

The News Feed

An Ontario Cattle Feeders' Publication



Fall 2021 Edition



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GROWING OCFB EXPORTS TO JAPAN



Daisuke Shimojima, (left) Ontario Corn Fed Beef Marketing Manager for Asia has been busy participating in trade events and meeting with officials from major retailers. Despite being in a state of emergency due to the pandemic, Ontario beef exports continue to increase.

Also in this issue: details on the Ontario Beef Quality Assurance Incentive Program and a spotlight on beef feedlot research.

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From The Desk Of Jim Clark



Jim Clark, Executive Director

With the province moving through the different phases of its pandemic recovery plan, I have now had the opportunity to go out for supper with others in a business setting. It was so nice to finally get out and be able to see and have a discussion with people face to face as opposed to phone calls or Zoom meetings. The outings underscored how vital the social aspect is to our lives and how much it has been lacking when it comes to business discussions. Based on my conversations, it's critical to note that our business is about people and the value we place on them. The opportunity to meet and participate in activities such as farm tours again will be important as we move forward and focus on our industry.

While it was great to have that opportunity to go out again, it also showed how far we still must go to get through the pandemic. The sad reality is that at this point, it looks like we're not out of the woods yet. The food service sector is still facing many challenges, from higher food costs to labour shortages. If you get a chance, and if it is safe to do so, consider going out for a meal to support your local restaurants and bars.

Not Business As Usual

From a cattle business perspective, we are nowhere near back to normal. Once again, due to many unforeseen circumstances and increasing concerns over the Delta variant of the coronavirus, we made the disappointing decision to cancel the 2022 Beef Industry Convention. While we deeply regret the move, the health and safety of our association's members, our industry partners, the event attendees, and their families remains paramount.

As we entered the "fourth wave" in late August, the processors seemed to be handling the pandemic in terms of dealing with their staff and the shock to the supply chains. Also, boxed beef prices are the highest we've ever seen. There's a huge demand for beef, and there's a ton of opportunities that the processors are addressing. But we also need to recognize that the struggles we have faced are not totally over. As much as we want to return to what we thought was normal around January or February 2020, we are not close to being there yet.

Cattle Feeding Sector Facing Crisis

It's not just about getting back to where we were before the pandemic. As I mentioned in the last issue of The News Feed, the status quo in the beef industry isn't working and that we need to look at different options. The cattle feeding side of the business is in crisis, and producers in Ontario and across North America have lost millions upon millions of dollars in equity over the past three years. Based on some of the conversations I've had following my last commentary, I feel that some of the producers are hanging their heads and are hoping that tomorrow will be a much better day.

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Unfortunately, that sentiment wasn't what I hoped for when writing the commentary. What I'm aiming for is to spark some discussion about ensuring a better future. I'm constantly driven to look at different options and ideas for the industry, not only from the past but the present as well. I don't have the answers, which is why I continually reach out to people. Somehow, we need to level this playing field in the beef industry, and this includes all of us: the cow-calf sector, the backgrounders, the feedlots, the packers, the retailers, the industry suppliers, and the consumers.

As I mentioned earlier, the cut-out values for boxed beef have gone through the roof, but the price for fed cattle is ever fluctuating. There's such a difference in the margins, and there is no correlation between the two anymore. It's a trend that has occurred many times over the past couple of years. But it's a trend that can't continue. Yes, demand, especially export demand, is extremely strong, but the feedlot challenges of the past few years have weighed heavily on the producers.

Levelling The Playing Field

The situation reminds me of a saying in the mining industry: If you keep bleeding the resources, there's going to be nothing left to mine at some point. It's why I talk about levelling the playing field so that somehow, we don't have to continue with the "I have to lose, and you have to win" scenario of our business. I believe it must be more about "we" and how do we insulate ourselves. A good example is the whole discussion around sustainability. There's much talk about the environment and other aspects, but there's really no discussion about what the key pillar of sustainability is to me, and that's financial stability for the farmers. Without that financial stability on the farm, you can't achieve

all these other things. If you have the money, you will make changes. But when you continue to lose money, your operation doesn't get the attention it needs. If we keep going down this path without more market-reflected relationships between the price of live cattle and the resulting beef products and the price the consumers pay, I don't think anything will change except for the fact that there won't be any feedlots left here. Feedlots are only going to do this for so long. Business dictates that, which is why we need to continue to look at levelling the playing field.

The Big Picture

I'm reminded of a quote from the late Don Tyson, the former President and CEO of Tyson Foods. He believed one had three choices. First, stand back and watch change pass you by. Second, jump on board and ride it out to the destination. Third, make a stand in the middle of the tracks, but that only works for Superman. And I think that describes where we are today. We need to continue to focus time and resources on the industry of looking at the big picture. What does the future look like, and what are the expectations? It's the complete package. If you're missing any parts, it's doesn't work.

Another key issue is that our overall reliance on western Canadian feeder cattle is changing rapidly for many reasons. One is the change to transportation rules. It's a real challenge and one that we need to continue to monitor. It was four beef industry meetings ago that the Virginia government set up a booth at our event. Since then, our relationship with the state has flourished. The number of cattle from south of the border and the number of farms importing the cattle continue to grow. It's an example of why we need to constantly consider whether current approaches serve our interests and that

they need to be weighed against adding value to our people.

Given that people around the world demand high-quality Canadian beef, it's critical that we continue to move our industry forward, especially for our younger producers. It's got to be hard for the youth of this sector because we don't have a lot of optimistic conversations about the state of the affairs of the cattle industry. A lot of that negativity results from the cattle feeding losses and the huge destruction of capital.

From a marketing standpoint, if we have a smaller production base, then it would be hard to increase our market share and continue to do what we've achieved in export markets to the benefit of the beef producer. We're going to need adequate supplies to meet the growing demand for our beef products produced here. I don't know what the answer is, but we're going to need to look at different things overall.

We need to have industry cooperation to halt the erosion of dollars. I see some great opportunities when I look at the pork industry and the integrated loops that I think have been good for them.

We need to pull things together and look at it; not from today but ten years from now. What does this industry look like, and how are we going to get there? And not only to maintain our sector but also to continue to grow it.



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Japan Market Continues To Increase Export Volumes For Ontario Corn Fed Beef



While Japan is still in a state of emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic, Ontario beef exports continue to increase compared to previous year volumes.

Volumes for the first six months of 2021 are up 30% over a very strong 2020. Marketing Manager Daisuke Shimojima (Shimo) has been busy participating at two major trade events so far this year including Foodex and the Supermarket Trade Show. Attendance was down significantly but still provided key introductions to additional customers for Ontario Corn Fed Beef and Ontario Heritage Angus Beef brands.

In his recent travels to Nagano, Shimo met with the leadership of Alpico Holding Inc. Alpico is an excellent company that operates Delicia (65 stores) and U-Pico (18 stores), which are the largest retail chain group in Nagano Prefecture.

Shimo also completed the launch of the Ontario Heritage Angus Beef brand with three new retail chains, which represent over 100 retail stores across Japan.

Consumer Beef Purchase Preferences Canada Beef global consumer preference survey reveals common themes

The Canada Beef Global Consumer Survey was undertaken this spring to identify what information matters most to consumers when purchasing fresh beef products or selecting a brand of beef.

A total of 8,000 adults participated in the survey, comprised of 1,000 consumers in each of the United States, Canada, Great Britain, China, Japan, South Korea, and Italy, and 500 consumers each in Mexico and Vietnam.

The attitudinal survey contained both open-ended and closed questions; the former to capture unprompted and likely more authentic consumer perspectives, the latter to rank a prepared list of beef characteristics by importance when selecting a branded product.

Common themes emerged among consumers across the emerging, established, and top export markets for Canadian beef. For example, when purchasing fresh beef, the freshness of the product, a quality certification or grade, price, and where the products come from were the most common considerations cited by consumers in the nine countries surveyed. In terms of selecting a brand of beef to purchase, the factors deemed most important included food safety protocols, price, the quality grade of the beef, and how cattle are raised.

The survey results also captured consumer attitudes that mirror current market access issues in some countries and revealed areas of opportunity in others. For example, when purchasing a fresh beef product, freshness is the most important factor for consumers in Mexico (52%), followed by China (35%) and South Korea (35%). In Vietnam, consumer preference for quality certification or grade (30%) competed with freshness (29%). Consumers in Canada (30%), the U.S. (26%), Great Britain (25%) and Japan (18%) considered price the most important factor. In Italy, consumers placed the most importance on where the beef product comes from (28%).

Understanding consumer preferences in key export markets for Canadian beef is essential to long-term strategic market development.

Canada's top six largest export markets by volume in 2020 were the U.S., Japan, Mexico, Hong Kong and Macau, Southeast Asia and Mainland China.



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- Hans Steen, Stoneview Acres



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Adding Value To Ontario Beef Through Quality Assurance Rebate Incentive Now Available

Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO), in partnership with the Joint Marketing Committee, a partnership between BFO and the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association, are pleased to share that we have introduced an Ontario Beef Quality Assurance Incentive Program, which will provide BFO check-off paying members with a 75 per cent rebate on VBP+ audit fees paid for members who become VBP+ certified through the completion of training, and an on-farm audit. Program funds will be allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis, with the program concluding on December 31, 2021. The goals of the incentive program are to improve the supply of Ontario certified sustainable calves for Ontario certified sustainable feedlots, encourage enrollment and support in quality assurance programming (a key component of the Ontario Beef Market Development strategy), and help offset VBP+ audit costs for our members. As always, Ontario feedlots also have the option to be certified under the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program (OCFB QA) through the completion of training, assessments and an on-farm audit.

The Certified Sustainable Program currently offered through Cargill Guelph provides financial credits to producers along the supply chain who have been audited by either VBP+ or OCFB QA as the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) certification body. The certified sustainable supply chain enables consumer-facing sustainability claims and makes it clear to consumers that they are purchasing Certified Sustainable Beef (CSB), all while showcasing the Canadian beef industry's dedication to transparency. There is a growing demand for CSB as retailers and food service providers like McDonald's, Walmart, Chop Steakhouse and Bar, Gordon Foodservice, Loblaws, and Harvey's are all sourcing a portion of their beef with the CSB claim. To meet this growing demand, more Ontario cattle need to be enrolled in certified on-farm quality assurance programs.

If you are interested in learning more about the VBP+ program and the Ontario Beef Quality Assurance Incentive Program, please contact Dan Ferguson by email at dan@ontariobeef.com or by phone at 905.375.8551, or Jaclyn Horenberg by email at jaclyn@ontariobeef.com or by phone at 519.608.2429. If you are interested in learning more about the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program, please contact John Baker by email at john@ontariocornfedbeef.com or by phone at 905.301.0137.

Singapore Lifts Trade Barrier On Canadian Beef

As of August 20, 2021, Singapore has approved the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) certificate for the export of all beef, including beef offal, with no age restrictions.

This change in certificate makes Singapore the first country to remove the remaining Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) trade restrictions following the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), recognizing Canada as a BSE negligible risk country on May 27, 2021.

"While Singapore is not currently a large market for Canadian beef, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is pleased with the market access progress as diverse market access leads to trade resiliency and the highest overall value for Canadian farmers and ranchers," said Bob Lowe, CCA President. "We are encouraged by Singapore's change and hope others will follow soon."

Previously, Singapore had approved all Canadian boneless beef and bone-in beef from animals under 30 months of age. Expanded types of beef and beef products from May 27, 2021, onwards will now be accepted for import into Singapore.

Canadian beef exports to Singapore peaked in 2014 at 53.77 tonnes, valued at \$586,000. In 2019, exports were at 1.79 tonnes and \$31,000. No trade was reported in 2020 or the first half of 2021.

While most of Canada's trading partners had already approved all Canadian beef based on Canada's previous OIE BSE controlled risk status, several key trading partners such as China, Taiwan and South Korea have yet to approve all Canadian beef.

In partnership with the Government of Canada, CCA has been working to have all remaining BSE restrictions on Canadian beef exports removed. Additionally, CCA is working to align Specified Risk Material (SRM) Removal with the U.S.



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Feed Bunk Management Study Update



Together with our research partners, the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program has launched the next steps in the feed bunk management and cattle behaviour study. The goal is to develop practical resources and tools a producer can use to implement good bunk management practices and strategies. The areas of study this summer included a survey of the feed industry professionals' views of Ontario's feedlot sector, observing behaviour of new feedlot arrivals and taking a closer look at robotic feed pushers in a feedlot environment.

Feed Industry Survey

The survey questions were designed to understand the production and management methods implemented in Ontario's feedlot operations. We asked a number of feed industry professionals who do business and provide advice to the feedlot sector to provide an insight on the types of educational forums needed from their perspective as a feed industry group. They were also asked about specific topics of interest that their clientele would welcome more information about.

An interesting finding in our early analysis of

the survey indicates the group reported that only a fraction of their clients uses closeouts to analyze the performance of each group of cattle. Producers should be encouraged to complete closeouts on groups of cattle, underlining the fact that if performance data is not identified, it is difficult to make critical management decisions.

Key Management Practices for Starter Rations

Continued exploration of key management practices, from a risk assessment perspective, is required to address the health of incoming groups of cattle. Developing routine standards to identify those practices is key to the success of starting various groups of cattle arriving in the feedlot. This part of the study includes observation of the cattle at the bunk and behaviour patterns in the pen. Further management considerations are based on cattle origin and diet history of the new arrivals. The strategies being investigated include the start-up regime, roughage level digression in each ration, concentration of grains progression in each ration and more, charted from our excellent group of participating producers in the study.

Robotic Feed Pushers

We have adopted technology from the dairy industry by doing an evaluation of robotic feed pushers at two farms with centre feed alleys and flat bunks. Assessing cattle behaviour at the bunk with multiple feed pushups over a 24-hour period will hopefully confirm our thoughts of increasing dry matter intakes. In last year's bunk management study, bunk activity increased at feeding and push-up times supporting our theory. Labour savings with robotic use and the convenience during nighttime push-ups are also contributing factors.

The participants in this study include the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program, the OMAFRA Livestock Division and their associated summer students. A great deal of collaborative work continues to be put into this year's study and results will be documented later this year. We are very appreciative for the excellent co-operation of our host producers involved in this study,

participating feed industry professionals, and the two companies offering support with the robotic feed pushers.

Feed Bunk Management Study Highlighted During Beef Research Day

Megan Van Schaik, OMAFRA Beef Cattle Specialist, discussed the first year of the study during the Beef@Guelph Research Day on Aug. 14. She told the virtual event that bunk management plays a key role in managing digestive upsets, noting that poor bunk management can decrease dry matter intake (DMI) by up to 10 to 15 per cent. "It's a central practice to cattle feeding; if the bunk isn't managed properly, it can lead to digestive disorders, erratic DMI and poor performance overall."

Summarizing last summer's research, Van Schaik said they set out to better understand how bunk management practices affect cattle feeding behaviour. Trail cameras monitored cattle feeding activities at the bunk during feeding events and feed push-ups at six different farms. A bunk scoring tool assessed the disappearance of feed through the course of 24 hours. The researchers monitored the animals' behaviour for approximately three to five days at each farm. "We know that bunk management is an important factor in cattle performance. So, those bunk management elements include consistent, daily feeding (and) feed push-ups where applicable so that feed is accessible," said Van Schaik as she listed some of the key takeaways from the study.

The frequency of feeding is also a critical factor as the feeding events encouraged the cattle to come to the bunk. The researchers also learned that bunk scoring tools are effective in assessing feed disappearance and matching feed deliveries with intake. Also, visual aids like trail cameras can help collect vital information about bunk management on farms.

An online video captures the benefits of the feed bunk study. If you haven't had an opportunity to view it yet, the video presentation is still available on the Ontario Corn Fed Beef website. Go to ontariocornfedbeef.com, and you'll see the link for the video on YouTube.

Researchers Study Effects Of Yeast In Feedlot Rations



The idea of using yeast is showing promise as a possible alternative to antibiotics in Ontario beef feedlot rations. With growing concerns about the use of in-feed antimicrobials, University of Guelph researchers have been looking at yeast as a replacement. Dr. Katie Wood, Assistant Professor in the Department of Animal Biosciences, discussed the findings of their study during the Beef@Guelph Research Day. While Dr. Wood summarized the project, she noted that the research was conducted by her student Melissa Williams, who completed the work as part of her master's thesis.

Feed challenges

When it comes to finishing steers, Wood said the goal is to produce a very high-quality, well-marbled carcass. As a result, the animals need to eat a very high energy-dense diet, which is usually grain-based. "When feeding high levels of grain to these ruminants, one thing we are introducing is a lot of rapidly fermentable carbohydrates into the rumen," noted Wood.

These carbohydrates stimulate the microbial population to grow and reproduce, which produces volatile fatty acids. When there are more volatile fatty acids produced than the animal can absorb, it decreases pH in the rumen. Wood said the low pH puts the animals at risk for ruminal acidosis and other associated disorders such as liver abscesses. "Certainly, that has direct and indirect economic impacts on the producer through the loss of sale of condemned livers as well as increased trim out of the carcass," she said, adding there are other

production losses too. "These aren't well characterized, but certainly an animal exhibiting a severe immune response will eat less and have lower gains as a result of that."

What's more, Wood noted the incidence of liver abscesses is increasing, particularly as beef carcasses are becoming larger.

The role of yeast in feed rations

She noted that in-feed antibiotics such as Tylosin or Virginiamycin are used to help control bacterium populations in the cattle. But with increased public pressure and a shift towards good antimicrobial stewardship practices to reduce the use of in-feed antibiotics for livestock, there is increased interest in removing them from feedlot cattle diets.

Researchers are studying alternatives that can help achieve similar levels of cattle performance without resulting in high levels of ruminal distress. For example, the Guelph team has been working with a dry active yeast. "This is very similar to the yeast that you use for baking bread or baked goods," said Wood. "It's a little different strain, bred specifically for use in cattle."

The product is not new and has been shown to help improve ruminal pH in dairy production. "Although we don't really understand exactly how this is happening, we think that it might be related to bacteria competing with yeast and reducing those lactate-producing bacteria, which help increase ruminal pH," she added. "There's very limited research in feedlot cattle and even less specifically with corn-based feedlot diets. And so that led us to our question: Can dry active yeast help us improve feedlot performance, rumen pH and other indicators of gut health?"

In the study, 51 Angus-cross steers were fed for 100 days while the researchers measured performance and efficiency, including average daily gain and feed conversion ratio. They also monitored feed intake and behaviour, the time spent at the feeder, the number of visits, and the mealtime duration. "We wanted to look at the variation from day-to-day on dry matter intake because we know that high variation can

also increase the risk of liver abscesses," noted Wood.

The researchers also looked at carcass traits and indicators of gut health, including continuous pH monitoring, rumen health scores and tissue histology. Commenting on the results, Wood said the researchers didn't notice any difference between the yeast and control treatments in terms of performance or the carcass traits. The feed intake results, however, painted a different picture as the steers fed with yeast in the ration had a reduced feed intake by 33 per cent. "When we looked that variation from day-to-day, in terms of DMI, the yeast-fed steers also ate much more consistently," she added. "So, with that reduction in DMI and similar performance, the animals with yeast added to the diet had a much-improved feed conversion ratio as well. Certainly, some positives in terms of animal performance."

In terms of rumen pH, Wood said there wasn't much difference between the two groups, but the researchers noted a tendency for the yeast-fed steers to have a higher minimum pH. Also of note, 7.84% of the cattle in the control group had liver abscesses compared with 3.92% of the cattle on yeast.

While yeast is showing promise as a replacement for in-feed antimicrobials, Wood said they're hoping to follow up the research to better understand why yeast worked so well in this experiment. They also want to make a direct comparison with some in-feed antibiotics like Tylosin.

On a final note, Wood added that they're studying other additives such as benzoic acid and doing considerable work on trying to better understand the role of fibre in feedlot diets and how it affects gut health and cattle performance.

Effects Of Rest Stop Duration And Resources On Cattle Welfare

While the issue of long-distance transportation of cattle has been a source of contention in the industry in recent years, the impact of the experience on the animals is not well understood.

A research project involving the University of Guelph is working to shed more light on the situation. Specifically, Prof. Derek Haley and his collaborators are taking a closer look at providing cattle with feed, water and rest during the journey. Haley summarized the study during the Beef@Guelph Research Day. He told the virtual meeting that long-distance transportation of cattle is critical to Ontario's beef industry as calves travel from western Canada and the United States to help fill the province's feedlots.

The researchers have been observing cattle at commercial rest stations in Thunder Bay. He noted that studying the animals' behaviour is critical to determining what the experience is like for them. Before starting the project, Haley recalled that some cattlemen expressed concern that the rest period was potentially harmful as unloading and reloading cattle was too stressful. They doubted the cattle would eat, drink and rest in an unfamiliar environment. "At the time they told me this, I couldn't argue with them; there was no evidence about it, one way or the other until, thanks to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, we were funded to go and look at it."

The research was the first to demonstrate that cattle would eat, drink, lie and rest. While observing the cattle, they noticed the animals' activity would stabilize approximately two hours after arriving at the rest stop.

They were also the first to benchmark long-distance cattle loads at these rest stations and describe where the loads were coming from, where they were going, and what weight classes of cattle were involved in long-distance transportation in Canada. Haley said they found the drivers were resting cattle for more than twice the amount they were required to do by law.

"Even though regulations stated a minimum of five hours rest, on average, cattle were being rested for 11.2 hours."

At the time of the research, the regulations called for a minimum five-hour rest period. However, the interval has since been expanded to eight hours, which Haley called a "non-issue" as the research demonstrated the drivers are resting the cattle for longer than that.

The researchers also looked at cattle handling at the rest stations. Haley said they found the handling to be efficient as the mean time to unload and reload the animals was similar at approximately 16 minutes. "And we found that the number of slips and falls that we recorded were well below the standards set by Temple Grandin's American Meat Institute handling audit," he added. "So, there is lots of good news in what we discovered when we looked closely."

Another area of interest was studying the impact of different resources at the rest station on arriving cattle. In terms of feeding resources, the arriving cattle are provided with hay. For the researchers, Haley said they were keen to find out how much space was available for feeding. "If every single animal on the load was hungry, was it possible for them to eat at the same time? Specifically, we asked the question, 'Is there any

impact of doubling the existing feeding space on cattle behaviour?'"

They gave the cattle two round bale feeders as opposed to one feeder. Not surprisingly, a higher proportion of animals could eat at any point in time, and there was less disruption or interruption of eating bouts. "Some of this is already known and, in some places, put into practice on farms and ranches," said Haley. "However, it was also important to examine this in the context of commercial rest stations to document how stations are feeding their animals and to find out if there were best management practices that could be changed there."

The next item for the study was the impact of the watering resources. Haley noted many of the western cattle stopping at the rest station might be coming off pasture where they weren't required to find a human-provided water source. The possibility raised several questions. Does running water help cattle find the trough, and does it impact drinking behaviour? Are they familiar with different kinds of water sources, and would they be timid around them? Would having running water as an auditory cue and potentially a visual cue change how they drank? Or how many animals drank and how soon? "I can tell you that we didn't find any impact of that flowing water source on the proportion of animals drinking, nor did that result in any spin-off effects on their behaviour, in terms of general activity," he said.

The researchers recently completed studying the impact of the resting resources. Haley noted that the rest stations commonly have dirt or dry-lot flooring. "And we have the question,

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does deep bedding affect the resting or lying behaviour of cattle? The code of practice suggests as a recommended best practice giving cattle bedding, but it does not require that," he added.

A layperson might envision that a rest station would have a comfortable bed for the animals to lie on. The researchers decided to put that assumption to the test. Noting that the data is preliminary, pending publication, Haley said they found a 15-centimetre depth of straw bedding is enough to cause cattle to lie down sooner after arrival versus the standard dirt or dry-lot flooring. "You get animals coming on the same truck, half go to a pen with straw, half go to a dry-lot or dirt floor pen and those ones that go into the straw bed lie down sooner," said Haley. "Presumably, they're all equally fatigued from the journey, but there is something about the presence of that bedding that affects how soon they lie down."

While the research is ongoing, Haley's general summary of the observations notes that the cattle at rest stations don't appear to be exhausted by transport durations of 30 hours, which is the average travel of a load to the station. "The critics would have you believe the animals walk off the truck exhausted, and they fall down in a heap," he said. "They generally get off the truck, spend a couple of hours eating and then lie down. This is information that had never been documented before. We now have some data."

As for the next steps, Haley's team continues to explore factors that influence effective rest station stopovers so that the animals take the best advantage of the time during their stay. It is critical to determine what is best for cattle health and their productivity. To date, the data shows that it's possible to manipulate the behaviour of the animals at the rest station. With that in mind, Haley said they want to know more about the effects of the feed at the stopover. For example, what is the impact on the cattle if they had a limited amount of feed versus being allowed to eat as much as they want? "What would help gut pH and flora be maintained in an optimal way," posed Haley, adding that the goal is to get the cattle from the rest station to the feedlot environment in the best state possible so that they can carry on and be productive.

New Website And Logo For Guelph Beef Research



Plans are in the works to launch a new website for sharing the latest beef research from the Ontario Agricultural College and Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph. The new site, planned for the end of the year, is part of a social media re-branding of Beef@Guelph.

Researchers, Drs. Katie Wood and Jessica Gordon gave a brief update on the plans during the Beef@Guelph Research Day.

Beef@Guelph aims to share the information about the beef research projects so they can be put directly in the hands of end-users, whether they're veterinarians, feed industry professionals or producers.

The website will serve as the cornerstone, providing a centralized point to house the information. In addition, the site will also include PDF versions of Virtual Beef, the technology transfer publication of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The group is also looking to expand its social media presence. You can follow the group on Twitter at UoGBeefResearch and watch for more details about their transition to Beef@Guelph in early 2022.

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High Feed Costs Pressuring Feedlot Producers

The hot, dry summer in parts of North America is lowering expectations for grain production and keeping feed costs at lofty levels. Since hitting a high of more than \$9.00 per bushel in early May, old crop corn prices in the Hensall area have averaged \$8.45 per bushel. New crop prices have averaged \$6.65. In the west, extreme heat and drought have pushed barley prices to record highs.

Besides the outlook for lower production, tightening grain stocks are providing further support to the feed prices. "That's tough on feedlots with cattle on feed," says Brian Perillat, Manager and Senior Market Analyst at Canfax. "And when you go to market calves, if the feedlot has to pay \$7.00 or \$8.00 for feed grain or more, it puts some pressure on the calves and the feeder market to some extent."

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada noted the eroding crop conditions in its August principal field crops outlook. The 2021 barley yield is projected at 2.48 tonnes/hectare (t/ha), which is 65% of the five-year average, and close to 2.24 t/ha, the record low in 2002. Production is pegged at 7.45 million tonnes, 31% lower than last year and a seven-year low. This, coupled with historically low carry-in stocks, will result in a 33% reduction in total supply from the previous year, making it the lowest level on record.

As for corn, the United States Department of Agriculture reduced its projections in the August World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report. The USDA cut its estimate for U.S. corn yields by 4.9 bushels to 174.6 bushels per acre. As a result, production for 2021/22 is forecast at 14.8 billion bushels, down by 415 million from the July projection. The report noted that record-high yields are expected in Illinois, In-

diana, and Ohio, among the major producing states. In contrast, yields in the drought-stricken states such as Minnesota and South Dakota are forecast below a year ago. Meanwhile, U.S. ending stocks are down by 190 million bushels to 1.2 billion.

While high feed costs will continue to be a challenge, demand for beef remains a bright spot. "Cattle markets themselves look pretty optimistic," says Perillat. "Futures into 2022 continue to hit new contract highs, consistently. Looking forward, cattle markets are a bit stronger than this year. So, that's kept calf prices holding relatively firm or relatively steady despite drought and grain costs."

Despite good demand and high boxed beef prices, the fed cattle market continues to struggle, with feedlot producers losing money. "There are still delays from COVID and processing plants not being able to work through the volumes as quickly as they want," says Perillat. "We're pointing towards some higher pricing next year, but (feedlots) have got to manage how much they pay for calves. Looking at the cost of feed, they continue to bid pretty aggressively on calves."

Another market driver to watch will be the value of the Canadian dollar. The Loonie has experienced some volatility lately, dropping below 78 cents-US around August 20 before rebounding to just under 80 cents a few days later. "If we start breaking over 82 cents, then that will also take a bite out of cattle prices and be challenging for feedlots or anybody else feeding cattle, too," says Perillat.

Canadian Farmers Organizing Hay West 2021

With farmers in the Prairie provinces facing a dire hay shortage due to devastating and prolonged drought conditions, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) has begun work to facilitate a "Hay West" initiative to send surplus hay from farmers on the East Coast to those struggling in the West.

Canada's farmers have supported each other in similar ways in the past. The first Hay West initiative occurred in 2002 when Prairie farmers were facing similar circumstances. Ten years later, the situation was reversed when Western farmers sent hay East to help farms stricken with drought.

"CFA is currently in the initial stages of facilitating a new Hay West program. We have our staff as well as a third-party working towards determining how much of a hay surplus is available and are looking to work with the railways and the government to help these farmers that are in dire need of feed for their animals," said Mary Robinson, CFA President.

"We'd also like to point to the new Climate Action Fund as the kind of support that farmers need to continue investing in sustainability initiatives as they face these incredibly difficult circumstances. It can be hard for farmers to invest further in sustainability as climate change impacts greatly affect their financial situations," concluded Robinson.

CFA will provide more information on the Hay West initiative as the details become available.

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Stats Can Forecasting Increased Corn Production For Ontario

In its latest crop report, Statistics Canada says Canadian farmers are projected to harvest more corn for grain, but less wheat, canola, soybeans, barley and oats. According to the Aug. 30 report, the lower production has been driven largely by ongoing drought conditions in Western Canada, which could decrease yields.

Farmers across Western Canada have had to contend with a lack of rain and higher-than-average temperatures throughout the growing season. This has exacerbated soil moisture conditions, which were already low at the start of the year. These factors have negatively impacted crop growth and yield potential across much of the Prairies.

Corn for grain production projected to increase on higher yields

Nationally, corn for grain production is projected to increase 0.8% to 13.7 million tonnes in 2021, with yields anticipated to rise to 158.4 bushels per acre. Meanwhile, harvested area is expected to fall 2.3% to 3.4 million acres.

In Ontario, the largest corn for grain-producing province, production is expected to rise 1.7% to 9.1 million tonnes, on higher yields (+3.4% to 169.4 bushels per acre). This would offset lower harvested area, which is expected to fall 1.6% to 2.1 million acres.

Corn for grain production in Quebec is projected to rise 7.8% to 3.5 million tonnes. Yields are expected to increase 8.8% to 157.4 bushels per acres, while harvested area is expected to decline 0.8% to 880,300 acres.

Soybean production expected to fall despite greater harvested area

At the national level, soybean production is projected to decrease 8.4% year over year to 5.8 million tonnes in 2021. The main source of this decline is lower yields, which are expected to decrease 12.5% to 40.5 bushels per acre, while harvested area is anticipated to rise 4.8% to 5.3 million acres.

Farmers in Ontario are projected to produce 1.6% fewer soybeans in 2021 for a total of 3.8 million tonnes. Harvested area is expected to rise 3.2% to 2.9 million acres, while yield is anticipated to decrease 4.7% to 48.3 bushels per acre.

In Quebec, soybean production is projected to decrease 8.0% to 1.1 million tonnes on lower yields (-12.0% to 42.6 bushels per acre), which will more than offset the projected 4.5% increase in harvested area.

Wheat production expected to decrease on lower harvested area and yields

Nationally, wheat production is projected to decrease 34.8% year over year to 22.9 million tonnes in 2021, on lower anticipated yields (-28.7%

to 37.2 bushels per acre) and less harvested area (-8.5% to 22.7 million acres).

The decrease in wheat area was largely attributable to spring wheat, which in addition to having less seeded area in 2021, has been impacted by drought conditions in Western Canada.

Wheat production in Ontario (the majority of which is winter wheat) is projected to rise 8.9% to 2.7 million tonnes year over year, on increased harvested acres (+2.3%) and yields (+6.4%).

Barley and oat production projected to fall due to dry conditions

Barley production is expected to fall 27.0% year over year to 7.8 million tonnes in 2021. Despite higher anticipated harvested area (+7.8% to 7.5 million acres), lower yields (-32.3% to 48.1 bushels per acre) due to hot, dry conditions are expected to push national production lower.

Oat production is projected to fall 32.9% to 3.1 million tonnes. Harvested area is expected to decrease 14.2% to 2.8 million acres and yields are expected to drop 21.8% year over year to 71.4 bushels per acre in 2021.

Saying Thanks With OCFB



Pictured above, Jones Feed Mills Ltd. (JFM) recently presented its staff with boxes of Ontario Corn Fed Beef. JFM purchased the OCFB boxes to show its appreciation of the employees. The OCFB was processed at NORPAC Beef.

The JFM management group endorsed this novel idea to enable participation of all their valued employees. Company social functions in the past proved difficult to gain full attendance, so it was decided to create a BBQ package to get full employee participation and support for the local business community as well. Great idea JFM!

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