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An Ontario Cattle Feeders' Publication



Winter 2024 Edition



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27th ANNUAL BEEF INDUSTRY CONVENTION EDITION



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Beef Industry Convention
January 9, 10, 11, 2025 – London, Ontario
Details & Registration Form Inside

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From The Desk Of Jim Clark



Jim Clark, Executive Director

As we bid farewell to 2024, we're gearing up for an exciting start to 2025 with the much-anticipated annual Beef Industry Convention in January. We're putting the final touches on the agenda, which features another incredible lineup of guest speakers. In addition to the speakers, I always look forward to having the opportunity to catch up with our members during the various meals and social times during the Convention.

When thinking about this chance to bring our industry together, I have been contemplating the strength of the women in our lives, which has been so evident recently, especially following my mother's passing. Reflecting on her life, I genuinely appreciate the determination she instilled in me. My mother taught me many things, the most important being the value of family. One tradition was our Sunday night supper, which was crucial for us. At six o'clock every Sunday, we gathered to enjoy each other's company, away from the chaotic world outside. It was more than just family; we welcomed everyone who was around at supper time.

From family to business, it's important to highlight the significant women in my life who have helped shape me. Their support, encouragement, and guidance have been vital to my career. I can say with absolute certainty that I wouldn't be where I am without them. As I think about my mother and the key women in my life, their wisdom continues to guide me through the challenges we all face daily. It's essential to recognize that women have always played pivotal roles in our lives, especially in agriculture. Unfortunately, their contributions haven't always received the recognition they deserve. Women in this field have overcome numerous challenges,

and their accomplishments within agriculture continue to grow. I hope sharing my experiences inspires others to reflect on the powerful women in their lives and acknowledge their influence. For instance, how they helped me prepare for my first Ontario Corn Fed Beef presentation when I was just starting with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association. The support made a significant difference, and I truly wouldn't have been able to stand in front of that group without their guidance. It's important to remember that behind every success, a network of support often goes unnoticed.

As we prepare for the Convention, politics and the whims of various parties dominate the headlines. As I am writing this, the stock markets and cattle futures are rallying in the wake of President-Elect Trump's victory. But grain and oil-seeds markets are down as trade tensions loom over threats of increased tariffs on imports.

In Canada, news regarding a Private Member's Bill, C-293, generated significant interest throughout the meat and agricultural industries. The Bill aims to support pandemic preparedness, including measures that are designed to enhance transparency regarding readiness levels and efforts that seek to strengthen Canada's domestic manufacturing capacity with respect to any products relevant to pandemic production. Of note, the Canadian Meat Council (CMC) is alarmed by the Bill's language around livestock farming, promoting alternative proteins, and the context of antimicrobial resistance that will negatively affect Canadian farmers and ranchers. Under the proposed legislation, public health officials would have the authority during a pandemic to close facilities they consider "high risk," such as livestock operations and meat processing plants, and even "mandate" the consumption of vegetable proteins by Canadians.

The CMC doesn't expect the Bill to pass in its current form for several reasons, including that the agriculture provisions would be difficult to enforce. Also, it could be several months before a large and complex bill like this would be fully studied because of the large caseloads of the Senate Committees. In addition, the Bill ceases to exist if it is not passed before the next federal election.



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Also, at the time of writing this commentary, the Bloc Quebecois is pushing the Liberals to adopt two Private Member's Bills. One aims to increase Old Age Security payments for people between 65 and 74. The other, Bill C-282, would exempt the supply-management sector from future international trade negotiations. In response to the latter, the beef sector notes that if passed, the Bill could result in less ambitious trade agreements, jeopardizing key industries, particularly those dependent on exports, like the beef and cattle sector.

It would add another challenge to our industry, which has already seen the exit of smaller farmers who have left due to several factors. Risk tolerance and age have been critical factors. Without the next generation to carry on these operations, we've seen other families expand their farms and include multiple generations. While they continue to invest and grow to meet their family's needs, they are vulnerable to the realities of today's feedlot business, which include volatile markets, unstable world prices and a lack of market power. Then, there's the added cost of meeting the various societal demands with little or no direct compensation.

At the heart of the issue is the volume of the cattle that we're feeding in Ontario as the feedlot sector continues to grow while the cow-calf sector decreases. But we remain very susceptible to any small market fluctuations. Our lives hinge on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, especially beef, as the market constantly moves up and down, significantly affecting everyone's profit margins throughout the beef value chain. We're at a time when both the cattle feeder and the cow-calf producer have made some money or have some margin. But that's changing quickly. Just look at the cyclical nature of our business. Currently, it's the Packers that are barely breaking even or are losing money. But the scenario will shift, and it will be the farmers again who will be fighting to break even while the Packers make money. It would be nice if we all could make a living up and down the chain instead of, "I have to lose money for you to make money or vice versa!"

Given the volatility of our business, we hope the Convention will provide a much-needed break and some insight and inspiration to meet the challenges ahead. More information about our speakers and agenda is on the following

pages. Of note, our lineup includes Corbitt Wall of DV Auction Cattle Markets and Ontario grain market analyst Steve Kell. Dr. Ron Hanson, Prof. Emeritus, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, returns to the Convention. Dr. Hanson always gives our members some insight and guidance on the challenging aspects of farm succession planning. We're also pleased to welcome Olympian Jeremiah Brown. You will want to experience what promises to be an electrifying presentation on the keys to persevering through setbacks that will inspire us to push forward.

On a final note, we at the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association wish our Quality Assurance Manager, Brent Cavell, a speedy recovery from some recent health issues that sent him to the hospital for a few weeks. We're pleased to see that he is now recovering at home. Our thoughts are with Brent and his family, and we look forward to his return.

I wish you and your families all the best for a happy and safe holiday season and a healthy, prosperous 2025. See you at the Convention!

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OCFB Trade Missions Impress Visiting Delegations



Visitors from Sogho Mart and Prima Meat Packers in Japan get a first-hand look at an Ontario beef feedlot

The ability to have our partners experience Ontario Corn Fed Beef's unique on-farm production protocols is a key component to our brand's value in the markets. It has been a few years since we have been able to host our trade partners due to the pandemic and various labour disputes.

When the people who sell our product in markets at home and around the world can experience first-hand the level of detail that certified OCFB feedlot operators provide when handling and caring for animals, growing various corn and grain crops that provide nutritious feed to produce consistently great-tasting beef and the amazing facilities that house the animals, they are always impressed.

The insightful knowledge that they gain through experiencing the process enhances their confidence in the consistent quality of Ontario Corn Fed Beef and their ability to communicate that to their customers.

This summer and fall, we have had the opportunity to host four groups from Japan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to experience the production of Ontario Corn Fed Beef. The tours start with OCFB staff providing guests with an overview of the OCFB production protocols that ensure cattle are healthy, productive, and managed using low-stress handling practices. We provide insights into how Ontario feedlots produce much (or all) of the feed the cattle require right on the family farm. This is always a key insight as this process is unique to Ontario cattle production.

In September, we hosted a group for our long-time partners in Japan, Kinsho Stores and Prima Meat Packers. In 2025, we will celebrate our 10th anniversary with these committed brand partners.

As new people move into prominent roles in their organizations, ensuring they have the understanding and confidence in the OCFB brand story that has become so important to their corporate successes is critical.

Also, in September, we had an opportunity to host our brand distribution partner from the United Arab Emirates, Simply Gourmet, along with five influential chefs from across the UAE. Many of these chefs represent prominent restaurants, hotels, and even the Royal Palaces and are all experienced in high-quality beef from major producing nations. However, all have had a strong commitment to Ontario Corn Fed Beef and its consistently great taste.

Lone Star Texas Grill, which features Ontario Corn Fed Beef on the menu at 23 locations across Ontario, took the time to visit a feedlot and experience first-hand the care and precision that goes into producing the beef they sell. "Great visit, very informative. We loved how passionate and, more importantly, the pride the team showed in being an Ontario Beef producer and the care and respect for the animals. It makes us confident we made the right decision to partner with the OCFB team for Lone Star Texas Grill," said Lyndon O'Hearn, Director of Purchasing-Culinary & Beverage Development for Lone Star.

"I have been using Ontario Corn Fed Beef for over five years because of its consistent great taste," said one chef who oversees 14 restaurants across the UAE. "Now that I have experienced how the farmers raise their cattle and the high-quality feed ingredients they produce to feed the cattle, I have a better understanding and appreciation of how they are able to produce such great beef."

A new retail chain from Fukuoka, Japan, called Sogoh Mart, attended the October Trade Mission along with their regional sales rep from Prima Meat Packers.



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Mixers Are Our Specialty





A delegation from Kinsho Stores and Prima Meat Packers in Japan tours an Ontario feedlot and the Cargill Beef plant in Guelph.

Chief Meat Buyer Masaru Takai said, “I have sold imported beef for many years in Japan, but this is the best quality we have found.” Having the opportunity to experience how OCFB feedlots produce such high-quality beef has enhanced his confidence in the brand. “We are excited to tell the story of how Ontario Corn Fed Beef farmers raise their cattle and to promote the best beef from Canada in our stores.”

A special “Thank You” to all the OCFB feedlots who welcomed the various groups into their operations and shared their passion for these tours: Schaus Land & Cattle, Van Osch Farms, Lucan Feeders, Dibbhurst Farms, West Coast Cattle, and Thames Sales Yard.

Also, a big thank you goes to the Packers, who took the time to host our guests: Cargill, St. Helen’s Meat Packers, Southwest Meat Packers, Parkhill Meats, and Rowe Beef.



Ken Schaus (left) shows visitors from Lone Star Texas Grill a sample of high-quality feed during their visit to Schaus Land & Cattle.



OCFB hosted our brand distribution partner from the United Arab Emirates, Simply Gourmet, along with five influential chefs from across the UAE.

Thursday Keynotes: Corbitt Wall And Ron Hanson



Corbitt Wall

We are pleased to announce that Corbitt Wall of DV Auction Cattle Markets will be one of our speakers on Thursday, January 9. Wall is best known for his honest and insightful video market report Feeder Flash, which reports every Monday-Friday. In Canyon, Texas, Wall reports daily market information and shares commentary on the current livestock market environment. He collects data and information from the National Beef Wire, USDA's price reporting information, and acquaintances within the industry.

A native of eastern New Mexico and west Texas, he is a fourth-generation cattleman and has been a livestock auctioneer for 30 years. Corbitt grew up at his father's side, taking delivery of country cattle purchases off New Mexico ranches and wheat pastures. They were also some of the first to order stocker calves from the Southeast, partnering with shippers from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida.

Corbitt received a Bachelor's degree in Agbusiness and Economics and a Master's in Agriculture from West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. He started an 18-year career with the USDA's Ag Marketing Service upon graduation. He carved a niche in feeder cattle market reporting as the author of the weekly National Feeder & Stocker Cattle Summary.

In 2014, Mr. Wall accepted a position with DV Auction as their Commercial Cattle Manager and Livestock Market Analyst. He relocated back to the Texas Panhandle in 2017, after 16



Ron Hanson

years in northwest Missouri, where he operated a small stocker cattle operation with his three daughters.

A leading speaker on farm succession planning is returning to the Beef Industry Convention.

Dr. Ron Hanson, Prof. Emeritus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has counselled and worked with farm families for more than 40 years to help them resolve family conflicts more positively and to improve family relationships through better communication. He has informed and entertained our members with his honest and straightforward approach during his previous appearances. As our attendees learned, Ron's goal is to help people save their farms and their family relationships.

For the 2025 Convention, Ron will deliver his first presentation – "Avoiding the Mistakes of a Farm Family Succession Failure" – on Thursday. He notes that families are notorious for procrastinating and never implementing a business succession plan for their farming beef operation. Unfortunately, many families wait until a farming crisis or family emergency forces them to initiate planning efforts. But that is often a fatal management error. This session will examine the potential mistakes and pitfalls that cause succession failures. Insights to workable solutions will be shared to achieve a seamless ownership transition between generations.

The second presentation – "Empowering Beef Producers to Achieve Transition Planning Success" – is planned for Friday's session. Family

beef production operations need the certainty of a documented succession plan that provides their ag business with a directed pathway which empowers their success and prosperity for the future. Transition planning between generations can be an overwhelming journey with many challenges and difficult questions demanding needed answers. Failing to find these answers can easily prevent a successful ownership transfer between generations. This session will outline a step-by-step decision-making process along with concise management guidelines that empower the next generation's success when taking over a family beef operation. Beef producers must clearly communicate as well as convince other family members of the important and urgent priority of formulating/implementing a long-term planning vision that enables the success of their family beef business operation.

In addition to Ron Hanson and Corbitt Wall, our Thursday lineup also includes Craig McLaughlin, President of Beef Farmers of Ontario, who will kick off the evening with an update on the BFO's various activities and initiatives.

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2025



27th ANNUAL BEEF
INDUSTRY CONVENTION

January 09-11, 2025
London Ontario



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27th ANNUAL BEEF INDUSTRY CONVENTION

Schedule of Events

Thursday, January 9, 2025

- 4:00 • Exhibitors Hall opening
- 5:30 • Ontario Corn Fed Beef Welcome Reception/Supper
- 7:00 Evening Session Speakers
 - Craig McLaughlin President, Beef Farmers of Ontario
 - Dr. Ron Hanson Keynote Speaker, Prof. Emeritus, U.of Nebraska-Lincoln
 - Corbitt Wall Keynote Speaker, DV Auction Cattle Markets
 - Industry Sponsored Reception

Friday, January 10, 2025

- 8:00 • Registration, Coffee, Exhibitors Hall opening
- 9:30 Morning Session Speakers
 - Jim Clark Executive Director, OCFA & OCFB
 - John Baker Director of Brand Mgmt. & Business Devel., OCFA & OCFB
 - Steve Kell Market Analyst
 - Dennis Laycraft Executive VP, Canadian Cattle Association
- 12:00 • Lunch
- 1:00 Afternoon Session Speakers – re-convene
 - Al Noorloos President, OCFA & OCFB
 - Eric Bienvenue President, Canada Beef
 - Dr. Ron Hanson Keynote Speaker, Prof. Emeritus, U.of Nebraska-Lincoln
 - Jeremiah Brown Keynote Speaker, Olympian, Bestselling Author, Transformation Expert
- 4:00 • Trade Show
- 5:30 • Exhibitor Networking and Cocktails
- 6:00 • Banquet
- 8:00 • Live Auction
 - Industry Sponsored Reception

Saturday January 11, 2025

- 8:00 • Exhibitors Hall opening
- Sponsored Breakfast

Note: Times are approximate and subject to change



2025

27th ANNUAL BEEF INDUSTRY CONVENTION



27th ANNUAL BEEF
INDUSTRY CONVENTION

January 09-11, 2025
London Ontario



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

Thurs Jan. 09 _____ Exhibitors Hall Opening _____ Industry Speakers
_____ OCFB Welcome Reception/Supper _____ Industry Sponsored Reception

Fri. Jan 10 _____ Registration, coffee, trade show _____ Wrap up, Trade Show
_____ Morning session speakers _____ Exhibitors, Networking, Cocktails
_____ Lunch _____ Banquet, Live Auction, Reception
_____ Afternoon session speakers

Sat. Jan 11 _____ Sponsor Breakfast

Fee Structure	Complete Registration Package (includes all meals, breaks, sessions and handouts)	\$ 350.00 _____
	Thursday Supper	\$ 85.00 _____
	Friday sessions and lunch only	\$ 110.00 _____
	Friday banquet only	\$ 155.00 _____
	Saturday breakfast	\$ N/C _____
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Registration and payment deadline is December 31, 2024

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 London's Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre. Once again, the OCFA is thrilled to host the Convention at this beautiful and versatile venue.

The layout provides many opportunities for our Industry Partners and 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 meals his top priority. And best of all, he uses Ontario Corn-Fed Beef!

Prepare for an unforgettable experience filled with networking opportunities and captivating speaker presentations. The Trade Show kicks off at 4 p.m. on Thursday, January 9, followed by the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Reception at 5:30 p.m. The evening continues with a speakers' program at 7 p.m. and a sponsored reception. Friday promises a full day of engaging activities, including more speaker presentations and networking opportunities. The day will culminate in a spectacular banquet dinner featuring Ontario Corn Fed Beef, followed by an 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! Reservations are to be made on an individual, call-in basis directly to the Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre at (519) 681-7151, or to the toll-free number 1-888-232-6747. Callers must quote "Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association" to the Reservation Agent to receive the discounted rates. Alternatively, reservations can also be made online using the following link:

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.66016.html?groupId=A90CU0H2

Pricing for our event:

Thursday, January 9, 2025, > \$159 to \$199 plus applicable taxes.

Friday, January 10, 2025, > \$199 to \$239 plus applicable taxes.

A block of bedrooms has been set aside for this event. Room rates vary depending on location. Rooms not reserved prior to January 4, 2025, will be released and subject to availability.

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Phone: (519) 681-7151

For complete information contact:
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Fax: 519-686-6227
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Auction Items Needed

Just a reminder about our live auction during the annual Beef Industry Convention.

Our dedicated volunteer auctioneers will take the stage after the Ontario Corn Fed Beef banquet on Friday evening to lead the bidding.

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

Beyond providing entertainment, the auction serves a crucial purpose as our main fundraising initiative for the year and is vital to the success of our convention. We appreciate the support of our sponsors and exhibitors.

If you or your organization have something to donate, please contact Kate Baker at baker.kate55@gmail.com and cell 226-545-2300 or Wendy Clements at wendy@ontariocornfedbeef.com or the office at (519) 686-6226 with your auction donations. You may also contact one of our Board of Directors.

See you at the Convention!

Convention Keynote: Jeremiah Brown



We're excited to welcome Canadian Olympic athlete Jeremiah Brown as one of our keynote speakers at the 27th Annual Beef Industry Convention. Jeremiah is an inspirational and motivational speaker who guides people in developing resilience and determination to overcome challenges and embrace change.

Jeremiah won an Olympic silver medal as a member of the Canadian men's eight-rowing team at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Remarkably, he began learning to row only four years before achieving this distinction. As a young father with big dreams, he exemplifies perseverance and commitment.

After the 2012 Olympics, the Canadian Olympic Committee selected Jeremiah to lead the development and implementation of "Game Plan," a program designed to support the transition of over 3,000 elite athletes into their next life phase. He established partnerships with leading Canadian universities and top companies, securing over \$11 million in scholarships through the Smith School of Business at Queen's University.

Jeremiah started his career in business as a commercial banker with TD Bank, where he managed the lending risk for an \$80 million portfolio of loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on Vancouver Island.

Whether helping elite athletes reinvent themselves or assisting organizations in adapting to change, Jeremiah Brown offers profound insights into the psychology of high performance and human transformation from both individual and leadership perspectives. His memoir, "The 4-Year Olympian," spent five weeks as the #1 bestselling sports memoir in Canada and has been featured in prominent media outlets such as CBC, CTV, Rogers Sportsnet, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, and USA Today.

As a world-class motivational speaker, Jeremiah empowers people to cultivate resilience and determination in the face of challenges. He captivates audiences with strategies for goal resilience, transformation, and team success. His keynotes equip individuals with the grit, leadership mindset, and collective resolve necessary to overcome obstacles and achieve ambitious goals.

Highly sought after as a speaker, Jeremiah has delivered hundreds of keynotes for renowned organizations such as Spotify, TD Bank, Cisco, and the NHL's Calgary Flames. He is dedicated to helping individuals unlock their full potential, foster positive team cultures, and embrace the principles of servant leadership.

By redefining the power of enduring uncertainty and trusting others, Jeremiah Brown inspires audiences worldwide to rethink what is possible in just four years. Through each reinvention, he has learned that resilience is the foun-

dational skill that underpins all success, and he now passionately assists organizations and individuals in strengthening their resilience as they navigate change in their personal and professional lives.

Jeremiah will cap an impressive lineup of speakers on Friday, January 10.

We also look forward to presentations from grain market analyst Steve Kell, Canada Beef President Eric Bienvenue and Executive Vice President of the Canadian Cattle Association Dennis Laycraft.

Other speakers include Jim Clark, John Baker and Al Noorloos, who will provide updates on the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association and the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program.

As noted on page, 6, Dr. Ron Hanson will deliver his second presentation of the Convention on Friday afternoon.

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Trump Reaction Adds More Market Volatility

Just one day after former U.S. President Donald Trump won the Nov. 5 presidential election, markets showed signs of volatility. Stocks hit record highs on Wall Street, providing some strength to the livestock markets. Grain prices initially moved lower on concerns about the potential of increased tariffs and a looming trade war with China. During the campaign, Trump talked about imposing tariffs of 10 to 20 per cent on imports and levying a 60-per cent tariff on goods from China to pay for tax cuts. “Hopefully, that isn’t the case for Canada,” says Dallas Rodger, market analyst with Canfax, regarding the possibility of foreign tariffs. “It’s on the radar as a concern, but we have a pretty good trading relationship with the U.S.”

Another closely watched policy is Trump’s vow to re-open the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement. Also on the radar is the move by the Biden administration to tighten requirements around certain food products. The United States Department of Agriculture’s final “Product of USA” rule comes into effect on Jan. 1, 2026. It would restrict companies from adding a “Product of USA” or “Made in the USA” label to meat, poultry and egg products unless the animals they came from were born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the U.S. “That’s not positive news (but) a lot can still change from now until a year down the road,” says Rodger.

The Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) expressed disappointment when the details of the final rule were announced in March. The CCA noted that the integration of the North American live cattle and beef supply chain is unlike anywhere else in the world, contributing to both food security and local and regional food systems.

U.S. Heifer Retention Below Expectations

Beyond the results of the U.S. election, one of the more significant questions in the cattle markets remains the readiness of U.S. farmers and ranchers to rebuild the herd. Rodger notes that there had been optimism that producers would retain more heifers. But drought conditions intensified in the fall, causing more heifers to be

placed on feed than expected. The heifer inventory in the U.S. on Oct. 1 was close to 40 per cent of the feedlot inventories. “It sure doesn’t suggest that there’s a whole bunch of retention materializing here,” says Rodger. “These heifers going into the feedlot mix, and potentially going into the slaughter mix, has taken the shine off the futures market as of late.”

As for an outlook for fed cattle prices, Rodger points out that December can historically be a robust market. However, two different situations have emerged between Western and Eastern Canada. Slaughter volumes have been relatively light in the West. “It’s a concern going into the later stages of the year without seeing these bigger slaughter rates,” he says, noting that October saw the smallest fed slaughter in Western Canada since 2017. “It was interesting to see the opposite for Ontario, where volumes, I think, were just slightly above last year.”

Beef Demand Remains Strong

The strong demand for beef continues to be a bright spot for the industry as Canadian retail prices hover near record prices. “I’m not sure what the stat is in Canada, but in the U.S., they say about 50 per cent of the meat consumed is ground beef,” says Rodger. “And when you look at the Canadian ground beef price from a retail level, it’s record high, and it drives home that demand, even with higher prices, continues to be strong.”

In addition to the domestic market, there has been good export demand, particularly in Southeast Asia, where exports have been exceeding last year’s levels. Rodger adds that it has been interesting to see the activity increasing in countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia. “Not a huge market relative to the U.S., but picking up some of these smaller markets is critical for Canadian beef, too.”



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Early Corn Harvest Shows Big Yields, Stalk Integrity Concerns



Pictured: A corn field in Southwestern Ontario in mid-August

The Ontario corn crop was performing exceptionally well as the harvest was getting underway. Dale Cowan, Agronomy Strategy Manager and Senior Agronomist with the Agris Co-operative, says farmers have been reporting their personal best yields in quite some time. He was hearing about yields averaging in the range of 185 to 290 bushels per acre.

Tar Spot, a fungal disease in corn, has been a concern, particularly when it developed late, causing green leaf loss and affecting grain fill. Farmers have had the experience of managing Tar Spot in the past. Cowan notes that spraying a fungicide at the silking stage can result in yield responses of 40 to 80 bushels per acre. But Tar Spot kept developing, causing the crop to lose a lot of its green leaves during the grain fill period. "It means you're not making sugar to fill grain," says Cowan. "So, that resulted in the corn cob cannibalizing the stock for sugars to fill the grain."

While Tar Spot is not having a significant impact where it came in late, it has diminished the integrity of the stalk. Some of these affected fields are experiencing stalk breakage and lodging. "Between the dry weather and other stress, Tar Spot amplifies other stresses," notes Cowan.

"We have some fields that are much worse than others. If you had Northern Corn Leaf Blight along with Tar Spot, nitrogen deficiency and dry weather, you just had compounding stresses that have influenced the stalk quality and integrity."

The harvest pace was rapidly increasing in late October as the crop was drying down. Moisture levels were below 20 per cent in some fields, with some corn arriving at the elevator at 16 per cent. "We're saving tremendous amounts of money on drying, but the commercial elevators right now are just full, and we're starting to pile corn on the ground at some of our locations, just so the combines can keep going," says Cowan. "But the elevators are full of soybeans because of a big soybean crop and rapid harvest, and then not a lot of shipping opportunities have developed for soybeans."

Looking past harvest and to the winter meetings, Cowan expects more discussion on Tar Spot as the industry continues to gather more research. Key topics include hybrid tolerance, fungicide efficacy, and the effectiveness of a second application. "Was it economical? Did it produce enough yield and increase stalk integrity that made a difference at harvest? Those

are things we're curious about to see what the research is going to come up with," says Cowan.

The notion of spraying twice can pose additional problems, namely the capacity to complete it when weather or other work can even make spraying just once tricky. "There's lots of questions around that. Any research I've seen out of the Corn Belt in the U.S. (shows) that in one year you might get a 20 bushel per acre response and another year you might get no response to the second application."

Given that there isn't a guaranteed response with the second application, Cowan looks forward to seeing the criteria that would determine whether a second pass is warranted. "Is there something we've learned with this disease development, a hybrid interaction, or just the weather conditions? So, I think there's a big question mark around that."

Survey Shows Low DON Levels

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) field crop specialists, in collaboration with Grain Farmers of Ontario and members of the Ontario Agri-Business Association, have completed the 2024 annual Ontario corn ear mould and DON mycotoxin survey. Corn ear moulds such as *Gibberella* and their corresponding mycotoxins occur every year in Ontario. These mycotoxins, particularly deoxynivalenol (DON, also referred to as vomitoxin), are produced primarily by *Gibberella*/*Fusarium* ear moulds and can be disruptive when fed to livestock, especially hogs. The 2024 survey found 94% of samples tested low (below 2.00 parts per million (ppm)) for DON and is one of the lowest DON level years compared to the 10-year average (86% of samples below 2.00 ppm).

OMAFRA notes that this survey does not capture all regions of the province, and results can vary from field to field depending on local weather, hybrid, planting date, insect feeding, rotation, residue levels, fungicide practices and moisture. Results may not capture what is occurring in your field, therefore monitoring is always recommended.

Ontario Investing In Cutting Edge Research Projects To Strengthen Agri-Food Sector

The Ontario government is investing \$1.28 million in seven research projects to help farmers increase their long-term productivity and competitiveness. The funding through the Agricultural Research and Innovation Ontario's (ARIO) Innovative Breeding Research Program (IBRP) will help create new tailored plant varieties and livestock for the province's domestic food supply and export markets which will reinforce economic growth across Ontario's almost \$51 billion agri-food sector.

"Our government is proud to support world-class Ontario-led agri-food research that will equip our farmers and agribusinesses with the best tools to increase the efficiency and productivity of their operations," said Rob Flack, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. "Ontario agri-food assets like ARIO and the research it supports will ensure a competitive advantage for our farmers and agribusiness champions for years to come."

IBRP research creates enhanced plant varieties

and animal traits, promotes biodiversity and plant and animal health, and supports resilience to environmental challenges. Examples include determining if methane emissions can be reduced in beef cattle through improving feed and modifying gene characteristics. On the crop side, the research involves developing drought resistant, higher yield soybean varieties and better-quality crops for Ontario farmers to grow and for export and developing bean varieties that are disease resistant and environmentally resilient.

IBRP research delivers made-in-Ontario intellectual property that can strengthen economic growth and competitiveness, facilitate new exports, and generate reinvestment funds for ARIO to support new research.

"ARIO is proud to announce these successful projects funded by the new Innovative Breeding Research Program," said Lorne Hepworth, Chair of ARIO. "It is exciting to see researchers address emerging opportunities for Ontario's

farmers and agri-food sector – ones that will help foster economic development, domestic food production, and export opportunities for Ontario."

Research investments like these helps achieve the goals of the Grow Ontario Strategy, to create and adopt innovative technologies to enhance competitiveness, and grow exports.

The ARIO was created in 1962 as an agency of the province of Ontario, accountable to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. It operates 14 research stations across the province that provide agribusiness stakeholders with the latest in agricultural and food specific research.

Amendments made to the new Agricultural Research and Innovation Act were proclaimed on July 1, 2024, which also support the actions outlined in the Grow Ontario Strategy.



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