



# Chairman's Message

By Peter Verleun



## Chairman's Report

This is our winter edition, 2011, of the Beef Newsletter. On behalf of all the directors of the PEI Cattle Producers, I wish to extend a welcome to all readers of this issue.

So, is there a light at the end of the tunnel? Prices for feeder calves seemed to average at \$1.00 or more this past fall. This is up from the previous year when prices hovered at \$.80. Feeder prices are higher now with \$1.30 being reached at Truro. Prices for heavy feeders in Ontario are reaching \$1.60. At the other end, the price for finished cattle remains rather low at \$1.70. Rumours abound that the price of beef will skyrocket because of low North American inventories of both cattle and hogs. Let's hope!

There has been a change in management at the Atlantic Beef Products plant in Borden. Mike Nabuurs has taken over from Shane Murphy as President of ABPI. Shane will stay on during a six-month transition period. Mike is best known for his position as Executive Director of the PEI Federation of Agriculture. He has committed to meet with the PEICP at least four times per year to discuss common issues and is doing so. We welcome Mike Nabuurs and wish him all the best.

Your board at PEICP has been active on a number of issues. We may not have been in the spot light, but we continue to work behind the scenes. We have met with provincial cabinet and Minister Webster on several occasions. We continue to take part in Maritime Beef Council sessions and are active on the board at the Nappan Bull Test Station. We are striving for a solution to the Advance Payments Program dilemma. It has turned into a PEI only problem because the rest of Canada does not seem to be worried. Other programs we have underway are Verified Beef Production; premise ID; traceability trial, as well as continuation of Age Verification and the Beef Industry Initiative programs available through the PEI Department of Agriculture.

### Contact Information

- PEI Cattle Producers [cattlemen@eastlink.ca](mailto:cattlemen@eastlink.ca) (902) 368-2229
- CCA Daily Update [www.cattle.ca](http://www.cattle.ca) 1-866-463-6222
- Maritime Cattle Market Report [www.atlanticstockyards.com](http://www.atlanticstockyards.com)
- Canfax Boxed Beef Report [www.canfax.ca](http://www.canfax.ca)
- OCA Market Report [www.cattle.guelph.on.ca](http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca)
- Alberta Daily Market Report [www.albertabeef.org](http://www.albertabeef.org)
- CFIA Transportation Emergencies [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) 1-877-814-2342
- Dr Les Halliday [ljhalliday@gov.pe.ca](mailto:ljhalliday@gov.pe.ca) 569-7639 or 314-0827
- Agriculture Information Officer 1-866-PEIFARM (743-3276)

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Department of  
Agriculture

## Chairman's message continued:

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From a marketing angle we are sponsoring a made in PEI hamburger contest called "PEI Burger Love" Watch for this at your favourite restaurant or visit [www.peiburgerlove.ca](http://www.peiburgerlove.ca)

We have spent a lot of time creating a brand called "Atlantic Signature Beef." The Atlantic Beef Products plant in Borden will be using this to market our beef and have designed a new website using this name. You can check it out at [www.abpi.ca](http://www.abpi.ca)

We are sponsoring an information session with Dave Aiten. Dave will be explaining programs such as Agri-Stability; Price Basis Insurance and Livestock Insurance.

One of our directors, Jamie Whalen, has

resigned because of work commitments. Jamie was always "on deck" and was our rep on the national CCA and our Maritime rep on CCIA. We would like to thank Jamie for his dedication to the board. Jamie's replacement is Jeremy Stead, from Wheatley River.

Vice President, Ivan Johnson from Belmont, PEI has become our new rep on CCA. John Tilley from the NS Cattle Producers is representing the Maritimes on the CCIA.

With spring just around the corner, we will soon be returning to the land. The two fatalities last year should remind all of us to take an extra moment to ensure our own safety and the safety of others.

I would also like to thank Ms Rinnie Bradley for her unerring devotion to her

job. She always holds her own at any issue and is well respected all across Canada. We are justifiably proud to have her representing us in all aspects of our organization.

So, in closing, I would remind everyone to verify the birthdates of those calves. Vaccinating, dehorning, and castrating are all important chores. Please update your registration so we can have accurate member information. This needs to be done annually and can be done on-line or by phone. All registered members are invited to attend our Annual General Meeting on April 6, 2011 at the Farm Center.

Thank you  
Peter Verleun

## PEI Burger Love.ca - The Great Island Burger Contest

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PEI Burger Love is a one month campaign celebrating 100% Island Beef burger creations of

select PEI restaurants and chefs. The promotion starts April 1st 2011, and ends May 2nd, 2011. It encourages restaurants to custom create their own burger using only 100% Island beef. All

other ingredients are up to the restaurant and chef. Islanders will be encouraged to visit participating restaurants to eat their unique PEI Burger Love creation and then go online to [www.peiburgerlove.ca](http://www.peiburgerlove.ca) and DECLARE THEIR LOVE of the burger and qualify for a chance to win tasty prizes. PEI Burger Love will be promoted through social media, local radio stations, posters, buttons, and other advertising encouraging consumers to: Eat the Burger. Love the Burger. Rate it Online.

Win Tasty Prizes! In the end, one burger will be crowned "PEI's Most Loved Burger." And the winning restaurant will receive a specially designed trophy to display in their restaurant. We invite you to show your support for buying local and participate in our PEI Burger Love campaign! The countdown to PEI Burger Love is live on the website [www.peiburgerlove.ca](http://www.peiburgerlove.ca).

## PEI Easter's 60th Beef Show & Sale

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The PEI Easter Beef Show and Sale is scheduled to take place on Thursday, March 31st and Friday April 1st at the Charlottetown Civic Centre. This year the judging team of Brad and Sarah Buchanan from Gold-Bar Livestock will travel from Ontario to assess the 79 beef animals entered in the show. These quality entries include youth competitors from the Island 4-H program as well as from top cattle operations from across the province.

Jeff Matheson, president of the PEI

Easter Beef Show & Sale will oversee the activities which include 4-H conformation and Showmanship classes, Open Breed Classes and fund raising for the Easter Seals Campaign.

The Show will commence on Thursday, March 31st at 10:30 am with the 4-H program. At noon a Celebrity Showmanship class will be held followed by Opening Ceremonies at 1:00pm. Additional classes continue throughout the afternoon, culminating with the selection of the Grand

Champion of the Show. A banquet takes place at 7pm Thursday evening.

Friday April 1st begins at 12:30pm with the "Noon with the Buyers" reception. The sale will start promptly at 1:00pm with the Opening Ceremonies. The Grand Champion from the show is the first lot to be auctioned followed by the remaining animals.

Please come out to support the Island beef industry and be part of this long standing Island tradition!

## Sheath your Horns

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Canada's three western provinces introduced "horn taxes" to encourage dehorning in the late 1930's, and they are still being collected in Saskatchewan and B.C. More recently, the Canadian beef industry developed the Quality Starts Here program to encourage improved standards for food safety and quality. One best management practice recommendation is to dehorn all calves in an effective, humane manner prior to three months of age. These efforts have helped reduce the number of horned cattle in Canada. The 1995 Canadian Beef Quality Audit reported that 32% of cattle entering Canadian packing plants had horns longer than 5 cm. This dropped to 16% in Canada's 1998-99 audit. Audits in the U.S. found that the incidence of horned cattle fell from 31% to 21% between 1991 and 2005.

### What do horns cost?

**Packing sector:** Horns were once found to be responsible for 50% of carcass bruising. This suggests that each horned animal cost an average of \$5.09 in bruising related trim in the previous Canadian beef quality audits. Packers also have to pay someone to cut horns off the carcass so that the hide can be pulled over the head. This cost an average of 16 cents per horned animal. If the sinus exposed by dehorning gets contaminated at the plant, the whole skull will be condemned adding an additional cost of 6 cents. These costs add up to \$5.31 per horned animal slaughtered.

**Feedlot sector:** Horned cattle are more likely to injure people, themselves and other cattle, and need more space at the

bunk and in the truck. Dehorning takes time, is stressful, may result in infection, and can reduce growth rate and feed efficiency. Treatment and labor costs associated with dehorning feedlot cattle are between \$5 and \$10 per head, so cattle are rarely dehorned in the feedlot.

**Background Sector:** Some backgrounding lots will dehorn calves with large horns. Horned calves are often discounted because horns can break off during handling, and horned cattle still require more bunk space and more room in the truck. These discounts vary but average around 2 cents per pound (\$10 on a 500 pound calf). Assuming this discount includes the \$5.31 cost faced by the packer, the feedlots share of the discount is likely in the neighborhood of \$4.69 per horned calf.

**Horned cattle deductions:** "Horn taxes" can add an additional \$2 (Saskatchewan) to \$10 (B.C.) per head. These funds do not offset discounts from the packer or feedlot; they're an additional charge. This brings the total discount faced by producers selling horned calves to \$12 to \$20 per head in those provinces.

**Cow-calf sector:** Horned cows may be better at discouraging wolves and other predators than polled or dehorned cows, but not always

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KMvNdOY-ro&feature=related>).

Cattle without horns are less likely to hurt each other or the employees, though. Australian information suggests that the labor cost of dehorning calves is

approximately \$0.25. Even if it's ten times that amount, \$2.50 per head is considerably cheaper than the discounts imposed through market signals and horn taxes.

### Dehorning considerations

Producers are strongly advised to dehorn calves as early as possible for two reasons. Firstly, the procedure is less invasive in newborn calves, so growth performance is not impacted as much. Secondly, common sense and science both say that removing an established horn from an older animal is much more painful than removing the unattached horn bud from calves.

The other way to dehorn cattle is to use polled genetics. Most breeds do have polled bloodlines. A pair of Canadian studies published in 1996 and 1998 found miniscule difference in backfat depth between horned and polled bulls, but no differences in birth, weaning, or yearling weight, pre- or post-weaning growth rate, scrotal circumference, carcass weight, marbling score, ribeye area or lean meat yield. This has not entirely stopped the passionate debate about pendulous sheaths and other relative merits of horned vs. polled cattle in coffee shops around the world.

The current Canadian Beef Quality Audit underway at Alberta and Ontario packing plants in 2010-11 will update industry statistics and costs due to horns and other carcass quality defects.

Article from BCRC For more information, visit [www.cattle.ca](http://www.cattle.ca) or call 403.275.8558.

## Premise Identification Plan

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Premise identification (PID) is a critical element of a national traceability system. Provinces have been mandated to lead the implementation of Premises Identification and the PEI Department of Agriculture (PEIDA) is working towards meeting the FPT Ministers directive in partnership with the PEICP. For the beef industry, animal identification has been regulated and implemented on farm. The PEIDA will assign national premises identification numbers to the beef locations which can be used by industry when movement reporting becomes mandatory. Through new regulations, all farms, community pastures, exhibition sites, abattoirs or any other location where cattle may be found, will be given a Premise Identification Number. The PEIDA needs this information for emergency management (planning, preparedness, response and recovery). To acquire a new Premise Identification Number, forms will be sent out to producers asking general information about your operation to be filled out and sent back to the PEICP office. Once we receive this information, a number will be assigned to your operations. The PEICP has hired Amanda Tweedy who will be in charge of the traceability program. You can contact Amanda at [a\\_tweedy@peicattleproducers.ca](mailto:a_tweedy@peicattleproducers.ca) The information is collected under Section 31c of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988 c., F-15.01, as it relates directly and is necessary for emergency related activities including preparedness, prevention, response and recovery.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### April 6—Annual General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Farm Centre, Charlottetown.

Presentations by: Sean Firth – Market Trends; Dr. Edward MacAulay -General Animal Health. A light Lunch will be provided. For More Information contact Rinnie Bradley at PEICP.

### April 16—Planning for Business Success Workshop

9:30 - 3:30 p.m., Charlottetown

Modeled on the Environmental Farm Plan approach, the workshop and follow-up activity will be offered to PEI farmers so that they can self-assess their current farm business management practices and skills; build on the strengths they have identified; develop action plans, then implement sound business management practices and plans with business planning incentives. Lunch Included. No Cost. **Contact** Suzanne MacNeill 888-8040 slmacneil@gov.pe.ca

## Livestock Dealers License Requirement to Purchase Cattle in the province of New Brunswick.

We have been asked to share the following information with Island beef producers.

Anyone wishing to purchase cattle in New Brunswick, including anyone wishing to purchase beef breeding stock, veal calves, cull cows and dairy cattle marketed for slaughter must, by law, have a current livestock dealer's license issued by the NB

Cattle Producers. Also any person who purchases cattle in NB must deduct a \$3.00/head levy and forward them to the office by the 15th day of the month following the purchase of the cattle with the completed Dealer Fields Reports. If you have any questions please contact the NBCP office at 506-458-8534.

## Verified Beef Production Program

The Verified Beef Production Program is continuing under the direction of Justin Lawless. For more information please contact Justin at the PEI Cattle Producers office.



## 2011 Census of Agriculture – Mark your Calendar MAY 10, 2011!



In the early weeks of May every farmer in Canada will be receiving the 2011 census of Agriculture questionnaire. It will be updating Canada's definitive agricultural profile. It is more important now for all farmers to complete their census as they confront challenges such as high feed process, low livestock prices, high Canadian dollar and a challenging trade environment.

The Beef sector is important throughout Canada. In the 2006 census, the beef sector represented 27% of the 229,000 farms across the country. All provinces, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador, featured beef farms among the top 3 types of farms in their province. The 2006 census also provided insight into the impact of the BSE crisis on the Canadian Beef Industry.

Moving forward, trade challenges continue to be present along with exchange rate valuations and input costs. Participation in the 2011 Census of Agriculture will give beef producers a voice both locally and nationally on their present situation. It will inform Canadians the crucial role the agricultural sector plays in shaping our national picture. The Census of Agriculture, the backbone of Canada's agricultural statistics program, identifies trends and helps to illustrate the issues, opportunities and challenges within the agricultural community. Questions cover topics such as land use, crops, livestock, agricultural labour, machinery and equipment, farm finances and land management practices.

On May 10, 2011, add your voice to those of Canada's beef producers by counting yourself in on the Census of Agriculture. Fill out your questionnaire on paper and mail it back in the prepaid envelope or take advantage of the internet application which automatically adds totals and skips you through the parts of the questionnaire that you indicate don't apply to your operation. For more information on the 2011 Census of Agriculture visit <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2011/index-eng.htm>