



OCA Weekly Update – January 25, 2008

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Visit <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/weekly-updates/weekly-update.asp> to download archived OCA Weekly Updates as PDF files. They are posted by 5pm on the day of issue.

In Brief:

Ontario Agriculture Calls on Farmers to Pressure Ottawa

GUELPH – Ontario's farm organizations have assembled a list of essentials needed from Ottawa to KEEP Ontario agriculture in business. Following a recent funding announcement from the provincial government, Geri Kamenz, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) promised: "All of Ontario agriculture will now turn its focus on the federal government to provide its share of economic support to our producers." Representatives of a broad spectrum of Ontario commodity organizations met earlier this month to discuss their specific needs. They reviewed Ottawa's recent proposals for Ontario farmers and found them seriously lacking. "Given the state of Canada's hog industry, we need immediate relief beginning with a short term loan program and improvements to the Federal Government's AgriStability program. Our requests have so far been ignored." said Curtiss Littlejohn, Chairman of Ontario Pork. "The industry appreciates efforts by the government to speed up payments within existing programs but this is not enough. Value-added industries are at risk. Farm families in ridings across Canada are affected." said Ian McKillop, President of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association. These sectors rely heavily on exports. The high value of the Canadian dollar caused traditional markets to dwindle.

Statistics from pork, beef and horticulture indicated massive losses on all products sold to export. Pork producers reported losing between \$35 and \$50 a hog while beef losses are worse than during the BSE crisis. Farmers need changes to the business risk management programs available to them starting with the 2007 program year. "The financial woes of these farmers are getting worse every day - it's time for the Federal government to act," says Kamenz. The OFA and Ontario's commodity leaders are calling on all farmers to get in touch with their MP to reiterate the value of Ontario agriculture and the solutions that are necessary to sustain a strong rural economy.

Backgrounder

Ontario farm organizations are calling on the Federal government to help farmers who are struggling to survive in an export industry that has been severely impacted by the rise of the Canadian dollar. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and a broad spectrum of commodity group representatives met recently to determine solutions the federal government needs to provide in order to maintain the second largest industry in Ontario and third largest employer which in turn maintains strong rural communities.

Overall, prices for livestock and animal products were 6.9% below their November 2006 level as cattle, calf and hog prices continued to slide. This was the sixth consecutive year-to-year decline for these major commodities.

The cattle and calf index (87.0) fell for the seventh consecutive month to its lowest level since the fall of 2004. Falling prices pushed the hog index to its lowest level since December 1998.

The following is a solid list of solutions both the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and Ontario commodities are asking farmers to take to their MPs.

Financing for hog farmers to address the immediate liquidity issues in the pork sector with the financing to be repaid by hog farmers when market conditions improve.

A deficiency payment to farmers based on the number of cattle and calves sold during this period of depressed market prices.

Modifications to the CAIS/Agri-Stability program to ensure farmers have a realistic support level under margin-based programming.

An increased contribution rate and a higher cap in the Agri-Invest program. This will help mitigate the program benefit reduction some farmers will incur when their CAIS coverage level is reduced under the Agri-Stability program.

Improve "product of Canada" food labelling rules to ensure consumers can accurately identify products containing food actually grown in Canada.

Implement and fund an exit plan that will provide an orderly, managed and fair exit program for Ontario tobacco farmers and provide transition support for those communities that have long been economically dependent on tobacco production and who suffer from its decline.

Acceptance of the Agri-Flex proposal as part of the new agricultural policy framework, Growing Forward. This proposal would provide federal funding for provincial specific programming for farmers in each province. In Ontario, the proposed Agri-Flex funding could be directed to provide federal funding for the 3-year (2007-2009) RMP pilot program, a permanent RMP program for Grain and Oilseed farmers and other programs proposed by Ontario commodity organizations, such as the development of additional RMP programs for horticulture and livestock sectors.

Extension of SDRM for horticulture until such time as adequate production insurance has been developed for all fruit and vegetable crops.

Provincial Funding Announcement: December 14, 2007

Specific information for producers on the new Ontario Cattle, Hog and Horticulture Payment is available by calling Agricornp at 1-877-838-5144.

*A PDF is also posted on the OCA Web Site at
<http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/PDFs/2008/InfoSheet-Dec.14Announcement.pdf>*

Changes to Regulation 54 of the Beef Cattle Marketing Act Came into Effect on January 1, 2008

Please note that due to GST reduction from 6% to 5% on January 1, 2008 and changes to regulations of the Beef Cattle Marketing Act (check-off increased to \$3.00/head on January 1, 2008), OCA has developed revised check-off forms which will be applicable to all transactions made on or after January 1, 2008.

- OCA Check-off Deduction Remittance Report for Individuals
- OCA Check-off Deduction Remittance Report for Licensed Dealers

The new check-off forms, as well as more detailed information, are now available at <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/Checkoff2008/index.asp>, as PDF files.

Making Tough Decisions in Tough Times

Need help to analyze your business in this new reality?

Aimed at the pork, beef and veal sectors, this conference is intended to provide real time information to help producers and agribusiness make sound business decisions in this changed business environment.

Topics will include: effects of the dollar, competitiveness, things to consider when transitioning your business, risk management, among others.

Pre-register by February 8th and Save!

Payment and registration information must be received by February 8th to receive reduced rates.
If you are a registered producer with OCA, Ontario Veal, Ontario Pork or are an OPIC member you can preregister for \$30.
If you are not a producer or OPIC member, you can preregister for \$40. Registrations will be accepted at the door at a cost of \$50 for the day.

Register now at: www.toughdecisions.ca
See Web site for details on topics and speaker bios.

Speakers include:

David Irvine Irvine and Associates Maurizio (Moe) Agostino Farms.com
Dr. Vincent Amanor-Boadu Kansas State University Steven Meyer Paragon Economics
Dr. Gary Smith Colorado State University Kevin Grier George Morris Centre

Venue:
LONDON CONVENTION CENTRE
300 York Street, London ON, Canada
Supporting Partners:

See Web site for funding partners

Opportunities through Changes: Growing into the Future

January 30th – February 1st, 2008
Westin Nova Scotian Hotel Halifax, Nova Scotia

Join the Canadian Farm Business Management Council for the Managing Excellence in Agriculture Conference January 30th to February 1st 2008 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This conference is a leading edge professional development and networking opportunity for farmers, farm families and their advisors. It involves engaging speakers, interactive workshops and relationship building networking opportunities. This is a learning conference that will leave delegates with a toolbox of farm management ideas and strategies to implement on the farm when they return home.

This year we will be hosting the event at the harbour front Westin Nova Scotian Hotel. Our dinner banquet will take place at the historic Pier 21. With spa services and childcare available onsite, and many other extra-curricular activities available in the area, we have once again strived to make this a family event.

The conference sold out last year – be sure to book your calendar and join us this year! To register, go to www.farmcentre.com Early bird deadline is January 7th, 2008. Final registration deadline is January 25th, 2008.

Culinary Tourism Seminar

Calling all; Food & beverage Owners/Managers, Caterers, Food Producers, *Farmers* and all tourism businesses or individuals with an interest in the Kawartha's Culinary Tourism Development.

Date: Monday, January 28, 2008
Time: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Location: Elmhirst's Resort, 1045 Settler's Line, Keene
Cost: \$25 per person, includes lunch

RSVP by Friday, January 18, 2008 – Registration is limited

For further information contact Lisa Greig, Peterborough & the Kawarthas Tourism at (705) 742-2201 Or Karen Jopling at the phone below or visit the Kawartha Choice Web site at www.kawarthachoice.com

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Canadian Farm Business Management Council Agriwebinar Series

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council is again this year promoting their Agriwebinar series. All sessions are free. In order to view the webinars you must register, but only once for all of them. For more information and to register go to <http://www.agriwebinar.com/>

2007/2008 CFBMC Agriwebinar Schedule - Each Monday at noon EST

February 4
Roger Samson *Resource Efficient Agricultural Production Canada*
Switch Grass for Bioheat in Canada

February 11
Mélanie Tremblay *MAPAQ*
Does On farm Biogas Production Hold a Future in Québec?

February 18
Don Jonovic *Family Business Management Services, Ohio*
Surviving Family Farming Whitewater

February 25
Mara Jernigan *Fairburn Farm, BC*
Slow Food: Good, Clean and Fair

March 3
Paul Paquin *Institut des nutraceutiques et des aliments fonctionnels, Université Laval*
Dairy Ingredients Issues

Oxford Steps to Leadership 2008 – It's Back

Who?

Any community-minded resident of Oxford County. Maximum of 25 participants will be accepted, including up to 5 students age 15-19 years.

Why?

To encourage the personal development of Oxford County residents; to expand the leadership skills of community-minded individuals; and to initiate organizational and community involvement in Oxford County.

Where?

Each session will be in a different location throughout Oxford County. The program will include a 1-day workshop and a 1-day educational bus tour throughout the County.

On people's list of fears, it's number one! Learn tools and techniques to speak effectively in a large or small group setting including tips for thanking and introducing guest speakers. This session will also give you the tools to write an effective media release to communicate with the media.

Find out more about Oxford County and its many assets. Economic, agriculture, agri-business, historical and cultural aspects will be highlighted on this tour.

Monday, February 4th, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. - *Tavistock*
"Asset Mapping"

A planning and goal setting session where you will have a chance to set some realistic goals. Learn more about Oxford County's diversity—the area, the people and their values and cultures.

Monday, February 11th, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *Norwich Museum, Norwich*

"Team Building & Group Dynamics" - Have fun while getting the job done is the theme for this session. Methods on how to keep groups working in a positive and innovative direction will be addressed.

"Effective Organizations" - Learn ways to make meetings more productive and how you can help create an organization that can make a difference.

Find out how to run your organization smoothly while dealing with community issues.

Saturday, February 23rd, 2007 – 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. "1-Day Workshop" - *Mt. Elgin Community Centre, Mt. Elgin*

"Responsibilities and Liabilities of Directors" - What is your responsibility and liability as a board member? Responsible procedures for organizations and individuals elected to a board will be discussed using case study examples.

"Stress & Time Management and Conflict Resolution" Time management tips that will help you meet your goals successfully and not stress you out! Learn how organizations and individuals can resolve conflicts effectively.

"Marketing & Fundraising for your Organization" - Learn ways to market your organization to create community awareness and build sustainability. Fundraising is often necessary—learn the essential features for any successful activity.

Monday, March 3rd, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *Fusion Youth Centre, Ingersoll*
"Working with the Media"

Print, radio and TV—learn to utilize the press to your advantage. In addition, learn ways to achieve clear writing.

Monday, March 17th, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *County Building, Woodstock*
"Community Issues and the Political Process"

Group discussion on local and organization issues and how to deal with them. What is the process and how do you effectively lobby for change? How do you foster greater involvement in the democratic process to the benefit of individuals and the community?

Monday, March 31st, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *North Blenheim Insurance, Bright*
"Ironing Out Community Issues"

Learn some effective problem solving techniques that will help you formulate an action plan for your community.

Monday, April 7th, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre, Ingersoll*
“The Challenge - Shaping Our Future”

Where will you go from here? Organizations that will be successful in the future need to think creatively and be willing to adapt to change. A motivational speaker will put the program into perspective and challenge participants to strive for excellence. Graduation ceremony will follow.

How?

For more information or to obtain an application form, contact: Brenda West or Patti Arts, Program Co-ordinators, Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs (519) 537-6621. brenda.west@ontario.ca or patti.arts@ontario.ca

Cost?

(Including all resource materials)

\$200.00 per participant (Due November 30th, 2007 or \$250.00 after November 30th, 2007)

Student (age 15-19) \$100.00 (Due November 30th, 2007) or \$150.00 (after November 30th, 2007)

Note: If financial constraints are a concern, please contact us.

Participation in Steps to Leadership will:

- Build self-confidence and leadership skills
- Allow you to learn from other local leaders
- Help you and/or your organization become more effective and
- Involve you in the planning of your local community

Don't Sit Back! Get Involved! Registration is limited, so APPLY NOW!

Growing Your Opportunities, Traction and AgriBusiness ecampus

Growing your Opportunities:

This workshop is for Farm and rural based entrepreneurs who want to learn how to tap into new value added opportunities from idea to market.

Over The Two Days You Will:

- Learn how to identify, find and evaluate new value added ideas
- Learn how to put your ideas into action using the seven step value added development process
- Learn how to connect with the right market channels
- Learn how to find innovative ways to market your products and services
- Learn how to build a business that can support your new idea
- Learn how to create a dynamite, but simple business plan
- Learn how to finance the different stages of your new ventures
- Learn how to save time and money in the development process
- Learn how to price your products properly
- Learn how to manage your risk
- Explore case studies of how innovative rural and farm businesses that have developed their value added ideas and opportunities

- Follow a new product from conception to integration into the marketplace

Growing your Opportunities
 Orangeville
 Day 1: Sat. Feb. 23
 Day 2: Sat. Mar. 1
 \$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities
 Hanover
 Day 1: Mon. Feb. 25
 Day 2: Mon. Mar. 3
 \$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities
 Clinton
 Day 1: Tues. Feb. 26
 Day 2: Tues. Mar. 4
 \$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities
 Port Hope
 Day 1: Thurs. Feb. 28
 Day 2: Thurs. Mar. 6
 \$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities
 Napanee Area
 Day 1: Mon. Mar. 17
 Day 2: Fri. Mar. 28
 \$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities
 Tillsonburg
 Day 1: Wed. Mar. 19
 Day 2: Wed. Mar. 26
 \$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Traction

Traction: Skills to Grow is a program developed by Guelph-based Juice Inc. The program has been well received by farmers and producers within the agricultural community, who are attending with their spouses and family members to ensure they are aligned in the planning of their farm's future. Traction participants, ranging in age from their early 20s to their late 60s from various commodity groups, have consistently rated the program a 4.9 on a five-point scale. Uniquely designed in conjunction with producers, advisors and industry leaders, Traction provides a pragmatic and process-based approach to four main areas:

- Taking stock
- Innovation
- Communication
- Goal Setting
- Planning

What participants are saying:

- “Seeing the real life examples helped me to see how understanding the other person’s point of view can solve problems that otherwise seemed impossible to solve.”
- “This gave me a whole new way of approaching problems and relationships”.
- “Problems just don’t seem to be overwhelming after taking this course. Our family left with tools to help us keep unstuck and moving ahead more smoothly.”
- “Being successful as a farmer requires ongoing development of not only your industry knowledge but your communication skills. This high energy program gave me new tools to take home that will keep the ideas flowing.”

Traction

Ancaster
Thurs.-Fri., Feb 17-18
\$895 + tax

Traction

Belleville
Mon.-Tues., Feb. 4-5
\$895 + tax

Traction

Exeter
Thurs.-Fri., Feb 7-8
\$895 + tax

Traction

Hanover
Wed.-Thurs., Feb. 21-22
\$895 + tax

AgriBusiness eCampus Project
<http://agribusinessecampus-com.rkd.ca/default.aspx>
Your Home – offered by the University of Guelph, Kemptville Campus
Launch date – early February
variable

AgriBusiness eCampus Project

The AgriBusiness eCampus (ABeC) is a web-based and face-to-face learning centre offering a range of topics to assist farmers in managing their farm business in today’s increasingly complex environment. The ABeC offers a “one-stop-shop” for practical, real-world business solutions through life-long learning in agribusiness management and entrepreneurship.

Our eCourses are designed by top experts in the agribusiness field with you in mind. Our focus is on developing skills that are immediately applicable to you and your farm business. Courses are self-paced and self-assessed, allowing you to fit your learning around other farm and family commitments. Courses provide you with networking opportunities through question and answer sessions and streamed discussion with industry experts and peers. Course facilitators are always just a phone call or click away to answer your questions and assist you with any course-related or technical problems.

Courses are currently being offered in: Strategic and Business Planning, Succession Planning, Domestic and Global Marketing, Commodity Marketing, and Human Resources.

Farm Succession Planning Courses 2008

Introduction to Farm Succession Planning (Producer focus)

February 6, 2008; 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Fergus OMAFRA
Workshop registration - \$110.00

The introductory courses will help producers, farm business advisors and consultants to: identify the five steps in developing a farm succession plan; prepare essential documents for farm succession; engage farm families with succession planning tools & approaches and coach farm clients to better assess their current situation; help resolve conflict; and generate options and make decisions related to farm succession planning.

The advanced level course will see participants increase their knowledge and learn more about a variety of tools to assist with succession planning, deal with conflict, promote open and honest communication and assess family readiness for change.

Course instructors Peter Coughler, Succession Planning & Business Agreements Program Lead with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in Brighton and Blake Bexon of Bexon Consulting in Ailsa Craig bring an extensive background of skills and understanding to the courses. Participants will appreciate their straight forward approach to learning and instruction. For more information or to register, please contact The Centre for Rural Leadership at (519) 826-4204 or register online at www.aalp.on.ca

Your Farm – Planning for the Future

Join us for a one day workshop for farmers, to explore the steps in developing a plan for the sale of a farm business, transferring ownership to family members, or a transfer/sell upon death.

Tuesday February 12, 2008

Mount Albert Lions Hall

9:30 - coffee and registration
10:00 to 3:30 - workshop

Cost: \$15.00 per person. This includes the workshop and lunch
Please make cheques payable to "York Region Federation of Agriculture"

To Register Contact:

Kim Empringham
Secretary, York Federation of Agriculture
12900 Kennedy Road
Stouffville, Ontario
L4A 7X5

Phone 905-888-1234

Email: mandk.empringham@sympatico.ca

The agenda will focus on planning for the future transfer or sale of a farm business. Topics include goal setting, communications, tax and legal implications, business structures and agreements, financial considerations and retirement. There will be time for discussion, questions and case studies.

Workshop leaders are Rob Gamble, Finance and Business Structures Program Lead (OMAFRA) and Peter Coughler, Succession Planning & Business Agreements Program Lead (OMAFRA).

The workshop has been planned and developed in co-operation with the York Region Federation of Agriculture.

Minister Ritz Meets with Mexico's Alberto Cárdenas Jimenez

MEXICO CITY, Mexico, January 22, 2008 - Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, Alberto Cárdenas Jimenez, and the Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, met today to discuss and review common strategic agri-food issues.

"In the global economy, Mexico and Canada are strategic partners, sharing common interests and goals," said Secretary Cárdenas. "As partners, we must look beyond NAFTA, and look for new and more creative ways to maintain the benefits originally conferred by this Agreement, as well as to strengthen the very special relationship that exists between our countries. This would benefit both our consumers and producers."

"Canada and Mexico share many values, as well as personal and historic links," said Minister Ritz. "It is an important partnership that goes beyond trade to include collaboration and forward-looking initiatives that benefit farmers and the agri-food sectors business in both of our countries."

Canada and Mexico share concerns about certain aspects of the U.S. Farm Bill, in particular as it relates to the provisions for mandatory country-of-origin labelling. Our countries consider that these measures will have a negative impact on our commercial relations rather than supporting the forward-looking strategies that promote market development in the North American Region.

Both Ministers welcomed the opportunity to meet during Minister Ritz' first official visit to Mexico. The meeting provided an opportunity for Minister Ritz and Secretary Cárdenas to underline the recent signing by the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales, Agrícolas y Pecuarias (INIFAP) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada of a Memorandum of Understanding on scientific and technical cooperation. They enthusiastically noted the mutual interest in pursuing collaborative research projects on dry beans, an area where there are benefits for both countries.

Minister Ritz and Secretary Cárdenas also reviewed progress made on the trade elements of the agendas of the Canada-Mexico Consultative Committee on Agriculture (CCA) and the Agri-Business Working Group of the Canada-Mexico Partnership.

Minister Ritz and Secretary Cárdenas agreed on the importance of normalizing trade in cattle and beef on the basis of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) principles as soon as possible. To this end, they agreed that technical officials will meet during the third week of February 2008, to review the final details of the appropriate protocols to enable trade to resume.

With regard to seed potatoes, Secretary Cárdenas and Minister Ritz agreed that technical officials should work expeditiously with a view to resuming trade as quickly as possible.

Likewise, they committed to move forward in Canada's willingness to undertake a commodity-based risk assessment approach for the export of poultry products and by-products from Mexico.

Mexico is Canada's second largest source of agri-food imports after the United States. Canada imported about CAN \$890 million in agri-food products from Mexico in 2006. In that same year, Canada exported CAN \$1.3 billion in agri-food products to Mexico, making Mexico Canada's fourth-largest export destination for agri-food products. With respect to our commercial relationship, Secretary Cárdenas shared with Minister Ritz that aiming to have balanced agricultural trade between our two countries will be of mutual benefit. As a result, Secretary Cárdenas is proposing a mission of Mexican agricultural exporters to visit Canada to promote their products. In this context, Secretary Cárdenas asked Minister Ritz to support the Mexican industry in their work to introduce their products in the Canadian marketplace.

More Resources on the Way for Farm Families

McGuinty Government Expands Training and Outreach Services

TORONTO - Ontario farm families will have more resources available to help them manage their way through financial pressures and changing market conditions.

The province is providing \$500,000 to boost business training resources and enhance services offered by a phone-in help line for farmers.

- The Centre for Rural Leadership will receive \$300,000 to identify and deliver the greatest immediate business training needs for the hog, beef and horticulture sectors.
- The Farm Line, a not-for-profit organization that provides front-line peer support and referral services, will receive \$200,000 to enhance its telephone support services and to provide additional training for peer volunteers and regional services, particularly in areas with greater numbers of producers needing assistance.

"We want to ensure that farm families have all the information they need at their fingertips, from emotional support services to affordable business and market development training opportunities," said Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Leona Dombrowsky. "We are working to put farmers on a stronger footing, emotionally and financially."

"We are committed to developing effective training that will empower Ontario producers and strengthen our agricultural industry," said Rob Hannam, president, The Centre for Rural Leadership. "This investment will assist us in delivering on that goal."

"Farm and rural families face unique work and living circumstances. When times are tough our service can really be a lifeline for them. This funding will strengthen the support we provide," said Susan Klein-Swormink, manager, The Farm Line.

The funding is part of \$150 million in assistance announced in the 2007 Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review to increase competitiveness and help hog, horticultural and cattle farmers.

Finding a Future in Beef

Are you under the age of 40, involved in the Ontario beef industry and live in East Central Ontario?

If so, you are invited to an evening workshop that will address the opportunities, challenges and needs of young beef producers

When: Thursday February 7th, 2008
6:30pm to 10:00pm

Where: Scugog Community Centre, 181 Perry Street, Port Perry
Cost: \$20.00, dinner included

Tentative Agenda:

- Dinner and networking opportunity
- A Successful Farm Model: Adapting to Change for Survival, Betty Green, owner of a 1000 cow herd family farm. Betty is also involved with the West Hawk Lake Zoning Initiative and the Quality Starts Here-Verified Beef Production program in Manitoba.
- Planning for the Future: A facilitated discussion on opportunities, challenges and needs of Ontario beef producers, Marilyn Bidgood and Eric Lawlor, OMAFRA

Who should attend?

Anyone involved in the beef industry under the age of 40 who lives in the Simcoe, York, Durham, Northumberland, Peterborough, City of Kawartha Lakes, Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox and Addington counties. This includes beef farmers, veterinarians, abattoir or processor owners, and auction mart owners.

Why should you attend?

If you would like an opportunity to network with other farmers and individuals involved in the beef industry, then this workshop is for you. Not only will you meet people with similar interests, but through the round table discussions you will discuss your similar needs and challenges. You will also provide input to the facilitators about the types of resources and educational vehicles young farmers need.

This is a pilot workshop that may be extended to other areas in Ontario or may become a province-wide initiative. The ultimate goal is to establish a networking and training resource for the beef industry at a one-stop shop.

To register contact:

Marlene Werry
Rural Economic Development Officer
The Regional Municipality of Durham
Box 623, 605 Rossland Road East, 5th Floor
Whitby ON L1N 6A3
Tel: 905-668-4113 Ext.2609
Fax: 905-666-6228
Email: marlene.werry@region.durham.on.ca

**University of Guelph Beef Cattle Transportation Study:
Assistance of Beef Producers Requested**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is currently assessing how cattle are transported in Canada with intentions of changing the laws and regulations that govern the industry. Changes proposed by CFIA may increase trucking costs for beef producers. In an effort to better understand current transportation conditions for the movement of cattle in Canada, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association is funding a University of Guelph research study to examine how current transportation conditions (space/loading densities and travel time) impact animal welfare, health, and performance for weaned calves and yearlings (500-900 lbs). The objectives of this research are to determine if current procedures for transporting cattle ensure animal welfare and how they impact health and performance after arrival. The ultimate goal of this work is to ensure animal welfare while increasing the demand for Ontario grown beef.

The help of beef producers is needed in this study to collect data on cattle loads that are received at feedlots and to follow their health for approximately 8 weeks after arrival. Surveys have been constructed to collect data from producers and truckers on the same loads of cattle during transit and following arrival. The more information that can be collected on how cattle are transported in Canada will provide CFIA with industry data that will support current trucking regulations without the need for the proposed costly changes. Please consider participating in this research study to provide valuable information on the Ontario Beef industry. If you would like to participate in this benchmark study or desire more information, please contact one of the University of Guelph researchers involved in this study by telephone or e-mail: *Matt Thrower* (519- 827-1346 or e-mail mthrower@uoguelph.ca); *Ken Bateman* (519-824-4120, Ext 5-4006; kbateman@ovc.uoguelph.ca), *Ira Mandell* (519-824-4120, Ext 5-3337; imandell@uoguelph.ca), *Tina Widowski* (519-824-4120, Ext 5-2408; twidowsk@uoguelph.ca)

BIC Bits

BIC Teams Up to Work with US Chefs

The Beef Information Centre (BIC) and the Canadian Consulate Detroit recently co-sponsored an event in Ferndale, Michigan at the invitation of the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine, Detroit Chapter of the American Culinary Federation (ACF). The event is part of BIC's objective to work with the ACF chapters to establish a better understanding of Canadian beef quality attributes with chef members. At the same

time BIC uses these opportunities to connect with local distributors to seek additional volume opportunities in these key markets.

The Michigan event attracted more than 120 member chefs to learn about the 'Canadian Beef Advantage' (CBA) and experience the quality of AAA grade Striploin Medallions. Chef, Joe Beato of Via Nove Restaurant, along with his brother and nephew, provided the preparation assistance BIC needed to present the consumer driven cut concepts (medallions) in the Via Nove kitchen. The hosts themselves turned out to be huge fans and proponents of Canadian beef products. This event had one of the best turnouts of recent meetings and members left with a strong understanding of Canadian beef and key resources to promote Canadian beef within the foodservice industry.

"This type of event in the United States is the focus for BIC in 2008," says Marty Carpenter, a chef and director of US market development for BIC. "Delivering the CBA messages to a broad group of end-users is clearly an opportunity to positively affect 'pull-through' and generate understanding and confidence of Canadian beef from the grass-roots level." America's finest chefs are members of the ACF and the Detroit event will create additional exposure for BIC and Canadian beef prior to upcoming ACF Regional Conferences in Colonial Williamsburg and Cincinnati that BIC will attend this spring.

BIC is implementing a comprehensive strategy to define the CBA with the US trade. This strategy includes scientific research and consumer testing of Canadian beef products, market research targeting retail and foodservice sectors, as well as educational materials to communicate the CBA to meat professionals. All of the efforts to define and communicate the CBA are designed to enhance returns to the industry and increase demand for Canadian beef products. For more information on BIC's work in the United States visit www.canadianbeef.info.

2008 OCA Annual General Meeting "Meeting Our Challenges"

February 20 and 21, 2008
Doubletree International Plaza Hotel
655 Dixon Road, Toronto
Reservations: 1-800-222-8733

Call by February 8th and ask for the "Ontario Cattlemen's Association" block of rooms

Agenda Highlights

Wednesday, February 20

****Registration 7:30am - 10am****

Convene 10am

- Election of reps (4) to Board of Directors: Cow Calf / Feedlot / Backgrounder / Eastern Region
- Election of reps to Feedlot and Cow Calf Committees
- Election of Directors to CCA
- Presentation of Environmental Stewardship Award

Guest Speakers:

- Hon. Leona Dombrowsky - Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
(to be confirmed)
- Hon. Gerry Ritz - Minister of Agriculture & Agri-food Canada *(to be confirmed)*

Reports from:

- OCA President and Executive Director

- Ontario Corn Fed Beef program
- Canada Beef Export Federation
- Canadian Cattlemen's Association
- Beef Information Centre
- CCIA
- CanFax (market update / outlook)

7:00pm Annual Banquet
with after-dinner Entertainment by Award-Winning Comedian, Derek Edwards

Thursday, February 21

Convene 9am

- Proposed Amendments to OCA Constitution
- Debate on Resolutions
- Presentation of Pasture Award
- Guest Speaker: Ted Schroeder , Kansas State University "*Meeting Our Challenges through Vertical Coordination*"
- Panel Discussion - "*Meeting Our Challenges*"
 - Participants (confirmed): Mike Buis, producer/OCA Advisory Councillor, Kent County
 - Jim Oehmke, CEO, George Morris Centre
 - one more participant to be confirmed

Moderator: Dan Ferguson, OCA Verified Beef Production - Quality Starts Here Coordinator

Spousal Program

Wednesday, February 20 - 2:00pm

Presentation by:

Anita Stewart, Author and Culinary Activist - "*The Power of Women in Agriculture*"
sponsored by: Daco Animal Nutrition

Thursday, February 21

Shopping trip to *Square One* shopping centre

Cattlemen's College®

Tuesday, February 19 - 7:00pm
Plaza C - Doubletree International Plaza Hotel, Toronto
Sponsored by: Pfizer Animal Health
in conjunction with the OCA 2008 Annual Meeting

Program:

Stan Jacobs, General Manager, Douglas Lake Ranch, British Columbia: "Herd Protocols and Marketing Cattle in an Ever-Changing Environment"

Dr. Maury Bredahl and Mike von Massow - University of Guelph, Dale Kaliel - Alberta Department of Agriculture and Food: "Benchmarking for Improved Performance"

Gord Colliar, Pfizer Animal Health: "Cowboy Humour"

The Ontario Co-operative Association invites you to a
Co-operative Development Toolkit Workshop.

- Learn more about co-ops
- Connect with local business resources
- Discover why the co-op model works

This workshop will be held Wednesday February 6, 2008 at the W.I.S.H Centre, Chatham from 1 to 4pm. Please see the attached invitation for more information about the workshop. This workshop is FREE. However, we ask that you pre-register to allow us to adequately prepare. To register or if you have questions please call 1.888.745.5521 ext. 31 or reply to this email to indicate your attendance.

Tanya Gracie
Ontario Co-operative Association
tgracie@ontario.coop
1-888-745-5521 ext. 31

BIO AGM

February 19th, 2008
1pm

The DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre
550 Dixon Rd, International Room C
Toronto, Ontario

Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario Conference 2008

February 19 and 20, 2008
9 am to 8 pm day one 9 to 3:30 day 2
Best Western Lamplighter Inn, London ON
\$235 for non memb includes most meals and banquet

Speakers, John Phipps of Farm Report & John's World, Alistair Polson, New Zealand, Moe Russell, Iowa, Terry Schneider, Illinois, Larry Brown, Ohio, Shawn McRae, Glengarry, George Cornelissen, Martin Van Raay Topics: Irrigation with Drainage Tiles, Manure in No-Till, Great Lakes NO-tillers, Trends in Agriculture, Conservation Tillage, Cover Crops, Getting/Retaining good Help, Planter/Drill modifications, Fertilizer Materials and Placement, Guidance and Auto Steer Systems.

Contact: Lorraine House (519) 769-2443

Willabar Ranch Long Yearling Black Angus Bull Sale

March 18

at the ranch
Claresholm, AB
Contact: (403) 625-2060

**Saunders Andemar 3rd Annual
Purebred Charolais Bull Sale**

March 8th 2008 at 2pm
Keady Livestock Market.
Be our guest for lunch 11:30am sale day
Contact: Brent: (519) 986 4165 or Pete: (519) 871 4703

Northern Powerpac Bull and Heifer Sale

2 p.m. Saturday, April 12, 2008
Temiskaming Livestock Exchange
New Liskeard, Ontario

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This report prepared with the assistance of Dr. Doug Powell's team at the Universities of Guelph and Kansas State. This service does not allow emails to be sent by responding to this email directly. If you have questions or comments, please contact Lianne Appleby at lianne@cattle.guelph.on.ca

A) CALIFORNIA: Lawmakers seek to delete raw milk rules

18.jan.08

Sacramento Bee

Dennis Pollock

<http://www.sacbee.com/111/story/646222.html>

Just two weeks after new restrictions on raw milk took effect, the California Assembly Agriculture Committee was cited as voting unanimously this week to repeal them after the state's two raw milk producers said they would go out of business if they had to comply.

Assemblywoman Nicole Parra, the Hanford Democrat who supported the new limits last year and is now leading the charge to repeal them, was cited as saying she was deceived by agriculture officials in the Schwarzenegger administration who said the limits had broad support.

The story says that as the committee met Wednesday, hundreds of raw milk backers protested the tighter restrictions on bacteria counts, which took effect Jan. 1.

Parra's measure, Assembly Bill 1604, would stop enforcement of limits for raw milk of 10 coliform bacteria or less per milliliter until June 30. Effective July 1, it would fix the limit at 50 coliform bacteria or less per milliliter. Co-authors are Assembly Republican leader Mike Villines of Clovis and Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, D-Los Angeles.

The story says that the 90-minute hearing opened with sharp criticism of the state Department of Food and Agriculture, none of whose representatives appeared before the committee. Parra, the committee's chair, said she was misled by department staff who "purposely omitted mention of opposition to the bill." She also faulted the agency for not contacting the two producers, Organic Pastures Dairy Co. in Fresno County and Claravale Farms Inc. in San Benito County. And she shouldered some of the blame for "not grilling my ag consultant and (the department) more thoroughly."

B) NEW YORK: Lodi farmers argue for right to sell raw milk

18.jan.08

Gannett News Service

Dan Osburn

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080118/NEWS01/801180345/1002>
WATERLOO — Lawyers for Seneca County farmers and the state Agriculture and Markets Department were cited as arguing Thursday before an administrative law judge about whether the farmers are violating state law by distributing unpasteurized dairy products to a select group of people. The owners of Meadowsweet Dairy LLC, Steve and Barbara Smith of Lodi, charge their 110 members small fees to maintain the company's only asset, a herd of cattle, and in turn supply them with raw dairy products.

Gary Cox, lawyer for Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund who represented Meadowsweet, was quoted as telling Administrative Law Judge Susan Weber, "These people have a fundamental right to produce their own food and to consume it. They're going to nourish their bodies the way they want to." The story says that the Smith family has decided to abandon the state-regulated method for milk production and opted for the new communal approach because they feel pasteurization is unhealthy, Cox said. They launched their venture last March.

The Agriculture and Markets Department argued that Meadowsweet has broken state agriculture laws by providing unpasteurized dairy products without a special license.

Numerous attempts by state officials to bring the company in line with the law has failed, said state Ag and Markets spokeswoman Jessica Chittenden.

C) MASSACHUSETTS: When it comes to milk, some dairy farmers seek a raw deal

18.jan.08

Vermont Press Bureau

Peter Hirschfeld

<http://www.timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080118/NEWS01/801180388/1002/NEWS01>

MONTPELIER -- At Applecheek Farm in Hyde Park, local customers, according to this story, fill up mason jars with raw milk from a spout affixed to the Clark family's bulk tank.

The story says that farmers get \$5 to \$7 a gallon for their unpasteurized, un-homogenized milk in Vermont, significantly better than the \$1.72 or so they're presently fetching in the commodity market.

"If I could sell 50 gallons a day, that'd make just such a huge difference for me," John Clark said Thursday.

But Clark can't sell 50 gallons a day. A Vermont law passed in the 1980s sets a 25-quart daily sales limit on raw milk. On Thursday, in the Statehouse, lawmakers and farm advocates unveiled legislation that would abolish the cap on raw milk sales and allow farmers to advertise their wares, a practice also prohibited under Vermont law.

Amy Shollenberger, director of Rural Vermont, said during a press conference that the proposal will infuse the rural economy with a new revenue stream and preserve the state's dairy farms.

Some health professionals and agriculture officials, though, urge caution in widening the consumption of a product that has been linked to bacterial outbreaks that can cause serious illness and, in some cases, death.

Dr. Catherine Donnelly, a University of Vermont professor and food microbiologist, was quoted as saying in a telephone interview Thursday, "It's generally accepted in my profession that raw milk is a source of bacterial pathogens that can cause illness."

D) US: January 2008 update on feed enforcement activities to limit the spread of BSE

24.jan.08

From an U.S. FDA press release

http://www.fda.gov/cvm/CVM_Updates/BSE0108.htm

To help prevent the establishment and amplification of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) through feed in the United States, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) implemented a final rule that prohibits the use of most mammalian protein in feeds for ruminant animals. This rule, Title 21 Part 589.2000 of the Code of Federal Regulations, here called the Ruminant Feed Ban, became effective on August 4, 1997.

The following is an update on FDA enforcement activities regarding the ruminant feed ban. FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) has assembled data from the inspections that have been conducted AND whose final inspection report has been recorded in the FDA's inspection database as of January 12,

2008. As of January 12, 2008, FDA had received over 59,000 inspection reports. The majority of these inspections (approximately 70%) were conducted by State feed safety officials, with the remainder conducted by FDA officials.

Inspections conducted by FDA or State investigators are classified to reflect the compliance status at the time of the inspection based upon the objectionable conditions documented. These inspection conclusions are reported as Official Action Indicated (OAI), Voluntary Action Indicated (VAI), or No Action Indicated (NAI).

An OAI inspection classification occurs when significant objectionable conditions or practices were found and regulatory sanctions are warranted in order to address the establishment's lack of compliance with the regulation. An example of an OAI inspection classification would be findings of manufacturing procedures insufficient to ensure that ruminant feed is not contaminated with prohibited material. Inspections classified with OAI violations will be promptly re-inspected following the regulatory sanctions to determine whether adequate corrective actions have been implemented.

A VAI inspection classification occurs when objectionable conditions or practices were found that do not meet the threshold of regulatory significance, but do warrant advisory actions to inform the establishment of findings that should be voluntarily corrected. Inspections classified with VAI violations are more technical violations of the Ruminant Feed Ban. These include provisions such as minor recordkeeping lapses and conditions involving non-ruminant feeds.

An NAI inspection classification occurs when no objectionable conditions or practices were found during the inspection or the significance of the documented objectionable conditions found does not justify further actions.

The results to date are reported here both by "segment of industry" and "in total". NOTE – A single firm can operate as more than one firm type. As a result, the categories of the different industry segments are not mutually exclusive.

RENDERERS

These firms are the first to handle and process (i.e., render) animal proteins and to send these processed materials to feed mills and/or protein blenders for use as a feed ingredient.

Number of active firms whose initial inspection has been reported to FDA – 267

Number of active firms handling materials prohibited from use in ruminant feed – 165 (62 % of those active firms inspected)

Of the 165 active firms handling prohibited materials, their most recent inspection revealed that:

0 firms (0%) were classified as OAI

5 firms (3.0 %) were classified as VAI

LICENSED FEED MILLS

FDA licenses these feed mills to produce medicated feed products. The license is required to manufacture and distribute feed using certain potent drug products, usually those requiring some pre-slaughter withdrawal time. This licensing has nothing to do with handling prohibited materials under the feed ban regulation. A medicated feed license from FDA is not required to handle materials prohibited under the Ruminant Feed Ban.

Number of active firms whose initial inspection has been reported to FDA – 1,077

Number of active firms handling materials prohibited from use in ruminant feed – 473 (44 % of those active firms inspected)

Of the 473 active firms handling prohibited materials, their most recent inspection revealed that:

0 firms (0%) were classified as OAI

8 firms (1.7 %) were classified as VAI

FEED MILLS NOT LICENSED BY FDA

These feed mills are not licensed by the FDA to produce medicated feeds.

Number of active firms whose initial inspection has been reported to FDA – 5,207

Number of active firms handling materials prohibited from use in ruminant feed – 2,544 (49 % of those active firms inspected)

Of the 2,544 active firms handling prohibited materials, their most recent inspection revealed that:

0 firms (0%) were classified as OAI

43 firms (1.7 %) were classified as VAI

PROTEIN BLENDERS

These firms blend rendered animal protein for the purpose of producing quality feed ingredients that will be used by feed mills.

Number of active firms whose initial inspection has been reported to FDA – 398
Number of active firms handling materials prohibited from use in ruminant feed – 191 (48 % of those active firms inspected)

Of the 191 active firms handling prohibited materials, their most recent inspection revealed that:

0 firm (0%) was classified as OAI

3 firms (1.6 %) were classified as VAI

RENDERERS, FEED MILLS, AND PROTEIN BLENDERS MANUFACTURING WITH PROHIBITED MATERIAL

This category includes only those firms that actually use prohibited material to manufacture, process, or blend animal feed or feed ingredients.

Total number of active renderers, feed mills, and protein blenders whose initial inspection has been reported to FDA – 6,628

Number of active renderers, feed mills, and protein blenders processing with prohibited materials – 505 (7.6 %)

Of the 505 active renderers, feed mills, and protein blenders processing with prohibited materials, their most recent inspection revealed that:

0 firms (0%) were classified as OAI

22 firms (4.4 %) were classified as VAI

OTHER FIRMS INSPECTED

Examples of such firms include ruminant feeders, on-farm mixers, pet food manufacturers, animal feed salvagers, distributors, retailers, and animal feed transporters.

Number of active firms whose initial inspection has been reported to FDA – 19,481

Number of active firms handling materials prohibited from use in ruminant feed – 6,275 (32 % of those active firms inspected)

Of the 6,275 active firms handling prohibited materials, their most recent inspection revealed that:

0 firms (0%) were classified as OAI

155 firms (2.5 %) were classified as VAI

TOTAL FIRMS

Note that a single firm can be reported under more than one firm category; therefore, the summation of the individual OAI/VAI firm categories will be more than the actual total number of OAI/VAI firms, as presented below.

Number of active firms whose initial inspection has been reported to FDA – 21,630

Number of active firms handling materials prohibited from use in ruminant feed – 6,927 (32 % of those active firms inspected)

Of the 6,927 active firms handling prohibited materials, their most recent inspection revealed that:

0 firms (0%) were classified as OAI

162 firms (2.3 %) were classified as VAI

E) Bluetongue threat to UK

25.jan.08

Farmers Guardian

Alistair Driver

<http://www.farmersguardian.com/story.asp?sectioncode=24&storycode=15854>

Everything you need to know about bluetongue – including some you would not want to – was, according to this story, discussed at a highly informative conference arranged jointly by the NFU and the Institute of Animal Health. More than 80 farmers gathered at the IAH's Compton laboratory heard why vaccination may be the saviour of their industry.

The United Kingdom is involved in a 'race against time' to deliver a vaccine soon enough to prevent large parts of the livestock industry being destroyed by bluetongue, farmers were told.

The stakes could not be higher, Chris Oura, a leading bluetongue expert at the Institute of Animal Health was cited as saying. The virus is almost certain to re-emerge some time this spring in the same areas of eastern England that were infected in 2007.

Modelling work done by the IAH shows that if nothing is done to halt its progress, the virus will spread down to the south coast, across the Midlands and northwards nearly into Yorkshire by July.

But then it could explode over the rest of the summer and autumn as midge numbers grow. Eighty

farmers gasped as one as a slide was displayed by the IAH's Peter Mertens showing how the whole of Britain, except the north of Scotland, could be infected by October, if no action is taken to prevent its spread. The story goes on to say that sheep production in Belgium was effectively wiped out, after a quarter of the national flock became infected and 30,000 sheep, nearly half those that became infected and 15 per cent of the national flock, died.

Belgian sheep farmers have decided it is simply not worth carrying on and sheep production has ceased, Dr Oura was cited as saying, adding, "With 35 million sheep in the UK, a 15 per cent mortality rate would be devastating."

Dr Oura is convinced the UK will face similar problems this year in the absence of a successful vaccination strategy, adding that a vaccine could save the industry

However, a number of key elements need to fall into place in order for this to happen.

- The vaccine needs to arrive on time.

- A thorough vaccination strategy covering as near to 100 per cent as possible of animals in targeted areas needs to be implemented.

- Measures need to be taken to prevent the importation of infected animals from Europe, as has happened in recent months.

The UK Government, the only EU country to have placed an order so far, has ordered 22.5 million doses of vaccine, including 2.5 million for Wales, from Intervet.

The animal health company says the first batch of around three million doses of its inactivated BTV8 vaccine should be available by May. The rest should follow over the summer.

The story goes on to say that vaccination would serve a number of purposes, the IAH's Peter Mertens told farmers. It would:

- 1) Prevent initial infection of the vaccinated animal.
- 2) Prevent significant levels of virus growth in the vaccinated animal.
- 3) Protect vaccinated animal against clinical disease.
- 4) Prevent persistence of the virus in the vaccinated animal.
- 5) Prevent onward transmission of the virus.

A vaccination plan has been drawn up by a working group made up of industry stakeholders scientists and Government officials. It will be presented to the European Commission by the end of January and is due to be published and put for industry consultation before then.

The intention is to implement a phased policy. The first three million doses will be used in the current Protection Zone, where infection is most likely to re-emerge. There is also likely to be a vaccination buffer zone around the targeted area to try and prevent infection 'jumping' in midges into clean areas. This zone could be in the region of 10 to 20km, it was suggested.

The story goes on to say that the key to the success of the policy, it is universally agreed, is encouraging sufficient take-up among farmers. Previous experience has shown that at least 80 per cent of livestock have to be covered for vaccination to work. The aim will be to get as close to 100 per cent coverage as possible. Compulsory vaccination is an option but, while nothing has been finalised, the general preference is for a voluntary approach, said NFU head of food and farming Kevin Pearce.

The compulsory approach is likely to be more bureaucratic and could lead to damaging delays, he was cited as saying.

F) Government of CANADA announces commitment of \$660,000 to Foot and Mouth disease prevention and preparedness in SOUTH AMERICA

24.jan.08

From a press release

Ted Menzies, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and Member of Parliament for Macleod, Alberta, at a meeting with senior Argentinean agriculture officials, announced today that the Government of Canada is committing \$660,000 over the next two years to assist governments in South America in efforts to eradicate foot and mouth disease (FMD).

Mr. Menzies made the announcement on behalf the Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and the Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs

"Canada has state-of-the-art scientific expertise and technologies for FMD management that can benefit other countries," said Minister Ritz. "In sharing these capabilities, Canada also benefits by strengthening international relationships and gathering strategic information to enhance our own foreign animal disease

management strategies."

Canada's contribution will include laboratory equipment and training in FMD diagnostic technologies and computer simulation modelling to assess, predict and mitigate FMD outbreaks.

"This initiative is in keeping with our efforts to play an active role in the Americas - and help our hemispheric neighbours build a better future together," said Minister Bernier. "In addition, by addressing emerging diseases and other threats beyond our borders, we can increase security for the Canadian public and economy."

"We recognize that international cooperation is an increasingly critical component of managing and eradicating global animal disease threats," added Mr. Menzies. "This initiative is a good example of Canada's commitment to international efforts to address FMD."

Canada's contribution is being delivered in cooperation with the Pan-American Health Organization's FMD Centre for South America and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture of the Organization of American States.

Foot and Mouth Disease is a severe, highly communicable viral disease of cattle and swine. It also affects sheep, goats, deer and other cloven-hoofed ruminants. An outbreak of FMD can have severe impacts on animal populations and national economies. Canada has been free of FMD since 1952.

Canada's commitment to international partnership in the management and eradication of FMD in the western hemisphere was further advanced in July 2007 with the appointment of a Canadian as the Director for North America on the Inter-American Group for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease. These initiatives highlight the Government of Canada's re-engagement in the Hemisphere. Canada's focus on the Americas seeks to increase prosperity and improve security throughout the Hemisphere, as well as to promote Canada's fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

For additional information about FMD, visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency web site at: http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/disemala/fmdfie/inf_e.shtml

G) UK: New initiative announced to develop a UK beef market from male dairy calves

23.jan.08

Farmers Guardian

Jack Davies

<http://www.farmersguardian.com/story.asp?sectioncode=1&storycode=15813>

Industry leaders, politicians and animal welfare charities have, according to this story, given their backing to a scheme to develop a domestic beef market from black and white male dairy calves.

The scheme aims to produce more beef from British cattle, negating the need to import hundreds of thousands of tonnes of beef every year.

Following 18 months of intense research and debate, forum members – which included representatives from farming organisations and retailers – agreed to develop economically viable outlets for rearing and finishing dairy calves.

At present the 482,000 dairy calves born in the UK each year are either killed or exported to continental veal farms.

The forum concluded that slaughtering or exporting dairy calves was “wasting a valuable resource to the British beef industry that has the potential, given appropriate market conditions, to directly increase farm incomes and inject more work into the economy”.

The new initiative will see calves enter the domestic supply chain in an attempt to make up the current 250,000 tonne shortfall in production each year in the UK beef industry.

The story goes on to say that Tesco announced this week that it has developed an initiative linking its dedicated dairy farmers with its beef suppliers to make it easier for calves to enter the supply chain.

Waitrose meanwhile have also developed a scheme to ensure that its dairy farmers have a useful purpose on the UK beef market.

It is hoped that following the forum, more retailers will develop similar initiatives and phase out imported beef, instead rearing and finishing dairy calves.

The forum's conclusions came as welcome news for animal welfare charities who have opposed the live exports of male dairy calves to Europe.

Philip Lymbery, chief executive of Compassion in World Farming was quoted as saying “This collaborative approach to improving animal welfare is truly ground-breaking.

"We hope that these measures will now be implemented by all stakeholders so that we can move beyond calf exports and bring lasting and mutual benefits to animal welfare and industry alike."

H) MINNESOTA confirms positive bovine TB results

22.jan.08

Feedstuffs

<http://www.feedstuffs.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=F4D1A9DFCD974EAD8CD5205E15C1CB42&nm=Breaking+News&type=news&mod=News&mid=A3D60400B4204079A76C4B1B129CB433&tier=3&nid=2E0A84DEA7254B45A802C172D1256EBB>

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health has, according to this story, announced that a Roseau County beef cattle herd has tested positive for bovine tuberculosis (TB). The newly detected Roseau herd tested negative in 2005 and 2006, but during a third, follow-up round of testing in November, one animal tested suspect for bovine TB. Tissue samples were collected and submitted to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa, where a diagnosis of bovine TB was confirmed late last week. Minnesota has now detected bovine TB in nine beef herds.

The story goes on to say that at this time, Minnesota's Modified Accredited Advanced TB status will remain unchanged. Minnesota Board of Animal Health executive director and state veterinarian Dr. Bill Hartmann was cited as saying work will continue unabated to return the state to TB-free status. However, the discovery of any additional herds could result in the downgrading of Minnesota's status.

I) NAMIBIA: Foot and mouth disease threat

22.jan.08

The Namibian

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200801220602.html>

Windhoek -- The Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU) has, according to this story, appealed to all farmers to adhere to strict movement control of their livestock and report all suspicious livestock movements to their nearest state veterinarian office after a new outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in western Botswana.

The department of veterinary services has confirmed the presence of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) at Tholamoro and Kgomotshwaana in the Sehithwe area, which is in Ngamiland, north-western Botswana. Namibia and Botswana share a common border, about one thousand kilometres long and running through very remote areas on both sides of the border fence. The areas are south of an earlier FMD outbreak in the Habu Extension, where the disease was confirmed in mid-October last year. The Botswana authorities banned all movements of all cloven-hoofed livestock and wildlife into or out of that area, known as Zone 2.

Also banned was movement of fresh products from cloven-hoofed animals such as milk, meat, skins and trophies. The ban was even extended to the transport of wood. Inspections and surveillance were mounted to confine the disease within the affected area.

J) WASHINGTON D.C.: Fewer cattle to grade Choice or better: USDA report

21.jan.08

Meatingplace.com

Ann Bagel Storck

<http://www.meatingplace.com/MembersOnly/webNews/details.aspx?item=19645>

Higher feedlot placements during fall and winter could reduce the percentage of cattle grading Choice or better, according to the January Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook from USDA's Economic Research Service.

Wheat prices are currently high enough that there is not likely to be wheat pasture available for graze-out this spring, the report said, shifting some fed cattle marketings ahead of a normal schedule. Because cattle will have been in feedlots during the winter months, when gains are poorer because animals must utilize feed for body condition maintenance instead of growth, the report predicts fewer cattle will grade Choice or better.

The situation could affect trade by increasing the need for more fed cattle, fed beef or trimmings from Canada. It could also reduce the need for processing beef from Australia, New Zealand and Uruguay, the report said.

K) PENNSYLVANIA: Milk and honey, er, hormones

18.jan.08

Scientific American

Lisa Stein

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=milk-industry-gag-order-on-artificial-hormones-lifted>

Bowing to pressure from consumer advocates, Pennsylvania officials have, according to this story, dropped plans to bar farmers from revealing whether or not milk hails from hormone-enhanced cows. The state's agriculture department on Thursday issued new guidelines that allow dairies to label milk so that customers know if it was produced from cows pumped with recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) also known as recombinant bovine somatotropin (rBST).

The move comes less than two weeks before a February 1 ban was set to take effect that would have barred dairies in the Keystone State from slapping certain labels on milk products, including "from cows not treated with growth hormone rBST" and "free of artificial growth hormones."

"This is a victory for free speech, free markets, sustainable farming and the consumer's right to know," Michael Hansen, a senior scientist with the Consumers Union (CU), was quoted as saying about the state's about-face. "Consumers increasingly want to know more about how their food is produced and, particularly, whether it is produced in a natural and sustainable manner. There is no justification for prohibiting information about rBGH use on a milk label."

He added that the state should be applauded for "realizing that its initial regulation prohibiting such labeling was flawed and for reversing its position."

Many farmers in Pennsylvania and other states have vowed not to use rBGH in their milk products, a claim which in some cases fetches higher prices. The new rules will allow them to continue advertising their fare as free of artificial hormones, but requires them to document their claims--a safeguard applauded by consumer advocates. Dairies are barred from labeling milk as containing no growth hormones, because cows produce some naturally.

L) US: Labels weighed for food from clones

20.jan.08

Washington Post

Rick Weiss

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/19/AR2008011902233.html?nav=hcmodule>

With the Food and Drug Administration having declared that meat and milk from cloned animals are safe, opponents of food from clones are, according to this story, shifting their fight to how such fare is labeled. Although the FDA said last week that it will not require special labels on foods from clones, legislation already introduced in the Senate could force the agency's hand. Short of that, many consumers are demanding that the agency allow food from conventional animals to be labeled "clone-free" -- a marketing move that could dash industry hopes of getting beyond the public debate over clones.

Separately, some consumer groups are wondering aloud how the FDA will live up to its promise to keep an eye on the quickly evolving field of animal cloning and protect the public from unexpected problems. A fight over labeling is likely to be led in part by Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), who has introduced legislation that would require labels.

The story goes on to say that clone companies oppose labels, seeing them as little more than a tool to help wary consumers avoid clone-derived products. Companies note that meat and milk products from conventionally bred animals are not labeled with details about how those animals were conceived. And the FDA has generally reserved mandatory labeling for things that present a real risk.

But even if calls for labeling fail, the FDA could respond to public pressure with the clone-free labels for products not from clones.

The FDA may allow such labels, even in the absence of safety concerns, if the claims on the labels can be verified. That is a difficult bar to clear for clone-free milk and meat because those products are

chemically indistinguishable from their equivalents made from clones. But there is a precedent. Years ago, the FDA relented under consumer pressure and allowed special labels on dairy products from animals that are not treated with recombinant bovine somatotropin (rbST), a hormone that some farmers give their cows to boost milk production.

Milk from cows treated with rbST is indistinguishable from untreated cows' milk. But the agency accepts the assurances of an independent verification system that tracks untreated cows, and allows the labels as long as they do not suggest that one product is more wholesome than the other.

Recent events in the United States and Europe have given consumer advocates hope that the FDA may allow such labels on food not from clones.

Responding to a public outcry, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture reversed a plan that would have banned those now common "No rbST" labels.

Under similar pressure from consumers and regulators, the nation's two largest producers of cloned cattle -- ViaGen of Austin and Trans Ova Genetics of Sioux Center, Iowa -- recently announced that they would create a registry of all farm animal clones and a system for keeping them out of the mainstream food chain. The registry could become a verification system for clone-free labels.

And in Europe last week, an ethics board that advises the European Commission recommended that food from cloned animals not be allowed on the market until, among other things, a labeling system has been put in place to help consumers avoid food from clones if they choose to.

Jim Greenwood, president of the Biotechnology Industry Organization, was cited as saying he is "perfectly comfortable" with clone-free labels, "as long as they are truthful and don't mislead consumers." He also believes food from the offspring of clones should be eligible for the clone-free label. Even the European report conceded that a program covering the offspring would be technically daunting because of the complex genealogy records that would have to be kept.

Apart from labeling, some advocacy groups are raising concerns about how the FDA will keep up as the food-from-clones sector grows.

The agency concedes that its assurances that food from clones is safe are based on the particulars of methods clone-makers are using today -- methods it says are likely to change in coming years.

"Significant changes in cloning technology . . . would significantly increase the uncertainty associated with our judgments," the FDA concluded in its 968-page risk assessment.

But the agency's plan to keep abreast of such changes is less than reassuring, Margaret Mellon of the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington, an advocacy group was cited as saying, adding, "Does [the FDA's regulatory authority] allow them to require the companies to disclose any new methodologies or problems? Is the FDA going to have to wait until it reads about these changes in the scientific literature? Because by then, it's going to be way too late."

Asked whether the FDA is equipped to find out about unexpected problems from cloned food, given that so much of the science is proprietary, and whether FDA is empowered to act on any problems that arise, the agency's new director of veterinary medicine, Bernadette Dunham, said she could and would act quickly



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