

The News Feed

An Ontario Cattle Feeders' Publication



Summer 2023 Edition



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SPOTLIGHT ON: FARMER/FEEDERS



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Details inside.

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From The Desk Of Jim Clark



Jim Clark, Executive Director

As we head into summer and the traditional highs in the cattle market, strong prices continue to dominate the various market commentaries. When I look at where the market is as of this writing, I cannot help but feel that the cattle business seems unreal. For example, six or seven years ago, you could buy a load of calves for between \$60,000 and \$80,000. Today, that same load is close to \$200,000. Then, there are also the skyrocketing costs of the other parts of the business to consider.

Somebody recently asked me how I would describe the current situation. I would say that it feels like we've booked a mysterious flight to an unknown place. In essence, we're on a journey, but we don't know where we're going. It sounds a little eerie, but we're on this ride in the cattle business, purchasing cattle and not having a true idea what will happen down the road. Several factors, including fluctuating feed and other production costs, drive the uncertainty. There are also

questions about the state of the economy and how it will impact export markets and consumer reaction to high beef prices. While I know beef producers have the option of contracts to help mitigate the risk, how do you know if it's the right thing to do when you book a contract? I'm finding that many people are asking that question, too, because it's so hard to nail something down when we don't really have an idea of the costs and what the markets will be.

Another factor contributing to "our mysterious flight" is the impact of government policies. Sometimes, I think governments don't realize the effects of some of the rules and regulations they set. For example, ethanol was a significant priority 15 years ago. As a result, the renewable fuel standards for gasoline became a major part of corn production and the by-products side for hogs and cattle. And now you see changes proposed in the U.S. emphasizing more soybean oil for biodiesel production. It's just one example of the government policies you see, making it difficult to control your pricing or your cost because of the uncertainty of the spin-off effects of these moves.

We also need to consider the impact of trade deals. I realize trade agreements are necessary. But trade needs to be a two-way street. We can't make agreements with the European Union, the UK and some of these other deals we're going into with countries like Brazil, with beef coming this way, but we don't have the same opportunity to ship beef into those markets. This inequity really shows the impact of policy on our business, and I think governments need to be more conscious of the fact when they're making these deals to ensure that trade is truly a two-way street.

When it comes to government policies in trade and agriculture, I'm reminded of the time when I first started with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association 22 years ago. I had the opportunity



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to talk with Martin Van Geffen, who was a leader of Beef for Change. Looking back, I noticed that several people who were involved in that initiative are large cattle feeders today. What stands out to me now is that there was a core group of truly visionary producers. For some, they may not have had the right idea, but at the end of the day, they had a vision of where things needed to go.

What I'm getting at here is that we need to take more charge of what we're doing and what we expect instead of others doing it for us. And there's no time like the present, especially with all the talk around sustainability.

There are many great things we're doing regarding the issue, including work on animal welfare and environmental stewardship. But I don't think we hit the government policy side as hard as we should. Our farmers are feeling more and more pressure, and it's difficult to talk to them about sustainability. Of all the things that get discussed, the one issue that seems taboo or overlooked is the pillar of financial stability. Once you have that, you can then look at all those other pieces related to the other pillars.

At the end of the day, it's extremely important for our leaders to take a stand. We need to continue to move forward with a vision of what our industry will look like in the next five to 10 years and even longer. We hear our government leaders talk about their support for supply management. But for the non-supply managed sectors, including beef, veal and pork, we need to know where our governments are going and what the support will be. Given the amount of beef exported to Ontario, we also need to be protected.

We still have a lot of good things going for us that make Ontario a great place to feed cattle. There's no question about that. But to continue to carry the industry forward, more needs to be done to get us to our ultimate destination and arrive without the mystery.

From all of us at the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association, we wish you and your families the best for a safe and healthy summer.

Canadian Cattle Producers Welcome Increased Beef Access Into Japan

The Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) is pleased to see the full restoration of market access into Japan with the Government of Canada announcing on March 27 the opening of processed beef into this important market. In 2022, the beef industry exported \$518 million in beef and beef products, an increase of 18.4 per cent compared to 2021. The value of beef in Japan has increased 15 per cent going from \$6.74/kg in 2020 to \$7.76/kg in 2022.

"Cattle producers are grateful for the re-opening for processed beef in Japan, our second largest export market for beef," commented Nathan Phinney, CCA President. "Our industry will continue to support global food security by providing some of the most sustainable and highest quality beef in the world."

This decision marks the removal of the last set of restrictions put into place by Japan after the discovery of a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in 2003. CCA is grateful for Japan's decision to adhere to science-based trade with the removal of BSE-era restrictions following Canada's attainment of BSE-negligible risk status by the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) in 2021.

"We look forward to continuing to work with the Government of Canada to further remove remaining BSE-era trade restrictions and expanding our trade capacity in the Indo-Pacific region," said Phinney.

Since the start of the Comprehensive Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in 2017, and the removal of tariffs that followed, Canadian beef exports increased 192 per cent to Japan.

Under CPTPP, Japan's 38.5 per cent tariff on beef imports will decrease to 23.35 per cent by April 1, 2023, and will go down to 9 per cent by 2033.

In 2022, Canada exported \$518 million in beef and beef products, reaching half a billion dollars.

Japan, and the Indo-Pacific region, hold the greatest potential for beef export diversification.



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Trade Shows Provide Opportunities For Showcasing Ontario Beef



Attendees at the Supermarket Trade Show in Tokyo, Japan check out the Ontario Corn Fed Beef display.

The Ontario Beef Market Development Program has been very busy on the trade show circuit coming out of the pandemic.

Trade shows provide an opportunity to create awareness around your brand and a great opportunity to represent your brand to target audiences.

During the pandemic, all high-valued trade events all around the world were all cancelled, making it virtually impossible to develop new customers but also to keep our Ontario Beef brands in front of our existing customers.

With the increase in import competition in our domestic market, developing a high level of awareness for Ontario Beef in the retail and food-service sectors is critical.

Over the past six months, Ontario Beef has been represented at 10 major trade events in export and Ontario markets.

Our flagship brands, Ontario Corn Fed Beef and Ontario Heritage Beef were highlighted at Food & Hotel Asia in Vietnam as well at the Supermarket Trade Show and Foodex in Tokyo, Japan, FoodStyle in Okinawa, Japan and Gulfood in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

On the local front, Ontario Beef was represented at major events, including Grocery Innovations Canada, Meat & Poultry Ontario Meat Expo, Meatex Canada, Restaurants Canada Show and SIAL Canada.

“Participation at trade shows is an important aspect of our market development program,” says John Baker, Director of the Ontario Beef Market Development Program. “They provide an opportunity to engage with industry stakeholders, identify new customers and create awareness around the high quality of Ontario beef.”

With the increase of import competitors, Baker notes that it is also imperative to maintain a high level of awareness of our local supply capabilities. “More and more import competitors are targeting the Ontario market,” he adds. “We have to keep in front of our industry partners to



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demonstrate our capabilities and commitment to maintaining and growing our share of this market.”

In the past, our import competitors consisted of a few import countries that traded commodity beef into the market to fill a demand gap. Today, we see many more countries and even domestic competitors all targeting the vast Ontario market with attribute-based beef products.

Many of these countries are now marketing their environmental commitments, animal welfare programs and their geographic locations as points of differentiation. New entrants to the market include Mexico, Spain, Ireland, the UK, Italy, Brazil and Japan, with new programs coming from long-time importers Australia, New Zealand and the USA, as well as Western Canada and Prince Edward Island.

Ontario is a major destination market, and virtually all exporters understand the opportunities Ontario represents. “This is our most important market, and if we want to grow our share, we need to be active and engaging with our industry partners, and trade shows provide an opportunity to do that,” says Baker.



Ontario Beef on display at the Grocery Innovations Canada Show



Meatex Canada Show



Meat & Poultry Ontario Meat Expo



May 3, 2023

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OCFB QA CRSB Program – PRODUCER INCENTIVES

In conjunction with CRSB, Cargill and their supply chain partners, and FCC (Farm Credit Canada) there are currently 3 incentive programs in place to support Beef Producers to become and maintain CRSB certification. Certification bodies for the CRSB are OCFB QA CRSB, VBP+ and Where Food Comes From.

Cargill Recognition Credit Payment

What is this payment for?

This Recognition Credit was established to recognize the upfront investment that many Canadian producers have made to become CRSB Certified even when they aren't guaranteed a clear, financial payback for that effort at this time.

Who currently qualifies for this payment?

Operations who maintained or earned CRSB certification in 2022 and then maintained this status going into 2023 are eligible for the Recognition Credit. The amounts of each operation's credit will be based on the difference between \$400 CAD and the amount that the operation earned via Cargill Qualifying Cattle Credit for all qualifying cattle processed in 2022. **However, all operations certified to the CRSB Sustainable Beef Production Standard are eligible AND do not need to have sent any cattle to Cargill to be eligible.** There was no need to apply or take extra steps to ensure you receive this credit. The payment will come from CCIA in the form of a cheque and was expected to be paid in March 2023.

Is this a long-term program to be repeated this and subsequent years?

There is a commitment by Cargill, CRSB and their partners to long-term recognition for operations who become and maintain CRSB certification. The incentive may be structured differently in the future, but in principle, this recognition will be in place for future years.

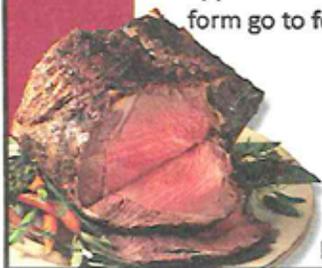
FCC Sustainability Incentive Program

What is this Incentive Program for?

This incentive program rewards eligible FCC customers who are CRSB certified. The goal is to increase producer adoption of sustainable beneficial management practices (BMP's). FCC wants to support the long-term health of the beef industry by reducing barriers and providing financial incentives for customers to practice environmentally sustainable agriculture. FCC has partnered with CRSB to promote sustainability by offering incentives to CRSB certified customers of FCC.

Who currently qualifies for this Incentive Program and how do I apply?

Individuals must be CRSB certified customers holding eligible lending with FCC to receive the incentive. CRSB certified producers who are FCC customers will receive incentives of up to \$2000 calculated based on their amount of total lending with FCC at the time of their application. The program is in its second year and applications for this year are open May 2 – Dec 31/23. For more information and access to the on-line application form go to fcc.ca/SustainabilityPrograms.



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Is this a long-term program to be repeated this and subsequent years?

For the life of the program, all eligible FCC customers who meet the criteria outlined within a Sustainability Incentive Program initiative offered by FCC are eligible to re-apply for the incentive annually.

Cargill Qualifying Cattle Credit Payment Program

What is this Credit Payment for?

Cargill has elected to provide credit payments to producers for cattle that moved through their operation and were deemed sustainably-sourced when processed at one of Cargill's two Canadian abattoirs, High River and Guelph. All Canadian producers meeting the requirements of the CRSB framework (i.e. CRSB certified) are eligible for these payments. Payments are made for *fully qualifying cattle* processed at Cargill and have averaged between \$18-\$20 per head per certified operation over the past 2 years.

What constitutes fully qualified cattle?

Qualification is based on the CRSB's Certified Sustainable Beef Framework requirements. Within Cargill's supply chain, this means that **cattle must move only through certified sustainable operations** (i.e. from birth through to processing at one of Cargill's primary processing plants – High River AB &/or Guelph ON) **as determined through ear tag movements reported in CCIA's CLTS database.**

Who currently qualifies for this Credit Payment and how is it managed?

Payments to CRSB certified operations for fully qualified cattle slaughtered at Cargill facilities are based on cattle movement not cattle ownership. Payments are intended to recognize the effort made to certify the operation itself. Payments are made by Cargill to CRSB certified producers when cattle are deemed *fully qualified* via ear tag movements reported in CCIA's CLTS database. These payments are shifting from being made quarterly to being made monthly in 2023. Cheques are issued and mailed to the certified operations. Ensure your mailing information is up-to-date in CLTS.

What do I need to do to ensure my cattle can be recognized as coming from a CRSB certified operation?

Cow/calf:

- Becoming and keeping your VBP+ certification up-to-date
- Allow for contact information such as company name, contact name, address and CCIA/CLTS Account ID to be shared by your Certification Body (i.e. VBP+) with CCIA
- Ensure you have an active and up-to date CCIA/CLTS Account
- Age verify each calf by applying birth date information to an approved/official CCIA tag number
- Submit age verification for animals born on your premises directly online to the CLTS database. Only the herd of origin can submit a birth date. If you rely on a third party (i.e. Herdtrax, BIX, etc.) to manage your herd data, ENSURE they are submitting this information to the CLTS or do it yourself!

Feedlot

- Becoming and keeping your OCFB QA CRSB certification up-to-date
- Ensure you have an active and up-to date CCIA/CLTS Account
- Submit a Move in event for approved/official CCIA indicators/tags of purchased cattle directly in CLTS. Move-in data is submitted to the CLTS when animals arrive at your facility. Only move-in events are required to verify cattle movement on certified operations. (i.e. Herdtrax, BIX, etc.) to manage your herd data, ENSURE they are submitting this information to the CLTS or do it yourself!

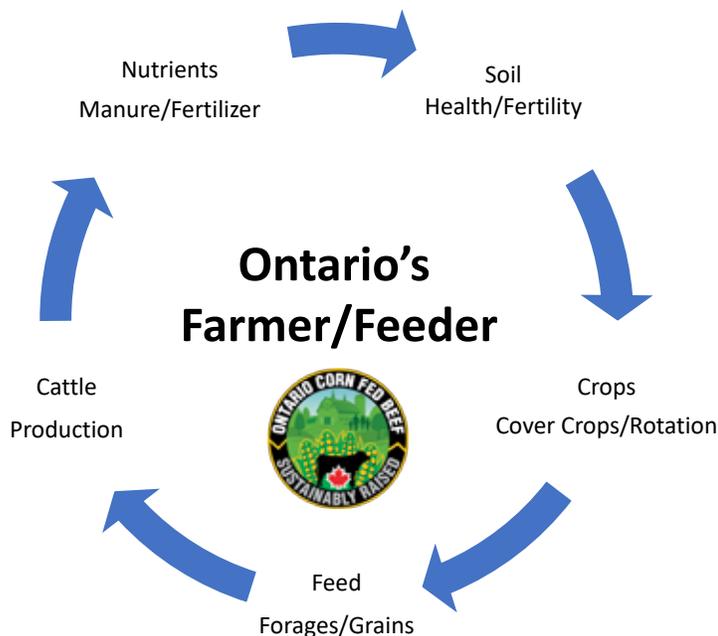
You can contact the **Client Support Team at the CCIA for assistance with submitting data at 1-877-909-2333 or info@canadaid.ca.**

For further information on becoming CRSB certified:

For cow/calf operations please see www.verifiedbeef.ca for producer enrollment and contact info for Provincial Coordinators of the VBP+ program.

For Feedlots in Ontario please email OCFB QA CRSB program at info@ontariocornfedbeef.com or call 519 686-6226 to let them know you are interested in OCFB QA CRSB certification.

Sustainable Corn Production For Ontario's Farmer/Feeder



The latest “News Feed Live” webinar showcased the strong connection to sustainable production practices in our Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program. Entitled “Sustainable Corn Production for Ontario’s Farmer/Feeder,” OCFB producers and invited experts shared their methods, management guidelines and benefits from incorporating improved feed growing and fertility practices on an OCFB feedlot operation.

Once again, we were pleased to collaborate with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on the March 9th webinar. While this article provides a few highlights, we encourage anyone interested in learning more to view the webinar on our YouTube channel or on the Ontario Corn Fed Beef website.

Why produce a webinar on sustainable corn production?

The OCFA Quality Assurance program continues to be recognized as the foundation of the Ontario Corn Fed Beef brand, advocating good management practices and good production practices for quality feed and cattle production. Ontario’s corn crop is a mainstay for livestock feed and ethanol production in the province. Corn is also the reason consumers support OCFB’s great taste and flavour enhanced by Ontario corn. However, customers/consumers have recently been asking additional questions and want to know more about the OCFB pro-

duction story. These questions include: how are farmers being good stewards of the land, how are cattle being sustainably raised on farms, how are farmers protecting groundwater sources etc.?

Producers are striving to adopt and implement the best management practices on their farms involving crops and cattle production. Examples are minimum tillage methods, cover crops, fertility programs using manure and fertilizer matching crop yield potential and both maximizing feed quality and having detailed animal health protocols for cattle.

Producers continually look at ways they can improve. “After all, it’s their livelihood and the financial security for their family and employees,” said Brent Cavell, OCFA/OCFB Quality Assurance Manager. “It’s their commitment to creating a vibrant, local agricultural value chain to support their community and its members. Ontario farmer feeders have a huge, vested interest in producing crops and cattle as efficiently as possible, particularly now with production costs for both being at all-time highs.”

Christoph Wand, OMAFRA Livestock Sustainability Specialist, noted the importance of demonstrating the linkages between the land-based producers because much of the cropping footprint is in their hands. “In livestock, the footprint in many cases is tied to the feedstuffs we buy or grow,” said Wand. “(Having) a good

feeding system and a good growing system is a very good outcome. We need to work in both of those areas.”

The term “Ontario farmer/feeders” provides a great storyline to expand on, focusing on the family farm growing crops to feed their cattle, which produce manure and nutrients to return to the land to grow crops, thus continuing the cycle. This represents a very sustainable production model. “I think that is something that the consumers can latch onto, and it also puts some definition into the word sustainability in our world here,” added Cavell.

We have a simple system yet comprehensive story to tell about the farmer/feeder production cycle, something the consumer will no doubt be able to relate to very well. The producers in our webinar videos describe what they implement on their farms resulting in a great consumer-friendly story in response to their many questions.

The interrelationship between crop rotation, record-keeping and feed costs became evident during the preparation for the previous webinar on financial management. “If livestock people don’t talk about how cropping systems perform specifically in a livestock context, nobody else will,” said Wand, explaining the aim of offering the context for ‘farmer/feeders.’

Nitrogen management

The webinar featured presentations from Ben Rosser, OMAFRA Corn Specialist, Deb Campbell of Agronomy Advantage Inc., Darrell Russett of Russett Farms and Scott Cochrane of Cochrane Farming Inc.

On sustainable corn production, Rosser focused on sharpening management skills, given the attention paid to nitrogen in terms of reducing emissions. “One of the big things about managing nitrogen is applying the right rate,” said Rosser. “Of all the things you can do to manage nitrogen emissions, the right rate has the biggest impact on reducing emissions.”

Rosser recommended some online tools for optimizing rates, including the corn nitrogen calculator at GoCorn.net.

Another key management site is OMAFRA's Agri Suite. It's the Ontario government's free agricultural and environmental suite of decision support tools for crop management, nutrient management and minimum distance separation. It can be found at <https://agrisuite.omafra.gov.on.ca/>

Manure management

Deb Campbell discussed several aspects of manure management, noting that the topic is strongly tied to farm nutrient stewardship. “It's become an underpinning concept any time you're talking about nutrients,” said Campbell. “Whether nitrogen, phosphorus, or manure, it's all cornerstone nutrient stewardship. I think most of you would be familiar with these concepts of the right source, the right rate, the right time and the right place.”

If the primary source of nutrients is manure, producers need to have a good handle on how it tests and the various nutrient levels in the mix. “Those manure analyses are really important to know the whole nutrient balance on the farm,” she added. “A bunch of labs will also tell you if your nitrogen is responding, based on how quickly you're incorporating it, whether you're injecting it, or whether you're applying it in the fall or the spring. It gives you a lot of value in terms of knowing what you're applying.”

Producer comments

Darrell Russett shared his methods from his farm near Stirling, Ont., in Hastings County. Two-thirds of the land is dedicated to the cattle operation, and the remaining third is for cash crops. Noting that they grow 700 acres of corn, Russett said the ground gets a coat of manure. They also plant 140 acres of no-till beans in 30-inch rows. Again, the ground receives manure before the beans are planted. The bean straw is then used for bedding packs. They also plant 150 acres of wheat annually, no-tilled into corn silage ground after a coat of manure.

Russett spent a few minutes discussing their experience with planting rye in the fall. He said the density of the rye is fairly thick in the spring, which gives their cows a good area to calve and where the disease pressure is low. “After the fall rye's density is established, we'll spread manure on that again in the spring before it starts to grow,” he said. “Once the growth is there, we cut it, and it's all ready for planting corn. We wait until it heads because we don't need the protein; we need the fibre.”

Producer Scott Cochrane highlighted his experience with strip tillage on the family farm near Paris, Ont. He has been pleased with the strip-

till results, particularly on the corn-on-corn ground. “Sometimes you just have to use corn-on-corn in a livestock operation in order to get enough feed for the livestock,” he said. “When we're trying to disc or cultivate corn stalks in order to plant again, there's too much trash around the seed. This way, you drive down in between the rows (from last year), and you get a nice blank strip between, and the corn planter does a nice job of planting on top of that. With corn-on-corn, we've got very good emergence when we got rid of the trash and planted between the rows.”

Cochrane added that strip tillage is also helpful when planting into their manure pack spread on the fields. He noted that it could be a difficult process as the pack can have quite a bit of straw due to their backgrounding cattle. “The strip-tiller moves that trash into the centre, and that leaves a perfectly blank strip to plant into in between the rows,” he said.

Russett and Cochrane were interviewed on their farms, where videos were produced to help capture their cropping methods. Again, we encourage people to view the webinar online to fully appreciate their experiences and get the full presentations from Ben Rosser and Deb Campbell.



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Canadian Cattle Inventories Decrease



Canadian cattle and hog inventories were down, while sheep inventories were up on January 1, 2023, compared with the same time as last year.

Statistics Canada reports that Canadian cattle inventories have been on a general decline since January 2005; however, they have remained relatively flat since January 2016.

This was the second consecutive cycle with a year-over-year decrease of Canadian hog inventories.

Meanwhile, Canadian sheep inventories have continued to grow on a year-over-year basis since January 2021. Drought conditions and tight feed supply continued to put pressure on the livestock sector.

Cattle and calves

Canadian farmers held 11.3 million cattle and calves on their farms on January 1, 2023, down 2.2% from the same date the previous year. Among the provinces, Alberta held the largest cattle inventories on January 1, 2023, contributing 42.7% to the national total, followed by Saskatchewan (19.3%) and Ontario (14.0%).

Canadian cattle producers retained less breeding stock on January 1, 2023, with year-over-

year decreases observed in all breeding stock categories. Meanwhile, producers held more feeder heifers (+1.6%) and steers (+0.7%) compared with January 1, 2022.

The July-to-December 2022 total disposition of cattle and calves declined 3.0% from the same period in 2021. Cattle and calves slaughter was down 1.5% to 1.9 million head, and international cattle and calve exports decreased 7.6% to 341,400 head during the same period.

Hogs

Canadian hog producers reported 13.9 million hogs on their farms on January 1, 2023, down 1.7% from the same date in 2022. Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba continued to hold over 80% of Canada's hogs, with Quebec accounting for nearly one-third of Canadian hog inventories, at 4.4 million head.

Hog producers reported 1.2 million sows and gilts (-0.7%), and the number of boars decreased by 5.3% year over year to 16,000 head.

The July-to-December 2022 total disposition of hogs declined 2.5% from the same period in 2021. Total hog slaughter was down 1.4% to 10.7 million head, and international exports of live hogs decreased 7.1% to 3.2 million head during the same period.

The pig crop, which represents the number of live piglets after weaning, fell to 14.7 million for the July-to-December 2022 period, a 1.4% drop compared with the same period one year earlier.

Sheep and lambs

On January 1, 2023, Canadian inventories of sheep and lambs were up 3.3% year over year to 854,400 head.

The sheep breeding herd rose 0.6% year over year to 628,700 head, as increases in the number of ewes (+1.1%) and rams (+0.4%) more than offset a 1.8% decrease in replacement lambs. Inventories of market lambs rose 11.5% year over year to 225,700 head on January 1, 2023, primarily due to reductions in slaughter capacity in Western Canada. During the second half of 2022, sheep and lamb slaughter fell 0.2% year over year to 381,400 head.

For the July-to-December 2022 period, international exports of live sheep and lambs decreased 40.5% year over year to 13,200 head. Meanwhile, international imports of live animals remained elevated relative to historical levels, at 5,000 head.

An Interview with Kevin McArter of **West Coast Cattle**



Kevin, can you give us your thoughts on the Britespan building?

“Welcome to our cattle spa! Really, this is truly a state-of-the-art facility. The air is so fresh, and the cattle are so content; it is really unbelievable. We are very **happy with the average daily gains.**”

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Marketing For Profit



From left: Steve Kell, Jim McCormick, Floyd Howard and Tyne Morgan discuss key issues affecting the grain markets in a taping of the U.S. Farm Report at the March Classic in London, Ont.

Uncertainty over the Ukraine-Russian grain corridor, the state of the Ontario wheat crop, and the need for farmers to lock in profits emerged as the key issues during a panel discussion on marketing at the Grain Farmers of Ontario March Classic in London.

The discussion was recorded for a feature on the U.S. Farm Report, hosted by Tyne Morgan. The panel included grain market analyst Steve Kell from Kell Grain, Floyd Howard, grain merchandising manager of the Wanstead Farmers Co-operative in Lambton County, and Jim McCormick, a founding partner of AgMarket.net in Chicago.

The panel's first discussion topic was the large winter wheat crop in Ontario. As he mentioned during his presentation to the Beef Industry Convention in January, Steve Kell said Ontario farmers planted 1.2 million acres of wheat in the fall of 2022, up more than 600,000 from the previous year. "If we harvest that 1.2 million, we'll have over 3 million tonnes of wheat in the market that needs about 650 thousand tonnes

for flour milling," he added. "The mills have as much as five times what they need. We're going to have to look at exports and feed usage displacing corn in order to get the wheat crop put away."

Howard said the basis for the new crop has been weak, and farmers have been reluctant sellers. "We have less than half of our wheat bought for harvest delivery than what we had at this time last year, despite the massive increase in production potential," he remarked. "The end-user is understandably not aggressive for harvest."

While the Chicago prices aren't at the same levels as last year, the numbers are historically high. In terms of quality, he said his company's agronomy team has never seen the winter wheat crop rooted as well as it is this year. "So, the production potential is absolutely huge."

One of the more significant issues affecting the trade leading up to the March Classic was the uncertainty over an agreement to enable Ukraine to continue exporting grain. While the

deal was for 60 days, there needed to be more clarity about the timeframe, as the Ukrainians initially believed the agreement would be for 120 days. "The reality is China is taking a lot of that grain; they're taking the wheat; they're taking the corn," said McCormick, who expected the deal to last 60 days. "I'm guessing the grain corridor will stay open, but there will be a lot of politics between the deadlines."

In keeping with McCormick's expectations for turmoil, Reuters News reported in mid-April that the Russian government would not extend the deal beyond May 18 unless the West removed obstacles to exporting Russian grain and fertilizer. The agreement, however, was renewed with a two-month extension negotiated by the United Nations and Turkey. The renewal was announced a day before the previous deal was due to expire on that May 18 deadline.

Before looking ahead to 2023, Kell was asked about the significant events that shaped the prices in 2022. The drought in South America, the beginning of the war between Russia and

Ukraine and drier conditions in the U.S. Midwest formed a “trifecta” of issues that pushed the market higher. “Brazil’s yield is better than we thought,” said Kell. “The war is getting to be old news. I think farmers need to dial down our expectations. If we’re aiming for 2022 crop prices in 2023, we’re going to wind up missing the mark.”

The panel then turned its attention to the planting intentions in the U.S., with the United States Department of Agriculture set to release its estimates 10 days after the convention. McCormick was close with his estimate of 91 million acres of corn, as the USDA forecasts 92 million acres. “The reality is producers in the U.S., when doing their books, it doesn’t matter where they’re at; all our clients are saying the same thing: corn is where the money is at.”

Howard concurred that corn has the best return but added that the big Ontario wheat crop could limit the amount of corn planted in the province. “I imagine that all those wheat acres are going to be retained,” he said. “Something has to accommodate that increase in wheat acres, so we’re anticipating lower corn acres and slightly lower to unchanged soybean acres.”

As for marketing their crops, McCormick encouraged the audience to look hard at their break-even numbers. “We like to say you want to market for profit, not for price,” he said. “The price is down from where it was the last couple of years.”

He added that this is a year to make money because if the weather cooperates, cash flows will be difficult next year. “You want to make sure your break-evens are bought in. The market moves so fast.”

Howard is optimistic about 2023 but added that growers on both sides of the border are undersold. “The message would be to do something,” he said. “There’s a lot of opportunities to lock in profit. For those of you who have wheat, you probably need to do something sooner rather than later. Locally, once this wheat breaks dormancy and producers see crop potential, you’re going to start to see farmer selling, and that is going to negatively impact basis.”

(The above article is a summary of the panel discussion held during the March Classic. It is intended for informational purposes only and is not marketing or financial advice.)



Brent Cavell, Quality Assurance Manager, Nutritional Feed Ingredient Specialist, and Chelsea Martin, Program Manager, were hand to discuss the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program with the attendees at the 2023 March Classic in London, hosted by the Grain Farmers of Ontario.

Industry Notes

New Investments Will Train More Veterinarians And Provide Grants To New Graduates

The Ontario government is investing more than \$15 million to help address veterinary shortages in rural and northern communities, making it easier for farmers and large animal owners to access veterinary care when and where they need it. The funding will be used to establish a new Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program with the University of Guelph and Lakehead University to train more veterinarians. The government is also providing grants to new veterinary graduates as an incentive to work in underserved areas in the province.

“Access to veterinary care for farmers and animal owners across the province is critical to ensuring a safe and stable agri-food system,” said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. “Our government has listened and is taking direct and immediate action to ensure Ontario farmers in rural and Northern Ontario have the resources they need to succeed for years to come.”

As announced in Ontario’s 2023 Budget, Building a Strong Ontario, the new Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) program with the University of Guelph and Lakehead University will enrol an additional 20 veterinary students per year, resulting in up to 80 new Doctor of Veterinary Medicine seats in total by 2028. Leveraging the existing University of Guelph Doctor of Veterinary Medicine curriculum, the new DVM program will focus on the recruitment of students from northern, rural and Indigenous communities.

“Our government knows supporting in-demand sectors like this starts with addressing labour shortages head-on, and together with our post-secondary institutions, this collaborative new Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program will do just that,” said Jill Dunlop, Minister of Colleges and Universities. “This is a historic investment that will help more students get the training and education they need for rewarding careers in veterinary medicine while supporting local labour needs, keeping animals in every corner of the province healthy and supporting the economic growth of local communities.”

The government is also launching the Veterinary Incentive Program to encourage recent veterinary graduates to practice in underserved and northern communities. This \$900,000 investment over three years will provide program participants with annual grants totalling up to \$50,000, conditional on the participant continuing to practice on large animals in these communities.

Ontario Investing In Improved Soil Health

The Ontario government is investing \$9.5 million over the next three years to equip farmers with the technology they need to maximize the health of their soil and increase their productivity and profitability.

This new funding in the 2023 Budget: Building a Strong Ontario will help improve soil data mapping and soil evaluation and monitoring. Soil data and interpretive maps support on-farm decision-making, enabling farmers to innovate and use technology to improve their long-term viability to remain competitive in the global market.

“This funding will allow farmers, researchers,

and others to access critical data to help understand and adapt to meet the needs of soil management and health protocols provincewide,” said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. “This initiative builds on actions outlined in the Grow Ontario Strategy to support the resiliency and growth of the overall food supply sector while providing beneficial information to understand the needs and potential of the agricultural and agri-food across the province, including Northern Ontario.”

Through this investment, OMAFRA will update the province’s soil maps and information as part of its Soil Resource Inventory (SRI) work. It will also build the Ontario Agricultural Soil Information System (OASIS). This data and information system will house, manage, and analyze soil data critical to support farming operations. As planting season begins, we want farmers to know that this programming will enable them to make better-informed business and land management decisions in tending their own soils for years to come.

“Our government is taking a responsible and targeted approach to support farmers, people and businesses today while laying a strong foundation for future generations,” said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. “This investment is part of our government’s plan to strengthen our agri-food sector so that more local food can be grown here in Ontario.”

The Ontario government’s 2023 budget, Building a Strong Ontario, is helping to drive economic growth, attract jobs and investments, and build key infrastructure projects faster. The government’s plan is also training skilled workers to fill in-demand jobs, keeping costs down for those who need it the most, and providing better services for the people of Ontario.

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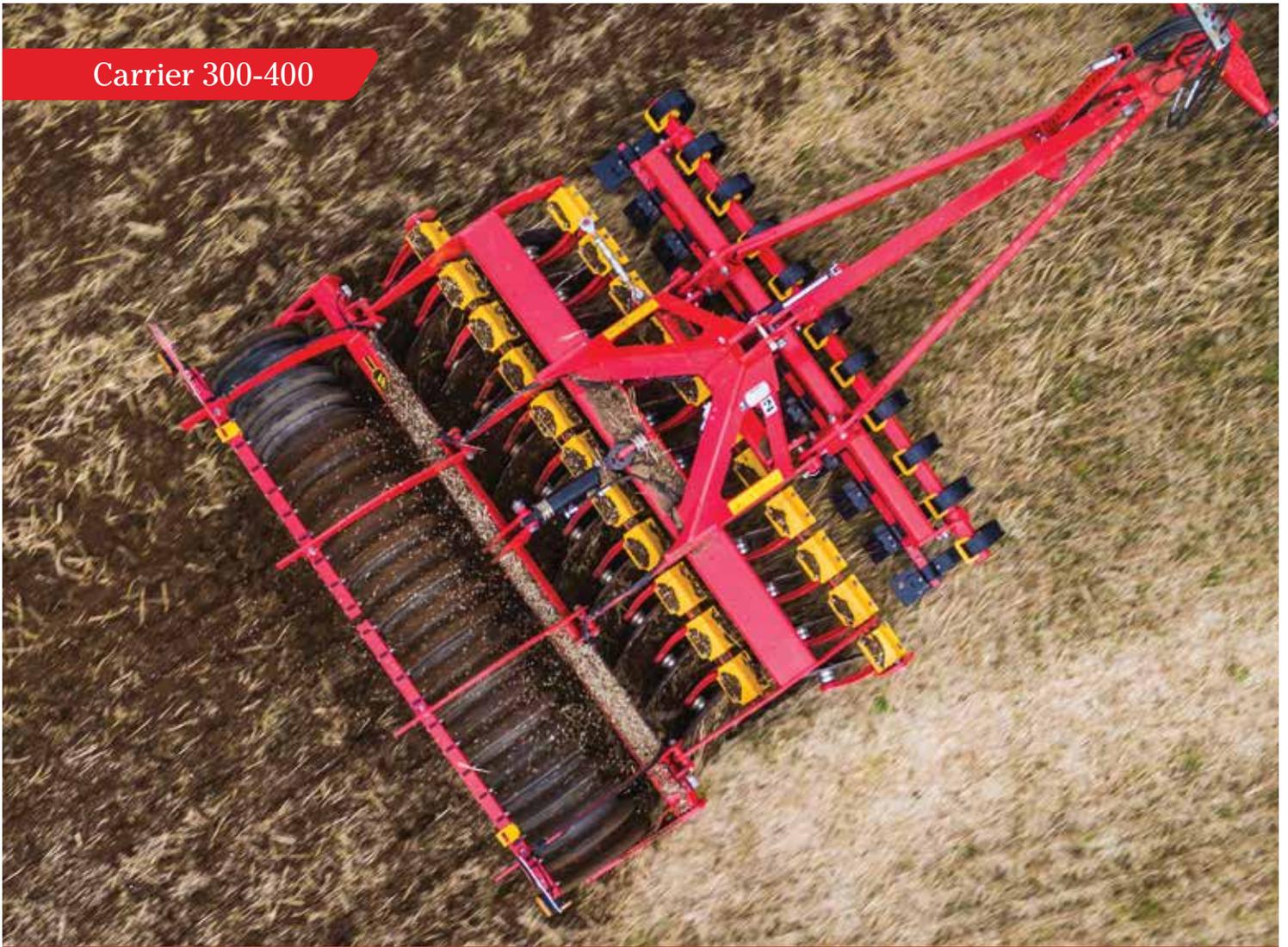
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