



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

NOV 2023

Chair's Message – Dennis Hogan

I wanted to take a moment to express our growing concern about the current state of cattle herd numbers on the island. While we face various challenges, rest assured that we are actively working alongside the government and our partners to address this issue. By fostering collaboration and implementing strategic initiatives, we aim to boost cattle herd numbers and ensure a sustainable future for our industry. Together, we can overcome these hurdles and secure a prosperous future for PEI cattle producers.



Program Updates

PEI Cattle Producers Assurance Program

In response to the growing demand for transparency in the beef industry, the PEICP is dedicated to collaborating with the Maritime Beef Council (MBC) and the Atlantic Beef Products (ABP) to ensure that this goal of conducting 8 audits can be achieved. To support this objective, the PEICP is exploring funding options for RFID Readers for individuals who have completed various training programs at the Canadian Cattle Learning Centre, including VBP+ Online Training, the Atlantic Beef School Cattle Handling Systems Module, and online Humane Handling training. These funding options aim to encourage participation and recognize the successful completion of these training programs. More information on the funding program will be announced in the coming months.

2023–2025 Livestock Genetic Enhancement Program & Safe Cattle Handling Program

The 2023–2025 Livestock Genetic Enhancement Program & Safe Cattle Handling Program aim to tackle the challenge of improving genetic traits in cattle production. By incorporating genetically superior animals, producers can consistently achieve high-quality livestock products while reducing overall costs. The program emphasizes the importance of performance testing seedstock sires to gather data on growth rate, reproduction, and composition. This information is then used to calculate Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs), which provide an estimate of an animal's genetic merit as a parent. The program advocates for a balanced approach to selection, as focusing solely on a single trait may result in unintended consequences. Additionally, ultrasound analysis and the evaluation of residual feed intake play a crucial role in selecting sires for branded beef programs. Producers prioritize production efficiency, with a particular focus on pregnancy rates to ensure a consistent calf crop during weaning. The program acknowledges the vital role of breed societies in capturing production performance data and generating EPDs, benefiting both seedstock and commercial producers seeking hybrid vigor. Further details regarding the funding program will be announced in the upcoming months.

Atlantic Beef Products Inc. Update – Russ Mallard



Record high cattle prices.

Over the past year, cattle prices have risen sharply due to a multi-year drought in the USA and Western Canada. This has forced producers to ship their beef cattle and beef cows to market due to a lack of feed. This glut in cattle worked their way through the market last year. Over the past year, due to the shortage of cattle, cattle prices rose to record prices earlier this year and they remain at historically high levels, although less than the highs of last spring. As a result, boxed beef prices to domestic and international customers are now at record high prices. This has resulted in reduced demand, particularly for premium cuts such as prime ribs, striploins, and tenderloins. This resulting drop in demand has meant many packers, including Atlantic Beef Products Inc. have been forced to respond to this supply situation over the past several months by canceling some production days to reduce the amount of inventory on hand. Thank you for your understanding in advance, should we have to cancel any more production days for this reason in the months ahead.

Changes made to PEI Certified Island Beef™ program to increase supply of CIB cattle.

Changes were announced recently to the CIB™ program. The specifications are the same, but the main requirement now is that beef must be finished on PEI farms and there is no longer a requirement to purchase calves from CIB approved cow-calf operations. Premiums are paid to feedlots only now. This has resulted in more cattle producers signing up for the CIB program to qualify for the extra premiums paid for qualifying cattle. To find out more or to sign up for the CIB program, please contact Bruce Andrews at 902-437-3224.

The Importance of more Grade AAA and less Grade AA grade cattle.

Atlantic Beef Products Inc. is pleased to pay premiums for certain Canada Grade AAA or Canada Grade Prime cattle. Although the base price for AA and AAA cattle is the same, there is a lost revenue opportunity for producers if they ship their fat cattle too early and consequently miss the AAA grade. When fat cattle are shipped to the plant too early and miss the Canada AAA grade, it hurts everyone, the producer and the plant. Please take the extra time it takes, to get your cattle a bit heavier and filled out to maximize your financial return for your efforts. This will also be a great help to the plant because Grade AAA and higher beef is what most of our customers want and what they are willing to pay a bit more for, which is why we pay premiums to producers for qualifying carcasses.

Future Markets come down from recent highs.

Over the past several weeks, futures markets are off their highs from September due to tough market conditions and reduced demand both for exports and domestic markets. As someone once said, "The cure for high prices is high prices". This is proving to be true as high prices for beef to the consumer, is resulting in lower demand and less demand for cattle. Pork and chicken are being advertised in retail flyers far more often as a result, depressing demand for beef.

Atlantic Beef Products Inc will be adjusting its hours for the Christmas Holidays.

We are closed on December 25 and 26 as well as January 1st. In addition, there will be no kill on December 22nd.

Thanks for sending us your cattle this past year and we wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Member Profile – Matt Hardy

Farm location: Clinton, PEI



What inspired you to become a cattle producer, and how did you get started in this profession?

I grew up on a small mixed farming operation. After years of being away, farming is still a familiar part of life to me. My inspiration is to leave a legacy farm for the next generation. I started back into farming with beef cattle. I decided I would take the plunge and by some cows and calves. I keep adding as much to the herd as possible each year and continue to grow that way.

What are some of the challenges you face as a cattle producer, and how do you overcome them?

The biggest challenge I face now is very similar to any start-up business. Overhead costs are high until you've built some equity in your operation. The only way to overcome this will be to grunt out the first few years. Basically, working for free until the farm is more established.

What part of being a cattle producer do you love?

I love relaxing peaceful cattle after fresh bedding and feeding. Working with your hands to see a result is rewarding. I treat the cattle with respect and care and it's rewarding to see them grow over the months. To me, there is nothing like seeing a new calf hit the ground. It doesn't matter if you've seen one, or a thousand born, I tend to just stop and admire the moment.

How do you stay up-to-date with the latest trends and advancements in the cattle industry, and how do you apply this knowledge to your operation?

Today, staying up to date is easier than it's ever been in our history. I have more up-to-date information in my handheld device than what our grandfathers would have had in an entire collection of encyclopedias. More than that, we can be connected with various social media platforms to share experiences and advice. I'm constantly watching videos and reading articles about the latest in beef cattle production.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in becoming a cattle producer, and what skills and qualities do you think are essential for success in this field?

Advice that comes to mind would be, have multiple streams of income. Starting out in cattle will never support you financially. Be prepared to spend all your free time in farming activities. However, if it's your passion, this will not be a sacrifice. If you are prepared, don't wait. The sooner you can start a herd, the faster it will grow over the years.

Maritime Beef Council Update - Amy Higgins

The Maritime Beef Council has a lot on the go these days. Next big event on the agenda is Beef Day @ Dal which is an inaugural event this year. We have decided to move the Maritime Beef Conference to every other year to be able to make more impact and add some of these other events without detracting from it. The plan is to rotate the Beef Day @ event between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward with the Beef Conference remaining in New Brunswick.

Price Insurance has been another large part of the project listing for several years. There was a very successful round of focus groups in December 2022 all over the Maritimes and the feedback that came out of those focus groups helped move the file forward. At the July Federal-Provincial-Territorial meetings in Fredericton, NB- "The federal government and the maritime provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) have agreed to continue discussions on a Livestock Price Insurance program for producers in those provinces.". We have a short-term bridge project that is underway that is working towards. We anticipate doing a round of producer sessions between January and February 2024 to be able to provide more specific information.

The Atlantic Beef School modules are coming in the new year as well. On February 10th (in Moncton, NB) there will be an in-person edition of the Farm Business Management module put on by Steve Kenyon from Greener Pastures Ranching. Steve is typically well known in the regenerative grazing circles, but he also has a firm understanding of enterprise management and how the bottom line needs to drive decisions. His experience with agriculture makes the day very relatable and relevant. There will be a virtual offering of Reproductive Systems Management (details TBD) module which addresses strategies to avoid one of the cow-calf operators biggest= "money pits" . . . The open cow. It also goes into utilizing tools like synchronizing, embryo transfer, and artificial insemination to take advantage of genetic improvement.

There will be a dairy-beef nursery school offered in person March 21st in PEI. Dr. Steven Roche from Acer consulting is the main feature. This module will feature management strategies to get the calves healthy and able to express their genetic potential down the road in the beef value chain. The focus is from birth to weaning.

Production Clubs have been another ongoing project. The calf club has sold within 3 feeder sales so far this fall, and more is being recruiting for the spring feeder run. The Feedlot Club that started in PEI, will be replicated in Carleton County NB and Annapolis Valley NS. 2 meetings per geography should happen before the end of March.

There is a cow-calf survey that will be released near the end of November. This is a Canadian Survey that replaces the Atlantic Cow-calf survey so that all producers across the country are asked the questions in the same way so that it can inform extension and future strategy development. This survey will happen every 5 years so please take time to fill it out. We know the burden of surveys on Ag producers is high- but this is the most cost-effective way that we can collect data that is really needed to inform decisions and back the various project funding requests that we co-develop with the various stakeholders. There are a number of research projects that there has been collaboration on that are in various stages of development and going through the various funding mechanisms. Keep an ear open- as there may be opportunity for producer involvement to ensure that on farm relevance is achieved!



Training Opportunities

Holland College is offering new flexible microcredential training in climate change technology. The training is online and asynchronous, meaning participants can begin at any time and progress at their own pace over 5 weeks. Throughout the course, an experienced instructor with a strong background in agriculture will provide support and guidance.

This training is fully funded by Canadian Colleges for a Resilient Recovery (C2R2) and the Government of Canada's Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program.

More info found here:

<https://www.hollandcollege.com/about/customized-training/microcredentials.html>



Verified Beef Production Plus Training

Getting started on VBP+ is pretty straightforward and takes just a small time commitment.

To get involved please click the link:

<http://www.verifiedbeef.ca/producer-enrolment/the-5-easy-steps.cfm>



PEI FARM TECHNICIAN
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

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Helping to train a skilled and sustainable workforce for PEI Agriculture

COST

This **2 Block** training program is subsidized 100% if EI eligible, by SkillsPEI through the Labour Market Development Funding

You Will Learn :

BLOCK I - Crop Production

- Field and Cropping
- Soil & Nutrient Management
- Pest Management
- Forages, Potatoes, Legumes
- Cereal Corn and Grains
- Computers

5 WEEK BLOCK STARTING



January 8th 2024



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MORE INFORMATION

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