

The News Feed

An Ontario Cattle Feeders' Publication



Fall 2025 Edition



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CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF OCFB IN JAPAN!



This year marks the 10th anniversary of our export marketing initiatives in Japan for Ontario Corn Fed Beef. The celebration started with the leaders from Kinsho Stores of Osaka and Prima Meat Packers visiting Ontario to tour our feedlots. The festivities then shifted to Osaka, Japan, where the city is hosting the Osaka World Expo. Details inside.

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FROM THE DESK OF JIM CLARK



Jim Clark, Executive Director

Cattle markets have been quite the ride for our industry as a whole! Honestly, I don't think any of us has a clue, other than a day-to-day strategy. It's kind of like buckle up and wait. As we all know, our industry is heavily intertwined with the USA beef sector on numerous levels, not to mention the uncertainty of the markets and the unpredictability of the geo-political climate.

But what about the consumer? On the industry side, we deal with market fluctuations on a daily basis. The consumer, however, has no idea of the market makeup or what causes the price of beef to change. When they shop, there is a ride involved with pricing, too.

Every time I walk into a grocery store and go to the meat counter, I usually end up scratching my head! I know what cattle are worth, and I know that equates to the price of beef. I compare the prices of Canadian steaks with those of imported products, which are often half the price of ours at various times. I recognize that

we also import a lot of beef here in Eastern Canada. However, for the consumer who shops weekly for groceries for themselves or their family, they must scratch their heads when they see the variation in pricing.

We want consumers to buy the products we produce here in Canada. Still, when they compare Canadian-made products with imported ones, they may easily form the perception that we are trying to take advantage of them. Don't get me wrong; some consumers are die-hard supporters of Canadian and can afford to buy our beef every time they shop. Yet those on a budget with kids or limited resources may need to sacrifice some other purchase to support us and buy our beef. However, for those on a tight budget who enjoy eating beef, there is a true dilemma: "Buy local or buy imported," with the final decision often coming down to pricing. It's not that they don't like our beef; it's the fact that it's an expensive purchase overall.

It makes me think about the working class. I am fortunate to have a good-paying job and some change in the piggy bank. Yet, I often find myself watching the flyers for sales on Canadian and USA beef. It's the working class that loves the protein we produce, but it is often overlooked. This group typically consists of individuals who rely on wage or salary-based employment for income. They often perform manual labour, service jobs, or low-wage work, sometimes in blue-collar or white-collar occupations. This group can include individuals with less financial stability, limited job security, and fewer benefits compared to those in the middle or upper classes. They ultimately create the goods and provide the services that generate a society's wealth. They have nothing to sell but their labour power and skills. But many people in the working class live paycheck to paycheck and have little savings.

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There needs to be a greater push to ensure that some of the savings from imported beef and beef products are spread across the entire beef portfolio, helping to prevent our product from being priced out of the marketplace here at home. Several countries from which we import products do not permit our Canadian producers' products in their markets. Trade needs to be fair and two-sided.

Building Strong Connections

Working at a startup can feel like the Wild West, and honestly, that's how it should be in the early days. Things move quickly, decisions need to be made promptly, and excessive bureaucracy can hinder progress. However, there comes a point in a company's growth, whether due to increased headcount or maturity, where a structured approach becomes necessary. Employees start looking for consistency and transparency. I am at the stage where my job role has shifted from an everyday hands-on, active position ("in the trenches") to one that emphasizes listening and understanding ("a listening ear").

This change suggests a transition to a more supportive or advisory role, potentially involving mentoring, counselling, or even managing team morale.

I've been in that role for over 25 years, and it's a game-changer when you have a great team around you constantly doing the heavy lifting. Don't get me wrong, there are days when I need to be right in there lifting as well, or as our staff might think, "Now he is sticking his nose into it."

Yet, in the trenches with the team and the producers, you need to understand their goals, their metrics, their roadblocks, and how everything works across the organization. It creates a much deeper partnership on all the fronts; a strategic driver, not just a support function with a one-thousand-foot view. It's about building rapport and establishing a strong connection with individuals based on mutual trust and respect.

What I'm most optimistic about, which I'd argue is more of an evolution than a trend, is the branding work we've done over the years. The proud storyline that accompanies our

product, from the producers to the packers, to the retailers, and ultimately, the consumers. It is more than just selling a piece of beef. The branding story is perfectly illustrated by our cover story in this edition of The News Feed – celebrating 10 years of Ontario Corn Fed Beef in Japan!

In closing, I would like to address something that I feel is of major importance to everyone who reads this article: heart health. Honestly, in my 25 years, I have never seen the stress level as high as it is right now, and the question of debt-to-equity often dominates the conversation.

Sometimes stress can be useful. However, constant stress can negatively impact overall well-being and may even affect heart health. But long-term stress induced by work troubles, financial difficulties or family discord is a different story.

Stress, whether acute or chronic, can have a significant impact on heart health. Acute stress can temporarily increase heart rate and blood pressure, while chronic stress can contribute to long-term cardiovascular problems like coronary artery disease. Stress can also lead

to unhealthy lifestyle choices like overeating and reduced exercise, further increasing heart disease risk.

Your body's response to stress may include muscle aches, headaches, back strain, stomachaches, and other physical symptoms. Stress can also cause fatigue, disrupt normal sleep patterns, and leave you feeling irritable, forgetful, and out of control. When stress is constant, your body remains in high gear for days or weeks, which can lead to more significant health problems.

I know that I'm not really in a position to discuss anyone's health or fitness. However, please take care of yourself, and if you don't feel right, don't hesitate to reach out for help. As the old saying goes, "Feeding cattle isn't for the faint of heart!"

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10 YEARS OF ONTARIO CORN FED BEEF IN JAPAN



A delegation from Japan tours Eusi Farms as part of the ten-year celebration of Ontario Corn Fed Beef being offered in Kinsho Stores in Osaka, Japan. The celebrations then shifted to Japan and the Osaka World Expo. A reception marking the milestone was held at the Canada Pavilion.

2025 marks the 10th anniversary of our export marketing initiatives in Japan for Ontario Corn Fed Beef. Japan was identified as one of our priority export markets due to the market's need for imported beef and the consumer demand for high-quality grain-fed beef.

The anniversary was celebrated with activities held in Ontario and in Osaka, Japan, at the Osaka World Expo over two weeks in July. The celebration started with the Kinsho Stores and Prima Meat Packers leadership team's visit to Ontario to meet with the Ontario Corn Fed Beef team at the London office to discuss the success and challenges we have faced, while looking to the future and continued growth. The group made visits to four of the OCFB QA certified feedlots. A special thank you to Dibbhurst Farms, Eusi Farms, Al and Marlene Noorloos and Van Osch Farms for hosting the delegation, for opening their operations, sharing their family stories and celebrating the anniversary.

The Ontario visit ended with a reception at the Ministry of Agriculture in Guelph and a welcome video speech from the Honourable Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, as well as in-person greetings from Deputy Minister John Kelly, who spoke of the long-standing relationship with Japan and Ontario. The celebration then shifted to Osaka, Japan, where the city is hosting the Osaka World Expo. A reception was held in the Canada Pavilion at

the Expo with 80 guests attending from across the Japanese supply chain. The event included speeches from the Presidents of Kinsho, Prima and Cargill.

Partnership Beginning

It all began in the spring of 2015 when a 40-store retail chain based in Osaka was identified as a potential partner. They were seeking a unique brand of high-quality imported beef. "We were looking for a premium brand of high-quality beef, and we came across the Ontario Corn Fed Beef program," says Mr. Hiroshi Ueda, President of Kinsho Stores. "The consistent great taste backed up by the Quality Assurance program was the solution to the challenge. In the ten years since the launch of Ontario Corn Fed Beef in the Japan market, there have been many challenges. We worked together with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association, Cargill and Prima and worked through many challenges over the years."

Some of the challenges were beyond the control of the OCFA, including the pandemic, which was followed by the strike at the Port of Vancouver, and the strike at the Guelph Cargill plant. The Japanese economy was slow to recover following the pandemic, driving a historically low Japanese yen. Combined with high beef prices, these challenges were significant. The value of the relationships that were developed over the years played a role in Kinsho

staying committed to the brand. "Moving forward, we hope to expand sales, making this product an even stronger asset for our company, for the benefit of the cattle producers, and to meet the expectations of Cargill and Prima, taking this 10th anniversary as an opportunity," says Mr. Ueda.

The exposure the brand has received over the years has also helped to develop new retail partnerships throughout Japan. Currently, seven retail chains across the country are marketing the Ontario Corn Fed Beef brand across Japan. The brand would not have the reach in the market without the commitment of our supply chain partners. Prima Meat Packers is the primary importer and distributor that supplies all of our retail chain partners.

With distribution across the country, Prima Meat Packers is a key component of this partnership. They have made major commitments over the past ten years to ensure their sales reps are well versed on the unique production aspects of Ontario Corn Fed Beef and the Quality Assurance program. Over ten years, Prima has sent 12 of their sales reps to Ontario to experience our unique production system. As a company that sells and distributes imported beef from many countries, including the United States, Australia and New Zealand, it is imperative that their team has the insights to confidently sell Ontario Corn Fed Beef as a premium-priced product.

“Our company was exploring ways to expand our Canadian beef business and enhance its value. That’s when we came across Ontario Corn Fed Beef, which offered a clear brand concept and a consistent quality management system,” says Mr. Naoto Chiba, President and CEO of Prima Meat Packers, Ltd. “We became confident that this was a brand that could truly differentiate itself in the market.”

Another key member of the partnership is Cargill, through their Guelph facility and the Japan Sales Office in Tokyo. The Ontario Corn Fed Beef team in Japan works closely with the Japan Sales Office to develop a unique positioning for the brand and identify targeted partners across the country. “In 2005, we acquired the Guelph plant in Ontario and began supplying corn-fed beef that features a richer and deeper flavour, (and) better aligned with the preferences of Japanese customers and consumers,” said Mr. Tatsuo Ishii, President of Cargill Japan LLC.

While corn-fed beef is also common in the U.S., Mr. Ishii noted that Ontario’s climate and

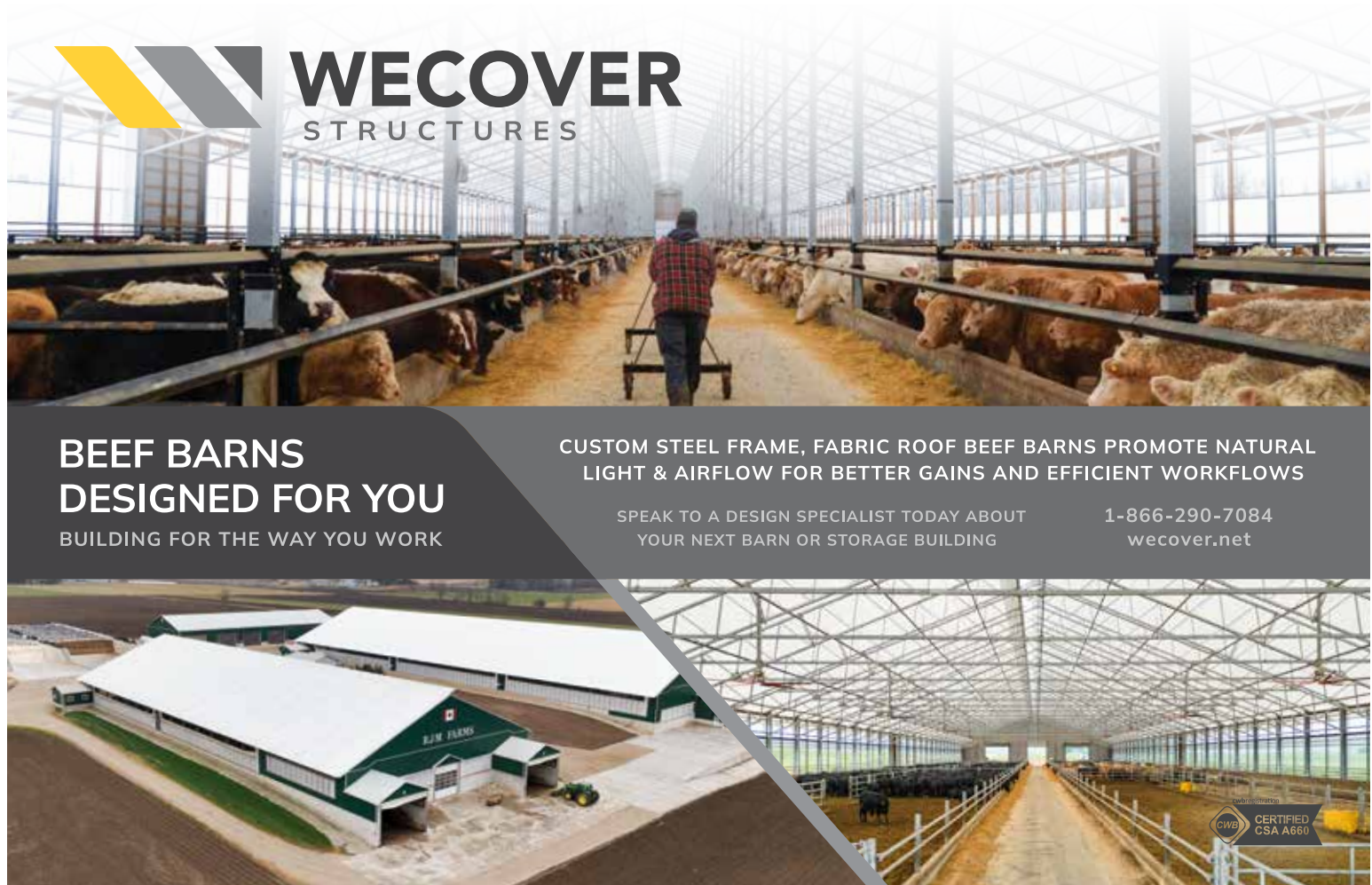
production environment differ significantly, which results in a distinctive flavour profile that has been well received in the Japanese market. “This shift had such a significant impact that it changed the way we positioned and distributed Canadian beef within our own company,” he added. “The Ontario Corn Fed Beef program was officially introduced to the Japanese market in 2015. Since then, it has been recognized as a true premium beef brand, steadily expanding its sales with the strong support of discerning customers, dedicated retailers, and appreciative consumers. As a result, the brand’s recognition has also grown remarkably.”

In offering his congratulations on the 10th anniversary of Ontario Corn Fed Beef’s export program to Japan, Mr. Ishii noted that the important milestone would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of those who passionately supported the sales and promotion of OCFB. “I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Ontario Cattle Feeders’ Association and the Japan office of Ontario Corn Fed Beef. And most importantly, to all the producers who work tirelessly on the

ground to raise high-quality cattle, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere congratulations and gratitude,” said Mr. Ishii.

With the commitment of the supply chain partners and producers, there is a tremendous opportunity for continued growth in Japan.

“The brand has gained a strong reputation in the market for its consistent high quality and great taste,” says John Baker, Director of Brand Management and Business Development for Ontario Corn Fed Beef. “We have enquiries from retail chains across the country who are interested in the unique attributes the Ontario Corn Fed Beef brand represents. Our Marketing Manager in Japan, Mr. Daisuke Shimojima, works very closely with Prima and Cargill to identify strategic partners that align with our strategy for growth.”



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2025 FEEDLOT SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS ATTENTION TO DETAIL



Participants in the Feedlot Management School received a closer look at Ellengowan Farms in Cargill, Ont. The farm of Jairus and Becky Maus was one of four stops on this year's tour.

Innovation and dedication to animal welfare emerged as key themes during the annual Feedlot Management School. Presented by the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association (OCFA) and Beef Farmers of Ontario, this year's event on June 18 and 19 featured a tour of progressive feedlot operations.

The attention to detail by the host producers stood out as a highlight of the two days. "Feedlot operators have control over their operations and can make management decisions based on maximizing those opportunities," says OCFA President Al Noorloos. "It's those little details that add up to improved efficiencies, creating better feeding margins overall."

In summarizing the tour, he noted that cattle comfort and ventilation was a consistent topic among the host farms as the operators spoke about how they incorporated air quality into their facilities.

The tour kicked off at Wm. Bennett and Sons Farms in Gorrie. The third-generation beef and swine operation has a capacity for 6,600

head of finishing beef cattle and 7,000 hogs. They farm on multiple locations with newly upgraded barn facilities, while cropping over 6,300 acres to support livestock feed. Ron and Bob Bennett discussed their new Britespan barn that replaced an older barn that was heavily damaged by snow load last winter. The new barn was built to enhance airflow and to cover the feed alley and a previous outside yard space. Animal comfort, ventilation and labour savings were top of mind.

Next on the tour was PKW Schaus Group at Walkerton. The Schaus Group is a leading cattle enterprise founded by Wally Schaus in 1971. Wally's son, Ken, has propelled the business forward with his passion for animal welfare, dedication to research and a generous commitment to the next generation of agriculture leaders.

Of note, a slatted floor barn that was built in the 1970s was retired and replaced with a modern bedded area pen design, including a centre feed alley. The new WeCover barn incorporates a robotic feed pusher for the

flat feed bunk, which encourages cattle to come to the bunk each time the 24-hour programmed robot passes. This action helps to increase dry matter intake and reduces labour costs. Ken explained their robust management goal as it relates to rations, gain and efficiencies, including receiving protocols and nutrition for incoming cattle. A StrongBo individual animal weighing system is used in pens to help track individual gains and prevent overweight carcass deductions.

Following the tour at Schaus Group, the attendees arrived at the Best Western in Walkerton for an Ontario Beef dinner. Guest speaker John Baker, Director of Brand Management and Business Development for Ontario Corn Fed Beef and Director of the Ontario Beef Market Development Program, was on hand to provide an update on the marketing of OCFB and the various export initiatives.

The second day of the tour took the group to Eby Farms in Kincardine. Stan and Steve Eby market 1,200 head per year through the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program. Cattle

bedding and comfort were discussed at every opportunity. They noted a structure to cover their bunk silo for cob meal, as they are in a region that typically receives a significant amount of snow. Other highlights included the benefits of using inoculants on feed and forage going into storage, as explained by Ashley Knapton of Leeder Agri Services. The group also heard from Tim Prior and Melissa Veldman of Brussels Agri Services on tag readers and traceability.

Ellengowan Farms in Cargill hosted the final stop of the tour. Becky and Jairus Maus operate a feedlot, cash crop and grain elevator business. They background and finish more than 3,000 head per year, farm 2,500 acres and operate a 300,000-bushel on-farm storage and elevator facility. Jairus explained the addition of a ceiling to the bottom of the wood trusses in a slatted-floor barn to enhance air flow and to protect the trusses from moisture and deterioration. They also added a structure to cover their high-moisture corn bunker to enhance storage and consistency of the feed to avoid storage losses. A new handling system, much of which they designed and built themselves, was incorporated. Details included bushing and grease points on many of the hinges aimed at noise reduction and ease of use. Jairus has also incorporated a three-way sort for cattle coming out of the squeeze chute.

A big thank you goes out to our enthusiastic host farms and all those who participated during the tour. Also, we greatly appreciate all of our many sponsors. Their generous support helps make events like the Feedlot Management School possible.

Beef Farmers Serve OCFB At Queen's Park Lobby Day



BFO Directors were joined by Premier Ford, Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness and MPP Bill Rosenberg and MPP Paul Vickers, Parliamentary Assistants to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness at the annual barbecue and lobby day in Toronto.

The Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) returned to Queen's Park in late May to host their highly anticipated annual barbecue and lobby day on the lawn of the Ontario Legislature, and just prior to Ontario's Local Food Week, which takes place the first week of June and celebrates the abundance of food grown by Ontario farmers. The BFO Board of Directors and staff proudly served over 500 attendees an all-Ontario meal featuring Ontario Corn Fed Beef and fresh salads curated with local ingredients.

Beyond hosting the barbecue, BFO Directors and staff personally met with numerous MPPs throughout the day to highlight key priorities of Ontario's beef sector. These discussions focused on how farmers and government leaders can work together to ensure the sector's sustainability through strategic investments and sound policies that safeguard farmers' financial health and create opportunities for agricultural growth.

"Ontario beef farmers are facing a lot of market uncertainty and trade volatility right now, which is being intensified by the increased costs of raising cattle and producing beef,"

says Craig McLaughlin, BFO President. "This economic climate is especially difficult for young and beginning farmers, who need access to affordable land and competitive financing to get started. That's why programs like Ontario's Risk Management Program (RMP), the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program, the Ontario Breeder Co-operative Program, and access to community pastures are so important to the long-term growth of Ontario's beef sector."

Throughout the day, directors and staff thanked all MPPs for their increased investment and commitment to RMP. They pitched the establishment of a government-backed Breeder Loan Guarantee Program, which would build on the 35-year success of the government-backed Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program. While not a direct financial ask for the province, a government-backed guarantee would result in competitive financing from lenders, help farmers purchase breeding cattle and support the expansion of Ontario's cow herd.



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Gerry Wideman of Triple G Livestock works the grill, preparing Ontario Corn Fed Beef striploins for the Ontario Central West Beef Tour on June 5.

The Ontario Central West Beef Tour 2025 (OCWBT), formerly known as the Waterloo-Wellington Beef Tour, held its annual summer classic on June 5 in the Linwood area. Visitors toured two producers' feedlot operations in the Linwood and St. Clements area, congregating at the Linwood Recreation Complex for the awesome steak supper and informative evening program.

Another large crowd of visitors toured the host producers' operations, resulting in lots of discussion with the tour hosts, including barn designs, handling facilities and management strategies they are implementing within their farms. Our hosts included Kenneth Brubacher in Linwood and Joel Martin in St. Clements. The OCWBT appreciates our host producers for their time and effort in preparing for a large group to visit and discuss their operations with the OCWBT group. Thank you to Ken and Joel. A very sincere thank you to our many sponsors who participate each year with their gracious support. The OCWBT committee appreciates the opportunity to provide a venue for the sponsors and producers to participate in the barn tours, network and engage in discussion opportunities to work together and bring management ideas back to their operations.

St. Helen's Meat Packers was the source of the Ontario Corn Fed Beef striploins for the evening. The Jones Feed Mill Beef Team once again attended, along with their BBQ, cooking the hot dogs and assisting in the searing of the steaks and relaying them to the food lines.

Gerry Wideman of Triple G Livestock provided the preparation and smoking of the striploins and searing of the steaks on a wood-fired, charcoal BBQ as well. The OCWBT organizing committee of Marvin and Alisha Weber, Elam and Fern Bauman, Glen and Carolyn Martin, including numerous helpers, are to be commended for preparing and serving an awesome meal, including the steaks, the meal sides and hot dogs for the children. Thank you to everyone involved for their great efforts!

Elam Bauman acted as emcee for the evening program. He commented on the large crowd of well over 400 in attendance and thanked everyone for attending. He recognized the sponsors and noted that the evening would not be possible without their generous contributions to the OCWBT activities of the day and evening (all sponsors were recognized for the attendees, including verbally, trade show opportunities, signage and video displays).

...continued on page 10

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Management Strategies for Livestock Producers Growing Ontario's Corn Crop

Ben Rosser, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness Corn Specialist, discussed strip tillage management and related corn trials in Ontario. The viability of strip tillage in conjunction with manure applications and residue challenges is real, and with proper management, it works very well.

Tar Spot is the next challenge that Ontario growers are facing. Ben showed maps of areas of Tar Spot findings and control measures that should be followed to reduce/prevent yield losses. Tar Spot needs to be on the management list for corn growers.

Corn Rootworm was another topic that was discussed in depth. Ben stressed full crop rotation as being the best method of control. However, with livestock-intensive feedlot operations, that's not always easy to manage when high-volume corn crops are needed to support the feeding enterprise. BT management and new insecticide technologies will help manage modified rotations of corn on corn.

Ben also discussed improving the nitrogen efficiency of liquid and solid manure and applying it to cover crops in seasonal applications. Spring applications of manure prior to seeding are beneficial for the nitrogen level gained, but only under ideal field conditions. Otherwise, compaction from heavy equipment will persist in yield losses. Side-dressing with liquid manure once the corn crop is established is becoming more popular, showing excellent results. Summer applications of solid cattle manure

are beneficial for nitrogen availability, similar to liquid hog manure applied in spring. Much of this extensive manure research was conducted by Christine Brown, Field Crop Sustainability Specialist with OMAFA.

Next on the agenda was Dr. Marty Metzger from Metzger Veterinary Services, filling in for Dr. Jaques Van Zyl who wasn't able to attend. Dr. Metzger discussed various overviews of health trends for placing cattle on feed and management of those new arrivals. The data trend continues to determine that December has the highest treatment rate, and the 14-to-21-day time frame post-arrival is the most critical time and has the highest morbidity rate. These stats point out the need for an introductory ration that meets the nutritional needs of the animal to prepare them for that critical time period!

A liver biopsy study was conducted, showing varying degrees of deficiencies in incoming calves. Western and Virginia cattle were deficient in Vitamins A and E, likely due to forage quality deteriorating throughout summer and fall. Local and particularly Western and Virginia calves were deficient in copper. Westerns seem to get worse as fall progresses. A lung sample study was conducted, with a culture study completed. No resistance was found in most of the commonly used antimicrobials.

Experior, a new B-Agonist/Antagonist product on the market, was discussed at length for its attributes being added to a finishing ration.

Our final speaker for the evening program was Stephen Duff, OMAFA Chief Economist. Steve touched on the many factors causing the current market conditions.

He had data to support a market update for cattle and grains, along with historical reviews and nearby projections.

Again, he stated the herd does not seem to be rebuilding and probably won't be with the demand for feeder cattle so high. Heifer placement into feedlots is at 38 per cent, signaling that feeder demand is continuing strong. Placements of feeders are down seven per cent, also indicating the empty pens and strong demand from the feedlot sector – a real seller's market!

It's always a pleasure to have Steve give his presentation to our crowd, as many are not privy to this amount of up-to-date market information on a regular basis. Steve also gave an update on the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Benchmarking Project, directed by a steering committee. The goal is to develop a standardized template for the feedlot sector using the popular dairy benchmarking template model as a guideline. There is currently a template being structured using data from the Risk Management Program as a guideline.

The Ontario Central West Beef Tour was a great success again this year, and we look forward to next year. The videos and drone footage of the farms are available online. Thanks to Jacob Mulligan for creating the drone footage of the farms. Thank you to Christoph Wand for setting up the audio and video equipment at the hall and organizing the drone footage.

The YouTube videos, including the complete sponsor lists, are available on our website at ontariocornfedbeef.com. Click on "Producer Resources" to find the link to the Ontario Central West Beef Tour 2025.

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