

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS
MINUTES FOR THE CATTLE FEEDER COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY AUGUST 20, 2015, 8:30 A.M.
AT THE ABERTA AGRICULTURE BUILDING, LACOMBE, ALBERTA

Present: Howard Bekkering - *Chair*
Jimmy Nelson - *Zone 2*
Craig Ference - *Zone 4*
Charlie Christie - *Zone 5*
Garth Porteous - *Zone 1 at large*
Tim Sekura - *BOD Rep*

Staff: Rich Smith - *Executive Director*

Absent: Bryan Thiessen - *Zone 3*
Cecil Anderson - *Zone 6*
Ken Stanley - *Zone 7*
Phil Amyotte - *Zone 8*
John MacArthur - *Zone 9*

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

(a) Adoption of Agenda:

Motion by Christie/Porteous:

“That the agenda be approved as presented.”

Carried

2. Approval of Minutes

(a) Minutes of the January 16, 2015 meeting:

Motion by Sekura/Nelson:

**“That the minutes of the June 10, 2015 meeting
be approved as presented.”**

Carried

3. Financial Statement

(a) Financial Statements ending May 31, 2014:

The council reviewed the financial statement for the period ending July 31, 2015 and found no unusual or noteworthy items. The two significant expenses to date in this fiscal year are the ABP contribution to the Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) administration and the ABP contribution to the Phosphorus Management Tools project.

Motion by Porteous/Nelson:

**“That the financial statement be accepted for
information purposes only.”**

Carried

As a matter arising from the financial statements, the council members discussed the progress ABP had made in

discussions with the ACFA about industry funding and the proposed increase in the National Check-off (NCO). The council members continue to be concerned about the negative impacts of service charge refunds on industry funding.

4. Decision Items:

(a) Drought Impacts:

The council members discussed the dry conditions that had occurred across the province in the spring, but noted that there had been significant changes in rainfall levels since the beginning of July in many areas. With the changes in moisture, pasture, forage and crop conditions, the council thought it was appropriate for the government to wait until after the harvest before making a decision on disaster recovery funding. The council was interested in the AFSC summer meetings on forage insurance and ABP is continuing to press for improvements in forage and pasture insurance programs.

(b) Farm and ranch safety policy discussion:

The council heard a report on the meeting between a large group of agricultural commodity organizations and the Ministers of Jobs, Skill, Training & Labour (JSTL) and Agriculture & Forestry (AF) that occurred on June 29, 2015. Rich Smith, Roland Cailliau, and Charlie Christie attended the meeting on behalf of ABP. The agriculture organizations generally supported legislative changes that would allow for investigations of fatalities and serious incidents on farms. This would involve a repeal of the farm and ranch exemption from the OH&S Act, but agriculture would be exempt from OH&S code requirements until the industry is able to work with the government on the development of reasonably practical technical rules. The industry also generally supports a requirement for employers to provide baseline insurance coverage for employees, but does not support mandatory WCB coverage for farm and ranch workers.

During the meeting, the council members were able to join Smith on a conference call with other commodity organizations and representatives from JSTL and AF to discuss next steps in the labour legislation process. The government representatives stated that they were still supporting the recommendations from the June 29th meeting, but could not say what direction any legislative changes might take. They also noted that Employment Standards and Labour Relations are two other pillars of labour legislation that the government is considering, although there has been no consultation with the agriculture industry on these two areas.

The council again discussed concerns about the high potential for unfair and inconsistent enforcement of labour regulations and heard examples of changes in compliance and enforcement activities at one operation.

(c) Manure spreading on frozen or snow-covered ground:

Smith reported on two meetings with AF and NRCB representatives addressing the issue of manure spreading on frozen or snow-covered ground. The purpose of these meetings has been to consider refinements to NRCB policy regarding this practice and develop an approach that would allow feedlots to spread manure during the winter as a sound management practice. There will be further work on policy and evaluation of environmental impacts, but AF also will be developing a pilot project to look at winter pen management on a number of feedlots across Alberta. The purpose of the pilot project will be to identify current practices and gain the understanding needed to justify winter spreading as a beneficial management practice.

(d) Labour force issues:

The council again discussed the challenge of finding enough workers for primary and secondary agricultural operations. The changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and other changes in foreign labour employment processes have created high levels of uncertainty and inefficiency for employers. The Agriculture Industry Labour Council – Alberta (AILCA), of which ABP is a member, is presenting its second Labour Summit in October and ABP has been asked to join other members in providing sponsorship for the summit.

Motion by Christie/Sekura:

“That ABP provide sponsorship in the amount of \$1,000 for the Agriculture Industry Labour Council-Alberta Labour Summit on October 20, 2016.”

Carried

Smith will circulate information on the summit to the CFC members.

(e) Taxation of intensive agricultural operations:

Ron Axelson of the Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) is part of the Intensive Agriculture Operations Working Group (IAOWG) that is considering options for assessment and taxation of intensive agriculture operations and approaches for dealing with municipal infrastructure deficits. Stuart Thiessen is also part of the working group. After considering a number of options, the only one that the municipalities appear ready to support is an infrastructure levy assessed against intensive livestock operations (CFOs). This option will be reviewed by the ILWG at a meeting in September, but it does not seem to a fair approach that would be supported by the CFO sector.

(f) Feedlot Animal Care Assessment/VBP+:

The council discussed the McDonald’s Sustainability Indicators and the development of the VBP+ modules. When the McDonald’s pilot project ends in the spring of 2016, the sustainability assessment and verification process will be handed over to the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB). It will be important to have the VBP+ modules ready for implementation at that time.

(g) Federal Election issues:

The council discussed the CCA Federal Election Information for Candidates document and the questionnaire that the CCA will be sending to all federal candidates. The CCA election information included points on the importance of the beef cattle sector, export market access, mCOOL repeal, competitiveness, research, and labour force issues.

5. In Camera

6. Discussion Items:

(a) CCA Report:

The council members heard a report from Bekkering about the recent CCA Semi-AGM in Winnipeg. He discussed the committee and board meetings that had occurred in Winnipeg. There was discussion about the CFIA consultation on traceability and the upcoming CCIA AGM in September. There are concerns about the status of our BSE surveillance and the participation of A&W and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) on the National Farmed Animal Care Council (NFACC). He noted the progress being dealing with the diseased bison in Riding Mountain National Park and our hope that the same approach could be brought to the Wood Buffalo herd in Alberta. Mark Klassen, of CCA, has developed a cooking protocol for mechanically tenderized beef that involves lower meat temperature and more turning.

(b) Phosphorus Management Project:

The council has supported the Sub Basin Phosphorus Pilot Project that is a long-term research initiative between AF and the ILWG to develop and test an approach to mitigate phosphorus losses from agricultural watersheds. The project is set in two watersheds, Acme Creek near Acme and Tindastoll Creek near Penhold. The project workers have developed a risk assessment tool and are now looking at beneficial management practices to mitigate risks. Getting the participation of producers in the project has been a challenge and they are seeking the help of the local municipalities in engaging producers.

(c) Harmony Beef:

Harmony Beef is getting closer to acquiring a development permit for the water recycling building it wants to erect beside the processing plant. There as been some vocal opposition to the reopening of the plant from businesses and politicians in Calgary, but the opening date is still set for early in 2016.

(d) Lacombe Field Crops Centre Tour:

Following the meeting, the council had lunch with representatives of the Field Crops Development Centre and an excellent tour of the centre.

7. Next Meeting and Upcoming Events

- (a) Council Meeting – December 7, 2015, Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Calgary, AB

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Christie at 12:30 p.m.