

The News Feed

An Ontario Cattle Feeders' Publication



Spring 2022 Edition



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The Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs are taking a closer look at the impact of feed bunk management on new feedlot arrivals.

Also in this issue: An update on the Beef Market Development Program and notable livestock transportation changes.

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From The Desk Of Jim Clark



Jim Clark, Executive Director

Beef markets, and markets in general, don't like uncertainty. After dealing with the pandemic for the last two years, it looked like things were starting to seem a little more certain, with a good cattle market shaping up for us. The events of the past two years were in the rear-view mirror. But we find ourselves in turmoil once again with the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The markets were rattled when word spread throughout the world of the military action. There are certainly more significant issues going on than the markets and our thoughts are with the Ukrainian people and their safety. At the same time, we're mindful about global events and how they affect our businesses. I believe the cattle markets will continue to show improving strength. The cattle numbers are stable and maybe a little tighter than normal going forward. But the feeder cattle supply is also tight, resulting in strong prices for replacements. Freight is also a major issue when you look at the fuel costs.

Given these challenges, I have my fingers crossed for a strong summer market. Demand outside North America is good and continues to be a positive driver for the markets. However, one major

issue tied to the exports that we've noticed is the shortage of containers and vessels for international shipping.

When I look at where to go with market development, my objective is to continually combine all our marketing efforts so that no matter what the commodity markets are doing or showing, we don't veer off our plans. For example, I often talk about the blueprint for Ontario Corn Fed Beef that was developed more than 20 years ago. And while we continue to develop many new brands under Ontario Beef, the blueprint for Ontario Corn Fed is the fundamental structure that we continue to use. So as markets change, we need to continually focus on the fact that we're not just selling something that is ordinary. We're selling something that's different. We're not just selling commodity beef. We want people to look for and purchase better beef coming from Ontario. This is why we showcase all the attributes of an extraordinary product that we produce. So no matter what the pressures are outside of it, the marketing part continues to be a long-term process, and you need to stay with it.

At the end of the day, everything still comes down to the end-users and the consumers. It relates to the dollars they have in their pockets and the price of our products. That's why we build a story and create awareness about our brands. More than delivering a great eating experience, it's developing a partnership with the consumers who are interested in the other attributes of our product beyond price. This relationship helps us weather the storm and insulates us from the swings of the markets.

Continuing to push forward is essential as I believe the best is yet to come for the Ontario beef industry. I see Ontario feeding more cattle in the next 10 years and gaining strength as the place to procure fed cattle and beef overall. The one significant thing I see beyond the markets is the



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weather we experience in the province, particularly around the Great Lakes. Yes, we're going to have dry spells, and we may not have the best production every year, but we always manage to produce a crop. This gives us a level of continuity and shows people that we're a contender because we're always going to have the product.

In addition, when I see the new barns being built and the next generations of our farm families becoming involved and taking the reins, it gives me the confidence to say that we're going to feed more cattle here and continue to expand. We have the land base, great producers and a solid blueprint. So let's not get lost in the markets because some exciting opportunities are ahead.

Personally, since I talked about my "pet" steer, Lucky, at one of our conventions, I'm still often asked about him during various conversations. Unfortunately, it saddens me to say that Lucky passed away in January. He was nine years old.

When talking about him, I would compare my experience to people who have Chihuahuas and say that their tiny pet acts like a big dog. Well, Lucky acted like a 2,500-pound dog. No matter how bad your day was, he could always put a smile on your face because the world didn't affect him. I would talk about how he would play hide-and-seek, hopelessly trying to hide behind some thin spruce trees. In his mind, he was sure we couldn't see him. I think the interest in Lucky from others shows the importance

of our farm animals, how much they mean to us and what they mean to our overall state of mind. Rest in peace "Big Boy!"

By the time you receive this issue of The News Feed, we'll be getting ready to plant the 2022 crops. Here's wishing you and your families all the best for a healthy and safe Spring season.



Lucky the steer

NOTICE OF 24TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ONTARIO CATTLE FEEDERS' ASSOCIATION



MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO JOIN US
THURSDAY, MARCH 31ST, 2022 AT 1:30PM - 3:15PM

-PURPOSE OF THE MEETING-

1. REVIEW THE 2021 FINANCIALS AS PREPARED BY THE ACCOUNTANTS
2. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS
3. OCFA & OCFB UPDATES

LOCATED AT
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Bunk Management Key For New Arrivals



Starting cattle on feed is one of the most important phases of finishing cattle. The transition from a high-fibre, low-energy diet to a low-fibre, high-energy ration requires time and a set protocol to be followed. This is best described as a series of step-up rations where the fibre and energy components of the ration change gradually over a period of time to properly transition the rumen to a high-energy diet. Developing routine standards to identify those practices is essential to the success of starting various groups of cattle arriving in the feedlot. This transition is like a newborn calf receiving its colostrum. Getting this starting source of nutrients in a timely fashion and the proper amount determines the potential of that animal over its lifetime.

Problematic animal health, including bovine

respiratory disease (BRD), is an economic hardship in the cattle feeding business. According to research, proper gut health plays a significant role in reducing BRD in feedlot animals. All aspects of feeding cattle are influenced by strong, healthy cattle. Anything we can do with the management of the feedlot suggests that consistent dry matter intake (DMI) of the cattle will improve the health and efficiencies of the cattle in the feedlot. Cattle will eat their maintenance requirements (approximately 80% of DMI) first, and then the gain requirements are met with the remaining (approximately 20%) DMI. The importance of being consistent in bunk management and feed delivery times is essential to maximize that 20 per cent DMI to achieve the best gains and cattle efficiencies possible.

To get a closer look at the impact of feed bunk management on the behaviour of new feedlot arrivals, the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs conducted a study this past summer. Similar to our research in 2020 on feed bunk management, trail cameras were used at participating feedlots to monitor the animals and bunks over 24-hour time periods.

Webinar highlights producers' starting protocols

Three of the producers from the study commented on their management practices for receiving cattle during a webinar that was held on February 10. While there are a few differences in their operations, they all have a consistent



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approach for handling new arrivals to their feedlots. Their management includes using the step-up method, which is an easy way to transition new arrivals.

There are many views on how many rations are needed and how long. You should consult the advice of your feed advisor to determine what's best for your application and the type of cattle being started.

For the webinar, the participating feedlots shared their experiences and tips for receiving cattle in videos that were recorded in December. Here are some highlights from each producer.

Javan Martin

Javan Martin of HM & Sons has a very defined protocol in place for the operation near Drayton. At the time of the study, a heavier group of locally backgrounded cattle travelled a short distance to the feedlot. Although he knew the history of the cattle, Javan continued to go through the complete step-up program, citing the stress of the cattle being trucked and adjusting to new surroundings as the main reason. He has a close relationship with his team members and uses their expertise to do all the small things properly, such as observing the consistency of the manure in the pens and watching for any digestive upsets.

The number of step-up rations depends on where the cattle originated. If the calves are coming from the West, they're likely to have a 10-step ration before going on the finishing ration. The cattle shown in the video were yearlings, which were started on a five-step ration. The cattle and their manure are then monitored to see how the animals respond to the first ration, and they'll be stepped up accordingly. They feed the cattle twice a day and at the same times each day. Javan said being in the pen with the cattle is essential for things like checking the ventilation and the manure and then adjusting as needed.

Andrew and Heather Mitchell

The Mitchells faced the challenge of receiving a unique group of cattle from Western Canada that were drought-stressed. The animals required a lot of attention and a special approach

to start them on feed. At first, they couldn't fill the cattle. So, they had to gradually increase the high-fibre ration to reach the cattle's fill until they could slowly begin the step-up rations. After receiving the cattle at their farm near Molesworth, Andrew said they initially fed the animals four times a day with a high roughage ration. Once the animals were full, and onto silage, he said it was quite amazing to see the compensatory gains they had made. In this case, with the requirements of this group of cattle, the cattle were allowed to write the story instead of the Mitchells writing the script.

Chris Pallister

Chris Pallister highlighted the facility near Dundalk that was built approximately three years ago for receiving cattle. The six receiving pens feature a hay manger and a TMR bunk to offer choices to the cattle. The goal for each new group of cattle is to fill the rumens with good-quality feed and long-stem hay as soon as possible. They pay very close attention to the details and keep extensive records to back up their management decisions.

Cattle backgrounded in Ontario typically have free-choice hay and are introduced to the TMR ration at the same time. The animals are usually

on the TMR within 48 hours. From there, they go through five to six step-up rations before going on the highest energy ration.

Western cattle will be given more time on straight hay and an extra ration in the step-up process to ensure the rumen is fully functioning before increasing the energy.

Chris says the initial start-up and transition stage is critical in the performance throughout the entire feeding period. As for feed bunk management, he notes that it's a continuous learning experience, adding that it's vital to know how long the bunk is empty each day. His rule of thumb is that he doesn't want to see it empty for more than two hours in a day.

More information

Several resources are being made available if you missed the webinar or would like to know more information about the study. The video content, including the producer panel and the farm videos, will be uploaded to the Ontario Corn Fed Beef YouTube channel. Also, look for more articles in upcoming issues of The News Feed and OMAFRA's Virtual Beef newsletter.



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Beef Market Development Update



Despite the impact of COVID-19 on the food industry, Ontario beef made some significant gains in the marketplace last year. According to figures from the Ontario Beef Market Development Program, Ontario beef exports increased by 19 per cent in volume and 27.5 per cent in value from January to November. Of note, exports to Japan jumped by 17.5 per cent in value and 29 per cent in volume.

Meanwhile, the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program continues to see growth. Last year, 330,577 head of cattle were certified under the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program. The number represents an 18 per cent increase over the past five years and 123 per cent over the past 10 years.

John Baker, Director of the Ontario Beef Market Development Program, highlighted the growth during his presentation to the Beef Farmers of Ontario Annual General Meeting on February 23.

While COVID-19 had a significant impact on our business and personal lives, Baker said it's important to look at the effects through the

lenses of the beef industry partners because that is where the marketing strategy is implemented – with packers, retailers and foodservice distributors. The crisis made it difficult for the packing and retail sectors to develop innovations as they focused more on operational and safety issues. “Our foodservice sector has just seen massive drops in customer capacity,” added Baker. “They’ve been shut out and closed off for a large portion of 2021, and the banquet sector has been virtually eliminated for the last couple of years.”

Of note, the marketing efforts were focused on several activities with the various packers in Ontario, including two new operations. Kinder Foods opened a new federal plant near Mount Forest. “We’re working on branded programs that are unique to them,” said Baker. “We focus on the domestic as well as export markets.”

The other is Tru Harvest Meats, the former Ryd- ing Regency plant in Toronto. Baker said the company has seen steady growth since it began operating in March 2021. “We’re working with them on unique branded programs, domestic and export, and they’re focused on boxed beef

as well as further processing,” he added. “They have a lot of unique capabilities on further processing, so that’s very exciting.”

Another highlight was the development of a new brand partner – The Butcher Shoppe. The company is a foodservice distributor with strong connections to high-end steakhouses. While The Butcher Shoppe has an excellent reputation for service, it didn’t have access to an Ontario brand. “We’ve developed a supply chain, and we’re working through the logistics of putting together a brand launch that will hit the market very shortly,” said Baker.

Branding Ontario Beef

Besides discussing the efforts to promote Ontario beef in domestic and export markets, Baker also focused on the program’s inner workings and provided insight into how branding plays a key role in increasing the competitiveness of Ontario beef.

He explained that increasing competitiveness in a market is achieved in one of two ways: low-cost or differentiation. “Cost is obvious: You produce a product that’s cheaper than anybody else, and you become competitive in the marketplace,” said Baker. “The other one is much more challenging to develop. In Ontario, we don’t do low-cost well as compared to our grain-fed competitors that we face from around the world.”

As a result, Ontario needs to compete on differentiation. Using a definition from Porter, a business and advocacy consulting group, Baker noted that competing on differentiation means being unique in an industry on dimensions that



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are widely valued by buyers and being rewarded for the uniqueness with a premium price. "That is not easy to do," he said. "That takes a lot of time and a lot of effort."

Developing and marketing an Ontario branded product has become essential to compete on differentiation. For Baker, the starting point is straightforward. Brands are built on core attributes that can be delivered. Other factors include determining the supply chain, the price-value equation, and the marketplace position. The next phase involves investing in the brand, which includes creating brand awareness and promoting the point of differentiation.

Once brand awareness has been achieved, the next phase is brand advocacy when loyal partners for the brand are developed. "They become passionate about your product, and they consider it their own," said Baker. "It becomes a shared investment in your product, especially in the commercial world. A lot of investors in Ontario brands spend a lot of money promoting their Ontario brands, and they're talking about the things you do to make it unique."

For Baker, the ultimate goal is to strive for brand equity, which means there is tangible value in the product. In other words, the product means something to somebody. What's more, the cost point becomes less important, and the product can command higher values than the alternatives in the marketplace. "And when you get there, you've really developed committed, long-term partnerships," he said.

Baker then provided several examples of the work being done at each step of the brand development for Ontario beef. The various trade show events in key markets are crucial for creating brand awareness for the export markets. "When we started Ontario beef marketing in

2015, the words, 'Ontario beef,' didn't mean anything outside the province of Ontario," he said. "We've had to make that awareness around Ontario beef. And then we had to define what it meant."

For brand advocacy, he cited the examples of Loblaw's long-term partnership with the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program and the Carve Premium Beef Program of Flanagan's Foodservice. "They talked about their brand program, and it's built on everything producers do," said Baker. "They've become advocates for your brand, and they begin to tell your story to their customers. It becomes their own story."

On brand equity, Baker pointed to the success in Japan as an example of achieving this crucial goal. "They've taken our product and made it theirs and have carried it forward," he said. "It's a tangible asset for them, and it becomes less about what the cost is compared to our competitors."

About The Beef Market Development Program

The program is a four-year strategy that runs through 2023. It sets a clear vision and a mission that leads to a profitable, sustainable beef industry for future generations. The program's defined goals include enhancing the industry's competitiveness, providing significant benefits to Ontario producers, and delivering a clear, tangible return on the provincial check-off investment. A joint marketing committee, which consists of three representatives from the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association and the Beef Farmers of Ontario, oversees the strategy's development.

New Transport Regs Now Being Enforced

A hot topic of discussion for the industry has been the implementation of revised transportation regulations for the livestock industry. Of particular concern was reducing the maximum time off feed, water and rest (FWR) to 36 hours from the previous time of 48 hours. While the new regulations went into effect in February 2020, there was a two-year delay in enforcement.

Since the announcement of the delay, the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) and the Canadian Cattlemen's Association have been pushing for a further extension until current research on the welfare of cattle fed, watered and rested at rest stop stations during long-distance transport is completed. This research is funded by the Beef Cattle Research Council, BFO and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and is set to be finished this year.

The extension, however, was not granted, and enforcement of the new regulations came into force as scheduled on February 20, 2022, under amended parameters. According to info from BFO, enforcement of FWR requirements will not be prioritized where the maximum time allotted is exceeded by four hours or less and all animal welfare outcomes are being met. Inspector discretion will be used when enforcing the prescriptive FWR intervals if the incident is due to unforeseen circumstances such as vehicle breakdown, a traffic accident or unforeseen weather events.

Meanwhile, BFO has compiled a list of notable changes and frequently asked questions about the livestock transport changes. We included this information on the following pages.



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Livestock Transportation Changes & Frequently Asked Questions

Ensuring excellent animal welfare outcomes is extremely important to our industry. Canada's Health of Animals legislation, including updates made to the transport of animal provisions in Part XII of the Health of Animals Regulations, came into force in February, 2020.

NOTABLE CHANGES TO THE TRANSPORT REGULATIONS

Records and Transfer of Care

Under the new regulations, every commercial carrier or any person who transports animals in the course of business and/or for financial benefit, regardless of the quantity, frequency or duration of animal transports, are required to keep records related to the movement of those animals. These records must contain:

- the name and address of the producer or shipper, consignee or receiver, the transport company (if applicable) and the driver's name
- an identification number (license/registration number) of the conveyance in which the animals are moved
- the measurement in square meters and/or square feet of floor area available to animals in the conveyance
- the date and place that the conveyance or container were last cleaned and disinfected
- the date, time and place that the animals came into the carrier's (driver's) custody
- the description of the animals in the load and actions taken to address concerns should be documented (e.g. species, class and any other relevant information)
- the last time the animals had access to feed, water and rest

To assist beef farmers and our industry's service providers in complying with the revised regulations, BFO has developed an Animal Transport Record, which includes the required transfer of care documentation as outlined in the regulation. Hard copy booklets, in triplicate form, can be accessed through the BFO office and are available to auction markets, producers and transporters, free of charge. If you would like a hard copy booklet mailed to you, please contact Bethany Storey at bethany@ontariobeef.com, or call the BFO office at 1.866.370.2333.

A fillable online version of the form can also be accessed on BFO's website under the Services tab.

Compromised and Unfit Animals

Under the new regulations, the definitions for unfit and compromised animals, for transportation purposes, have been updated. Unfit cattle must not be transported unless being taken directly to a place (outside of a slaughter establishment or assembly centre) to receive veterinary care and meets the following conditions:

- it is individually loaded and unloaded without having to negotiate any ramps inside the conveyance;
- it is isolated during confinement and transport;
- measures are taken to prevent the animal's unnecessary suffering, injury or death during loading, confinement, transport and unloading; and
- a veterinarian recommends that the animal be transported to receive veterinary care.

Compromised cattle may only be transported under the following conditions:

- it is isolated (or transported with one other animal with which it is familiar if to do so is unlikely to cause either animal suffering, injury or death and if they are segregated from other animals)
- it is individually loaded and unloaded without having to negotiate any ramps inside the conveyance;
- measures are taken that are necessary to prevent the animal's suffering, injury or death during loading, confinement, transport and unloading; and
- it is transported directly to the nearest place, other than an assembly center, where it can receive care or be humanely killed.

Contingency Plans

Every commercial carrier and those persons who transport animals in the course of business or for financial benefit must have a contingency plan. The plan will establish measures to be taken to reduce or mitigate avoidable suffering if:

- there are any unforeseen delays or circumstances that could cause avoidable suffering, injury or death
- an animal becomes compromised or unfit during loading, confinement, transport or unloading

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1 When do you need to use a transfer of care document?

A transfer of care document needs to be used anytime the responsibility of care is transferred from one party to the next i.e. shipper to transporter and transporter to receiver.

Q2 Where can I find an example of the transfer of care document?

An Animal Transport Record, which includes the required transfer of care documentation as outlined in the regulation has been developed by BFO. Hard copy booklets, in triplicate form, can be accessed through the BFO office and are available to auction markets, producers and transporters, free of charge. If you would like a hard copy booklet mailed to you, please contact Bethany Storey at bethany@ontariobeef.com, or call the BFO office at 1.866.370.2333.

A fillable online version of the form can also be accessed on BFO's website under the Services tab.

Q3 When do the regulations come into effect?

The updated regulations have been in place since February, 2020, but the CFIA has focused its enforcement efforts on compliance through promotion, education, and awareness measures. Beginning in February, 2022 CFIA will start to issue fines at their discretion.

Q4 Will CFIA be performing inspections only at federally regulated plants or will they also be performing inspections at provincial abattoirs and auction facilities?

All modes of transporting animals are regulated: aircraft, carriage, motor vehicle, trailer, railway car, vessel, crate, cargo container, cage, module and/or any other conveyance or container used to move animals. The Humane Transport regulations are applicable at federal abattoirs, provincial abattoirs, assembly yards, auction marts, etc. Any movement of animals by commercial transport fall under the regulations, CFIA staff is able to do inspection of any of these places at any time.

Q5 When cattle go through an auction market, when is a transfer of care document needed?

A transfer of care document is needed for each individual (owner/shipper) to the auction market and then a separate transfer of care document is needed from the auction market to each individual receiver.

Q6 What are the requirements for transporting my own cattle to an auction market or abattoir?

A transfer of care document is required because you are transferring the responsibility of the care of your animals at the end of their journey. You would be considered both an owner/shipper and transporter in that scenario.

Q7 What is the process of shipping my cattle to another one of my facilities through a commercial transporter?

A transfer of care document would still need to be utilized as you release your animals' care to the commercial transporter. This would mean that you also have to sign off that you received the cattle at the destination as care is being transferred back to you.

Q8 What are the requirements for a contingency plan?

A contingency plan is to establish measures to reduce or mitigate avoidable suffering if:

- there are any unforeseen delays or circumstances that could cause avoidable suffering, injury, or death
- an animal becomes compromised or unfit during loading, confinement, transport or unloading

There is no prescribed format for a contingency plan (can be written or verbal). However, regulated parties must be able to demonstrate that they know what to do in a variety of predictable, possible, transport situations and any contact information must be up to date.

Q9 How can a driver complete a transfer when dropping off at a site after hours? Will sending an electronic message (i.e., text message or email) suffice to confirm the transfer of care?

It is the responsibility of regulated parties to make sure they are following the transfer of care process. The provision of the transfer of care notice and document may be done electronically as it does not require the consignee to be present. While it is the best practice for the consignee to be present, the regulation was written this way to offer flexibility in situations such as these. However, there should always be someone responsible for the care of the animals and this is the intent of the requirement.

Q10 How long should producers keep the livestock transportation documentation?

The transfer of care documentation is not considered a record so there is no specific regulatory requirement for parties to keep it. However, it is recommended that all parties should keep the transfer of care documentation (original or a copy) for two years.

BSE Class Action Lawsuit Dismissed

The announcement of a case of BSE in Canada in May 2003 had immediate and devastating effects on the Canadian cattle industry. A class-action lawsuit was initially launched against the Government in Canada in 2005, and it was certified in 2008.

It was brought on behalf of all Canadian farmers who raised cattle in May 2003, alleging that the government was negligent in keeping BSE out of Canada by failing to implement a ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban in 1990 when it brought in the import ban, or in 1994 when Canada ordered the destruction of the remaining UK imports.

It is also alleged that Canada was negligent in failing to adequately monitor and prevent the UK imports from entering the feed chain

between 1990 and 1994. Finally, the plaintiff sought damages arising from losses suffered between 2003 and 2007.

A legal team pursued the \$8 billion lawsuit on behalf of producers. After multiple delays, the lawsuit was finally heard by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in 2021, with Judge Paul B. Schabas issuing a decision on January 28, 2022.

In dismissing the lawsuit, the judge noted that Canada was not negligent, that it followed available science at the time, that it was aligned with U.S. rules, and that it was in compliance with or exceeded OIE guidelines around BSE.

The judge further noted that irrespective of his decision on negligence and the Canadian government's alleged liability to Canadian cattle

producers, the complex expert evidence provided at the trial indicated that losses to cattle producers were \$1.163 billion after BSE support payments to producers were factored in.

Total losses were determined to be \$5.419 billion. However, the Canadian government provided financial assistance payments during this period in the amount of \$4.256 billion.

Finally, the judge noted that "there should be no award for general or aggravated damages."

The 188-page decision is available online. To view the decision, go to:

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2022/2022onsc601/2022onsc601.html?resultIndex=7>

(Source: Beef Farmers of Ontario)

ONTARIO CORN FED BEEF "THE NEWS FEED LIVE" WEBINAR

Beef on Dairy Crosses - A Discussion on Production Management

March 24, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Ontario cattle feeders and invited experts share their keys to success for an effective finishing program for beef on dairy crosses

Welcome from the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association

Brent Cavell, Quality Assurance Manager (Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program, OCFA)

Managing beef on dairy Xs in the beef industry

Dr. Tom Wright, Dairy Specialist (OMAFRA)

Dr. Dan Schaefer, Professor Emeritus (University of Wisconsin)

Brad Gilchrist, Manager - Beef Marketing (Semex)

Panel Discussion: Experiences finishing beef on dairy Xs

Bob Bechtel (Baden, ON)

Marvin Burkhart (Wallenstein, ON)

Al Noorloos (Wyoming, ON)

Moderated by Christoph Wand (OMAFRA)

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