

# GRASS ROUTES



**RICH SMITH**  
Executive Director

## LEADERS NEEDED

Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) is proud to be a grass roots producer organization. We are an organization of producers, led by producers, speaking and working on behalf of cattle and beef producers in Alberta. Our staff members see themselves working for the farmers and ranchers who are the foundation of the long history and rich legacy of the cattle and beef industry in this province.

As a producer organization, our first priority is making sure that we speak and work as effectively as possible on behalf of Alberta cattle and beef producers. We are similar to all other grass roots organizations in the way that our effectiveness is very much influenced by the quality of the producers who become our leaders. The producers who are elected as ABP delegates provide leadership to the organization and a critical connection to the grass roots producers in their respective zones. Those delegates who are elected to the ABP Board of Directors use their contacts with local producers and their knowledge of the industry to set the strategic direction for ABP.

We need good leaders for our organization and this is the time of year when we are accepting nominations for delegates to run in the 2014 fall elections. Producers in each of the nine geographic zones in the province can elect up to five delegates and one Cattle Feeder Council delegate to serve two-year terms. In order to ensure continuity and experience in our delegate body, delegate

elections are staggered and this year, there are two delegate positions open for election in each zone and Cattle Feeder Council positions open for election in Zones 2, 4, 6 and 8.

ABP is a democratic and representative organization and our delegates are the foundation of that representation. Clearly, one of the most important roles for delegates is the connection to grass roots producers. Delegates need to hear the concerns and issues of local producers and bring these forward to ABP so that they can be addressed. It is also important for delegates to make grass roots producers aware of the priorities and activities that ABP and our partner organizations are pursuing on behalf of producers. We are funded by check-off dollars from producers and you need to see value for that investment if you are going to continue supporting ABP.

Being an ABP delegate is not financially rewarding, but we do try to offset some of the costs associated with participation in an industry organization. There is significant satisfaction in making a meaningful contribution to your industry and the rewarding experience of working with the dedicated and knowledgeable producers who are true industry leaders. Delegates also have opportunities to serve on ABP committees and councils, become ABP directors, or represent ABP on the boards of our partner organizations such as the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and Canada Beef Inc.

Producers who want to become ABP delegates can find nomination forms at the back of this newsletter, on the ABP website, or by calling the ABP office. Nominations must be submitted to the ABP office by August 31, 2014. Please consider being a leader. ▾

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[www.albertabeef.org](http://www.albertabeef.org)

[FamousTaste.AlbertaBeef.org](http://FamousTaste.AlbertaBeef.org)



**KATELYN  
LAVERDURE**  
Communications  
Manager

## YOUNG GUNS HIGHLIGHT CHALLENGES

The Young Guns contest was held again this year for youth ages eight to 21 involved in Alberta's beef industry. Participants were asked what they felt was the biggest challenge going forward for beef producers in Alberta, through some form of communication tool. The Communications Committee reviewed some strong submission but was particularly inspired by three different entries.

Jade Nelson, from High River, AB, came in first place by putting together a thoughtful video highlighting not only the challenges in the industry but how we can overcome them as well.

"Producers in the beef industry are trying to figure out how to make profits when expenses are record high."

Nelson listed cattle, feed and land prices all as major contributors to the high expenses producers face and made note of the declining size of the industry over the last 15 years. Government grants, increased fuel discounts and encouraging grazing co-ops were ways she saw the industry moving forward.

"The beef industry is a strong and powerful industry... as long as we come together and start making changes now," was her closing message.

Melanie Krupa, Vimy, AB, put together an informative poster for the second place entry. The

poster detailed the impacts of the high Canadian dollar, the weather and land prices on Alberta's beef industry.

"The agricultural industry needs to improve productivity and efficiency in order to remain competitive in the international market if the Canadian dollar remains high."

The unpredictable nature of our province's weather was her next point, using the 2013 Alberta floods as a prime example. Krupa's final point was the ever increasing cost of land and the negative impacts of fragmentation.

The third place entry came from Rivers Osadczuk near Jenner, AB, who submitted her 2014 4-H speech. It was focused around the A&W Better Beef campaign that came out late last year. Osadczuk didn't agree with what she felt was messaging that encouraged fear around traditional production practices. She then went on to point out the truth of hormones in beef compared to others foods.

"Here are some examples of the amount of estrogen which is a commonly used added hormone, in some foods. 75 grams of implanted beef has 2 nanograms of estrogen... 75 grams of peas has 500 nanograms and 75 grams of raw cabbage has 2,976 nanograms."

The conclusion emphasized the positive environmental impacts of hormone use and the concerns of feeding an ever-growing population without such efficiencies.

The Communications Committee was impressed by the quality of submissions received this year and want to thank all of the applicants for their time and effort and look forward to even more next year. As the future voice of our industry, we want to hear from you. The contest runs in the spring and judging takes place at the beginning of June. You can check the ABP website [www.albertabeef.org](http://www.albertabeef.org) for other contests held throughout the year. ▾

## 2014 WESTERN CANADIAN COW/CALF MANAGEMENT AUDIT

Alberta Beef Producers and several other provincial and national beef organizations, along with Western Canada's four Agriculture Departments are developing a Cow/Calf Management Audit to help gain insight into herd productivity and cow/calf producers management practices. Information will be compiled to meet a number of purposes:

- Regional and operational benchmarking to assist individual operators in assessing their own related strengths and weaknesses; and
- Evaluating management practices producers are using: what's working and why.

An economic analysis will give individual producers a perspective about:

- Individual operation outcomes compared with others using productivity measures such as death loss, weaning rate, percent of open cows and others;
- Baseline information that will be included in the upcoming CowChip\$ program release; and
- Industry charting progress on breeding, feeding and management practices.

The audit will also assist government and industry focus extension and applied research to address sector gaps and to help meet business needs.

Survey information will be available later this fall. ▾



**BARB SWEETLAND**  
Marketing & Education  
Manager

## “FAMOUS TASTE” THIRD YEAR BEGINS

With the help of funding from the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency, ABP’s 2014 marketing campaign was launched on Stephen Avenue in downtown Calgary on a lovely June day during the lunch hour rush. Because the campaign’s summer message is essentially “nothing tastes better than Alberta Beef done on the barbeque” it made perfect sense to prove our point by hosting a barbeque contest amidst throngs of people who could sample our product and either agree with this claim or call us on it.

Our committee is happy to report that over 1500 two-ounce servings of beef were handed out to universally appreciative Calgarians, among them Mayor Naheed Nenshi; food critic, John Gilchrist; Calgary Stampede President, Bob Thompson and ABP Executive Director, Rich Smith.

At the end of the day, our co-host Tom Bomhorst, Dean of the SAIT School of Hospitality and Tourism, summed up the event with these words: “There is nothing,” he said, “like two great organizations collaborating to promote the great culinary experience of this amazing province.”

We definitely agree and hope to do more of this kind of work in the future.

Once launched, our campaign moved on to the biggest outdoor show on earth – the Calgary Stampede. On July 9th and 11th our Famous Taste Express Mobile BBQ

was featured at the Calgary Stampede Round-Up and the Oxford Stomp - two outdoor concerts that annually attract more than 30,000 Stampede fans and music lovers. While at these venues, our team prepared and handed out thousands of samples of AAA strip loin along with barbeque recipes, cooking tips and Alberta Beef shopping coupons from our retail partner, Save-On Foods. It was again a successful program not only in terms of brand building but also for driving the sales of Alberta Beef in featured marketplaces.

As in previous years, ABP earmarked some marketing funds for charity-driven work. By participating in the Curtis Glencross Invitational Rodeo and Fundraiser we feel we have contributed to making the lives of chosen Albertans just a little bit better. The tactic we used to help make this event a success was to partner with Alberta Treasury Branch to provide an Alberta Beef dinner to the five hundred or so visiting VIPs and potential donors. In this way, not only did we raise our brand’s profile amongst an influential crowd, we set the stage for happy diners making healthy donations.

BBQ on the Bow is also a repeat for ABP’s 2014 campaign because it provides us with valuable brand impressions by specifically targeting barbeque lovers. Not only are the five or six thousand festival attendees barbeque lovers, they are barbeque gourmards and gourmets. So not just any sauce-slathered tidbit will satisfy them. They demand the best and they get it as the event invites teams of award-winning cooks to prepare pork, chicken and brisket in unique and tasty ways. During the cook-off, our Famous Taste Express Street Team provides the crowds with samples of plain grilled AAA Alberta Beef. Since there has always been a solid line up at our truck during the event, it’s fair to say that even connoisseurs of fancy barbeque are still in love with simply prepared and truly delicious Alberta Beef.

As it did last year, the Famous Taste campaign will also be brought directly to our most important target audience – the family grocery shopper. To make sure we are at point of sale when she/he is deciding what to buy for dinner, our team will be at 10 major grocery stores across the province demonstrating how to cook beef, giving out beef samples and sales coupons, while answering any questions consumers may have regarding our product. If this year’s appearances are anything like last year’s we feel confident the uptick in beef sales at partner locations will be substantial.

The ultimate goal of these retail events is, of course, something larger than temporarily increasing sales at a given location. What we are hoping to do is create a competitive environment amongst grocery retailers so they all want to increase traffic at their stores by somehow featuring Alberta Beef. We have now seen the competitive impact our sampling program has created among store managers within a chain of stores. Next we are hoping to create the same desire between competing grocery chains. Doing so is a big job which will take some time but one, when completed, will be worth the effort. We strongly believe that it is only through this kind of pervasive and repetitive exposure that we will have returned Alberta Beef to its rightful place in the meat case – consumers’ first choice in dinner options. ▼



FRED HAYS  
Policy Analyst

# TRIPPING ON PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

Beef production, and the demand for the product have changed over the years. Animal protein is recognized as a food source that can provide a healthy basis for good human nutrition. As societies increase their affluence people generally increase their demand and willingness to pay for quality animal proteins.

Agriculture and the beef business are highly economic and science based. Cattle genetics and feed science help develop the sector's business and marketing case. Mixtures of grains, proteins, mineral, vitamins and additives have been researched and tested globally for over 70 years at a multitude of credible universities and research stations. The feed additive Rumensin® increases rumen microbes that produce propionic acid, improving feed efficiency, while preventing and controlling coccidiosis. Beta-agonist additives Zilmax® (zilpaterol) and Optaflexx® (ractopamine) promote protein deposition and muscle cell growth. All have been externally tested. The process is rigorous and transparent.

The mildly estrogenic ear implant Ralgro® (zeranol) increases protein synthesis in cattle muscle cells and decreases fat deposition. Overall, feed efficiency is improved by five to 15 percent, and daily gain improved up to 25 percent. Aspects of animal and human safety have been verified prior to registration.

Other implants such as Compudose®, Synovex® and Revalor® also have estradiol as an active ingredient. Health Canada, through their scientific process, observes no human health problems from these.

The normal range of estrogen in beef per three ounce serving is around 1.9 nanograms from cattle given growth implants, 1.3 for beef from cattle without, 225 from potatoes, 2,000 from cabbage, 2,600 from eggs and 100,000 from soybean protein.

Some criticism from all-natural groups in North America or the European Union (E.U.) appears to go against science-based facts. Canadian, U.S. and E.U. scientific committees, and the joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives do not support this censure. Accepting precaution can be a form of political risk assessment. This precautionary principle is a "better safe than sorry" philosophy. It can be used to leverage one product or process over the other, control a market and reduce food supply innovation.

Risk evaluation is important. The science-based method uses transparent, peer-reviewed risk assessment, communication, mitigation and enforcement through legal regulation. The precautionary process simplistically disputes the science-based process, creates doubt and exaggerates risk.

In Canada and other regions, science-based assessments are used to support products such as feed additives and implants at the first level as part of the registration process; however, the precautionary principle process is required too. Canadian registration processes must use the precaution as a second level review with a safety panel of area specialists. If the product or process continues to be considered risk-free to livestock and human health it's regulated as safe. If not, the registration does not go forward.

Persistent concerns about food and beef production involving the precautionary principle include locally grown, GMO crops, organic or all-natural, use of regulated antibiotics, hormones and steroids, and food safety issues dealing with accepted agriculture practices. A panel of specialists has reviewed those involved with any government regulation component after the science-based support was in place. Those who continue to promote the negative are using precaution as a way to create doubt about the government process: a precaution about a process that uses precaution in the approval process.

Where should we go with this?

There's a continuous need to focus on the consumer and their concerns about a product or process. The science-based methods need to be continuously driven and supported. Present the media with the quality, food safety side of the story and continue to debunk myths about possible long-term risks.

The growing population will need to have quality food at affordable prices. This will continue to be important as the global population expands over the next 50 years and food requirements increase 60 to 80 percent. The general viewpoint will have to go from one of questioning and doubt to concern about food supply sustainability. ▼



**KARIN SCHMID**  
Beef Production  
Specialist

# VACCINATION: CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO?

Vaccinating your cattle is a lot like having car insurance - when you've been in an accident, you're very glad you've got it. Similarly, if a vaccine-preventable disease shows up in your area, you will be very glad you vaccinated your herd.

No one vaccine program is perfect for all operations, but vaccination is a critical component of any herd health plan. Protocols must be matched to an operation's specific needs. They are best developed in collaboration with your veterinarian, who will know which vaccines will provide the greatest benefit for your herd.

Sometimes you'll hear arguments against vaccination like "it costs too much" or "the vaccines don't work." The bottom line is, if you do not vaccinate, your herd's ability to combat diseases such as blackleg, BVD, persistently infected BVD animals, and bacterial pneumonia will be reduced. This will lead to higher illness rates, death loss and treatment costs.

To better understand the cost of vaccination, Kathy Larson at the Western Beef Development Centre did an analysis (using 2010 numbers), and found the following:

## Scenario

Assuming that Bob vaccinates 100 cows, 100 calves, and five bulls for blackleg and BVD/PRSV/PI3/IBR, and calf vaccinations include pneumonia and are given in both spring and fall, and each shot costs \$2.87, then the total cost of vaccinating his herd is \$1575.

His neighbor, John, with the same size of herd, opts not to vaccinate, saving himself \$1575/year in vaccine costs. He is lucky, and is outbreak/disease free for five years, which equals \$7875 in avoided vaccine costs. But in year six, 20 calves die from blackleg. Using 2010 prices, those 550 lb calves would have brought in about \$1.05/lb, and would have been worth \$11,550. **John would have covered his vaccination costs for all six years, and made an extra \$2100 if those calves hadn't died.**

Imagine if there had been a disease outbreak every year that John didn't vaccinate, or that John lost more than 20 calves that sixth year. Not vaccinating is a pretty big gamble, especially when you're talking about your livelihood.

And it's not 2010. It is 2014 and those 550 lb calves are worth about \$2.45/lb. Even when we account for increased vaccine costs with inflation it's still a no brainer.

So what about those stories you've heard about vaccines just not working? Vaccines trigger the animal's natural immune response to protect from a disease before infection occurs by producing antibodies, so if an infection occurs, the immune system is already prepared to fight it off. While it is true that some animals have a better immune response than others, a fully vaccinated herd benefits from something fittingly called "herd immunity." Having the whole herd vaccinated means that if a vaccine-preventable disease does enter the herd, its spread will be limited.

Cattle may also respond poorly to vaccinations if:

- they are exposed to a different strain of the disease than the one vaccinated for,
- if they are not getting adequate nutrition, or
- if they are under stress.

While it may be convenient to vaccinate during branding, stressed cattle are expected to have a poorer immune response to vaccination. Consult with your veterinarian on the

best timing for your particular vaccinations to maximize vaccine response as well as what works best for you in terms of labour.

Vaccines are also not created equal. Reading and following the label is very important. A label claim that states "as an aid in the control of the disease" will not provide the same amount of protection as a label claim that states "as an aid in the prevention of disease" or "for the prevention of disease."

Vaccines may also 'fail' if they are mishandled. Make sure you buy vaccine from a dealer who has demonstrated good storage and handling practices. Vaccines are quite sensitive to heat and light, so should be stored in a cool, dark place - ideally in a refrigerator. Freezing will ruin most vaccines. If processing a large number of animals, keep the vaccine in an insulated cooler and take out as needed. Modified live vaccines are especially fragile. When using a modified live vaccine, only reconstitute the amount you will be using in the next 30-40 minutes.

While vaccination is a core component of an effective herd health program, and is an excellent insurance policy, vaccines can't prevent disease by themselves. Vaccination won't overcome poor management or prevent diseases for which vaccines don't exist. A comprehensive herd health program developed with your veterinarian is your best bet to avoid a wreck, which would be especially costly with the current record high prices.

*The Cost of Herd Health - Vaccination*  
**Western Beef Development Centre**  
<http://www.wbdc.sk.ca/pdfs/factsheets/2010/Cost%20of%20Herd%20Health%20-%20Vaccination.pdf>

*Vaccination Guidelines: How to get the maximum benefit when vaccinating your beef cattle herd.*  
<http://www.vido.org/pdfs/vbtg/VaccinationGuidelines.05.pdf>

*Matching a Vaccination Program to the Herd's Risk Level*  
**Video: Beef Research School**  
<http://youtu.be/jDIWm1h3i2w> ▼

## ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS NEEDS YOUR INPUT

Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) is in the process of our five-year review of the regulations that govern our operations. To make the Plan Review a success we need to hear from you.

ABP wants your opinion on our:

- **Mandate**
- **Structure**
- **Operations**
- **Funding**

A discussion paper is available for review and comment on the homepage of our website at [www.albertabeef.org](http://www.albertabeef.org). You can fill it out right on your computer, save it and e-mail it in, or print off a copy and mail or fax it to the ABP office.

Our objective in this process is to encourage as many producers as possible to participate in the Plan Review. ABP is your organization and we want you to help us be better.

This is a chance for us to hear your voice and make ABP a stronger, more effective voice for all the cattle and beef producers in Alberta.

**Comments on the discussion paper are due August 31, 2014.**

## 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/](http://www.albertabeef.org/page/news/) or by contacting [katelynl@albertabeef.org](mailto: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](https://twitter.com/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.

**Delegate nominations are also open until August 31, 2014. Fill out your nomination form and plan review discussion paper and send them in together.**



# ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS' LOYALTY PROGRAM

## What is the program about?

The program is a rewards initiative, designed to get check-off paying beef producers 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.



**JULY - SEPTEMBER**



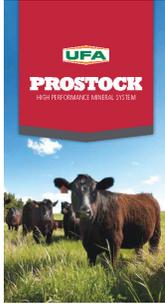
**10% OFF\***

**MOVLIN  
BIG ROUND  
TWINE**

709978 20,000' length, 297912 25,000' length  
\*Off regular retail. While supplies last.

Offer valid July 1- September 30, 2014  
Salespersons please enter promo code XXXX

**JULY**



**\$2 OFF**

**PROSTOCK  
GRAZING  
GROWTH  
MINERAL**

Per 20Kg bag 1101161

Offer valid July 1-31, 2014

**AUGUST**



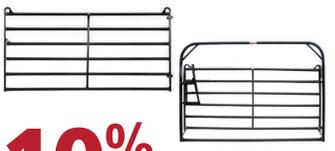
**20% OFF\***

**HEAVY  
DUTY BULL  
FEEDER  
SALE \$143.99**

215412 \*Off regular retail. While supplies last.

Offer valid August 1-31, 2014

**SEPTEMBER**



**10% OFF\***

**ANY  
PRIEFERT  
GATE**

(Please allow time for delivery)

Offer valid September 1-30, 2014



**2014 ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM**

Please indicate: ZONE DELEGATE  or CFC ZONE DELEGATE  for Zone Number \_\_\_\_\_

By providing the information requested on the nomination form, the nominator and the nominee consent to the Alberta Beef Producers collecting, using and disclosing the personal information on this form for all purposes related to the election process, including publication in the annual report, and for the business of the Alberta Beef Producers. For information about Alberta Beef Producers Personal Information Protection Policy, please contact Laura Procnier at Alberta Beef Producers.

I hereby nominate: (please print – ABP will not be responsible for misspelt names if they are illegible)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

County, Municipality, I.D. or Special Area \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Land Location \_\_\_\_\_ of Sec \_\_\_\_\_ Twp \_\_\_\_\_ Rge \_\_\_\_\_ W of \_\_\_\_\_ Meridian

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Operation: Cow/Calf  Backgrounder  Feedlot  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby declare to be an \*eligible producer. Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(NOMINATOR)

Acceptance:

I hereby accept this nomination and declare that I am an \*eligible producer:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(NOMINEE)

\*Eligible producer:

- "Eligible producer" means a producer resident in Alberta who has, during 2013 or 2014, sold cattle and paid a service charge to the Alberta Beef Producers or to another person on behalf of the Alberta Beef Producers. ABP reserves the right to verify your eligibility at any time.
- An "eligible producer" that is a corporation may appoint a representative to act on its behalf.
- An "eligible producer" who is an individual cannot appoint a representative.
- The "eligible producer" must be a producer in the zone in which they or their representative are standing for election.

**Alberta Beef Producers**

**Attn: Laura Procnier**

165, 6815 - 8th Street N. E. Phone: (403) 275-4400  
Calgary, Alberta T2E 7H7 Fax: (403) 274-0007

**Please note nominations must be in the ABP office by August 31, 2014**

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[www.albertabeef.org](http://www.albertabeef.org)

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:  
**Alberta Beef Producers** 1650, 6815 – 8 Street NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7H7  
PM 40069160