



Chairman's Message

By Cameron MacDonald



Greetings to my Fellow Beef Producers:

As I write this, my last Chairman's message, I am watching the snow melt, but listening to weather reports that snow is on the way - spring will come soon.

The PEICP has been quite busy since the last newsletter. On October 21st, the Maritime Beef Council met with the four Atlantic agriculture ministers. From this meeting, a dialogue was opened to regional co-operation. In the month of November, we held 3 district meetings where we listened to producer's concerns about the new proposed levy collection system we would like to put in place.

I would like to thank all of you who participated in the first Maritime Beef and Pork Conference. It was a great weekend to meet and network with fellow producers.

December was a very productive month, including a meeting with the Hon. Gail Shea. This meeting was integral in achieving a meeting with the Hon. Gerry Ritz on January 6th. This was a very successful meeting which opened new opportunities to work with the Federal Government and Eastern Canadian red meat producers.

In the month of January a Technical Meat Cutter's Seminar was held in Charlottetown for local abattoirs and meat cutters. Representatives were present from BIC who demonstrated new meat cutting techniques.

In conclusion, I would like to thank fellow producers, board members and staff for their guidance and support for the last year as Chairman for the PEICP and look forward to seeing you at the AGM on March 9, 2009

All the Best,
Cameron

NEWSLETTER



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
CATTLE PRODUCERS

Contact Information

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

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Department of
Agriculture

www.gov.pe.ca/af/agweb/index.php3

Technical Meat Cutter's Seminar

On January 20th, 2009, 34 delegates attended a Technical Meat Cutter's Seminar at the Rodd Royalty Inn in Charlottetown. They represented provincial abattoirs, meat managers from supermarkets and private retailers. Throughout the afternoon, delegates heard presentations from Cameron MacDonald, a feedlot producer; Laura Waugh, a representative from Atlantic Beef Products; as well as specialists from the Beef Information Centre in order to get a gate to plate perspective on beef production.

The purpose of the seminar was to help retailers provide consumers with what they really want in order to increase the demand and consumption of beef.



Meat cutting demonstration

The main focus of the event was an actual cutting demonstration provided by BIC staff. They showed various ways to cut primals in order to get more profitability from the meat. They elaborated on the changing demographics and a common message throughout their presentations was that consumers are no longer seeking large

portion cuts; instead they prefer to purchase smaller medallions that they consider to be healthier, and easier to cook. Throughout the demonstration, new methods of cutting resulted in new cuts of steaks and small roasts that followed the correct flow of the muscle grain making them easier to cut and serve once cooked.

At the end of the day, delegates were treated to a hot meal that featured medallion steaks from ABP. During the meal they listened intently to a presentation from BIC on what it is doing to promote the consumption of beef both domestically and internationally through the Canadian Beef Advantage Brand. This event was sponsored in part by the Buy PEI Initiative, BIC, and the PEICP.

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

Although CCA is keeping us abreast of the Country Of Origin Labelling regulations being implemented in the US, additional information becomes available on a regular basis. For this reason we encourage you to go to the CCA's website where a page has been dedicated to COOL. The link to this page is as follows:

<http://www.cattle.ca/newsroom/NewsCurrent/COOLhomepage.htm>

The latest developments include a letter from Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture, Thomas J. Vilsack urging US packers to adhere to voluntary implementation of beef labelling, or face regulation changes that will force them to do so. Also available is a report on a meeting between CCA and Federal Minister Ritz in which trade action against the US and COOL was discussed.

AGM of the PEI Cattle Producers

The 2nd Annual meeting of the PEI Cattle Producers will be held at the Farm Centre on Monday, March 9th at 7:00pm.

The regular business meeting will be followed by guest speakers John Duynisveld, AAFC, and Scott Fife, Area Agronomist with Pioneer. In an effort to address

the loss of potato waste from Cavendish Farms, we have asked them to provide information on "Alternative Feed Solutions"

All registered producers welcome! Refreshments will be provided.

For more information please contact Rinnie Bradley at 368-2229.

Alternative Feed Solutions

AGM Speaker Bio's

John Duynisveld received his M. Sc. (Agr.) from Dalhousie University, through the NSAC and completed in 1999.

He has worked at AAFC Nappan since October of 2000 as a beef research biologist. The main area of his research is in the use of pasture in sustainable beef production systems, with additional work in feed efficiency, enhancing beef fat composition, and the use of by-products in beef finishing diets.

Current research projects include a collaborative project studying the relationship between beef cow net feed efficiency and milk production, the effect of pasture species on beef fat composition, and the use of extended grazing in winter calving beef herds to improve sustainability of beef farms. He also runs a pasture-based beef, pork, and free range poultry farm. He will be speaking on Alternative feeds.



Corn options

Scott Fife grew up on a farm growing corn, soybeans and cereals as well as raising beef and sheep. He attended the University of Guelph where he received a degree in plant genetics. During this time he began working for the Pioneer Corn Research Station in Coteau du Lac Quebec.

After completing his degree he began working fulltime as a Research Associate in the Pioneer Soybean Breeding Program in Chatham, Ontario for two years.

In the fall of 2008, Scott became the Area Agronomist covering Eastern Ontario and the Maritimes.

Topics covered include:

- Crop budget comparing corn silage vs. Hi Moisture corn vs. other crops
- Local corn production problems such as ear molds, stalk rots and european corn borer.
- New seed corn technologies.

Agriculture Innovation Program

The Agriculture Innovation Program was established to provide assistance for innovative projects that will yield positive economic benefits within the Prince Edward Island agricultural industry. This program will provide funds to farmers, groups of farmers, and agri-business to support investments in primary agriculture which contribute to on-farm profitability and competitiveness.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

Program Components/Sub-Programs:

- Value Added Opportunities for Agricultural Products** The purpose of this sub-program is to promote and accelerate the pre-commercialized development of new products in the agri-food sector.
- On Farm Diversification** Financial support is available to assist with innovative projects which lead to on-farm diversification including new crops, livestock, or alternative uses for agricultural products.
- Innovative Technology Evaluation** Limited financial support is available for the evaluation and demonstration of new technologies.

Due to limited space in this newsletter, we were unable to print the entire application, however; we encourage you to seek additional information by checking out the PEI Department of Agriculture website at <http://www.gov.pe.ca/af/agweb/index.php3?number=1022803> or calling: 368-4145 or

Contact Lynda MacSwain: Supervisor, Agriculture Innovation, Agriculture Resource Division, PEI Department of Agriculture
PO Box 1600, Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7N3, Email: lemacswain@gov.pe.ca

Strategic Planning

During the district meetings we informed producers of our intention to undertake some strategy planning for the Island's beef industry. We explained that the NSCP and NBCP were doing the same. Since that time, the NSCP has completed their strategy. We have acquired funding for ours and will be starting it soon. We are still determining the best way to

complete this quickly and still meet our objective to have a solid plan with input from all producers. We hope to incorporate much of the background information captured by the NSCP. Repeating the preliminary steps done by the NSCP would be a waste of time and resources. In the next few weeks we hope to choose a facilitator and organize several

sessions across the Island followed by a two day strategy session in order to capture the input from producers and identify goals and objectives for the industry. Please notice of these sessions I hope you will make an effort to attend and provide your input so we can develop a comprehensive plan that will incorporate ideas from all producers and help guide us forward.

VBP workshops now available



Beef producers across Canada wishing to participate in the VBP on-farm food safety program can now complete their workshops online. That will improve availability of the program in all regions, says the

national manager of the program.

The online workshops offer producers the same information and preparation they would receive at a live workshop, including an overview of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that support on-farm food safety, says Terry Grajczyk.

“This new online workshop feature is designed to improve VBP workshop access for producers in remote areas and

for others who simply prefer the convenience of online training,” she says. “With more and more producers today using the Web as a resource, we feel this online training tool is a good fit for VBP and its participants.”

For more information on VBP online workshops contact the provincial VBP coordinator listed under “VBP

Across Canada” at the VBP Web site, www.verifiedbeef.org

or Rinnie Bradley 368-2229

Beef Industry Initiative

The PEI Beef Industry Initiative has to date provided \$2.8 million to the industry.

Approximately 30 handling facility applications have been processed and we have received very positive feedback on how chutes and scales have made a difference to their operation.

The herd health program is modeled on the protocols used by the very successful Ontario cow-calf clubs. At the Maritime Beef and Pork Conference Dr Rob Bell and John Meilhausen gave an excellent presentation on value added calf production. If you would like a copy of their presentation please give Les Halliday a call. In general the protocol requires that all cows,

calves and bulls receive the required shots and boosted at appropriate times. We recommend that you work closely with your veterinarian to determine which products work best for your farm. To date we have processed applications covering approximately 1300 cow-calf pairs.

The heifer retention program is also being well received although the paperwork is causing a few problems including, documented minimum yearling weight of 800 pounds, EPD's on purebred heifers and

registration papers for F1's. However, to date over 175 heifers have qualified for funding through this program.

The Carcass incentive program is now complete and has

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provided \$1.019 million to the beef industry.

Preliminary analysis showed that the program achieved its

objective by improving the proportion of cattle grading AA or better with Y1 yield. Interestingly, I had a number of calls from cow-calf producers who received a higher price for their feeders as a result of the carcass incentive.

Hittin' The Road - Research Report

In an attempt to keep members informed of the activities of the PEICP, we will provide updates of some of the more pertinent meetings attended by PEICP reps.

Report on Research Meeting with AAFC in Moncton

by *PEICP Director Peter Veleun*

I recently attended a strategy session sponsored by the federal department of agriculture (AAFC). The meeting was held in Moncton and brought together industry representatives and those within the research branch of AAFC. Industry reps included; PEI Cattle producers, PEI Horticulture, PEI Potato Board, Cavendish Farms, PEI Federation of Agriculture, Dairy Farmers of PEI, Blueberry producers of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick Potatoes, Atlantic Grains Council, New Brunswick Dairy Producers and PEI NFU. The research branch was represented by Agriculture Canada staff from Charlottetown, Truro, Kentville, and Fredericton.

The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the future direction of the research being performed by AAFC. After two days of group discussions and brainstorming a pattern began to emerge. It was felt that research for the Maritimes should be conducted in the Maritimes. Research could and should pursue new crops/livestock but research on traditional crops and livestock should be maintained. AAFC staff should work closely with any work being done at the Atlantic Vet College or Nova Scotia Agricultural College. It was noted that a Maritime initiative would be given priority over a provincial initiative.

Several farmers expressed concern that any problems that occurred during the growing season were not investigated promptly. AAFC staff answered that they were given very strict instructions for their duties and had to apply to upper levels of AAFC for anything extra and this took time. It was felt that there should be a streamlined process for emergencies.

One strategy being discussed was the formation of industry "clusters" These would be a group of industry participants to represent the area and a particular commodity. I personally think the Maritime Beef Council is a step in this direction.



I feel it is important to represent our industry at meetings such as this. I managed to talk to two government officials about the Nappan Beef Station and I remarked how well suited the station is for teaching/research purposes as it is easily accessible from NSAC and AVC, and the importance of it being maintained.

One a lighter note; roast beef was served for lunch. I talked to the organizer and was assured that the next lunch would have ABP beef.

One of a number of feeding trials at the Nappan Experimental Farm

Directors Views

Hello, my name is Peter Verleun. I am a director of your organization.

Since becoming a director a year ago, I have become involved in the board and, let me tell you, it has been a learning experience. I never realized that a board could be so busy. This is the first time that I have been a member of a board that represents farmers from every corner of PEI and that, in itself, is a new and pleasant experience.

We have a full board meeting every month, sometimes in Kensington and sometimes at the Farm Center. Usually these meetings are four hours and we discuss everything. We often meet with the PEI Dept of Agriculture officials. We also participate in conference calls. These are often one hour long. In the last 3 months of 2008 we attended, as a group or as a single representative, over 18 various meetings. Sometimes these are day long activities so our farm work goes undone or we have to find someone to do the chores. Even for a regular meeting, with travel time included some Directors are away from their farms for nine hours. For the Chair, this can happen once a week or sometimes more.

Over the past year, we lobbied the provincial government which resulted in the Beef Industry Initiative (BII), which resulted in \$3.1 million. Part of this program was the Carcass Improvement Incentive, administered through the PEICP office. This provincial program gave the farmer an extra \$.08 or \$.12 cents per pound for cattle delivered to Atlantic Beef Products in Borden based on yield grades. As part of the BII application process, all farmers were also required to register for Agri-invest, one of the federal farm support programs. This program brought an additional \$6 million to the agriculture industry in PEI.

All beef farmers can apply for the federal "Advance Payments Program" (APP). This gives an interest free cash advance based on the number of market cattle in your herd. Because of lobbying by your board, this program is now available to Island producers. It fits under the emergency relief section of the federal department. Since the New Year, your chairman went to Ottawa to lobby to have the Severe Economic Hardship (SEH) designation for the APP extended for 2009, and to have payments for 2008 deferred. As a result, the Federal Government allowed APP money to be available until September 2010, and 2008 payments to be deferred for one year. We continue to lobby to have the SEH designation extended. Under this designation a producer doesn't have to get banks to sign off.

One of our directors is our representative on the Canadian Cattleman Association. This gives us an insight and a voice into the workings of the national association. Two of our directors are actively involved in the Maritime Beef Council. This group works with the three Maritime provincial organizations as a region to further our industry.

Our board was also instrumental in organizing the Mayday Rally held at the legislature last spring. We are hoping to see a repeat rally this year and may be looking for your support. It is very important to maintain a presence at all meetings. Progress may be small, but no progress will be made if we stop trying.

As we have formed a new organization with a new name, we have also developed a new letterhead. They three cows represent the three stages of beef production. The red and blue strands represent the soil and water of PEI. We are also developing a new website for our organization. As part of the website we will host a bulletin board for any announcements and any information that applies to us. The website will also have a "buy, sell, and trade" section.

I would also like to recognize our executive director, Ms Rinnie Bradley. She does all the office work and is well respected for her no nonsense work ethic. We are very pleased to have her. Just as an example of her work, in a recent week she worked a full day in the office on Monday. On Monday evening she travelled to Kentville, NS and attended two days of meetings there. She travelled home on Wednesday evening and worked her usual day in the office on Thursday. On Friday morning we left at 7 AM for a meeting in Halifax. We arrived home at 10 PM.

Now I will get to the point of my presentation. We do a lot, but we need money to continue doing this. Traditionally, we received all of our funding from the \$4 check off from all animals at slaughter. This worked fine up to recently. Feedlot operators are entitled to deduct \$2 from calves when calves are purchased and use this money to offset the \$4 check off at slaughter. The \$2 was rarely collected. The \$2 check off was supposed to be applied to all sales but this rarely happened when calves were sold out of province or out of country. Also, it often happens that cattle are sold to an out of province slaughter facility. Some of these businesses do not collect the levy for us. We call this slippage. To even out the levy process, the board has proposed a \$3 levy on the sale of the CCIA ear tags. We will also levy \$3 on cattle at slaughter.

To facilitate this, we also propose to participate in National Check-Off. This is a program by which \$2 of every levy collected will come back to the board for its operations. The last \$1 will be matched by federal money and can be used for a variety of things such as local research, advertising and product development. Every dollar we put toward worthwhile projects will be matched by federal money. We have presented this program at the district meetings but have run into resistance from members. We, as directors, are hurting on our farms just as much as every else. But, we have to keep trying. Having to reduce board operations will not accomplish anything. Progress is small but a slow down in our efforts will result in no progress.

We will be having a vote on this proposal in the months ahead. All registered cattle producers will be given an opportunity to vote. The vote will be over-seen by Murray Miles, the provincial government official responsible for boards and producer organizations. We are asking for your support in implementing this new levy system.