

The News Feed

An Ontario Cattle Feeders' Publication



Summer 2026 Edition



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Also in this issue: Building confidence with on-farm audits, bolstering the Ontario Beef Market Development Team, management strategies to reduce acidosis, cost of production in cattle feeding, and more.

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FROM THE DESK OF JIM CLARK



Jim Clark, Executive Director

You may be asking yourself why I'm not talking about the beef industry in my article this month. In all honesty, I have no clue where we are headed in these times of change and uncertainty. So, I will save that crystal-ball talk for the next edition or let those who truly are the experts explain the beef sector.

A moderator recently said something that caught me off guard. I was making a closing statement that I wanted to be heartfelt, to make those in the group think about or reflect on the meeting's purpose and what had been discussed. Here I am, all proud of my statement, and then the moderator says, "Tell me that wasn't ChatGPT that helped write that!"

I was a bit caught off guard, to be honest. Anyone who knows me knows that I spend a lot of time on my presentations and speeches. I do draw from many various aspects of information, including stuff I have read or stuff I have heard. I often keep it stored on my computer so that I can refer to it when I am trying to compose something. But to say that I used ChatGPT or Artificial Intelligence?

The next morning, I had to tell my assistant, Wendy, what had happened and how I felt. Let's face it, she is the one I ask to read over my stuff to see if it makes sense and covers the topic. She also adds punctuation! I am a grade 12 graduate, a jack-of-all-trades and master of

none, and never an English major, for sure! I have been fortunate to have my friend and colleague, Blair Andrews, who handles The News Feed articles and stories. Blair often interviews me for an article, and when I have something on paper, Blair takes what I have jumbled together and turns it into a readable story!

My mind goes a million miles per hour most days, and, like a squirrel, if there is something shiny over there, I drop what I am doing and take a look!

Why have I brought this up? It relates to the producers I work with; they are the true multitaskers. Every waking hour of the day, their minds are calculators, computers, encyclopedias, and the strongest form of intelligence I have ever seen, all in one place.

Prior to COVID, I had never been on a professional video call, no Facebook, no Instagram and no Twitter. It wasn't part of my day-to-day reality. Then COVID changed everything. Almost overnight, the expectation shifted. In-person face-to-face meetings were replaced with video calls. What once felt unfamiliar or unknown quickly changed and became routine. For sure, I was late to the party! My first Zoom meeting just felt awkward. It was weird seeing everyone's pictures on the screen and having a discussion with people across the country.

Today, it is hard for me to find a week without video conversations. What initially felt like a workaround has evolved into a permanent, highly efficient way to meet. New technology filled a gap created by COVID that stuck and fundamentally restructured how we communicate in our busy lives. What once required hours of travel or overnight stays can now be accomplished in minutes, or with a single click of the meeting button on your monitor.

This shift has been particularly impactful for many of us who historically have been very hands-on. Technology has stepped in as both an enabler and a necessity in this environment. While saying that, we have also lost some valuable ground: face-to-face meetings when you used to sit across the table from your staff or your customer. The one thing I find lacking is that



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STAFF:

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

OFFICE:

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

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

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

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people's body language always tells me more than the words coming out of their mouths. Don't get me wrong, efficiency plays a role in the evolution of our sector. All of us can point to tasks that once felt overwhelming when it came to sourcing information, whether market or related-sector information. Technology has helped to accelerate that process. Tools that streamline communication, reporting, and centralized information have allowed us to spend less time gathering information and have allowed for more time acting on the information we believe will help the business in the long run.

However, advancing communication technology and technology in general are not the cure for eliminating in-person discussions and meetings. If anything, it highlights why face-to-face remains so important. Operations and reputations are built on people, and the people in the trenches are doing the heavy lifting to benefit society. There is a level of engagement that only happens when you are physically present and in the moment. Whether it be at the feedlot, walking the alleys and observing the goings on under that roof. It's about observing

things that don't show up in a text or email, or just having one-on-one conversations with employees.

The most effective approach moving forward is not choosing between technology and physical presence but integrating the two. In-person interaction reinforces the culture, aligns with the operation, and maintains a strong connection to the people who make it run, and, most of all, to our families.

Trust me when I say that managing in a world of technology requires adaptability. It requires us to accept the new tools, yet we can't forget the most important part: staying grounded in the fundamentals of our operations. Finding the right balance between the two will assist in the direction of your business or job and help guide the next generation in your organization or business, not only today but well into the future.

We are all in this industry together, and we are truly only as strong as our weakest link. One of our strongest assets is the camaraderie and openness of the industry when we meet, talk on

the phone, or gather at various events. It is sad to say, but a sign of the times: as I get older, I often find myself meeting old friends and foes in the funeral home visitation line.

No matter how we communicate through the many forms of communication, take the time to reach out and have that visit with the people you care about, whether it is business-related or personal. Father time waits for no one!

Save The Date:

The 29th Annual Beef Industry Convention will be held Thursday, January 14 through Saturday, January 16, 2027.

Producers and industry partners are encouraged to mark their calendars. Watch for details in the Summer/Fall 2026.



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Just in time for peak grilling season, Uncle Jim's Homestyle Hot Dogs are available to more consumers across the province. With support from the Ontario Corn Fed Beef partnership with Loblaw Companies Limited, several banners now offer the premium hot dogs. These include Loblaws, the Real Canadian Superstore, Zehrs, Your Independent Grocer, and Valu-mart.

In addition to Loblaw's, the hot dogs are available at Van Osch Farms, with the Ailsa Craig on-farm store being the first to carry them.

The inspiration for the product came from the need to maximize carcass utilization and maintain brand identity. "We're producing all these cattle for the Ontario Corn Fed brand. From every carcass, there's roughly 400 pounds of trim," explains Jim Clark, Executive Director of the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association and OCFB. "When it goes to hamburger, it's hard to identify at the store level."

The opportunity was to develop a premium, all-beef hot dog. For Clark, it was also about creating a product that had been lost over time. "I wanted to develop a top-quality hot dog that I would have had when I was a kid," he says.

"With my dad and uncle as butchers... they had their own processing plant. If you're hungry, you would eat a wiener right out of the box."

As times changed, Clark found it difficult to find a product that matched that memory from his youth. Recapturing that standard became the focus during the product's development. "That was the emphasis: to build this hot dog to help utilize some trim and expand the brand," adds Clark. "We want to get the Ontario Corn Fed Beef product name out there and reflect on my history."

The result is a product that addresses supply-chain efficiency and taps into evolving consumer demand. Clark notes the importance of aligning with broader market trends. This includes the growing Halal segment.

As for the product's identity, it was only natural to adopt Clark's longstanding nickname. "Everybody calls me Uncle Jim," says Clark. "From family, employees and business associates, it's just always stuck. So, to take ownership of the hot dog, it's called Uncle Jim's."

So far, Clark is pleased with the early response and the finished product. "I can honestly say it's one of the very few hot dogs that I can relate back to my family tradition," says Clark, adding the benchmark was always front and centre to the development. "I wasn't going to put my name on something that wasn't up to our standards. I wanted it to be top shelf."

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ON-FARM AUDITS STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE IN OCFB



Hanneke Mills, Quality Assurance & Stakeholder Relations Manager

For Hanneke Mills, a career in livestock and agriculture has always been rooted in hands-on experience. Her connection to the industry began early and has since evolved into her role as Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance and Stakeholder Relations Manager.

“I grew up on a beef farm just outside of Glencoe, and then when I got married, we had beef cattle out by Brigden,” Mills said. “I worked in livestock before. I was a broker and exported pigs to the U.S.”

Today, Mills plays an active role in supporting the Ontario Corn Fed Beef program, focusing

on on-farm audits and international outreach. Her responsibilities involve technical verification as well as relationship building with producers and global visitors. “I do on farm audits for the Ontario Corn Fed Beef program, and I do events and meetings with international visitors,” she explained. “I help organize the farm tours and explain the program to those people that are here from overseas and then help with any events that we organize.”

International visitors are eager to understand how Ontario producers deliver on the promises associated with Ontario Corn Fed Beef. Mills said transparency and firsthand exposure are critical in building that trust. “International visitors really want assurance about what Ontario Corn Fed Beef stands for and the claims we make,” she said. “So, doing the feed samples and doing the actual on-farm audits to show how the program is implemented on the farm gives them that assurance and it gives them that personal experience with producers as well.”

Many visitors have limited exposure to livestock production, making farm tours an eye-opening experience. Mills noted that visitors appreciate seeing the complete production cycle. “Most of them have never really even been on a beef farm and definitely have never been on farms the way that we set them up here in Ontario,” she said. “And they really enjoy being able to see the feed ration from start to finish, how it’s grown in the field, processed and then fed to the cattle.”

Recent visits from international chefs showed the value of connecting farm practices to the final dish on their menus. “The last ones we had come from the Middle East and were mostly

chefs. For them, it was really interesting to see what goes into the cattle to then end up being the product that they’re serving to their customers,” she noted.

Beyond international engagement, Mills finds inspiration in working directly with producers and observing the diversity of operations across the province. “For me personally, I love the on-farm experience with different producers and seeing it from the brand-new barns to the modified barns, and how all the end product is the same, but how the producers implement technology and techniques in their own barns in so many different ways,” she said.

That diversity underscores the individuality of Ontario farms while reinforcing a shared commitment to quality. “I think every producer you go to, and everyone that you go and talk to, they’re all so interested in the program, and they’re actually proud to be a part of it,” Mills said.

She also emphasized that program requirements often integrate naturally into daily routines, improving efficiency rather than adding burden. “I think so many producers are doing the requirements because it’s just part of their routine, and once it becomes part of that everyday process, they realize it actually makes their lives easier,” she said. “Tracking this stuff saves money, saves time, and it saves the potential for mistakes to happen,” she said. For Mills, who joined the program in February of last year, the experience has strengthened her respect for the commitment of Ontario cattle feeders and highlighted the importance of accountability at every stage of the production chain.

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BOLSTERING THE ONTARIO BEEF MARKET DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Derek Boudreau, Marketing Manager,
Ontario Beef Market Development Program

A new addition to the Ontario Beef Market Development Program Team will expand the reach of the program and create broader awareness around Ontario Beef in the retail, foodservice and processing sectors.

After more than a decade of supporting Ontario's meat sector, Derek Boudreau is bringing his experience and industry relationships to his new role focused on strengthening the visibility and value of Ontario beef. Now serving as Marketing Manager for the Ontario Beef Market Development Program, Boudreau is drawing on years of collaboration across the province to help expand brand awareness both at home and abroad.

Boudreau spent 14 years working with Meat and Poultry Ontario, which offers regulatory support to freestanding meat plants and abattoirs across the province. "I was fortunate enough to have been in that role for a long time and was able to cultivate some pretty significant relationships with industry and further processors," said Boudreau, reflecting on his time with the non-profit organization.

Since stepping into the role with the Ontario Beef Market Development Program in July 2025, Boudreau has focused on expanding the reach of Ontario-branded beef and supporting

partnerships that showcase locally produced products. His priorities include working with processors to develop Ontario-specific offerings and strengthening brand visibility across the province. "We're looking to bolster Ontario branded beef across Ontario through the existing point-of-sale programs that we have available and cultivate relationships where we can have further processors create Ontario beef branded specific products," said Boudreau.

Trade shows and industry events are a major part of that strategy. Boudreau works to ensure the right partners are represented at key gatherings, where connections with retailers, processors, and restaurants can lead to new opportunities.

He believes consumer attitudes toward food sourcing have shifted significantly in recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. He sees a growing demand for transparency and connection between consumers and producers. "Everybody knows right now the beef is expensive, but one of the very few positive things that I hear was people really want to know where their meat is coming from and they want that relationship; they want that story," he added.

That emphasis on storytelling—connecting consumers to the families and farms behind the product—has become central to promoting Ontario beef. Boudreau notes that understanding the origin of food gives consumers greater confidence in their purchasing decisions.

While much of his work focuses on the Ontario market, Boudreau also sees growing enthusiasm from international buyers, particularly in regions such as Japan and the Middle East. Hosting visiting partners and introducing them to Ontario farms has been a highlight of his new role. "It's so incredible to see the enthusiasm for the foreign markets and how they embrace what is being done here," he said. "They're actually able to be in a situation where they're bolstering this in such an incredible way in Japan, and then them being able to take that story back and speak so passionately about it."

Even with language differences, Boudreau said visiting partners quickly connect with the values behind Ontario beef production. "It was incredible," he added. "And even with the language barrier, they

knew exactly what was going on, and they knew exactly why they were here, and they embraced it wholeheartedly."

As he continues settling into his role, Boudreau remains focused on learning from industry veterans and supporting the farmers and processors who form the backbone of the sector. He sees his work as part of a larger effort to celebrate local agriculture and ensure investments are directed where they can have the greatest impact. "I'm looking forward to continuing to get to know everyone and continuing to work and support as best I can to make sure that this is exactly where the dollars are being allocated and celebrating the wonderful things that are happening in Ontario."

U.S. Cattle on Feed Down One Per Cent

Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.6 million head on April 1, 2026. The inventory was 1 per cent below April 1, 2025. The inventory included 7.26 million steers and steer calves, down slightly from the previous year. This group accounted for 63 per cent of the total inventory.

Heifers and heifer calves accounted for 4.32 million head, down 1 per cent from 2025.

Placements in feedlots during March totaled 1.71 million head, 7 per cent below 2025. Net placements were 1.66 million head. Placements were the second lowest for March since the series began in 1996. During March, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 320,000 head, 600-699 pounds were 250,000 head, 700-799 pounds were 435,000 head, 800-899 pounds were 474,000 head, 900-999 pounds were 170,000 head, and 1,000 pounds and greater were 60,000 head.

Marketings of fed cattle during March totaled 1.63 million head, 6 per cent below 2025. Marketings were the second lowest for March since the series began in 1996.

Other disappearance totaled 50,000 head during March, 9 per cent below 2025.

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RUMINAL ACIDOSIS IN FINISHING FEEDLOT CATTLE



Finishing feedlot diets are built to maximize energy intake, drive rapid weight gain, and improve feed efficiency. Yet the same high-grain, high-energy rations that support performance also elevate the risk of ruminal acidosis—one of the most costly and persistent health challenges in feedlot production. Dr. Gabriel Ribeiro, Associate Professor & Saskatchewan Beef Industry Chair, Dept. of Animal and Poultry Science, University of Saskatchewan, provided insight on the topic during the 2026 Virtual Beef Symposium on February 5.

As Ribeiro explained, finishing diets typically contain high grain, high energy diets, between on average, six to 12% forage or roughage on a dry matter basis. While this strategy promotes growth, it demands careful balance. “At the same time, we want to make sure that we also minimize digestive disorders and liver abscess and other issues associated like laminitis and so on,” he noted.

Ruminal acidosis disrupts intake patterns, impairs short-chain fatty acid absorption, and triggers inflammatory responses that compromise growth and carcass consistency. According to Ribeiro, acidosis leads to decreased growth performance, decreased carcass weight and increased overall carcass quality variability at slaughter, which reduces profitability. “It’s also an animal welfare concern; it doesn’t look really good if we don’t care about it, and we don’t do anything when you think about consumer perception,” Ribeiro said.

Defining acidosis remains complex. Subacute ruminal acidosis (SARA) is often described as ruminal pH between 5.2 and 5.6, but Ribeiro stresses that duration is critical. “Just going down for an hour or so or for a few minutes, there is not

really a big problem,” he explained. “The problem is when it goes down between that range and stays for a longer period of time, so usually over three hours, we start to worry more.”

Research increasingly shows that acidosis is not limited to the rumen. Ribeiro points out that cattle with ruminal acidosis frequently experience hindgut acidosis as well. The intestinal lining is particularly vulnerable. “When we look at the intestinal epithelium, it’s just one layer of cells, and it’s more sensitive to lower pH,” he said. “If you cause damage here, you’re probably more likely to get pathogens being able to reach the circulatory system (i.e. blood) of cattle, leading to inflammation and secondary diseases.”

While high grain inclusion often draws blame, Ribeiro emphasizes that acidosis risk stems from multiple interacting factors. Rapid dietary transitions, inadequate physically effective fibre, feed sorting, and inconsistent feed delivery all contribute. Feed restriction followed by refeeding is especially problematic. When feed returns, cattle overconsume. “They get in this cycle, and this process repeats over time, and then you can have a situation what we usually call chronic acidosis.”

Grain type and processing further influence risk. Wheat presents particular challenges. “Wheat has a starch that’s very easily fermented when that kernel is broken,” Ribeiro said, noting that dry-rolled wheat can produce excessive fines that accelerate fermentation and acid production. Harder, high-protein wheat tends to shatter more during dry rolling, increasing fines and lowering ruminal pH.

Research evaluating wheat type and processing

found that temper rolling—adding moisture before rolling—significantly reduced fines. Looking at the step-up phase, temper-rolled wheat reduced the time ruminal pH remained below critical thresholds. “We saw a strong reduction in that just by tempering and reducing that amount of fines in the rumen,” he said.

Forage inclusion remains one of the most effective tools for managing acidosis, though it comes with trade-offs. “We know roughage is important but if we increase diet energy density, we can increase average daily gain, gain to feed and reduce cost of gain,” Ribeiro explained.

Research suggests an optimal finishing range near 5–6% forage NDF (neutral detergent fibre), with careful attention to fibre type. Physically effective NDF promotes chewing and rumen motility, while excessive undigestible NDF (uNDF) reduces growth performance. “We don’t want to feed over 7% of uNDF in that diet, because that can cause a large impact on carcass weights and performance,” he cautions.

He highlighted another study on forage inclusion and managing acidosis and liver abscess. “We started with more forage and then slowly reducing, just giving more time for cattle to adapt to a higher level of grain in the diet,” Ribeiro explains. Growth performance matched a tylosin-supplemented control, while minor liver abscess incidence declined. It is important to note that the treatment diet used the same amount of forage than the control diet over the full feeding period, but more was fed early and less was fed in the end of the finishing phase.

Although buffers and additives are often discussed, Ribeiro underscores that fundamentals matter most. Consistent feeding practices and disciplined bunk management remain essential. Ultimately, reducing ruminal acidosis requires fine-tuning fermentability, managing grain processing and fibre inclusion, and preventing intake disruptions. “We really need to get that diet adaptation done properly and adequate grain processing to really minimize fines, ensure we have enough fibre or NDF from forage in that diet,” he concluded. “The quality of that roughage is important too. But we really need to make sure we don’t let cattle get hungry and we don’t restrict cattle feed.”

COST OF PRODUCTION IN CATTLE FEEDING



With cattle margins falling from their highs in 2024 and early 2025, the beef sector is sharpening its focus on the cost of production. John Molenhuis, Business Analysis and Cost of Production Specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, covered the topic during the 2026 Virtual Beef Symposium on February 5.

While fed steer margins were strong through much of 2024 and exceptional during parts of 2025, Molenhuis pointed out that conditions have changed. “Going forward from September, we’re starting to see some declining margins, and we’re now seeing it getting close to those five- and 10-year averages,” he said.

The fed steer margin Molenhuis referenced represents what remains after livestock purchases and feed costs are deducted. “So, it is the money that’s left over to pay for yardage costs, all the other costs and a return to management,” he explained. While important, the margin does not reflect total cost of production.

Livestock purchases and feed dominate feeding economics. “In general, if you know what your livestock purchase price is and what your feed costs are, you’re 85 to 90% of the way to knowing what your cost of production is,” Molenhuis said.

In cattle feeding, cost of production is often evaluated through the lens of value of gain and cost of gain. Value of gain captures the increase in animal value during the feeding period, while cost of gain reflects the expenses required to achieve that weight gain.

Molenhuis noted that purchase value is accounted for in value of gain, not cost of gain. “So, you’re just looking at after you bought it, what’s the value you’ve gained over time on it during that feeding period,” he said.

Accounting properly for death loss is also necessary. “Not all cattle bought are going to be marketed, so you need to be accounting for that,” he noted, explaining how average animal value and death loss percentages factor into value of gain calculations.

Ultimately, profitability depends on the relationship between the two measures. “Of course, you want your cost of gain to be less than this value of gain,” Molenhuis said.

Feed remains the single largest component of cost of gain. “Typically, sort of in that 60 to 70% of the cost of gain is the feed costs,” Molenhuis said. Adding that feed cost is influenced by both feed prices and by animal performance factors such as average daily gain, intake, and feed conversion. “Knowing these numbers, these production numbers, are key,” he said, because faster, more efficient gains reduce days on feed and total feed consumed.

Feed composition also matters. “Corn price is obviously going to be a big factor in your feed cost,” Molenhuis noted, pointing out that corn influences not only grain rations but also silage and byproducts like DDGs.

For operations using homegrown feed, valuation becomes a key decision. Producers can use a cost-to-produce approach or market value. “It gives you that sort of the economic perspective of your feed,” Molenhuis said of the market value method. “It’s useful to know both of these numbers.”

Beyond feed and livestock purchases, producers must account for health, marketing, transportation, interest on cattle investment, and yardage. While all these costs can be included in yardage, Molenhuis suggested that it is useful to separate out health, marketing, trucking and interest on cattle investment. These costs can be directly tied to livestock production. Yardage, by contrast, includes broader overhead costs that exist without cattle. “If you decided to buy no cattle and not fill the feedlot, you would still have some yardage costs,” he said. These costs are commonly expressed on a dollars-per-head-per-day basis and applied according to days on feed.

Molenhuis cautioned producers against searching for a universal benchmark. “There isn’t a cost of production number,” he said. Instead, cost of production must be built using operation-specific assumptions and updated regularly as markets change.

He pointed to a suite of online cattle feeding budgeting tools to help producers. At the ontario.ca website, the livestock and poultry statistics page includes data for Ontario large and medium frame feeder and fed cattle prices, market prices, feed costs and feeder steer margins. At Ontario.ca/agbusiness, producers can also find several factsheets, including a guide to cost of production budgeting, field crop budgets, budgeting farm machinery costs and custom farmwork rates.

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NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY: BUILDING TEAMS THAT THRIVE IN THE FUTURE OF WORK



Eric Termuende

For years, business leaders have been focused on the question: What does the future of work look like? In his keynote speech at the Grain Farmers of Ontario March Classic, workplace strategist Eric Termuende, said that question is no longer helpful.

“For the better part of the last decade, I’ve been trying to answer this question: What does the future look like,” Termuende told the attendees in Niagara Falls. “And my confession is—I’m actually really bad at predicting it. I think we all are.”

In a world shaped by rapid technological advancement, geopolitical instability, and shifting workforce dynamics, uncertainty has become the only constant. Rather than attempting to predict what’s next, Termuende suggests that organizations and businesses should focus on building teams capable of navigating whatever comes. “The better question,” he explained, “is how do we build a team that’s so good it doesn’t matter what the future looks like?”

Drawing on the concept of the knowledge doubling curve, Termuende highlighted how dramatically the pace of information growth has accelerated. Before 1900, he noted that knowledge doubled every 100 years. By the mid-20th century, it was every 50 years—and now, with AI we’re seeing knowledge double in a matter of hours. “Perhaps this is why the uncertainty index is higher than it’s ever been before,” he added.

This acceleration is what makes traditional forecasting increasingly unreliable. By the time organizations adapt to one change, the landscape has already shifted again.

Two Pillars of Future-Ready Teams

Through his research with thousands of leaders and organizations, Termuende has identified two critical factors that separate teams that thrive from those that struggle: Trust and Friction Reduction, emphasizing that they must occur in order. “We need to deepen trust first—then we can isolate and remove friction.”

While often dismissed as a “soft” concept, trust is, in Termuende’s view, the foundation of high performance. This trust enables what he calls intellectual conflict—the productive exchange of ideas that fuels innovation. Without it, teams default to silence, avoiding risk and sticking to outdated practices. “If our team doesn’t feel safe enough, they don’t feel trusted enough to be able to share an idea that might sound something like, ‘Hey, we should try something new,’” he explained. “Only if we have a foundation of trust can these ideas ever be brought up in the first place.”

Building trust doesn’t require grand gestures. Instead, it comes from consistent, meaningful interactions. “We need to shift from checking on people to checking in with them,” Termuende said. “I check on my pizza in the oven—I check in with the people I care about.”

He points out that across industries and geographies, one insight remains remarkably consistent: when employees are asked what they love about their work, the answer is almost always the same: It’s the people.

Once trust is established, organizations can begin addressing friction—the inefficiencies and obstacles that slow teams down. But rather than pursuing large-scale transformations, Termuende pushes for incremental change. “I call it a one-degree shift,” he explains. “It’s the smallest viable change. It gets us a little bit further from where we’ve been and a little bit closer to where we want to go.”

These small adjustments—whether improving communication, refining a process, or testing a new idea—may seem insignificant in isolation. But over time, they compound into meaningful progress. This approach also reduces resistance. Large changes can feel overwhelming, while small shifts are easier to adopt and sustain.

Termuende believes that organizations overestimate the importance of strategy and underestimate the power of relationships. “We like to think that we need more investment and huge swings when it comes to innovation,” he said. “I just think we need to have better conversations.”

Strong relationships increase resilience, improve collaboration, and enable teams to adapt quickly to change. In uncertain environments, that adaptability becomes a critical competitive advantage.

“The way you navigate uncertainty is not to predict the future,” Termuende concludes. “It’s to deepen the quality of the relationships. I think if we can do that, the future, as uncertain as it might be, is something we can all navigate just fine.”

Interest-Free Limit Under The Advance Payments Program Set At \$250,000

The federal government has set the interest-free limit of the Advance Payments Program at \$250,000 for the 2026 program year, for all non-canola advances. This is the portion of advances on which the Government of Canada pays the interest on behalf of producers.

The Advance Payments Program gives producers easy access to low-cost cash advances of up to \$1 million, based on the expected value of their agricultural products. Under the program, producers typically receive the first \$100,000 interest-free. The higher limit announced in April will result in interest savings for producers, reducing the cost of the program and increasing access to cash flow to help cover their costs until they sell their products.

“As Canadian producers get ready for the growing season, our government is making sure they have the support and tools they need,” said Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. “By increasing the interest-free portion of the Advance Payments Program, we’re helping farmers manage costs, while giving them more flexibility to market their products on their terms.”

With this support at the beginning of the production cycle, farmers will be able to use their advances to purchase essential inputs and cover their costs to support production this growing season. More importantly, the program offers marketing flexibility, enabling producers to sell their agricultural products when it is most advantageous, rather than being forced to sell for immediate cash needs, which is especially crucial in times of uncertainty.

Under the Advance Payments Program, cash advances are calculated based on up to 50% of the anticipated market value of eligible agricultural products that will be produced or are in storage.

Advances are available on over 500 crop and livestock products, as well as honey, maple syrup and other commodities.

DON Screening Trials And Tar Spot Research To Strengthen Risk Management For Growers

Ontario corn growers will soon have better tools and data to help them manage two of the crop’s most significant risks, DON mycotoxin contamination and tar spot.

A new, five-year project will allow the continuation of annual assessments of DON across corn hybrids through the Ontario Corn Committee (OCC). It will also fund University of Guelph DON and Tar Spot research to improve disease modeling accuracy and hybrid resistance screening tools.

By developing and refining these disease prediction tools and hybrid screening resources, growers will have improved knowledge to select the best corn hybrids for their specific needs and better manage the two diseases, ultimately improving crop yields and profitability.

“Our government is proud to support the Grain Farmers of Ontario as they develop innovative tools that will help protect corn crop production and help farmers across the province be more profitable,” said Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.

Led through a partnership with OCC and Professors Dr. Dave Hooker and Dr. Gursahib Singh at the Ridgetown Campus of the University of Guelph, the project is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) with additional funding for the OCC DON trials coming from the Ontario Agri-Business Association, Greenfield Ethanol, Ingredion, Ontario Pork, Suncor, Alco Energy Canada and participating seed companies. It will involve field trials at the University of Guelph’s Ridgetown Campus and the Huron Research Centre in Exeter.

“This initiative is an important investment in the future of Ontario’s corn production,” said Dr. Josh Cowan, director, research, Grain Farmers of Ontario. “By leveraging cutting-edge research and data, we’re empowering Ontario’s farmers to make more informed decisions, reduce risks, and ultimately increase the sustainability and profitability of their operations.”

The GFO gratefully acknowledges the Government of Ontario, Alco Energy Canada, Greenfield Ethanol, Ontario Pork, Suncor, Ingredion, participating seed corn companies, the Ontario Agribusiness Association (OABA), and Agricultural Research and Innovation Ontario (ARIO) for their financial support.

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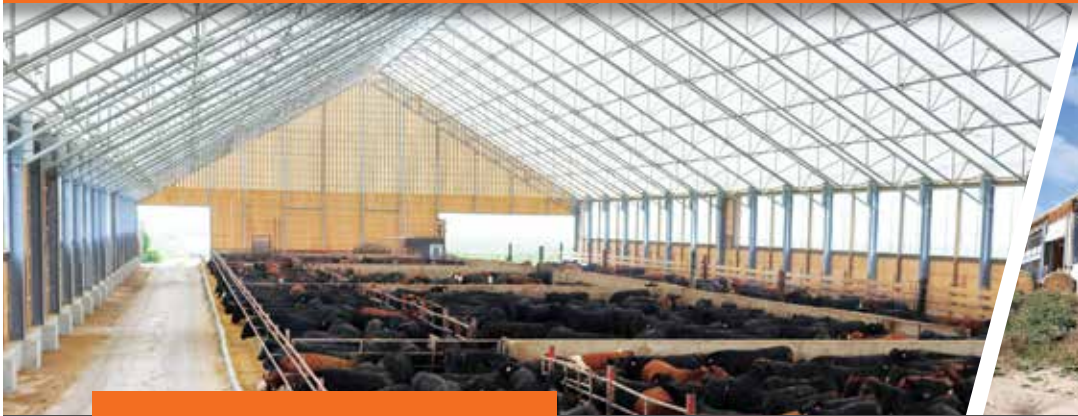
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