

**May 2005**

## **The President's Message**

*By Darlene Sanford*

As the warmth of the sun brings us to spring and, another growing season, we still face uncertainty about what the future holds for the beef industry. The recent provincial budget announced cuts to virtually all departments of government, including Agriculture. The PEICA will be meeting with the Minister once the number of employees taking the retirement package is known .

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association held its annual meetings recently in Ottawa. A number of resolutions were passed including one which instructed CCA to request that the Government of Canada immediately initiate dispute settlements under World Trade Organization (WTO) or North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) rules. A letter signed by CCA and 23 other organizations, has been forwarded to the Minister for International Trade and a reply is pending. These groups believe that dispute settlement is an essential element that the Government of Canada must use to achieve the re-opening of the US border.

The trade disruption with the US has forced fundamental changes to the North American beef industry. We have seen a rapid increase in slaughter capacity in Canada, while cuts are being made to processing in the US and an aggressive campaign to find new global markets for Canadian beef. During its annual meeting, the CCA revisited its Action Plan, and here are some of the highlights: Actions to create increased slaughter capacity in the shortest time possible. Actions that would protect and increase access to international markets. Extension and enhancement of the set aside programs to provide stability to cattle prices. Actions to fast track age verification within the CCIA system. Implementation of changes to CAIS to provide access to income support. Comprehensive evaluation of export certification, including BSE testing for market access. Identification of new international markets that could be accessed through greater certification. Announcement of intention to eliminate supplementary import permits.

There have been numerous lawsuits arising from the BSE issue. In one case, a Quebec farmer has filed a class-action suit against the federal government and animal feed company Ridley Inc. over mad cow disease and the U.S. border closure affecting Canadian beef exports. The farmer alleges that Ridley may have supplied tainted food to the Alberta cow diagnosed in 2003 with the disease, which caused the U.S. border to close to Canadian cattle. The suit was filed in Quebec Superior Court and is seeking \$100,000 in damages because of the border closings, causing the farmer's inability to sell his herd. It seeks certification as a class action on behalf of all affected farmers in the province. Other defendants in this case are the Solicitor General of Canada and the Ministry of Agriculture. In another case, a \$7-billion class-action suit was launched on behalf of 100,000 farmers in four provinces, who accuse the Federal Government of negligently allowing "mad-cow disease" to devastate the cattle industry. The lawsuit claims that a federal monitoring program incompetently lost track of 80 out of 191 imported cows it was supposed to track in case they developed signs of (BSE). Again in yet another lawsuit, the Canadian Cattlemen for Free Trade (CCFT) has served the first five of over 100 Notices of Arbitration under Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). CCFT members are exercising their right to claim damages when another NAFTA Government takes actions that give an unfair advantage to its own investors in the North American Free Trade Area. CCFT members are fighting back against these

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protectionist attempts to roll back the NAFTA because the U.S. Government appears unwilling or unable to do the job itself. The CCFT is made up of over 100 family businesses from across Canada. Their collective losses total well over \$300 million.

Meanwhile on the other side of the border dates for hearings in the USDA vs R-Calf case have been set for July 27. In the meantime, various groups like, the Government of Canada, the American Farm Bureau, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Tyson Foods, CCA and Alberta Beef Producers, along with 18 state farm organizations and 29 state cattle organizations all from the US, each filed an amicus curiae brief (a friend of the court) in support of the USDA's rule. These briefs offer additional information to the residing judge to help him make an informed decision. Some of these groups, along with four Conservative Members of Parliament, have also applied for intervener status and it is up to Judge Cebull to decide whether or not to grant this status. The same three judges from the Ninth Circuit US Court of Appeals will hear the appeals from the USDA and the National Meat Association. The date for these hearings has yet to be announced.

Back on this side of the border word of the pending closure of the Nappan Research Station has hit a nerve with producers. Representatives from various organizations that work with the beef industry in the Maritimes recently met with Agriculture Canada officials to discuss the closure of Nappan. This group has until June 30<sup>th</sup> to come up with a viable proposal to restructure the operations at the Nappan site, and ensure the continuation of beef research in the Maritimes.

On March 29 the Federal Agriculture Minister Andy Mitchell announced a \$1-billion aid plan for struggling Canadian farmers. Of the total, \$300 million will be set aside for beef producers who have been devastated by the U.S. border closure. About \$21 million will be paid to producers of other ruminants - such as sheep. Another \$480 million will go to farmers in the hard-hit grains and oilseeds sectors, with an additional \$150 million for farmers of other field crops. Ottawa said none of the money in the aid package had been previously announced, and payments will begin to flow to farmers immediately. For beef producers in PEI this aid package represents a direct payout of approximately \$19 per head based on 2003 TISP program numbers, as well as, 4% of eligible net sales for 2002 for those who participated in NISA or filled out a lengthy General Application Form.

A commitment from the Federal Government of \$50 million, and the Government of Alberta of \$37 million for the development of the Canadian Beef Industry's Beef Marketing Strategy has enabled the CCA to establish the Beef Market Development - Legacy Fund. This fund has been established to promote, research and market Canadian beef. BIC is currently developing a strategic plan to enable it to acquire some Legacy Funding for the work it does.

The PEI Cattlemen's Association has gone through an intense process of developing a Marketing Plan for a proposed commodity board for the beef industry of PEI. Throughout this process it has involved producers by asking for their input at information meeting. The necessity of the change to a commodity board from a commodity group has been a direct result of the national movement to implement a National Check-Off Program. Producers who have registered to vote in the cattle plebiscite, were in the process of sending in their ballots when this newsletter was being drafted. The support of producers is needed to form this commodity board and to be eligible to implement National Check-Off. We hope you voted in favour of forming a commodity board to enable the PEICA to move forward with this initiative while continuing to work for producers here on the Island.

### **Contact Information**

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Canadian Cattlemen's Association Daily Update 1-866-463-6222 [www.info-cca.ca](http://www.info-cca.ca)  
Maritime Cattle Market Sales Report. [www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/marketing/wmreport/feeder.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/marketing/wmreport/feeder.htm)  
Canfax Boxed Beef Report [http://www.canfax.ca/cbbr/cbbr\\_weekly.htm](http://www.canfax.ca/cbbr/cbbr_weekly.htm)  
Ontario Cattlemen Daily Market Report <http://cattle.guelph.on.ca/markets/railreport.html>  
Alberta Beef Producers Daily Market Report <http://www.albertabeef.org>

## Move to RFID Progresses Smoothly

by Megan Gauley:

CCIA Communications Coordinator

A timely transition to RFID will ensure that the Canadian cattle industry can continue to meet and exceed domestic and international requirements for animal health and food safety through an efficient trace back and age verification process.

As of September 1, 2006 all cattle leaving their herd of origin must be tagged with an approved RFID tag.

In order to facilitate bar coded tags on cattle that have left their herd of origin prior to September 1, 2006, the CCIA will also continue to recognize the bar coded tags until December 31, 2007.

Mabel Hamilton, Board Chair of the CCIA adds, "Since the fall of 2004, 1.8 million RFID tags have been registered in the system. We are pleased with how well these tags are being accepted by all sectors of the cattle industry, and we are confident that this transition will continue to run smoothly."

With bar coded tags no longer being eligible for sale as of July 1, 2005, the CCIA is recommending that all 2005 calves be tagged with CCIA approved RFID tags.

### CCIA Approved RFID Tags



Through a variety of tag trials both in lab and in the field, CCIA approved RFID tags must meet specific industry established criteria that adheres to our diverse Canadian climate and other established requirements. As outlined in the CCIA's Standards, Procedures, and Testing Document all CCIA approved RFID tags must have the following attributes:

- A CCIA Identification number unique to the individual animal
- CCIA Trademark (3/4 Maple Leaf and "CA" letters)
- Demonstrate exceptional retention and readability
- Are yellow in color with a yellow backing stud (unless otherwise approved)
- Meet all requirements in the Canadian National Standards for RFID technology

The CCIA encourages RFID tag manufacturers to submit a variety of RFID tag styles to the CCIA for trials. In the first 2 1/2 years of trials, 18 tag types (70,000 tags) were tested including 3 dangle type RFID tags. From these trials, 6 tags met the requirements and were approved for use within the Canadian Cattle Identification Program. "The CCIA and tag manufacturers recognize that many producers would benefit from a tag that allows them to accommodate visual herd management information", said Chris Giffen, CCIA Operations Manager. He adds, "Although we welcome all styles of RFID tags to be entered into trials, they must meet all requirements in order to be approved". There are several more tags in trials, including 4 dangle type RFID tags, with results expected near the end of summer. As an industry led nonprofit organization, the CCIA does not sell RFID tags however is confident that the further introduction of various tags will create a more competitive market place. In an effort to increase efficiency the CCIA has also standardized the color of approved tags. In order to more effectively identify the presence of approved RFID tags, the CCIA requires that all approved RFID tags are yellow in color. Chris Giffen adds that, "Having the CCIA RFID tags a standardized color

allows producers to tag in their chosen color for herd management. They then have the option of removing unnecessary herd management tags from previous owners without the concern of CCIA tags being cut out. Through our superior standards and commitment to effective and efficient disease trace back, the CCIA continues to examine how we can maintain our role as a world leader in animal identification”.

## Community Pastures Update

Since May of 2003, the Canadian Cattle Identification Program has been subjected to a higher level of scrutiny and evaluation domestically and by our international trade partners. In order to meet the ever increasing demands of the global animal health and food safety expectations, all tagging exemptions will be removed from the Health of Animals Regulations. This regulatory amendment will require all cattle to be tagged prior to leaving the herd of origin, even if going to community pasture, exhibition site, test stations or veterinary clinics (unless going to an approved tagging site). Although an official date for the amendments to come into effect has not been determined, the CCIA recommends that the industry continues with its responsible leadership by tagging all cattle prior to leaving the herd of origin, regardless of the regulatory amendments.

## Why RFID Technology?

With so many forms of identification technology available on the market, why is RFID technology optimal for the Canadian Cattle Identification Program? RFID technology is essential in providing accurate and efficient trace back information. It allows electronic reading of numbers which in turn provides an accurate read every time, as the line of site required by the previous bar code tags is not necessary. However, the benefits of RFID technology stem beyond simple identification. With international markets indicating that Age Verification may be a prerequisite for export, RFID technology will ensure that Canada has an accurate and comprehensive Age Verification system. Other proactive initiatives that RFID directly impacts include providing the necessary basis for full animal movement tracking. “It is the way that the beef industry is going. Consumers want to know there is a safety system in place and RFID technology will provide an excellent basis for this type of tracking”, said Julie Stitt, CCIA Executive Director.

Other popular forms of identification include implants and metal curl lock ear tags. Chris Giffen, Operations Manager for the CCIA states that, “If an implant were to be used, an external tag to identify that an implant has been inserted would still be required. In addition, these types of identification are not tamper evident and often require a veterinarian to assist in application. The CCIA is certain that RFID technology will allow producers to continue the application process as they did with the previous bar-coded tags without additional resources.”

### Birth Date Registration

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) has taken an important step in the effort to regain and rebuild export markets for Canadian beef. CCIA has made available to Canadian beef cattle producers the ability to register birth date information for their cattle. Birth date information can be registered on the website <https://www.clia.livestockid.ca/CTS/>. Producers will be required to enter their 4 digit PIN which can be obtained from their tag supplier. Be sure to keep this PIN number in a safe place for future reference when you buy more tags. Birth dates can be entered individually OR use one date which is the date your first calf was born that season.

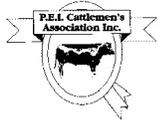
With countries such as Japan considering reopening to beef from cattle under 21 months of age, registering birth date information may become a marketing advantage. To register on the website, cattle producers must provide their name and address as well as a CCIA tag number registered to them. Confidentiality of information will be maintained. Feedlots, auction markets and packers accessing the system will only be able to obtain birth date information linked to a CCIA tag number. Producers without access to the Internet are encouraged to submit their information through someone who has access.

For More information contact :



#210, 6715- 8th Street NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7H7  
www.canadaid.ca ~ 1-877-909-BEEF

## Invitation to Participate in Pasture Soil Sampling and Nutrient Management Project



The PEI Cattleman's Association, the PEI Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture and the federally funded Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program delivered to beef producers by the Canadian Cattleman's Association would like to invite PEI cattle producers to participate in a pasture soil testing and nutrient management project in 2005.



The objectives of the Project are to demonstrate soil sampling and nutrient management in pastures. Pasture soil testing and nutrient management should result in healthier and more productive pastures, more digestible feed for cattle, optimize fertilization and reduce GHG emissions in agriculture.



We are soliciting up to 22 interested PEI cattle producers who would like to participate in this project. Producers involved with the project would take soil samples on pasture land and implement nutrient management planning on some or all of their pasture land, based on nutrient balance sheets completed by Shauna Mellish, Nutrient Management Coordinator, PEI Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Aquaculture. The nutrient balance sheets developed in these projects will be returned to the producers and the recommendations explained. Producers interested in taking advantage of this opportunity should contact the PEI Cattleman's Association as soon as possible. An information package detailing the project will be sent to all interested producers. The federally funded Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program delivered to beef producers by the Canadian Cattleman's Association will pay for the soil test analysis costs through the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre, up to a cost of 12 samples per participating

producer, up to a maximum of 22 producers participating in the project. In addition, the PEI Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Aquaculture currently offers farmers \$5/ac for up to 200 acres through the Sustainable Resource Conservation Program to complete nutrient balance sheets.

A workshop is planned for the participating producers in the fall of 2005, to discuss the importance of pasture soil analysis, how to take soil samples, and how to interpret soil test reports.



Agriculture and Agri-food Canada  
Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

## Continuing Confidence in Canadian Beef

*By: Janet Bryson, Communications Manager  
Atlantic Region, Beef Information Centre*

BIC has developed a new consumer resource, highlighting the safety of Canadian beef. ***“Continuing Confidence in Canadian Beef”*** explains the comprehensive measures that are in place to protect human and animal health from BSE.

“BIC has worked very hard in educating consumers about the safety of Canadian beef,” says Marg Thibeault, National Communications Manager with the Beef Information Centre. “In addition to the website we developed, [www.bseinfo.org](http://www.bseinfo.org), we also wanted an easy to read resource for consumers on the full suite of measures in this country.”

***“Continuing Confidence in Canadian Beef”*** is designed to communicate the facts about BSE. As a result, the resource helps to strengthen the trust between consumers and Canadian beef producers and instill confidence in the safety of our products. The booklet was funded through the National Beef Industry Development Fund (NBIDF).

“We wanted to be sure that we were on the right track with the booklet,” says Thibeault. “Our focus was to educate consumers, in a proactive way, without causing any undue alarm. So we tested the resource with Canadians across the country for their reaction to the piece and we were very pleased with the results.”

Consumers said that the booklet improved, or supported their confidence in the effectiveness of measures to protect human health from BSE. They were also pleased that the booklet highlighted the website [www.bseinfo.org](http://www.bseinfo.org) as an ongoing source of information. Overall, the majority of consumers found the information in the booklet as “good to know.”

The booklet stresses that Canada is a minimal risk country for BSE, and that under Canada’s meat inspection system, all animals are examined by trained meat inspectors and determined as healthy before entering the human food chain. There are answers to common questions on BSE and a focus on Canada’s BSE safeguards, including:

- a ban on beef cattle, products and materials from any country not recognized as BSE free;

- the declaration of BSE as a reportable disease;

- the national testing system targeting higher risk cattle;

- a feed ban on ruminant to ruminant feeding;

- a mandatory trace-back system for cattle;

- and the removal of SRM – those tissues that may contain the BSE agent – from all cattle entering the human food supply.

**“Continuing Confidence in Canadian Beef”** was distributed through the May edition of Reader’s Digest, to their subscribers.

## **Cow-Calf Feeding Workshop Nappan, NS**

Cattle producers in Eastern Canada attending a recent successful cow/calf feeding workshop in Nova Scotia heard that using better feeding strategies can improve cow-calf herd production and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

More than 60 cattle producers from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, attended the one-day, early-April workshop at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Experimental Farm, at Nappan, Nova Scotia.

The workshop was organized with the cooperation of provincial governments, AAFC, private consultants, the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre (ECSWCC) and funded through the cattle sector of the federal Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program for Canadian Agriculture (GHGMP). The GHGMP is administered by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA).

Along with a hands-on look at cattle facilities at the AAFC farm, presentations during the day included: Climate Change - The need for promoting sustainable farming practices, by Gordon Fairchild with the ECSWCC; Impact of Johne's Disease and BVD in the cattle herd, by Dr. John Van Leeuwen of the Atlantic Veterinary College; Forage quality evaluation with Mike Price, a New Brunswick forage specialist, and Les Halliday a P.E.I. cattle specialist; Cattle cow body condition scoring, by Guy LeBlanc, a New Brunswick cattle specialist, and Brian Trueman with AAFC; Round bale value, by Sean Firth, a livestock specialist with Agrapoint International; and Feeding options and strategies, with Les Halliday.

A summary of the talks by the eight cattle and crop specialists is being posted on the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre website at <http://www.ccse-swcc.nb.ca/>. The proceedings will also be available in a CD format by contacting Gordon Fairchild, Soil Specialist ECSWCC Grand Falls, N.B., Phone: (506) 475-4040

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## PEICA Herd Health Program

The PEICA has approved funding for a PEI Herd Health Program for cow-calf producers. If you are interested in participating in this program please contact Rinnie at the PEICA office at 368-2229 before **May 20, 2005**. Strict health protocols must be followed. Cattle scales with head gate will be available (supply your own truck) to process calves and cows if required. After May 20<sup>th</sup> a meeting(s) will be held to discuss program details with producers.

### Health Protocol

Veterinarian is consulted regarding vaccines and health protocols

Cow herd including bulls are vaccinated annually for IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV and Lepto

Calves are castrated a minimum of 6 weeks prior to sale and less than 8 months of age.

Calves are dehorned a minimum of 6 weeks prior to sale

Calves are vaccinated and boosted for IBR, PI3, BRSV, BVD and Pasteurella. as per manufacturers protocol

Calves are treated with endectocide for internal/external parasites

### Producers Participation

Enrol in the program

Producer must show receipts from vaccine and endectocide purchases.

Producer must keep health protocol records on forms supplied by program administrator.

Tag calves with approved PEICA herd tags

There is a possibility that certain manufacturers would provide a special rebate to PEI producers using their products.

## Canada's Beef on-Farm Food Safety Program



Producers  
joining the  
Quality Starts

Here, Verified Beef Production program help maintain consumer confidence in Canadian Beef.

Canada has a reputation around the world for high quality beef. Anything that has the potential to affect beef sales in Canada or internationally has the potential to affect the entire industry.

Consumers expect beef products to be safe, and everyone in the food production chain has a role to play in food safety. From producers who raise cattle to those who process, sell or prepare beef at home - everyone must do their part to minimize risks to beef safety.

Recognizing the importance of consumer confidence in Canadian beef, a team of industry leaders working with specialists from across the beef industry developed a national on-farm food safety program for beef producers called the Quality Starts Here (QSH), Verified Beef Production (VBP) program. It's a producer-led program designed to help implement and verify good production practices on-farm that minimize food safety risks.

Producers can attend training workshops to learn more about potential food safety risks on-farm and which good production practices they can implement will minimize those risks. Producers wishing to prove that they are "walking the talk" can request verification of their on-farm management practices through third party certification process.

**These are the fundamentals:** Good Production Practices (GPPs). These beef management practices, identified by the program organizers and a team of industry specialists as most critical to on-farm food safety, are outlined in an easy to use reference manual. In many cases, producers are already implementing these practices on-farm as part of their herd health and nutrition programs.

**Effective records.** By documenting management practices that reduce food safety risks, such as treatment, producers show they are implementing GPPs on-farm. As well, documentation helps producers make informed decisions. Producers are in a much better position to manage what they can measure.

### **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)**

When GPPs are understood and applied in a consistent manner by everyone involved in the operation they become "Standard Operating Procedures". The national QSH/VBP program specifies SOP's in areas of animal health, cattle feeding, cattle receiving and shipping, pesticide control, biosecurity, personnel hygiene and training. When SOP's have been implemented the beef operation can be certified.

### **Benefits to Beef Producers:**

**Improved production efficiency:** The practices in the QSH/VBP program are part of fundamental good management, minimizing food safety hazards and producing high quality meat as efficiently as possible.

**Reduced risk of Government regulation:** The QSH/VBP program is a proactive and producer driven initiative

**Increased Market Opportunities:** Beef competitors in the food industry, nationally and internationally have developed procedures for on-farm food safety. Increasingly the market will be looking for suppliers who can demonstrate the same vigilance.

**Demonstrated reasonable care:** This program provides a verifiable system of actions taken. This shows that producers are responsible and accountable to consumers.

**Certification Recognition:** Farm operations will have added credibility from the profile of certified good production practices.

For more info visit

[www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/af\\_Beeffoffs.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/af_Beeffoffs.pdf)