

The News Feed

An Ontario Cattle Feeders' Publication



Winter 2022 Edition



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25th ANNUAL BEEF INDUSTRY CONVENTION EDITION



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**Beef Industry Convention
January 12, 13, 14, 2023 – London, Ontario
Details & Registration Form Inside**

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From The Desk Of Jim Clark



Jim Clark, Executive Director

Beef Industry Convention Time Again

It is my pleasure to invite you to join us for the 25th annual Beef Industry Convention from January 12 to 14, 2023. We're thrilled once again to host our industry showcase at the Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn and Conference Centre in London.

Excitement is building for the Convention as many producers and industry participants are quite happy that the event is back on and that we're also getting the opportunity to celebrate the 25th anniversary. We know that people are looking forward to having some normalcy again in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. There's been keen interest in the Convention, and people are ready to go. On the organizational side, we've got another great lineup of speakers.

Much of the upcoming event's focus is on the industry's business side. As I have mentioned in previous commentaries, more of the younger generation is getting involved in our members' family feedlot operations. It's great to see that our businesses continue to evolve. But there can be some challenges involved with the genera-

tions working together. With that in mind, we're looking forward to the presentation from Alicia Rainwater of the Center for Generational Kinetics. Alicia is a Millennial who uses her leadership skills to bridge generations in a variety of organizations, from hospitals to global non-profits. She is our keynote speaker on January 13.

On Thursday night (Jan. 12), our keynote speaker is Dr. Derrell Peel from Oklahoma State University. Dr. Peel is recognized in the U.S. and internationally as an authority on livestock economics and trade. His continuous livestock market situation analysis is regularly used by the media, and he is in high demand as a conference and workshop speaker for presentations on cattle markets and trade. So we're very fortunate to bring him to Canada for our event.

In addition, we'll be getting insight into other aspects of the industry, including updates from Loblaw Companies Limited and Cargill. For the grain side of the business, we're looking forward to the latest outlook from veteran market analyst Steve Kell.

If you haven't done so already, I encourage you to register for the Convention as soon as possible. Please refer to pages 7 to 10 for the agenda, registration form and hotel information. You can also register online at www.beefindustryconvention.com. Be sure to check the site for more information and updates.

Marketing Beef To The Price-Conscious Consumer

As we move into a new year, we're seeing some extremely different cattle markets than we've experienced before. The price ceiling is rising, and many expect the tighter supply will result in higher cattle prices in 2023. When looking at the markets, we see that there are some key factors to



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STAFF

Publisher: Jim Clark, Exec. Dir.
Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association
Managing Editor: Blair Andrews
Design/Layout: Eric Broadbent
Advertising: Blair Andrews

OFFICE

The Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association
25 Enterprise Drive
London, ON N6N 1A3

PH: (519) 686-6226
FAX: (519) 686-6227
Web: www.ontariocornfedbeef.com
Email: info@ontariocornfedbeef.com

Subscriptions: (519) 686-6226
info@ontariocornfedbeef.com
Advertising: (519) 437-9219
Email: thenewsfeed@cogeco.ca

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The Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association
25 Enterprise Drive, London, ON N6N 1A3

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consider beyond the price. An important trend to watch is our consumers' reactions as beef prices increase.

This is where our efforts to market Ontario Corn Fed Beef and Ontario beef play a crucial role. We will need to push harder about our passion for the brands we produce and the goals we have set for the marketplace. It's vital to continue to extend our marketing reach and engagement and keep the conversation going about the relationships we have maintained. We have worked diligently to build trust in the marketplace, and that trust helps to drive revenues.

The marketing is even more important as consumers are becoming more value-conscious. They're starting to trade down somewhat from branded products to more commodity alternatives. Features are getting more attention. Given this environment, we must continue to protect our place at the retail counter. It's not always visible, but the work that goes on behind the scenes to maintain and enhance our position in the marketplace is one of our most significant efforts.

Much of the focus is on building Ontario brands that consistently deliver high-quality and to keep those brands in front of the consumers. There is still strong support for locally produced products, but we must be mindful of the price-conscious consumers who are adjusting their spending habits in response to these times of high inflation and fears of an economic recession. While consumers are looking for products with the attributes they want, they also have the realization that they only have so many dollars to spend. This also opens the door to an influx of lower-cost imported meat. Therefore, the focus of Ontario Corn Fed Beef and Ontario Beef Market Development is to maintain the market share in this environment of belt-tightening. We don't want to be seen as cost-prohibitive, but we still need to stay with our blueprint of the brand, which is to deliver our complete package of attributes to the consumer.

Managing Risk Amid High Cattle Prices

Moving from the consumer side to the production aspect of the business, the probability of high cattle prices reinforces the need for producers to assess their risk tolerance as markets move upwards. I've never seen fed cattle and feeder prices this high. Nobody plans for a train wreck, but we know all too well that train wrecks occur. So, I think it's imperative for producers to be very conscious of the markets we're experiencing. I believe it's vital for producers and their families to sit down and write down what they think they need and then check those notes from time to time. Then, when markets move up, you should ask yourself if you did anything during that upswing to help you offset the risk.

In closing, I want to thank all those who support the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association and the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program. We're grateful for the efforts of our producers and their families, who have made our brand a success story in the marketplace. I would like to thank all of the staff at OCFA for all the hard work that they put forward on a daily basis.

On behalf of OCFA and OCFB, I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season, and I look forward to seeing you at the Convention!

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!

OCFB Featured In The Loblaw Sustainability Zone At The Royal



Chelsea Martin, Program Manager, Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association/Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program, was on hand to talk about sustainable beef practices with visitors to the Loblaw Sustainability Zone at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Loblaw Companies Limited partnered with the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair this year to create the Loblaw Sustainability Zone, an impressive 3,600-square-foot exhibit. The new feature at the Royal allowed visitors to explore fun and interactive ways to learn about sustainable practices within Loblaw Group of Companies, its partners and suppliers, including Ontario Corn Fed Beef (OCFB).

Representatives from OCFB were on hand to field questions from consumers on how Loblaw has been sourcing sustainable beef for over 12 years through our program.

Beef Marketing Update

Ontario Beef On Display At Grocery Innovations Canada Show In Toronto



The show attracts key decision makers and influencers from the retail sector from all across Canada.

“The GIC show provides an opportunity to meet and talk with retailers from across the province,” says John Baker, Director of the Ontario Beef Market Development program. “It gives us an opportunity to engage in discussions on how we can assist them in identifying a local supply chain or by providing point of sale materials to help promote their local Ontario beef supply and generate more awareness around high-quality beef raised on Ontario family farms.”

With a high volume of imported beef available in the market, it is important that we establish a strong awareness around Ontario beef and work with our local processors and retailers to promote Ontario beef.

The focus of the Ontario Beef booth was to communicate the potential opportunities for retailers to partner with the Ontario Beef Market Development program to promote high-quality, locally raised Ontario beef.

Ontario Beef Market Development Partners With Meat & Poultry Ontario



Ontario Beef Market Development participated at MPO’s Meat Industry Expo in Niagara Falls.

The Meat Industry Expo event is a great opportunity for all industry sectors to come together in one event. “Meat & Poultry Ontario have done a tremendous job of creating a collaborative culture in the Ontario meat processing sector,” says Baker.

It is important that Ontario beef be an active participant in this event. It provides an opportunity to create awareness around locally raised high-quality Ontario beef to a sector that processes and markets a high volume of beef products. The event also attracts many retailers and specialty butcher shops from across the province.

Ontario Beef Gold Sponsor Of



Ontario’s Finest Butcher Competition

Ontario Beef was a Gold Sponsor of the Ontario’s Finest Butcher Competition again this year.

The event provides an opportunity to engage with retail sector partners to enhance the awareness of locally raised and high-quality Ontario beef. The competition attracted 15 competitors from across the province. The final round was held during the Meat Industry Expo in Niagara Falls.

Congratulations to all the competitors.

New Marketing Materials To Showcase Locally Raised Ontario Beef



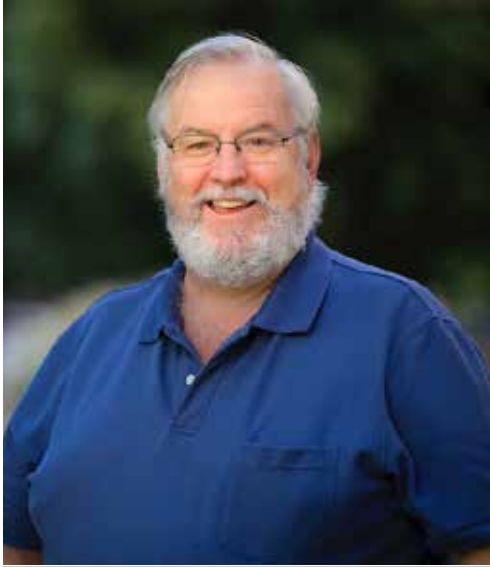
The Ontario Beef Market Development program has developed new materials to help promote locally raised Ontario beef with retailers across the province.

The new point of sale materials were developed to help retailers tell the story of their commitment to supporting local Ontario beef. “We are working with provincial packers across the province to distribute these materials to their customers,” says Stephanie Kaufman, Marketing Manager for the Ontario Beef Market Development program.

The materials utilize key messages around the quality of Ontario beef as well as linking back to Ontario Family Farms.

Anyone interested in these materials can contact Stephanie at stephanie@ontariobeef.com.

Convention: January 12 Speaker Lineup



Dr. Derrell Peel

Dr. Derrell Peel highlights our opening night of the Beef Industry Convention on January 12, 2023. Dr. Peel is the Professor of Agribusiness in Oklahoma State University's (OSU) Department of Agricultural Economics.

Additionally, he has served as the Extension livestock marketing specialist at OSU since 1989, after previously serving as the superintendent of the Southeastern Colorado Range Research Station in Springfield, Colorado.

His main Extension program areas at Oklahoma State University include livestock market outlooks and marketing and risk management education for livestock producers. He teaches undergraduate courses, advises graduate students, and collaborates on numerous research projects.

Derrell also works in the area of international livestock and meat trade with a particular focus on Mexico, Canada, and the North American

livestock and meat industries. He lived in Mexico on sabbatical in 2001 and has developed an extensive knowledge of the Mexican cattle and beef industry, as well as the economics of cattle and beef trade between the United States and Mexico.

He is recognized nationally and internationally as an authority on livestock economics and trade. His continuous livestock market situation analysis is regularly used by the media, and he is in high demand as a conference and workshop speaker for presentations on cattle markets and trade.

Derrell holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from Montana State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois.

Also scheduled to speak on the Thursday evening is Jack Chaffe, President of the Beef Farmers of Ontario, and Vice President of the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association. Jack lives north of Mitchell with his wife, Diane, and three sons where they operate a fifth-generation farm. The family runs a feedlot that markets 2,000 head per year through the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program.

Jack has a diploma in Agriculture Business Management and is involved in all aspects of the family business, from finances and herd health to the buying and selling of cattle and commodities.

In addition to his role with BFO, Jack represents Ontario on the Canadian Cattle Association Board of Directors and on the board of the Canadian Beef Check-off Agency.

We'll also hear from Brad Gilchrist, Semex's Global Beef Marketing Manager. Brad participated in the March 24 webinar, hosted by the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, on the rapidly growing production trend of beef-on-dairy crosses.

He joined Semex in June 2014 as the Beef Marketing & Product Support Specialist, excelling in this role and was named Beef Marketing Manager in January 2019.

Brad graduated from the University of Guelph with an honours degree in agriculture and has an excellent real life understanding of a wide variety of topics critical to the beef industry including breed pedigrees, EPDs, genomics, defects, policies and a mindset to ensure customers are able to produce profitable cattle. Brad is passionate about the beef industry, with a special focus on Angus genetics.

Additionally, Brad is a beef judge, officiating at all levels within Canada and he has shown beef competitively at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair for the past 21 years, as well as several major North American shows.

Brad and his wife Kristie reside in Lucknow, Ontario with their daughter Peyton where they market Angus breeding stock to customers across Canada and abroad. Recently Brad and Kristie have incorporated The Beefway into their business portfolio expanding their beef operation to encompass a provincially inspected abattoir, processing and retail meat business.



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Convention: January 13 Speaker Lineup



Alicia Rainwater

The Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association is pleased to have Alicia Rainwater as our keynote speaker on Friday, January 13. Alicia is a Certified Keynote Speaker at the Center for Generational Kinetics (CGK). Her speaking clients range from Bayer, John Deere, and Ebby Halliday Realtors to The Federation of State Medical Boards and the United States Air Force.

Since joining CGK in 2016, Alicia has spoken to thousands of leaders in diverse industries from manufacturing and healthcare to agriculture, insurance, and banking.

Her engaging presentation style combines CGK's latest research discoveries with her practical experience bridging generations in a variety of roles from hospitals to global non-profits.

Alicia attended the University of Texas in Austin. She holds a Master's degree from Boston College in Clinical Social Work with an emphasis on Global Practice.

She used her unique education to help develop tools for foster care programs in Ghana. As a clinical social worker, she utilizes her insight into human behaviour to help bridge the divide between generations.

Our Friday session features a full lineup of speakers, starting at 9:30 a.m. with Jim Clark, Executive Director, Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association (OCFA) and Ontario Corn Fed Beef (OCFB).

The morning session will also include updates from Al Noorloos, President of OCFA & OCFB and John Baker, Director of Brand Management & Business Development OCFA & OCFB.

Rounding out the morning will be Dennis Laycraft, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Cattle Association, and grain market analyst Steve Kell.

After breaking for lunch, the Convention reconvenes with speaker Stan Fergusson, President of Fergusson Fuels Ltd. He is also President of Fergusson Farms, which produces pedigreed seed in Ontario.

Born and raised on a dairy farm in Northern Ontario, Stan pursued a career in policing and spent 18 years with the Ontario Provincial Police. Of note, he was a provincial co-ordinator for the tactics and rescue team. He was also an instructor in criminal law, search and rescue – winter survival, firearms, and management and development.

In the business world, Stan was a contractor/distributor for Exxon Mobil Esso for 26 years and was the First Premier Associate in Canada for Esso. He also spent four years as vice-president

of a bookbinding company in Toronto and has served on the board of directors of Briercrest College since 2009.

We're also looking forward to an update from Loblaw Companies Limited. Brad Porter, VP Market Fresh, is scheduled to provide a retail perspective on the industry.

On the processing side, we'll hear from Emily Murray, Demand Planning Manager for Cargill Protein, North America. Emily joined Cargill in 2010 as an associate in the Strategy and Business Development group, working on corporate strategy projects in Europe and North America for many of Cargill's businesses.

Emily has been part of Cargill's Protein group since 2014, spending seven years managing Cargill's beef business with McDonald's U.S. and Canada – including living in Alberta for three years and supporting the creation of the Certified Sustainable Beef Framework in Canada.

Before joining Cargill, Emily spent five years in general management at Enterprise Rent-A-Car. She has an undergraduate degree with Honours from Dartmouth College and an MBA from the Darden School at University of Virginia. She grew up in St. Louis, Missouri.



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2023



**25th ANNUAL BEEF
INDUSTRY CONVENTION**

**January 12, 13 & 14
London Ontario**



**ONTARIO CATTLE
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25 Enterprise Drive
London, ON N6N 1A3
Tel: 519-686-6226
Fax: 519-686-6227

Email: wendy@ontariocornfedbeef.com

25th ANNUAL BEEF INDUSTRY CONVENTION



Schedule of Events

Thursday, January 12, 2023

- 4:00 • Exhibitors Hall opening
- 5:30 • Ontario Corn Fed Beef Welcome Reception/Supper
- 7:00 Evening Session Speakers
 - Jack Chaffe President, Beef Farmers of Ontario
 - Brad Gilchrist Beef Marketing Manager, Semex
 - Dr. Derrell Peel Keynote Speaker, Professor of Agribusiness, Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist, Oklahoma State University
- Industry Sponsored Reception

Friday, January 13, 2023

- 8:00 • Registration, Coffee, Exhibitors Hall opening
- 9:30 Morning Session Speakers
 - 9:30 Jim Clark Executive Director, OCFA & OCFB
 - 10:00 John Baker Director of Brand Mgmt. & Business Devel., OCFA & OCFB
 - 10:45 Steve Kell Market Analyst
 - 11:15 Al Noorloos President, OCFA & OCFB
 - 11:30 Dennis Laycraft Executive VP, Canadian Cattle Association
- 12:00 • Lunch
- 1:00 Afternoon Session Speakers – re-convene
 - 1:15 Stan Fergusson President, Stan Fergusson Fuels Ltd
 - 1:45 Brad Porter VP Market Fresh, Loblaw
 - 2:15 Alicia Rainwater Keynote Speaker, The Center for Generational Kinetics, LLC
 - 3:15 Emily Murray Demand Planning Manager, Cargill

- 4:00 • Trade Show
- 5:30 • Exhibitor Networking and Cocktails
- 6:00 • Banquet
- 8:00 • Live Auction
 - Industry Sponsored Reception

Saturday January 14, 2023

- 8:00 • Exhibitors Hall opening
- Sponsored Breakfast



Note: Times are approximate and subject to change

2023



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January 12, 13 & 14
London Ontario



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Tel: 519-686-6226
Fax: 519-686-6227

Email: wendy@ontariocornfedbeef.com

25th ANNUAL BEEF INDUSTRY CONVENTION



REGISTRATION FORM Please complete all Bolded fields

First name _____ **Last name** _____

Company name _____

Street address _____

Lot _____ Concession _____ Municipality _____ R.R.# _____

City/Town _____ **Province** _____ **Postal Code** _____

Telephone _____ Fax Cell _____

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I am _____ A feedlot operator _____ A cow/calf producer _____ A Breeder
_____ A backgrounder _____ With the agriculture industry
_____ Other: specify _____

Please check off **ALL of the events** you will be attending:

Thurs Jan. 12 _____ Exhibitors Hall Opening _____ Industry Regulations/Panel
_____ OCFB Welcome Reception/Supper _____ Industry Sponsored Reception

Fri. Jan 13 _____ Registration, coffee, trade show _____ Wrap up, Trade Show
_____ Morning session speakers _____ Exhibitors, Networking, Cocktails
_____ Lunch _____ Banquet, Live Auction, Reception
_____ Afternoon session speakers

Sat. Jan 14 _____ Sponsor Breakfast

Fee Structure	Complete Registration Package (includes all meals, breaks, sessions and handouts)	\$250.00 _____
	Thursday Supper	\$ 60.00 _____
	Friday sessions and lunch only	\$ 80.00 _____
	Friday banquet only	\$ 110.00 _____
	Saturday breakfast	\$ N/C _____
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London Ontario N6N 1A3

For a membership with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association, please complete form and return to the OCFA office as shown below.



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Beef Industry Convention Hotel & Auction Information



Hotel/Conference Centre Info

The Beef Industry Convention returns to the Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre in London.

Once again, the OFCA is thrilled to be hosting the Convention at this beautiful and versatile venue.

The layout provides many opportunities for our Industry Partners, as well as for our attendees. It's a great place to bring the family for a couple of days of good conversation and terrific meals. The Executive Banquet Chef is dedicated exclusively to hospitality catering, making our meal his top priority. And best of all, he uses Ontario Corn Fed Beef!

The Convention opens with the Trade Show at 4 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, to be followed by the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Reception at 5:30 p.m. A speakers' program begins at 7 p.m. The evening wraps up with a reception in the hotel's atrium area.

A full day of speaker presentations and networking opportunities is planned for Friday. And, as always, we are looking forward to another great banquet dinner featuring Ontario Corn Fed Beef. Rounding out the day will be our entertaining live auction.

The Convention concludes with a sponsor breakfast on Saturday, starting at 8:00 a.m.

Meanwhile, be sure to register for the Convention. A registration form has been provided on Page 8. You can also register online at the Beef Industry Convention website - www.beefindustryconvention.com.

Reserve your room now! The pricing for our event includes assorted room types at \$134.00 or \$144.00, plus applicable taxes.

A block of 150 bedrooms has been set aside for this event. Room rates vary depending on location. Rooms not reserved prior to December 21, 2022, will be released and subject to availability.

Best Western Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre
591 Wellington Road S.
London, Ontario, N6C 4R3
Phone: (519) 681-7151

For complete information contact:
Wendy Clements
519-686-6226
Fax: 519-686-6227
wendy@ontariocornfedbeef.com

See you at the Convention!

Auction Items Needed

There is still time to donate to our live auction that takes place during the annual Beef Industry Convention.

Under the direction of our volunteer auctioneers, the high-spirited bidding gets underway after the fabulous Ontario Corn Fed Beef banquet on Friday evening.

There is something for everyone as items in the past have included artwork, hockey tickets, boxes of Ontario Corn Fed Beef products and dozens of farm input supplies.

In addition to providing some fun and entertainment for our guests, the auction has an important purpose. It is the one fundraising initiative our non-profit association organizes each year and is vital to the continued success of our convention.

We thank our sponsors and exhibitors for their continued support of the auction. If you or your organization has something to donate, please contact the OCFA office or one of the directors of our board.

To contact the office, call 519 686-6226 or e-mail Wendy Clements at wendy@ontariocornfedbeef.com.

Bunk Management: Utilizing Feed Pushers in Feedlots

By Sedley Benitz, Christoph Wand, OMAFRA, and Brent Cavell, OCFA & OCFB

Bunk Management Projects

A number of projects have been conducted in recent years aimed at improving bunk management of feedlot cattle. These have included efforts on effective fibre and a survey of the feed industry regarding on-farm practices. Starting in the summer of 2020, bunk management strategies were evaluated at various farms by Ontario Corn Fed Beef, and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs.

Through the use of trail cameras ('cams') installed in various barns, bunk management was evaluated. Slick bunk management is a common practice that reduces feed waste by allowing the bunks to be empty for an hour or less. However, it was often found that the bunks were left empty for longer than an hour. In fact, the average length of time was found to be 5.5 hours with an empty bunk, which can cause digestive issues and performance problems for the cattle. Notably, the trail cams found that there was an increased response from the cattle during feeding times and feed push-ups.

In the summer of 2021, bunk management strategies were evaluated for newly received cattle. This is a critical period for the health of cattle that can impact their performance in the future. It was demonstrated that consistent feeding times and feed availability is very important and should be focused on more by producers.

Bunk Management Practices Evaluated

Through the use of trail cameras in each of these studies, the importance of proper bunk management is apparent. Having consistent feeding times and frequent push-ups, allows for the cattle to have a more consistent feed intake throughout the day and night. Ensuring that there is enough feed available for the cattle when the feedlot operator is away from the barn can be accomplished by 'reading' the bunk consistently prior to feeding and every

time people are in the barn, in conjunction with pushing-up feed.

Feed Pushers

Feed pushers are commonly used in the dairy industry to help promote feeding behaviour and feed intake. They reduce labor by eliminating manual push-ups and allow for push-ups even when the farmer is away from the barn. In the beef industry, manual push-ups are commonly performed multiple times a day on farms with flat bunks (tables) but not needed with j bunks (manger types). As seen in figure 1, there is a significant amount of feed that is out of reach to many of the cattle shortly after feeding time.



Figure 1: Trail cam image showing cattle eating at a table a few hours after feed delivery by TMR mixer. There is often feed out of reach for cattle on table-type bunks.

In figure 2, the feed pusher pushes the feed toward the cattle allowing access to the rest of the feed. This can reduce aggression and digestive issues at the bunk by allowing for consistent amounts of feed throughout the day, provided there is enough feed available to the cattle throughout the day and night.



Figure 2: Trail cam image showing the feed pusher pushing up feed that was previously offered to the cattle by TMR delivery truck.

Beginning in the summer of 2021 bunk management strategies have been evaluated with the use of feed pusher/refreshers. Two sites had similar automated products installed from two different manufacturers. The feed pushers were used on pens with flat bunks (figures 1 and 2). Previous to the installation of this technology, the feed was pushed up throughout the day manually or by vehicle-mounted blade. Trail cams were used to determine feeding behaviour before and after the machines were installed to determine if this technology had the ability to drive intake for the cattle and encourage more frequent bunk visits.

At one of the two sites, feeding behaviour, and intake were compared between three different bunk management styles: j bunks (figure 3) and flat bunks (tables), with push-ups being conducted by each the automated feed pusher or the blade mounted on a skid steer. Newly received cattle were split across the three treatment groups. The results of these three treatments were evaluated and compared, with no measurable impact on performance by any method. This implies that the benefits, if any should be predicated on capital and operating costs of the feedlot facility, as well as the intangible effects of ensuring consistent intakes and rumen health.

Conclusions



Figure 3: Cattle eating from J-bunk shortly after feeding. This technology has long allowed the feedlot sector to avoid the need for push-ups, but the use of better feed push up approaches might allow a table or flat bunk to be used more commonly.

Feed pushers may be a valuable technology for producers, allowing them to reduce labor and ensure consistent feed intake throughout the day and night for the cattle.

...continued from page 11

Through data collected from this project and past projects, producers are often not aware of the amount of time the bunk is left empty at night and the resulting acidosis risk. The use of a feed pusher can be helpful to producers provided enough feed is offered for the machine to make available to the cattle, and that they are not overly limit-fed. Whether or not the push-up is automated, there are potential barn cost advantages with a table vs J bunks or drop-managers that require bunk management and barn design decisions to be interrelated.

From our recent Bunk Management research observations, empty bunks for over one hour prior to consistent feeding times, tends to create binge eating when cattle charge the bunk looking for feed while its being delivered. A good strategy is 25 to 30% of the pen at the bunk, and the remaining cattle either laying down or congregating within the pen being very content. This is an excellent observation to note as a part of your decision making criteria to determine the feed calls each day.

If you are observing an empty bunk when completing bunk calls daily, remind yourself that the cattle eat to their maintenance requirements first, then their gain and growth requirements are met only by reaching maximum intakes without stalling them. Bunk Management should not be taken lightly, and is a necessary tool to achieve great performance with a herd of cattle.

The feed pushers (or similar device) with every pass at the bunk, will encourage cattle to eat more often and consume lesser amounts each time they travel to the bunk. In theory, this will keep a much narrower range of the PH levels, and avoid any digestive upsets leading to compromised performance.

Inflation Worries Cloud Fed Cattle Outlook

While fed cattle prices have been better than expected over the last few weeks, several factors continue to pressure the bottom line.

Dallas Rodger, market analyst at Canfax, notes that prices didn't really experience the normal summer dip in North America. Ontario and Alberta prices have been relatively steady, trading in the low \$180s per hundredweight. However, the market has been disappointing because the Canadian basis levels have weakened against the Nebraska market.

"For the month of October, we've seen the weakest basis levels – cash-to-cash – since 2004," says Rodger. "Ontario and Alberta prices are trading at a roughly \$25-discount against Nebraska as the U.S. market has picked up, whereas we haven't seen the strength here."

Some of the strength in the U.S. markets stems from the lower placements in feedlots in the Spring, whereas the opposite occurred in Alberta and Saskatchewan. "They didn't have a great start to the Spring," adds Rodger. "As a result, we saw an influx of cattle move into the feedlots during May and June."

The price outlook is more optimistic for December and into the New Year. But given the initial prices paid for yearlings and the high grain prices, Rodger notes that the fed cattle market needs to move significantly higher for feedlots to reach break-even. The prices need to rise to approximately \$2.00 to \$2.05 per pound. "Our Canadian fed market has only been over \$2.00 for a handful of weeks," he says. "We have to revisit our all-time highs just to break even."

On the plus side, strong demand for beef continues to support the market. The volume of Canadian beef exports has been steady with last year. Rodger says it was an impressive feat considering Canada lost access to China. Our fifth-largest export market for beef suspended imports in January after Canada detected an atypical case of BSE.

Closer to home, the trade will be monitoring consumer behaviour in the wake of higher prices at the grocery store and the overall higher cost of living. While beef has been competitive with pork over the last few weeks or months, there has been discussion of improved poultry demand. "It's more competitive than the red meats," says Rodger. "Consumer dollars could potentially shift more into poultry."

Consumers Paying More For Groceries

According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) report from Statistics Canada in September, prices for food purchased from stores (+ 11.4%) grew at the fastest pace year-over-year since August 1981 (+ 11.9%). Stats Can noted that prices for food purchased from stores have been increasing faster than "all-items" in the CPI for ten consecutive months since December 2021.

Contributing to price increases for food and beverages were unfavourable weather, higher prices for important inputs such as fertilizer and natural gas, as well as geopolitical instability stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



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Managing Corn Rootworm On Ontario Beef Farms

By James Byrne, OMAFRA Beef Specialist

Have you noticed that parts of your corn crop suddenly fell over during a windstorm or after heavy rainfall or that your corn is growing curved at the base rather than straight up? When you dig up these “goose-necking” plants, have you noticed that the root ball is smaller than expected and the root nodes appear to be clipped? If so, there is a very high possibility you have a corn rootworm issue in your corn. Corn rootworm is one of the most devastating corn pests in North America and is rapidly spreading in Ontario, especially on farms where continuous corn is practiced. The United States Department of Agriculture, (USDA), estimates that corn rootworm has infected 30 million acres of corn and causes \$1 billion USD in damages annually through a combination of yield loss, estimated at \$800 million USD, and \$200 million USD in producer control costs. Corn rootworm affects feedlot producers by reducing farm available feed which must be replaced through feed purchases or by a reduction in cattle output.

Corn rootworm is an extremely adaptable pest and has developed resistance to corn hybrids with traits called Bt traits (Bt-RW) that protect against corn rootworm damage. Some corn hybrids, (pyramid hybrids) use two or more traits to maintain protection on the basis that if one trait doesn't work the other will. Unfortunately, corn rootworm has also developed resistance to these pyramid hybrids. We have very limited chemical control methods, (e.g., soil applied insecticide to kill larvae), and they are very expensive to apply. Attempting to control adults with an aerial insecticide is futile. The insect's emergence period lasts several weeks, and they can simply fly onto farms from neighboring fields.

Life Cycle:

There are two species of corn rootworm beetles in Ontario. Western corn rootworm adults are yellow with three wavy black stripes on their wings, while northern corn rootworm beetles are green.



Figure 1. Western (top) and northern (bottom) corn rootworm adults. Photo credit: Tracey Baute, OMAFRA

Adults emerge in mid-Summer where they feed on corn silks, pollen and leaves. This feeding behaviour can impact pollination and kernel set, leading to a reduction in grain yields and starch content of corn silage. The adults then lay their eggs that overwinter in the soil. Larvae begin hatching from late May to early June,

where they seek out corn roots to feed on, (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Significant root clipping from corn rootworm larvae. J. Smith, UGRC
Courtesy: Havie Carter, OMAFRA

It is at this stage that the greatest amount of damage occurs and is not immediately obvious above ground. It is estimated that for every node of roots pruned by larvae, expect a 15% yield loss on average.

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Feeding on corn roots reduces water and nutrient uptake and leads to plant instability. These corn plants develop the characteristic curved growth shape, called “goose-necking” as the plant attempts to maintain an upright condition, (Fig. 3) and are at a higher risk of lodging after high winds or heavy rain.

The Problem With Continuous Corn

When a corn field with no corn rootworm becomes infected, the number of rootworm larvae in year one will be “small” and the effect on corn yield “minimal” but if corn is planted in the same field year after year, the population of corn rootworm will explode dramatically leading to significant yield losses. Devastating yield losses can occur as quickly as 3 years after a field’s initial infection. These beetles can easily fly from field to field, so resistant beetles can spread quickly between neighboring farms where continuous corn is grown.

Options For Control

The single and best option to control corn rootworm is good crop rotation. Rotating fields out of corn production for at least one, but preferably two years, breaks up the life cycle of corn rootworm. Corn rootworm cannot survive in the absence of corn roots. When corn rootworm larvae hatch in a field that does not have corn roots for it to feed on, the larvae starve to death, dramatically knocking back the population. Legumes, such as soybeans or alfalfa, are a good option to rotate into. It must be noted though that some variants of corn rootworm have developed the capacity to lay eggs in one year that do not hatch for two or more years. This behaviour is called extended diapause. Therefore, rotating out of corn for at least two years should be the gold standard.

Crop rotation will present challenges for those feedlots dependent on continuous corn to sustain an on-farm feed supply. Discuss your feed needs with your agronomist and nutritionist. There are viable alternatives to silage, grain and high moisture corn but will require forward planning to implement successfully. Land swapping with a neighbouring cash cropper who follows a three-year crop rotation can be effective, provided the land to be swapped did

not grow corn the previous year. Speak to your agronomist on how to monitor for corn rootworm as prevention is always better.

Crop Rotation Strategy

Corn rootworm damage is greatest from year four onwards. Crop rotation out of corn at least once every four years will reduce rootworm populations and enable the first and potentially second year of corn in those fields to go without any rootworm protection. Bt-RW hybrids can then be used in the third year of corn, when rootworm risk is highest. This ensures that rootworms are only being exposed to Bt-RW proteins one in four years, significantly reducing the risk of resistant individuals building up in the population and helps maintain the durability of Bt-RW hybrids.

Corn rootworm is an increasing threat to corn production in Ontario. The pest has developed resistance to hybrids bred with traits to be resistant to corn rootworm. Crop rotation is the single best method of controlling this pest. Rotating out of corn a least once every four years, and ideally for two years, will help stop the spread of corn rootworm and minimize the impact on the feed supply to Ontario feedlots. Any unexpected damage in Corn Bt-RW Hybrids, (corn hybrids with corn rootworm protective traits), should be reported to your seed provider and Tracey Baute, OMAFRA Entomologist, Chair of the Canadian Corn Pest Coalition, Cell: 519-360-7817, tracey.baute@ontario.ca.

Further information on mitigating the effects of corn rootworm can be found on OMAFRA Virtual Beef, OMAFRA Livestock blog, OMAFRA website and Canadian Corn Pest Coalition.

This article was developed with the assistance of Havie Carter, OMAFRA Beef Cattle Specialist, Christine O’Reilly, OMAFRA Forage and Grazing Specialist and Tracey Baute, OMAFRA Entomologist – Field Crops.

Webinar Series Resumes

“The News Feed Live” will return this Fall/Winter with topics of particular interest to Ontario’s cattle feeding industry, including producers and our industry partners.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and Ontario Corn Fed Beef (OCFB) are again collaboratively planning these webinars for mid-December and early February and late March of 2023.

Save The Date:

Date: December 15, 2022

Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Registration via Eventbrite – a link will be on the OCFB website and social media.

All previous webinar attendees from last year will be notified of the upcoming webinars and information can also be found on our OCFB website and the social media channels of OMAFRA and OCFB:
www.ontariocornfedbeef.com;
Twitter: @ONCornFedBeef
OMAFRA Twitter:
Christoph Wand @CtophWand

The topic for December’s webinar, “Building A Financial Management Foundation,” will include a banker, an accountant, an economist and a producer talking about their experiences and roles in livestock production.

The discussion point of importance is producers needing to have the team members of your farm business support group collectively collaborating on your farm’s information, which enables you to make well-informed management decisions.

The webinar agenda will be in circulation when you receive this publication of The News Feed.

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