68/cwt, about \$14 over recent lows and \$29.11/cwt above last year.

Local demand for grass cattle was good right through September, and while the 850-lb. steer price dropped to \$182.17/cwt towards the end of August it climbed back to a current average of \$194.88/cwt which, when compared with the same time last year, is nearly \$23/cwt higher. The 850-lb. feeder basis had seen record strength through September 2017 with an average at +\$6.50/cwt compared to the five-year average of -\$10/cwt. At the end of September, the 850-lb. feeder basis was at \$5.16/cwt.

Feeder calf prices continue to trade at a premium to the U.S., dampening feeder cattle exports. To date feeder exports are down 39 per cent to just 95,696 head.

## NON-FED CATTLE

Cow prices continued to struggle. The down trend since June has seen prices fall 23 per cent to the end of September. A higher Canadian dollar and a D1,2 cow market trading at a premium to the U.S. market has limited exports. Recent weeks have seen reduced cow exports when compared to the same week a year ago, and looking at a cumulative total for 2017 the number of cows exported to date is down 31 per cent to just 96,059 head. While exports are smaller, the number of cows slaughtered to date in Canada is up 16 per cent from a year ago at 307,185 head. The current D1,2 cow price is \$87.43/cwt which is down from \$90/cwt at the end of September 2016. Butcher bull prices have trended very similarly, currently at \$100.55/cwt. The price is down from \$115/cwt at the same time last year. Bull exports are virtually unchanged at 38,193 to date while bull slaughter in Canada is 39 per cent larger at 12,755 head. 🍁

*Debbie McMillin is a market analyst who ranches at Hanna, Alta.*

## ▶ DEB'S OUTLOOK

### FED CATTLE

Fed cattle supplies should tighten while the supply of non-fed cattle will increase. Packers may start to scale back kill hours as numbers tighten; however, moving into the fourth quarter, rising demand for higher prices cut should push fed prices higher. Near term the market will establish a low, if it hasn't already, but look for better prices further out. The technical market is currently supporting this trend.

### FEEDER CATTLE

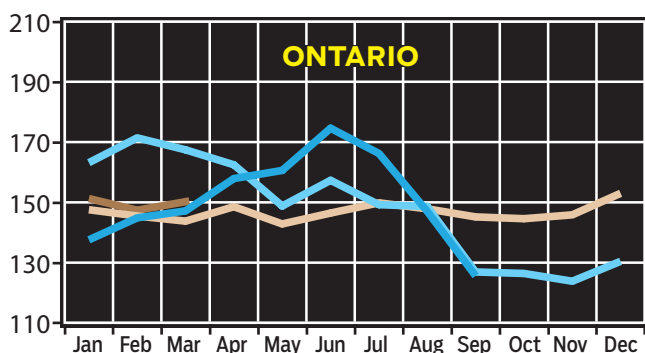
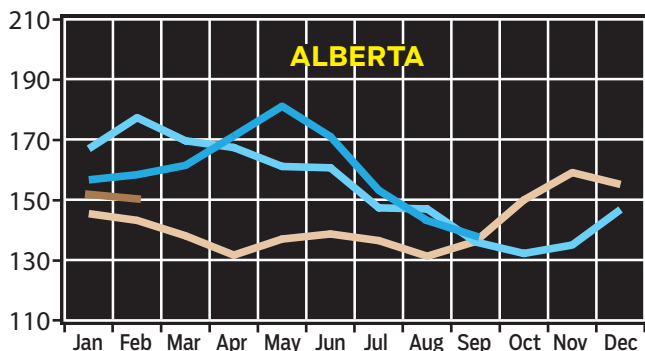
As harvest wraps up farmers will have more time to start bringing cows home and sending calves to market. Increased volumes through October put seasonal pressure on the fall run. Higher feed costs and the stronger dollar add to these negative influences, as do the limited risk management options available. Basis levels have been strong and it's not uncommon to see basis weaken through October and into November. On the flip side, the profits made in the feeding sector this year have feedlots eager to fill pens. Canada's cow herd has not grown and calf numbers remain manageable in terms of pen space and demand from buyers. Optimism in the market should put a solid floor on the downside of the seasonal trends ahead.

### NON-FED CATTLE

Non-fed prices have fallen sharply over the past few months and, based on the percentage drop from the spring high, we look for a low near-term. This points to more downward movement ahead. As producers bring cows home and make culling decisions over the next few weeks, cow volumes at auction will increase and pressure prices. Looking further out better prices in the fed market toward the end of the fourth quarter will have a positive influence on cow prices. Cows have a strong seasonal pattern that generally sees prices start to rally either late in the fourth quarter or early in the first quarter of 2018.

More markets ▶

## Break-even Prices on A-Grade Steers



Canfax weighted average price on A-Grade steers

2017 ■  
2016 ■

Break-even price for steers on date sold

2018 ■  
2016 ■

## September 2017 prices\*

### Alberta

Yearling steers (850 lb.)	\$184.17/cwt
Barley	4.32/bu.
Barley silage	54.00/ton
Cost of gain (feed)	66.52/cwt
Cost of gain (all costs)	97.86/cwt
Fed steers	137.95/cwt
Break-even (February 2018)	150.26/cwt

### Ontario

Yearling steers (850 lb.)	\$179.86/cwt
Grain corn	4.47/bu.
Corn silage	37.76/ton
Cost of gain (feed)	71.33/cwt
Cost of gain (all costs)	105.76/cwt
Fed steers	125.62/cwt
Break-even (March 2018)	150.22/cwt

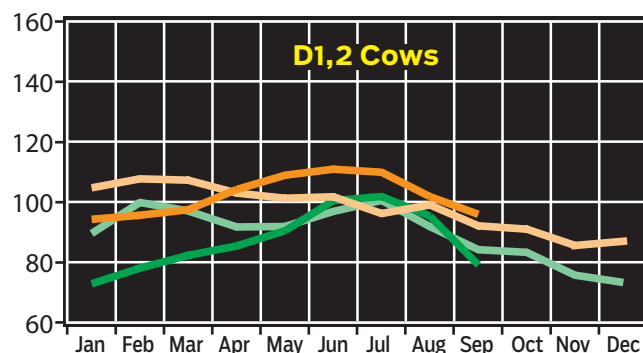
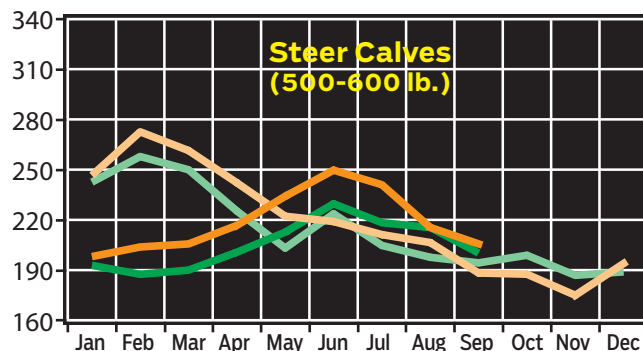
\*Mid-month to mid-month prices

Breakevens

East: end wt 1,450, 183 days

West end wt 1,325 lb., 125 days

## Market Prices



### Ontario

2017 ■  
2016 ■

Ontario prices based on a 50/50 east/west mix

### Alberta

2017 ■  
2016 ■

## Market Summary (to September 30, 2017)

	2017	2016
Total Canadian federally inspected slaughter	2,103,670	1,976,054
Average steer carcass weight	886 lb.	916 lb.
Total U.S. slaughter	23,677,000	22,363,000

### TRADE SUMMARY

#### EXPORTS

	2017	2016
Fed cattle to U.S. (to September 23)	233,447	217,788
Feeder cattle and calves to U.S. (to September 23)	98,861	157,859
Dressed beef to U.S. (to July)	342.53 mil.lbs	332.03 mil.lbs
Total dressed beef (to July)	467.71 mil.lbs	432.31 mil.lbs

#### IMPORTS

	2017	2016
Slaughter cattle from U.S. (to July)	0	0
*Dressed beef from U.S. (to July)	145.52 mil.lbs	143.86 mil.lbs
*Dressed beef from Australia (to July)	24.49 mil.lbs	45.60 mil.lbs
*Dressed beef from New Zealand (to July)	25.05 mil.lbs	28.08 mil.lbs
*Dressed beef from Uruguay (to July)	19.09 mil.lbs	22.53 mil.lbs

### Canadian Grades (to September 30, 2017)

% of A grades	+59%	54-58%	-53%	Yield	Total
Prime	0.1	0.3	1.1		1.5
AAA	14.8	21.1	21.5		57.4
AA	21.0	11.0	5.0		37.0
A	1.7	0.3	0.1		2.1
Total	37.6	32.7	27.7		
				Total A grade	98.0%
				Total graded	450,424
				Total ungraded	19,589
				% carcass basis	81.9%
					86.7%

Only federally inspected plants





# WINTER FORECAST FOR FEEDING MARGINS

**F**eedlots in Canada and the U.S. experienced a very profitable feeding margin structure from January through August. During the first week of May, when the fed cattle market reached \$197, margins actually edged over \$700 per head in some cases which was a record in my career of analyzing profitability. However, margins moved into negative territory in September. Feeder cattle that were purchased in May and June are now underwater by \$250 to \$300 per head. In late September, the Alberta fed cattle market was trading from \$132 to \$135 and the break-even pen closeout price was around \$155. Despite the negative margins, feeder cattle prices have percolated higher throughout the late summer and fall period. In past years, feedlots needed to experience four to six months of negative margins before bids for feeder cattle started to decline. I've received many inquiries with regard to the forecast for feeding margins over the winter. Cow-calf producers are asking if they should be selling their calves now or putting on 300 to 400 pounds over the winter to sell as yearlings next March. Therefore, I thought this would be an opportune time to discuss the feeding margin structure through the winter period.

Feed barley prices in southern Alberta were quoted in the range of \$200/MT to \$205/MT. Since the previous issue, there has been one major change in the feed barley market. Approximately 65 per cent of the barley seeded in Western Canada is a malt variety. This year the crop quality was excellent and I'm now estimating that malt barley production could reach as high as four million MT out of 7.5 million MT total barley crop. Farmers with malt barley will wait and hope for malt barley prices. In the previous issue I mentioned that the barley market needed to function to ration demand by encouraging the use of alternate feed grains. We will likely see low-protein milling wheat move into feed channels, and the feed grains market in Canada will be high enough over the winter to encourage imports of U.S. corn. I still feel there is \$20/MT to \$30/MT of potential upside in the barley market.

This will add about \$40 to input costs on a yearling over the winter.

I feel the fed cattle market is in the process of making a seasonal low. The monthly U.S. slaughter will likely peak in October. In November and December, I'm expecting the slaughter to experience marginal month over month declines. Although beef production will still be above year-ago levels, the main point is that beef production is not increasing. The market is not getting "more bearish" but, rather, stabilizing.

Those of you who have been following my comments for a while know that beef demand experiences a seasonal low in September and October. In late October, restaurant traffic tends to increase. Demand is further enhanced in early November when beef packers start buying for the

U.S. QUARTERLY BEEF PRODUCTION (million pounds)

Quarter	2013	2014	2015	2016	USDA 2017	USDA 2018
1	6,172	5,868	5,664	5,935	6,300	6,325
2	6,517	6,183	5,857	6,187	6,404	6,835
3	6,608	6,179	6,068	6,468	6,830	7,040
4	6,420	6,021	6,109	6,623	7,165	7,075
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,717</b>	<b>24,251</b>	<b>23,698</b>	<b>25,213</b>	<b>26,699</b>	<b>27,275</b>

U.S. Thanksgiving holiday. In December, consumer spending puts the economy into overdrive and this year, it could be more significant as the economy is running full steam. Unemployment levels are at historical lows, consumer confidence is near historical highs and equity markets have been very strong. It is interesting to note that approximately 12 per cent of the U.S. population was affected by the recent hurricanes but this didn't seem to temper beef demand as much as expected. The main point being is the economy appears to be very resilient when it is on full throttle.

Earlier in summer, the October to December live cattle futures were trading at even money or relatively the same price. At the time of writing this article, the December contract was trading at a \$6 premium to the October contract. This confirms the idea that the October period will probably be the lowest fed cattle prices of the year.

Feedlot operators have currently bid up the price of yearlings so that there is very little margin in the first quarter of 2018 based on the current April live cattle futures. Feeding margins will likely remain in negative territory until early January. In February and March, feeding margins are expected to move into positive territory by \$50 to \$100 per head. During the second quarter of 2018, I'm expecting feeding margins to come under pressure. Don't expect the fed and feeder cattle markets to rally in April and May of 2018 as they did in 2017. This was a unique situation that will not occur two years in a row.

In conclusion, I feel the cow-calf producers have potential to add value to their calves by backgrounding them over the winter and selling them in the March time frame. I'm expecting the yearling market to remain relatively flat over the winter. The current calf yearling spread favours holding calves and selling them in the late winter, early spring period. 🍁

*Jerry Klassen manages the Canadian office of Swiss-based grain trader GAP SA Grains and Produits Ltd., and is president and founder of Resilient Capital specializing in proprietary commodity futures trading and market analysis. Klassen consults with feedlots on risk management and writes a weekly cattle market commentary. He can be reached at 204-504-8339.*

# Sales & Events

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## EVENTS

### OCTOBER

- 25 Tools to build your Cow Herd Workshop, Pollockville, Alta.
- 25-28 Manitoba Ag Ex, Brandon, Man.
- 26-27 Canadian National Charolais Show & Sale, Keystone Centre, Brandon, Man.
- 27 Tools to build your Cow Herd Workshop, Warburg, Alta.
- 30 Tools to build your Cow Herd Workshop, Thorhild, Alta.
- 31 Tools to build your Cow Herd Workshop, Grand Prairie, Alta.

### NOVEMBER

- 1 Tools to build your Cow Herd Workshop, High Prairie, Alta.
- 1-2 National Environmental Farm Plan Summit, The Westin, Ottawa, Ont.
- 1-4 JTL Industries Stockade Roundup, Exhibition Grounds, Lloydminster, Alta.
- 2 Tools to build your Cow Herd Workshop, 9 a.m., Manning, Alta.
- 2 Tools to build your Cow Herd Workshop, 4:30 p.m., La Crete, Alta.
- 3-17 The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto, Ont.
- 8-9 BeefTech, Farmfair International, Edmonton, Alta.
- 8-12 Farm Fair International, Edmonton, Alta.
- 14-16 Canadian Forage and Grassland Association Conference, Delta Guelph Hotel and Conference Centre, Guelph, Ont.
- 18 Maritime Bull Test Station AGM and handling workshop, Nappan, N.S.
- 18-21 Canadian Bison Association annual convention, Delta Regina, Regina, Sask.
- 20-25 Canadian Western Agribition, Regina, Sask.
- 20-25 Simmental Federation of America's Conference, Regina, Sask.
- 21-23 AgEx, Agricultural Excellence Conference, Brookstreet Hotel, Ottawa, Ont.
- 22-23 People's Choice Gelbvieh Bull Futurity, Agribition, Regina, Sask.
- 23 Gelbvieh Sweetheart Classic Sale, Agribition, Regina, Sask.
- 23 Western Canadian Gelbvieh Sale

### DECEMBER

- 4-6 Alberta Beef Producers annual meeting, Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Calgary, Alta.
- 5-7 Western Canada Conference on Soil Health and Grazing, Radisson Hotel Edmonton South, Edmonton, Alta.
- 6-7 Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) annual meeting, Delta Edmonton South, Edmonton, Alta.

## JANUARY 2018

- 24-25 Saskatchewan Beef Industry Conference 2018, Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, Sask.
- 31 to National Cattlemen's Beef Association annual convention, Phoenix, Arizona

## FEBRUARY

- 8-9 Manitoba Beef Producers annual meeting, Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre, Brandon, Man.
- 11-25 Foothills Forage and Grazing Association, Spain and Portugal Ag Tour

## MARCH

- 17-18 Cody Sibbald Legacy Classic, Exhibition Grounds, Medicine Hat, Alta.

## SALES

### NOVEMBER

- 4 Nelson Hirsche Purebreds 1st Annual Production Sale, at the ranch, Del Bonita, Alta.
- 13 Speckle Park — Presort Feeder Sale, Heartland Livestock Services, Lloydminster, Sask.
- 18 Fenton Hereford Ranch Fall Production Sale, Irma, Alta.
- 21 Alberta Shorthorn Assoc. 7th Annual All Star Classic Shorthorn Female Sale, at Ag Society, Lacombe, Alta.
- 28 Bar Pipe Hereford Ranch Sale, at the ranch, Okotoks, Alta.

### DECEMBER

- 1 Brost Land & Cattle Co. "When the Smoke Clears 49th Annual Sale, at the ranch, Irvine, Alta.
- 6 Gemstone Cattle Co. 3rd Annual Hereford & Angus Bull & Female Sale, at Bow Slope Shipping, Brooks, Alta.
- 8 McMillen Ranching Ltd. Herdbuilder 17, at the ranch, Carievale, Sask.
- 11 Diamond K Cattle Co. "Buy Em Red, Breed Em White" Bred Heifer Sale, at the Bircham ranch, Piapot, Sask.
- 11 Y Coulee Land & Cattle Co. "You Be the Judge" Bull & Heifer Sale, at NCL Vermilion, Alta.

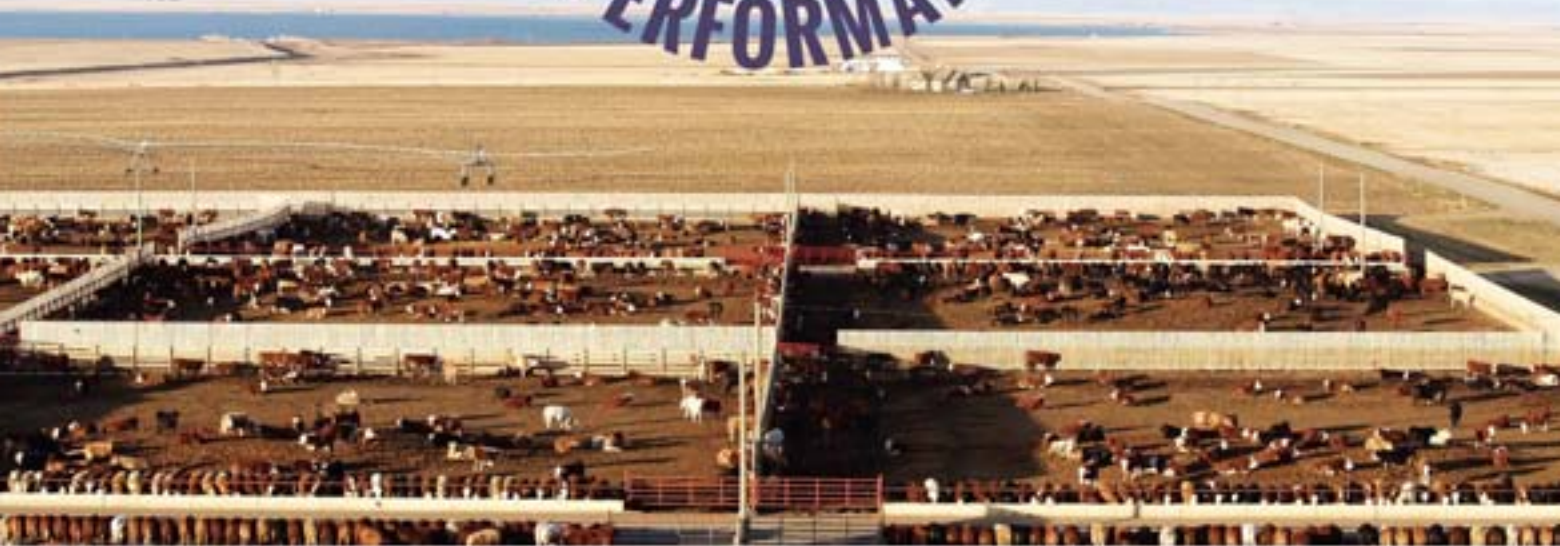
## JANUARY 2018

- 31 Moose Creek Red Angus 2-Year-Old Bull Sale, at the ranch, Kisbey, Sask. 🍁

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