

GRASS ROUTES



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RICH SMITH
Executive Director

A VOICE FOR PRODUCERS

Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) is a grass roots producer organization that was created to be a unified voice for close to 20,000 cattle and beef producers in Alberta. ABP is an organization of producers, run by producers, working on behalf of producers to make the cattle and beef industry more sustainable and competitive. ABP's work builds on the long history and rich legacy of the cattle and beef industry in this province and uses the strong family, business, and stewardship values of producers as the basis for our actions. ABP and our industry partners address issues related to animal production, food safety, animal care, government policy, environmental stewardship, communications, marketing and education.

ABP is established as a commission under the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act in Alberta. The mandate, structure, operations, and funding of the organization are governed by four regulations under this act, along with the ABP by-laws that were created in 2009 and approved by the Agricultural Products Marketing Council. The ABP by-laws may be reviewed and changed by delegates at an annual or special general meeting of the organization, while the four regulations are generally reviewed for ongoing relevancy and necessity every five years. We call the review

of our regulations a Plan Review and the next deadline for reviewing and renewing our regulations is June 30, 2015.

In order to meet the deadline for reviewing and renewing the ABP regulations, while leaving time for Alberta legislative processes, any proposed amendments to the regulations will have to be approved by the ABP delegates at the Annual General Meeting in December of this year. This means that ABP will be starting our Plan Review very soon. The primary purpose of the Plan Review is to seek input from grass roots producers about changes in the regulations that would make ABP more effective in speaking and working on your behalf. Talking with producers about ABP and more importantly, listening to what you have to say about the organization and our regulations will be the main focus of the Plan Review. We will also be discussing the regulations with other industry organizations and Marketing Council will provide us with advice and guidance through the Plan Review process.

During the Plan Review, all parts of the ABP regulations are open for review and possible amendments. Producers will also be able to propose changes to the ABP by-laws during this process, even though the by-laws do not have an expiry date or a formal deadline for review and renewal. We are expecting the main topics for consideration during the Plan Review will be the specific details of the ABP mandate, structure, operations, and funding.

ABP 2014 Plan Review

Although ABP started preparations for the 2014 Plan Review earlier this year, this article represents the beginning of the Plan Review process for grass roots producers. We will be preparing a discussion paper on the key topics to be addressed in the Plan Review. The paper will ask specific questions

continued from page 1

related to these topics, but also allow producers to add comments and recommendations on all parts of the regulations and by-laws. The discussion paper and all ABP regulations will be available on our website and distributed directly to all producers who request them.

Most of the zones will be organizing town hall meetings in the late spring where producers will be able to meet to discuss the future of ABP and our regulations. We will use the information gathered at these meetings to prepare proposals for changes to the regulations that again will be widely distributed to producers. Producers will have another opportunity to discuss the Plan Review in person during the Fall Meetings in every zone. The final proposals for the ABP resolutions will be reviewed and approved by the delegates at the Annual General Meeting in December.

Through the entire Plan Review, we will be doing our best to keep producers informed about the process through written, electronic, radio, media, and social media communications. We also will be providing you with many and varied opportunities for input to the review. Producers will be able to make suggestions in person at town hall and fall meetings. We also will create means for producers to provide input online, by mail, or by telephone. Of course, all ABP delegates will be available to discuss the Plan Review directly with producers.

Our objective in this process is to have as many producers as possible participate in the Plan Review. ABP is your organization and we want you to help us be better. This Plan Review is a chance for us to hear your voice and make ABP a stronger and more effective voice for all the cattle and beef producers in Alberta. ▼

YOUNG GUNS DUE MAY 30

If you are between the ages of eight and 21, and are involved in Beef 4-H, junior cattle shows or beef production – this is your opportunity to win one of three prizes in the Young Guns Contest. Show us how you advocate on behalf of the beef industry. We want to know what you see as the biggest challenge going forward for beef producers in Alberta and how to overcome it as an industry. An entry may be submitted as an essay, YouTube video, radio advertisement, social media campaign, poster, cartoon, press release or any other form of communication tool.

Be creative. Three prizes are available:

- 1st Place - \$1,000
- 2nd Place - \$500
- 3rd Place - \$250

Send your entry form (available at www.albertabeef.org/uploads/youngguns-218.pdf or on the homepage of www.albertabeef.org) and contest submission to:

Katelyn Laverdure
Communications Manager, ABP
165, 6815 8 Street, NE
Calgary, AB T2E 7H7
E-mail: katelynl@albertabeef.org

We must receive your entry by midnight, May 30, 2014 to be eligible to win. The winners will be determined by a panel of judges at the ABP Semi Annual Meeting on June 11, 2014 and will be contacted by June 20, 2014.

The over 20,000 beef producers in this province have an organization which represents their collective interests – the Alberta Beef Producers. Run by producers for producers, ABP is dedicated to supporting a truly sustainable, competitive and profitable cattle and beef industry for the benefit of all Albertans. ▼



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BARB SWEETLAND
Marketing & Education
Manager

TAKING AIM AT BEEF MYTHS



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"Good cholesterol comes from ice cream, cheeseburgers, and pizza. Bad cholesterol comes from tofu, broccoli, and spinach!"

Red meat makes you fat and causes heart attacks. Red meat is full of hormones, antibiotics and other dangerous chemicals. Red meat causes cancer. Red meat gives you weak bones and diabetes. Red meat lodges in your colon, putrefies and floods your system with toxins. Red meat clogs your arteries, makes your bodily fluids acidic and yes, red meat can even ruin your sex life.

There is obviously a lot of nonsense out there about beef consumption and what it does or does not do to you. This is true to the point that the average media-bombarded consumer is having a hard time separating the nonsense from the good sense. In fact, when it comes to the topic of nutrition in general, it isn't overstated to say we are in real danger of becoming a nation of food illiterates.

Research done by the Conference Board of Canada and the Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition supports this notion. They found that a startling 41% of Canadians are unable to name Canada's four food groups, while a full 38% of those respondents consider themselves to be knowledgeable about nutrition. These unsettling statistics, when combined with the prevailing notion that red meat is bad for you, add up to genuine problems for a sustainable Alberta beef industry.

In order to combat both the misinformation and lack of information on beef nutrition that we all suffer from, ABP decided it needed a new teaching tool to grab the attention of today's tech-savvy young Albertans. They are, after all, not only tomorrow's protein consumers, they may also be its political decision makers, as well.

With budgets tight, the Marketing and Education Committee approached the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency for help in financing this project. Happily ALMA agreed to do so, making it possible for ABP to finally add this essential tool to its educational tool belt.

To create it, ABP will partner with MindFuel, a non-profit organization known for its ability to fuel curiosity and critical thinking in young minds. Populated by scientists, educators and technical artisans, the company annually delivers millions of high-quality, interactive learning experiences to the global marketplace. With such a track record, MindFuel can be relied upon to produce a teaching aid that is both popular and completely science-based. This ability is key because only resources that are fun will be used, and only ones that are science-based will be considered unbiased.

So how, then, will this techy, fun-for-kids, myth-buster actually work?

Given most of us learn better by doing than by listening, ABP will develop a nutrition-focused online game based on real life actions like grocery shopping and meal preparation as a way to ensure

long-term learning. Players will earn points or lose them based on what foods they select during the creation of their favourite snacks and meals. By choosing foods like Alberta Beef, with its high nutritional content, players can score more points than by choosing low nutrient foods. We hope this kind of play action - because it is fun, informative and believable - will cross over into real life action. It is a strategy that has been proven successful in the past.

Once the game is designed and tested it will be launched on MindFuel's "Wonderville" website and will then be marketed to students, parents and educators across Canada. In addition to receiving national exposure, this asset will get solid international coverage as Wonderville is currently accessed in over 90 countries worldwide and the response to its free gaming resources has been traditionally overwhelming.

The real payoff for ABP, however, will be seen on a smaller stage. We firmly believe by having these kinds of activities available in the classroom we can make measurable inroads into the food literacy of young Albertans. Once they are genuinely food savvy, they will no longer need convincing it is okay to eat sensible amounts of steaks, burgers and ribs because beef has the essential nutrients needed to build strong muscles, hard bones and quick minds.

It is true that the development of this game is just one step in a long journey we have been on for some time. It is also true that we still do not see the end of the road just around the corner. But those facts do not allow us to quit moving. We have to continue to confront the half-truths, pseudo science, falsehoods, and downright silliness that daily attempts to taint our reputation as a world-class protein food. The best way to do that is to use the kind of scientifically grounded information provided in resources like this one. The kind, in which, even our harshest critics will have a difficult time finding holes. ▼



FRED HAYS
Policy Analyst

CATTLE PRODUCTION INSURANCE

Alberta Beef Producers' Safety-net Sub-committee has been assessing a public supported livestock production insurance program, comparable to the crop insurance program. Production insurance is a producer's safeguard for some production failure. For crops this might be loss coverage for hail, droughts, wildlife or other problems due to less than normal production. Livestock production coverage gets more difficult to describe and quantify. Any livestock production insurance would have to be for some potential losses like cattle death, disease, epidemics, drought or freezing weather related, predators and other catastrophes.

The sub-committee compared insurance production programs in Canada, the U.S. and other countries. Some governments provide livestock production insurance, and others don't. Some programs are mandatory where producers must enroll and pay premiums, and others are voluntary.

Insurance transfers risk to someone else and public-supported farming insurance is designed to offer producers financial support in the event of a disaster. Canadian agricultural business risk management policy is structured around three layers: normal risk that is retained by the producer; marketable or production risk transferred through some type of market tools; and catastrophic risk that requires government assistance.

Most cropping in Canada relies on catastrophic insurance to offset production losses primarily from

weather-related problems. These risks are usually relatively straightforward to monitor and assess and this allows crop programs to be readily developed and managed. The crop sector is seen as having more government financial support because of the production protection. In 2012 Alberta government payments for crop insurance accounted for over 50 percent of the total farming program payouts. AgriStability for all sectors paid out 22 percent and compensation for animal losses were less than one percent.

Canada's crop production insurance is premium protected at about 40 percent. These programs must be actuarially sound because of trade treaties: a top up of payouts is not done over the long-term, although administration can be paid. Insurance protection provides assistance to encourage farmers to stay in business. Although some producers still find this expensive it's a good government investment by helping stabilize food production, the food industry and the economy.

However, an unintended consequence allows those in the crop sector to take on more risk. Further, crop insurance support has the livestock sector competing with the crops sector for land and labour. At times, with protected crop insurance, farmers will develop pasture, forage and marginal land into cropland that extends land and feed competition beyond real marketing signals. Production-based insurance provides a yield guarantee and multi-peril coverage for crops grown on a farm including programs for hay and timothy export hay. Other crop insurance programs include area-based insurance, those using lack of rainfall and satellite growth data triggered for payment on coverage differences.

At present cattle producers don't have public production insurance, other than for pasture and forage, but instead rely on ad hoc government support to help with disasters. Private livestock insurance is available but it becomes even more expensive. For example, the Feeders Association of

Alberta requires death insurance coverage at 0.5 percent of the outstanding value with five percent deductible.

In Canada major catastrophic losses to the livestock sector can be publically supported through non-premium government assistance, such as AgriRecovery, or with wildlife compensation for predation and feed losses. The problem is usually negotiating regional assistance as it might or might not be available. Presently, Canada uses this support model but some other countries use catastrophic insurance with compulsory participation, or the producer self-insures these risks.

Why support price insurance and not production coverage? The cattle sector has good products available to protect against price risk like hedging and the government-supported Cattle Price Insurance Program (CPIP). CPIP's premiums are not protected but livestock price insurance is for risk against markets, not risk of yields.

A livestock production insurance program would need to identify the potential risk, quantify that risk and determine when the trigger should be pulled for a payout. This might include something for losses to disease, extreme weather changes affecting calving losses or wildlife. Coverage for epidemics could be possible but probably not for day-to-day disease flare-ups. These are usually considered part of the producer's management risk.

Pasture and forage insurance is one area that affects cattle productivity. These can be insured but the uptake by producers in Alberta is less than 10 percent for hay acres and 30 percent for pasture because it's considered to be fairly expensive for the protection afforded.

What are these potential production risks for cattle? How much are they costing producers? What trigger levels need to be established? To move forward with this file these need to be identified, quantified and justified. At the same time the trend for increased crop support continues. ▼



KARIN SCHMID
Beef Production
Specialist

HAS SPRING SPRUNG?

It has been a long winter, and I would bet we are still a few storms away from seeing more green than white on the ground. However, these warmer temperatures also bring some calf health challenges, beyond those of keeping calves out of the elements.

Calf scours is the primary cause of death for calves between two and 30 days of age. Scours is often spoken of as being a disease, but really, the diarrhea is only a symptom of intestinal distress. Most causes of scours are infectious and include viruses (e.g. rotavirus, coronavirus, bovine virus diarrhea), bacteria (e.g. E. coli, Salmonella, Clostridium perfringens), and parasites (e.g. Cryptosporidium, coccidia). Some non-infectious causes of scours include over-consumption of milk, or calves eating sand or dirt.

Most healthy adult cattle shed at least some of the infectious causes of scours in the feces. Older calves are unaffected, but young calves' immune systems are still developing and they are susceptible. Symptoms of scours will include watery stools of various colours, calves may also be weak, depressed, or develop a sunken appearance due to dehydration. Once calves are too weak to stand, left untreated, death usually follows within 24 hours. Severe cases can last up to two weeks.

The primary treatment for calves suffering from scours is fluid replacement. Calves need electrolytes and fluid to combat dehydration and restore their energy balance. Consult with your vet on the type of electrolyte formulation best suited to your situation, but be prepared to give

about two quarts two to four times per day depending on the severity. If you are also feeding milk, wait 15-20 minutes after feeding before giving the electrolytes. Calves may be reluctant to suck, so an esophageal tube feeder will likely be required. Be very careful to ensure that the tube is not accidentally inserted into the windpipe or lungs, as this will drown the calf.

Limiting scours depends heavily on prevention. Keep the calving area as clean as possible, even if that means moving it around. If you do have calves that are scouring, try to isolate them from unaffected calves or newborns. While warmer temperatures may melt the snow, they will also create muddy conditions that allow fecal contamination to spread easily. Dirty udders mean that calves are ingesting mud, and likely feces, that could expose them to scour-causing agents. Sloped calving areas can help minimize this. The more crowded the calving area, the more contaminated bedded areas get, so try to limit crowding. If possible, move cows with older calves to another area.

Ensuring that new calves get enough high quality colostrum will go a long way towards preventing scours. It may be possible to vaccinate the cows against some of these scour-causing pathogens – and then calves will receive those antibodies through colostrum. However, vaccination alone is unlikely to prevent scours completely. Consult with your vet to see if vaccination is appropriate for your operation.

Spring can be a busy time, but it is also a very important time to plan for the upcoming year. The amount of drifted snow this year may have wreaked havoc with fences – if you can see your fences, it may be a good time to assess the damage, and if the weather cooperates, do some maintenance.

Brush up on proper dehorning and castration (count to two) techniques – this will decrease the stress and discomfort on the calves and make your life easier. It is also a good time to start talking with your vet about a

pre-breeding vaccination program, as well as refreshing your entire herd health program.

Before turning the bulls out, a breeding soundness evaluation is an excellent way to make sure your cows have the best possible chance of being bred. If you are buying non-virgin bulls, a trich test is an essential preventative measure. Remember that even under the best circumstances, the odds of conception on the first cycle are only 60-70%. If using A.I. or estrus synchronization, plan and order semen early, and make sure you check your semen tank – nothing is worse than a dry tank.

Plan to breed heifers a cycle earlier than the cows. This will give them the extra time they need to recover from calving next year.

After this winter it will be very tempting to turn cows out on grass as soon as possible, especially with dwindling feed stores. Doing so will set your pasture back substantially. For every day you graze too early in the spring, you lose three days in the fall. Wait until the plants hit the three or three and a half leaf stage. Your pastures will thank you for it.

A high moisture spring may cause rapidly growing, very lush pasture, which can lead to grass tetany (magnesium deficiency), even though most forage in Western Canada generally contains adequate magnesium. A strong mineral supplementation program designed with your vet or nutritionist will help prevent any metabolic conditions while on pasture. ▼

1950's feed efficiency was 10:1



TODAY IT'S 6:1



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beefresearch.ca

ONLINE INDUSTRY NEWS

Free app puts agriculture radio program in your hand

A new smartphone app for Call of the Land, Alberta Agriculture's daily radio program, keeps producers in the know while on the go.

It's been 61 years since Call of the Land started broadcasting to Albertans about provincial government programs, agricultural technologies, market trends and research findings.

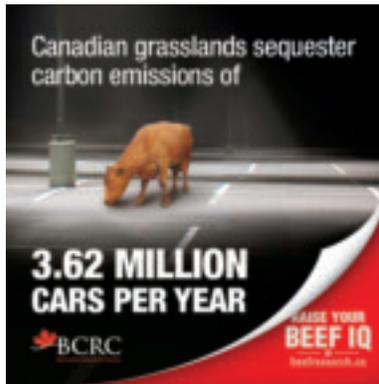
Alberta's producers are tech-savvy and can now stay informed anytime and anywhere by using the new app to access the latest Call of the Land broadcasts.

"Alberta has some of the best and most innovative producers in the world. The new app recognizes that our producers are embracing new technologies and will ensure that wherever they go, they can conveniently access the important information about developments in the agriculture sector."

Verlyn Olson, Minister, Agriculture and Rural Development

The Apple version is available now for download online or in the iTunes app store. The Android app will be available in early April through Google Play.

Call of the Land continues to air on 25 radio stations throughout the province five days a week at noon and a podcast is also available. ▼



Beefing up social media

2014 will be the year of the #felfie thanks to Canada's beef farmers & ranchers.

If the year of the #Selfie was 2013, 2014 will be the year of the #Felfie and Canada's beef farmers and ranchers are leading the herd. Felfie is a combination of Farmer and Selfie, showcasing life on Canadian farms and engaging with consumers who enjoy Canadian food.

"Canada Beef, in cooperation with our provincial partners, has launched an exciting campaign to encourage Canada's beef farmers and ranchers to share their #BeefFelfie," says Rob Meijer, President of Canada Beef. "We're seeing more and more producers engage in social media and with Canada Beef's large social footprint; we saw this trend as a great way to connect the farm to the fork, the farmer to the consumer."

Consumers want to know where their food comes from and by providing a forum for Canada's beef farmers and ranchers to showcase life on the farm we open the door to more conversations. If you are, or know, a Canadian beef farmer or rancher, join the moo-vement and 'show yourFelf'. Visit the Canadian beef blog at <http://canadianbeefinfo.wordpress.com/2014/03/16/canadian-beef-felfies/> for all the details on submitting your #BeefFelfie. ▼

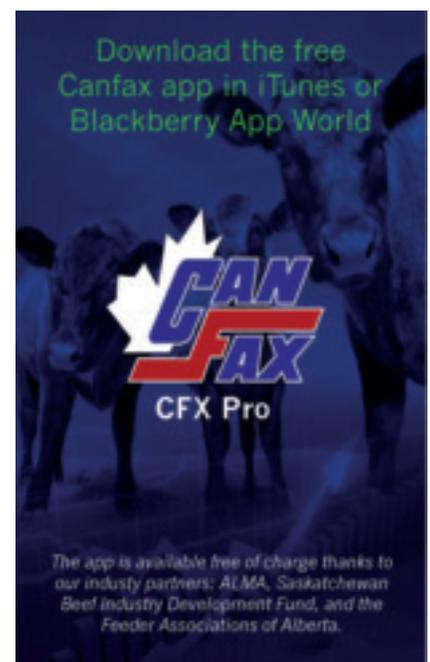
ABP updating e-mails and online presence

With your e-mail address we will be able to provide you with current information in a timelier manner that will be both cost effective and environmentally friendly.

ABP has been in the process of building our e-mail contacts for some time now but it is an ongoing task. After a mail out that was done in December we have merged and updated our e-mail contact list but there is still so much room to grow.

You can sign up for our weekly news updates online at www.albertabeef.org/page/news/ or by contacting katelynl@albertabeef.org. Providing us with your e-mail address will also mean this newsletter can be sent electronically and in turn will save check-off dollars.

ABP is on twitter and you can find us @albertabeef. Our twitter account keeps you up to speed with things going on in the industry as well as a look at the consumer side of things. With over 2,500 followers and growing, our twitter account has a great community of ag-minded people sharing information instantaneously.



zoetis



ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS' LOYALTY PROGRAM

What is the program about?

The program is a rewards initiative, designed to get check-off paying beef producer's rebates on special products offered by participating retailers.

How does it work?

Show your Loyalty Program Card when you purchase our retailers special offers. You will receive the discounted price on pre-advertised products and services.

Where do I get my Loyalty Card?

Simply call our office at (403) 275-4400, and Claudia will get you set up with our program.

Who are our Loyalty Program Retailers?

- UFA
- Dow AgroSciences
- Unigroup Insurance
- Mark's Work Warehouse
- Delta Hotels and Resorts

How do I know about new offers?

Watch for new offers advertised through our Grass Routes Magazine, on Cattle Country radio and on our website.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS

from our preferred partners at UFA Farm & Ranch Supply stores.

Show your ABP Loyalty Card at any UFA Farm & Ranch Supply store for exclusive offers this season. For replacement Producer Loyalty Program cards please call Claudia at 403-275-4400



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1101150 Reg. \$33.49

Offer valid May 1-31, 2014



BEEF ADVOCACY PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN CANADA

Beef Advocacy Canada was proud to launch its live advocacy and education program at the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) Annual General Meeting.

Canada Beef and the CCA, along with funding from the Alberta Livestock and Meat Association (ALMA), have brought together industry partners to develop a comprehensive program that will walk future beef advocates through the entire industry from gate to plate.

"The program is designed to equip advocates with facts and resources to support the beef industry in a world where information moves more quickly than it ever has before," said Annemarie Pedersen, former Director, Industry Communications, Canada Beef.

Canada Beef and CCA began work on the program in 2013, understanding the need for a positive, knowledgeable and unified voice for the beef industry.

"More people are talking about the Canadian beef industry now than in the past; they are talking about how cattle are raised and how beef is produced," said Jolene Noble, Program Coordinator, CCA.

The goal of the program is to empower people, those who make their living by and take pride in bringing beef to the world's table, to communicate about beef production with knowledge and confidence. Numerous industry partners collaborated on developing the material used in the course work. "This is definitely a program that shares the depth of knowledge within our industry," said Pedersen.

Two courses provide information for a large range of audiences. Course One is designed to provide basic information about the entire process from cattle on the farm, to beef in the meat case. This information is suitable not only for aspiring beef advocates, but also for the general population - anyone who wants to know more about the Canadian beef industry.

Course Two will be designed specifically for those people who want to become advocates for the Canadian beef industry. There will be specific resources and information available to registered users of both Courses.

The Beef Advocacy program is an educational, online resource designed to provide information on the Canadian beef industry via smart phones, tablets and desktop computers. The website is www.beefadvocacy.ca and Twitter is @beefadvocacy.



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