

# THE Connection

Spring 2021 Volume 3, No. 1



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# Contents

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Editor in Chief: Jennifer Haley

Managing Editor: Jennifer Bullock



For advertising inquiries contact: Jennifer Bullock

Design: Lynn Schoupe

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Address correspondence to:  
Veal Farmers of Ontario  
449 Laird Road, Unit 12  
Guelph, ON N1G 4W1  
519-824-2942  
info@vealfarmers.ca

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## Chair's MESSAGE



Pascal Bouilly

# New year, new challenges, new opportunities

Here we are one year later after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and we just wrapped up our first Virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM). Like so many other organizations, we had to go online to host this important meeting and all things considered the meeting went very well. Thank you to those of you who were able to join us.

I would like to welcome Kurtis Moesker as our newest member of the Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) Board of Directors. After the AGM and at our first board meeting, the VFO Board appointed Kurtis to fill a vacancy and our board is now complete with eight members. Our board brings together quite diverse veal production experience and I look forward to the year ahead working on the many issues of importance to our members. I would also like to congratulate Cam Knip on being elected to the position of Vice Chair and thank Phil Kroesbergen for his time as Vice Chair last year.

While the AGM was focused on the business of the organization, VFO staff also organized six informative lunchtime webinars on dairy calf and veal production issues. From the feedback received and the numbers of those of you in attendance, we will be looking at hosting future webinars as well. Technology has allowed us to broaden our reach. And while I know many of us are missing the face-to-face interaction, we also know that being able to save time not leaving the farm for the whole day makes a big difference too.

The Risk Management Program (RMP) has been a priority issue for VFO these past several months. We continue to work closely with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) staff on several items that impact the veal program to ensure that the risks we encounter as farmers are mitigated with the coverage levels. We are focusing our efforts on an in-depth review of the cost of production calculations and specifically the segments of yardage.

As well, we are pleased to have the opportunity to work with our counterparts in the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition (OASC) to lobby for changes to the AgriStability program. Minister Hardeman has been a strong champion at the federal level for the much-needed changes that will help ensure the program will work as it was intended for our farmers and cover unforeseen risks. But we are dependent on the other provinces signing on. While we wait, the Ontario government has money set aside for the AgriStability program reforms that OASC wants to see go to farmers as it was intended. The best way to do that right now is through the RMP.

The OASC leaders and staff have attended several meetings with Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) over the past few months to reinforce this message. It has been good to hear firsthand how much our rural and urban MPPs support Ontario agriculture and our farmers. We continue to work with our government to

ensure funding is available when farmers need it most.

2021 brings a new year and a new set of challenges for the veal sector. With higher corn and soy prices, we are seeing higher feeding costs, and this will have a huge impact on our veal cost of production and the very slim margins where our profitability is either made or broken. We are also seeing the impact of breeding programs with our dairy farmer partners and the increase in the cross-bred calves on the market. Supplies of Holstein calves are getting tighter, and we will need to adapt our production systems as a result.

All the best with spring planting and here is to sunnier days ahead despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and this third wave we are all now dealing with. As always, if you have a question, comment or concern please do not hesitate to reach out to any of your Board of Directors. ■





# VFO launches new calf health improvement project

Kendra Keels

Industry Development Director

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) has devoted many resources over the last 20 years to make calves a priority on farm, both the heifers and the bull calves.

For the last five years VFO has supported the research of Dr. Dave Renaud from the University of Guelph who has focused his research on calf health and management in Ontario. The research he has completed has been invaluable to both dairy and veal producers, however the challenge has been that not all of his research has been communicated to producers.

In 2018 VFO was fortunate to receive funding from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to develop resources for veterinarian calf education, called the *Calf Health Improvement Program* (CHIP). VFO included a veterinarian-only portal on the calfcare.ca website and developed many resources for use by veterinarians, including

calf health protocols that can be customized to accompany their prescriptions. Our focus with those resources was to encourage calf health to be included as part of herd health visits, and to help veterinarians with easy-to-access resources to support their recommendations.

Upon completion of CHIP, it was very evident that producer resources were needed to share the latest in calf research and improve the health and welfare of all calves in Ontario. It was also evident from a project funded by VFO, *Evaluating and Understanding Progression in Calf Health & Communication Preferences in the Veal and Dairy Industries*, that resources like Podcasts and condensed webinars were needed for busy producers to get the latest up-to-date information when they do not have time to sit and read, or look resources up.

Also included in the project will be resources on *Salmonella* Dublin (S. Dublin). S. Dublin

is an emerging disease in Ontario on both dairy and veal farms. This disease is very concerning because it is zoonotic, meaning it can spread from animal to human and can cause very high mortality in calves. VFO will conduct a pilot prevalence study on veal farms to develop an overview of how many farms could be dealing with this disease. In addition to the prevalence study, VFO will develop an S. Dublin portal on the calfcare.ca website and develop several resources specific to prevention and management of this disease.

As new regulations and updated Codes of Practice come into effect, it is critical that both dairy and veal producers have the resources to improve calf health and welfare on-farm. It is now time that calves become part of the herd health visits. The latest project by VFO was funded by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year federal-provincial-territorial initiative. ■

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Jennifer Haley

## Listening to the voice of the consumer

Consumers vote with their wallet, choosing products to purchase that align with their personal beliefs and fulfill their fundamental needs. Now more than ever, the power rests with the consumer and they have more choices for products and services. This is certainly a shift from the big brands that at one time dictated to the consumers what they could or should buy.

The changing face of the consumer is also a result of the next generation coming into the market and they are bringing the change that they want to see in the world. As farmers and producers of a primary product, it is so important that we remember who our consumers really are. We have customers who purchase and process our cattle, but ultimately the consumer is the one who chooses to eat our veal—whether at home or in a restaurant.

We need to listen to the voice of our consumers. We need to listen carefully to hear what they want and what we need to do to ensure we maintain our market share. Listening can be in the form of market research (see the article on page 16 for our recent study results), feedback from those selling our product like processors, retailers, or chefs for example, or in the form of actual sales data.

Thankfully, demand for local Ontario veal has been good throughout the pandemic and has kept our markets sustained. However, post-Covid markets paint a different picture for the meat sector, and we need to be prepared for the shift. Restaurants will re-open, but many will not recover; takeout and food delivery will continue to grow in popularity. Consumers love the delivered grocery boxes, and we need to make sure veal is an option for these. Consumers and retailers also want assurances about production standards, including animal welfare. The next generation of consumers will have more protein choices—plant-based and animal-based (both traditional and non-traditional) and our consumer demographics are changing, with the biggest changes to be seen with Millennials and with the growing Asian and African populations.

As an industry we need to continue to 'pivot' in order to fulfill the needs of our consumers. Can you imagine the incremental increase in veal consumption if we can get our current veal consumers to eat one more veal meal per week, month, or year? Our traditional veal consumer is aging, and we need to bring new consumers into the fold to sustain demand. We need to offer choices—gone are the days where there is

only one way to talk to the consumer. Now, we need to be all things to all people with a very segmented market. And while veal is perceived as a special occasion meat and not necessarily one of sustenance, we have an opportunity with consumers who are looking for variety, convenience, healthy, fresh, local—you name it veal fits the bill.

Remember, as producers your job may be done when the truck leaves the end of your laneway with the veal cattle you have worked so hard to raise right, but it is what happens at the consumer-level that will dictate our future. Listening to what our consumer wants is critically important to our future viability. ■

*Jen*



**The unpredictability of 2020 has thrown a wrench in even the best-laid business plans. With the introduction of and modifications to several small business relief plans, the Canadian Government aims to help local businesses succeed, including those in the farming and agriculture sectors. Do you know what programs are available to you? Are you using those resources effectively while forging a path forward? Reach out to a trusted advisor at RLB to make sure you're setting your business up for success.**

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At Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO), one of our core organizational beliefs is that our people are one of our greatest assets and without whom we would not be where we are today. VFO would like to take a moment to recognize one of these people—Jennifer Bullock. Jen has recently celebrated her 10-year work anniversary with VFO, and we are lucky to have her skills, passion, and professionalism as part of our team.

Congratulations and thank you Jen!



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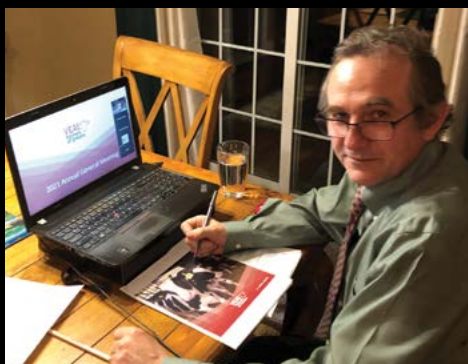




# Virtual Annual General Meeting HIGHLIGHTS

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) was pleased to welcome attendees to our virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. The evening event offered an opportunity for industry leaders to share an overview of the projects and issues directly impacting veal and male dairy calf producers that the VFO has undertaken in 2020, highlighting the opportunities this past year has provided to be thankful, find efficiencies and work together with our industry partners.

Thank you to our attendees, special guests, sponsors, staff, and Board of Directors—everyone had a vital role in making the 2021 Virtual AGM a great success!



Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair and Jennifer Haley, VFO Executive Director, led our first-ever virtual Annual General Meeting.

Bouilly reflected on 2020 and provided insights into VFO's response to the many priorities of the sector.

Haley shared a brief overview of VFO's initiatives in 2020, highlighting the pivots our organization and consumer marketing program have made, and touching on the past year's projects, activities, and issues addressed by VFO on behalf of its members.



VFO was pleased to welcome the Honourable Ernie Hardeman to our virtual AGM. Minister Hardeman delivered greetings and a message on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister Hardeman was thanked for his support of Ontario farmers during the past year and for the additional funding that was provided to the Risk Management Program.



VFO was also pleased to welcome Amy Cronin, Chair of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing to our virtual AGM. Cronin provided greetings on behalf of the Commission to VFO and the membership. Bouilly thanked Cronin and the Commission for their support, especially during this past year, as the final piece of VFO's regulatory framework came into place in December with amendments to broaden the definitions of veal and provide clarity on where licence fees are applied.



The 2020 Annual Report is available online at [bit.ly/VFO2020report](https://bit.ly/VFO2020report)



# AGM

## Annual VFO Board of Director's Award winner announced

Recognizing dedication and service to the veal cattle industry



Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) was pleased to announce this year's VFO Board of Director's Award winner at its recent virtual Annual General Meeting held on March 3, 2021.

The VFO Board of Director's Award recognizes the contributions that many make to help the VFO Board achieve their goals. This year, Larry Witzel, President of the Ontario Livestock Exchange, and Chair of the Livestock Financial Protection Board was recognized for his involvement in the veal cattle industry.

"Larry has always been a valued industry partner, and we are fortunate to have his perspective and insight on the many projects and issues over the years and of course his input and support on the Veal Industry Advisory Committee," says Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair.

Witzel is both Past President and a current director of Livestock Markets of Canada, and President of the Ontario Livestock Auction Markets Association. He has contributed to several VFO projects and initiatives over the years, and his insights and expertise have been greatly appreciated.

"I am honoured and grateful to receive the VFO Board of Director's Award," says Witzel. "The veal industry in Ontario is strong, aggressive, and has great vision as it continues to move forward into the future."

"We thank Larry for his dedication and commitment to the Ontario veal sector, he is truly deserving of this recognition, and we look forward to continuing to work together to serve Ontario's veal farmers," says Bouilly. ■

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# Veal Farmers of Ontario announces leadership for 2021

Bouilly re-elected to another term as VFO Chair



Pascal Bouilly



Cameron Knip

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) is pleased to announce the re-election of Pascal Bouilly as Chair and the election of Cameron Knip as Vice Chair, at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors.

Bouilly, the Dairy Calf Supply Chain Manager with Delft Blue Veal in Cambridge, was appointed to the VFO Board of Directors in 2015 and served as Vice Chair for two years prior to being elected Chair in 2020. Bouilly is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the farm and the started dairy calves program.

“Driving value for Ontario veal is a top priority for the VFO Board of Directors,” says Bouilly. “One thing that has not changed during this pandemic is Ontario farmers and their commitment to continuing to do what they do best—producing safe, high-quality food for our customers. As Chair, I look forward to the year ahead as we focus our attention on the issues, initiatives, and projects that will best support our members and our industry.”

Knip, who joined the Board in 2019, raises veal cattle south of Exeter where he also cash crops with his family.

“As Vice Chair, I look forward to working with my fellow directors to strategically address issues directly impacting male dairy calf and veal producers,” says Knip. “With market volatility, processing capacity, and uncertainty disrupting our livestock markets, the importance of business risk management programs that work for our farmers has never been more critical.”

Judy Dirksen, Sid Atkinson, and Phil Kroesbergen were acclaimed to the VFO Board at the 2021 virtual Annual General Meeting on March 3 and will serve three-year terms.

Dirksen, a veal producer from Harriston, and Atkinson, a dairy and cash crop producer from Roseneath, bring extensive board experience to their roles. Kroesbergen, who raises veal with his family near Mount Brydges, is past Vice Chair.

Returning to the eight member VFO Board of Directors is Brian Keunen (Palmerston). Earlier in the year, the VFO Board appointed Dylan Yantzi (Tavistock) to a two-year term to fill a board vacancy as per the requirements and expectations of our regulations. Stratford-area veal producer

Kurtis Moesker was also appointed to a two-year term at the recent meeting of the Board of Directors, filling an additional seat that became vacant mid-term.

“Thank you to each one of the members of the Board for your willingness to serve the Ontario veal cattle sector,” says Bouilly. “The VFO Board of Directors is most certainly a diverse group of farmers with a wealth of experience. I am looking forward to the year ahead.” ■

## Supplying Ontario Veal Producers



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# VFO's regulations amended to include veal cattle sold in sales barns

Amendments provide clarity and broaden definition of veal cattle

Amendments to the VFO regulations that update the definitions of veal cattle and now include the collection of licence fees on veal cattle sold in sales barns came into effect on January 1st, 2021.

VFO has been working collaboratively with the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission for quite some time to bring forward amendments to Regulation 58/15- Veal Cattle- Marketing Plan and Reg 272/14- Veal Cattle- Plan.

"VFO is pleased to reach this important milestone and we appreciate the support of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission and Minister Hardeman for ensuring these amendments were completed," stated Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair.

The amended regulations bring forward an expanded definition of veal cattle to include an extended weight on male dairy bob calves up to 150 pounds; inclusion of started or preconditioned intact male dairy calves up to 450 pounds; and the addition of veal cattle marketed on live weight basis, weighing no more than 769 pounds, through an auction or livestock dealer. There are no changes to the definitions for those producers who market their veal cattle directly to the processor.

"This is great news for VFO. We have been working on these amendments for quite some time and it is the final piece of our licence fee collection system to be completed since we became a marketing board under the *Farm Products Marketing Act* on April 1, 2015," stated Jennifer Haley, VFO Executive Director.

There are no changes to the \$5.50 per head licence fee or check-off being assigned to veal cattle sold.

Prior to the amendments coming into effect, veal cattle sold in sales barns on a live weight basis would have had the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) check-off applied. The change on January 1st, 2021 provides that the licence fees collected by the auction markets or livestock dealers on live veal cattle be redirected to VFO rather than remitted to BFO.

"The updated definitions of what is considered veal cattle will strengthen our regulations, provide clarity to our veal definitions, and ensure equity and transparency within all segments of our markets where our VFO licence fees are applied," stated Haley.

Bouilly also acknowledged the partnership with BFO has been key to bringing the amendments forward. "We appreciate the support and collaboration of BFO throughout this process. Both of our organizations share a common goal of ensuring licence fees and check-off are collected and remitted appropriately to each of our organizations," stated Bouilly. ■

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# A renewed interest in calf research



Dr. Dave Renaud, Assistant Professor

Dr. Michael Steele, Associate Professor and NSERC Industrial Research Chair

University of Guelph

Over the past few years, there has been a renewed interest in studying early life growth and health as several studies have highlighted the importance of calf management in the preweaning period. Specifically, calves having diarrhea and respiratory disease had several long-term consequences including reduced growth and survival, and in heifer calves, reduced milk production.

As a result of this interest, the University of Guelph has completed a number of studies and has a significant number ongoing in the field of calf research. Our labs, and in collaboration with Drs. Charlotte Winder and Trevor DeVries, are focused in several specific areas, including:

- Colostrum management
- Milk feeding regimens
- Weaning strategies
- Antibiotic alternatives
- Male calf health and management
- Pain control

Currently, we have over 30 graduate students working within our teams in these areas and we had cumulatively published over 40 papers about topics related to calf management last year in the *Journal of Dairy Science*. The University of Guelph has emerged as the most productive university for calf research, and we are excited to share our results with producers.

From these publications, there are several key findings to highlight:

- Transitioning calves gradually from colostrum to milk in the first three days of life improves gut development and leads to higher levels of serum IgG in calves. This can be achieved by feeding transition milk to calves or enriching milk with colostrum in the first days of life.
- Milk replacer formulations have been traditionally high in lactose and low in fat, and research has shown that these formulations may compromise gut health and reduce nutrient utilization in early life.
- Gradual weaning over a period of two weeks leads to significant improvements in growth and grain intake. Weaning after eight weeks and providing free access to a high concentrate diet for two months after results in efficient growth.
- Automated milk feeders can be used to predict disease prior to its onset, with lower levels of milk consumption, visits to the feeders, and drinking speed being seen two days prior to the onset of

disease. These changes in feeding behavior are being explored to determine if early interventions can be made to prevent disease.

- There remain small differences in colostrum management between male and female calves, however, there were no differences found with respect to failed transfer of passive immunity between sexes. Overall, there are approximately 25 per cent of calves with failed transfer of passive immunity which is an improvement from previous studies.
- Pain control, no matter the age or type of disbudding used, is absolutely essential. Using a lidocaine cornual nerve block and a meloxicam injection provides the best level of pain relief as it controls both short and long-term pain

In our future articles, we will explore each of these specific topics in more detail. Watch for our research and do not hesitate to reach out to us for our publications or articles. ■



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# Calf barn ventilation options when building new

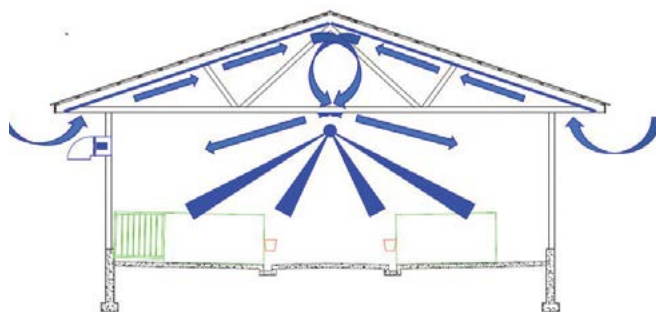
Harold K. House, M.Sc., P.Eng.

Agricultural Engineer, DairyLogix



Choosing a ventilation system for a new calf facility will depend on several factors:

1. Natural versus fan ventilation
2. Individual versus group pens
3. Cold versus modified housing
4. Operator preference
5. Operating cost



Ceiling inlets with insulated attic

The first major factor is: "Will my ventilation system use natural ventilation or fan powered ventilation?" Natural ventilation works best when a calf barn is a standalone entity that can be oriented to make best use of wind direction, or a separate room that projects from the barn and can make use of natural air flow. If this is not possible, the best option is a fan powered ventilation system.

Natural ventilation uses large adjustable sidewall openings to deliver natural air flow through the barn or room for summer ventilation and chimneys are used in the winter to provide for air exchange and exhaust. In calf barns, it is best to automate the curtains to adjust for changing conditions.

Fan ventilated barns use adjustable air inlets mounted in the ceiling to distribute fresh air into the barn or room. Fans are used to exhaust air from the room. The fan capacity is sized to meet the ventilation needs of the calves and the number of air exchanges needed for proper ventilation.

Air inlets are used primarily for late spring, summer, and early fall ventilation. Systems must be designed so that fresh outside air does not pick-up attic heat before it enters the room. The location of the air inlets dictate which system works best to avoid picking up attic heat. If one or more rows of ceiling inlets are used in the design, it is best to use the entire attic space as the air plenum. In this design, air enters the attic through soffit inlets and is then pulled through the ceiling inlets by the exhaust fans. The attic must have insulation under the roof steel so that the air does not absorb heat through the roof. The air exchange through the attic

should be one air exchange every 45 seconds or less, to avoid absorbing attic heat.

If the air inlets are in the centre of the room and the truss is a standard 'W' design, an insulated duct can be constructed using the truss webs for support to deliver air to the ceiling inlets. If the inlets are located along the outside wall, the system can be designed so that air can enter through the soffit and directly enter the ceiling inlets without picking up attic heat.

The minimum ventilation requirement for calves from birth to weaning is based on 17 m<sup>3</sup>/h (10 cfm) or four air changes per hour, whichever is greater. It is difficult to establish a good ventilation pattern to distribute this small amount of air evenly with either a natural ventilation or fan ventilation system alone. A positive pressure ventilation tube (PPVT) system is the best method to supply the small amount of air required for minimum winter ventilation and distribute it evenly throughout a calf room or barn. The air speed at calf level should be less than 0.3 m/s (60 fpm) or the calves will notice the air movement as a draft. A PPVT system can be designed to meet these requirements.

A variation of the basic PPVT system is a double walled tube design that allows the system to be used for both winter and summer ventilation. When the tube is in one position the fan inflates the winter tube with appropriate sized holes, and then by rotating the tube the fan inflates the other tube with summer sized holes. With this design the system can supply the winter ventilation rates and a portion of the summer ventilation rates.





Calves require extra air and at higher speeds in hot weather for cooling. They should have at least 170 m<sup>3</sup>/h (100 cfm) per calf or 40 air changes per hour. Air speeds of 1.3 m/s (250 fpm) are needed for cooling. In naturally ventilated barns, the reliance is on outside wind speed to provide this extra volume of air. Unfortunately, the hottest days are often the days with the least amount of wind. Therefore, in the summer it may be necessary to use panel fans to direct air at higher speeds to the calves. Panel fans work well to provide air at higher speeds in a group pen situation. In a barn or room with individual pens and solid partitions, a PPVT system with tubes designed for summer ventilation can be used to direct air into individual pens. Ventilation in group pens is more forgiving as calves can move to find the most comfortable location.

In a fan ventilated barn with individual pens, the fan capacity and air inlets should be sized and positioned to direct summer air volumes through the calf pens. Summer air tubes can still help to deliver air directly through the pen. Fan ventilation works well in both individual and group pen situations.

A third factor to consider is cold versus modified housing. Supplemental heat should be used in a calf barn to dry out incoming air to improve the fresh air exchange, not to make it more comfortable for the operator. It is best to keep the room temperature below 10 °C and it can be set as low as four °C to keep the environment above freezing while still maintaining fresh air exchange. At temperatures below 10 °C it may be necessary to use calf coats to improve insulation and preserve body heat. A cold, naturally ventilated barn without heat will only stay a couple of degrees above the outside temperature.

Finally, ventilation choices often come down to operator preference, whether they would prefer working with natural ventilation using adjustable curtains and chimneys relying on wind speed and direction, or fan ventilation with controlled inlets and more automation. Operating costs associated with each is also a factor.

There are many other things to consider when designing a calf housing facility beyond the ventilation system. The design needs to consider labour requirements for feeding, bedding and manure management, and health management to name a few. The more time spent in planning a facility will be rewarded when the project is completed. ■



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# What do our **consumers** really think?

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Jennifer Haley  
Executive Director

Last Fall, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) commissioned a consumer market research study to 'benchmark' the consumer's perceptions and usage of Ontario veal. We have done similar types of market research studies in the past, and the results have helped us to shape our consumer marketing campaigns and how we promote Ontario veal. Prior to this study, the most recent research was done about six years ago, so we felt it was important to check in with our consumers once again.

We decided to split our sample group into three equal categories in order to get a range of feedback—frequent veal consumers (within the past month); regular veal consumers (within the past year); and casual veal consumers (eaten veal in the past and open to consuming more in the future).

The fundamental marketing strategy VFO continues to pursue is to get those who are already eating veal to eat more of it! Those who are already predisposed to eating veal—they like it, they order it on the menu, they buy it at the grocery store—are the fastest way to increase demand and volume, we just need them to increase what they are already doing. But the magic question is how do we do that?

Veal has a lot of competition in the meat case or on the restaurant menu—we have so many different choices on what to have to eat. By far, our biggest protein competitors to get on

the centre of the plate are chicken and beef. Of those surveyed, 88 per cent had consumed chicken in the past week and 78 per cent had consumed beef. Compare that with only eight per cent of the same consumers had consumed veal in the past week or 27 per cent in the past month.

While the majority of our veal consumers are purchasing veal at grocery stores, our frequent veal consumers are more likely to purchase veal at independent butcher shops and specialty stores. The most popular cuts of fresh veal continue to be scaloppini/cutlets, chops, and breaded cutlets. Research results also tell us that first generation Canadians eat veal more frequently than the average consumer. VFO needs to better understand the many different cultures and ethnicities that are consuming veal in order to expand our opportunities to increase consumption within these groups.

Prior to Covid-19, 49 per cent of consumers were eating veal at a restaurant and are now reporting a decrease in their family's consumption because they are not eating out as often, there are limited menu options, and they have concerns about price and affordability. The uncertainty of the pandemic has shifted consumption patterns from the restaurant to retail.

Some very strong associations with veal are that 44 per cent of consumers perceive veal as

being great for special occasions and 42 per cent felt veal offered a fine dining experience. Both of these factors are not at all important to consumers when making day-to-day meal or purchase decisions. This 'specialty' perception remains a barrier to increased consumption.

Coming back to our key strategy of getting those who already eat veal to eat more of it, we wanted to know what is stopping you from doing that? What are the barriers to increasing veal consumption with our consumer? The top barrier to purchasing veal more often continues to be cost. Consumers told us that veal is either too expensive or perceived to be too expensive to purchase on a regular basis.

Other barriers include consumers concerns about not knowing how to cook or prepare veal at home, so they do not buy it as much. Consumers are fearful to try something new if they do not have the information or education about how to prepare a recipe or a specific cut of veal. This concern is especially true with the younger generations (Gen X and Millennials) which lines up with the shift we see in the food industry in general.

Of interest, is that animal welfare concerns were most prevalent with the Millennial generation—this group has concerns about ethical treatment of all animals and sustainable practices—they want to know where their food has come from and be assured it was treated



right. They are open to eating veal and so many other diverse types of foods and they are the perfect consumer for Ontario veal, but we need to give them the information they need before they make any purchasing decisions.

The other predominant barrier to purchasing more veal was that consumers feel they cannot find it at the grocery store when they want it. Perhaps their main grocery store does not carry it or only has a few limited cuts of veal. Or when the consumer decides to cook with veal, it is not at the grocery store and they purchase another protein instead. The retail offerings of veal cuts compared to beef, pork, and chicken is extremely limited, and in most cases only comprise three to five per cent of the full meat case. If consumers cannot find what they are looking for they will choose an alternative meat protein instead.

Our market research continues to confirm that cooking with veal is a planned event. The

consumer is planning to have veal as a special meal or to celebrate a special occasion, or it may be part of the family's weekly meals—but it is planned and not spontaneous. Veal is consumed fresh and is rarely frozen.

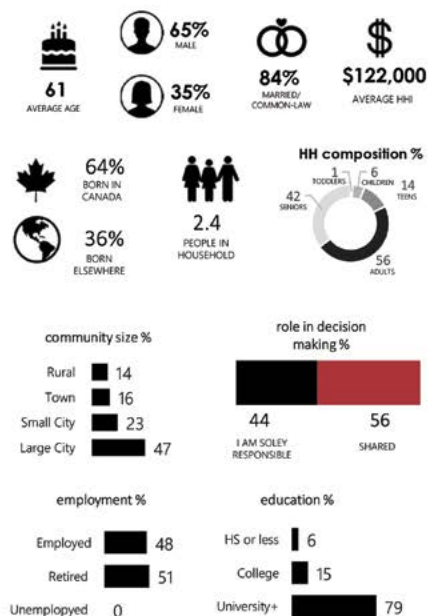
From the consumers who did not qualify for this research study (because they had not consumed veal or did not plan to consume veal in the future), results indicated that animal welfare concerns were their top reason (by far) for not eating veal. Coming in a distant second, were concerns about affordability, not knowing how to prepare it, not thinking about veal when grocery shopping, members of the family not wanting to eat it, and the lack of ready-to-eat veal products that are available.

In the end, our research continues to show that consumers like veal and would eat more of it, but it needs to be affordable, accessible, and available. However, our consumers are getting older and eating less in general. We

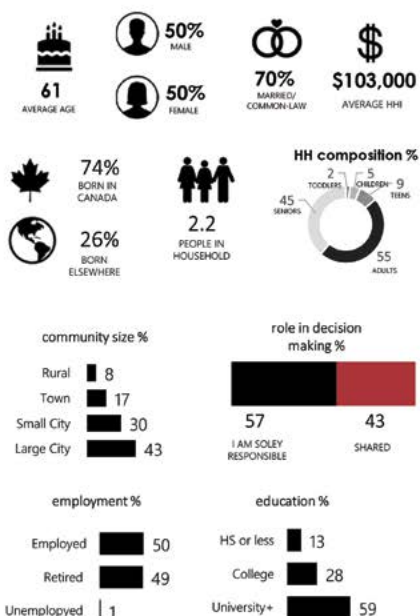
need to get the younger generations (younger than 55+ years old) convinced to eat more veal by providing production assurances and offering convenient value-added options for meal preparations. We need to reach out to new consumers and ethnic groups who like veal to encourage them to consume more. Focusing on taste, freshness and value for money will also be key to consumer communications moving forward.

Moving the needle is not a fast process, especially with a limited marketing budget, but what is encouraging from the research is that the veal market has retained its consumers—we have not lost market share. But the research also tells us we are in a transitioning marketplace with the consumers, and we need to communicate our message to strategically retain our position in the market. ■

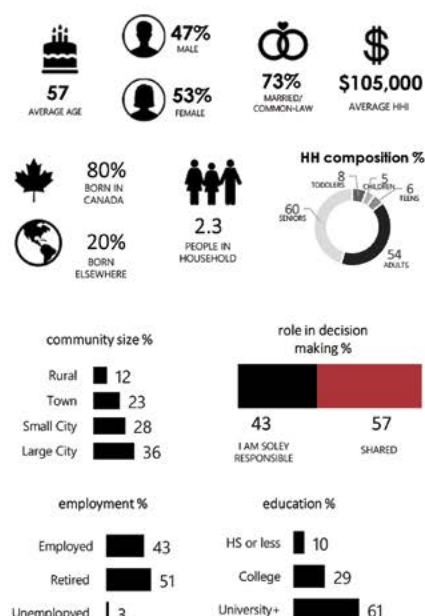
## Frequently Eat



## Regularly Eat



## Open to Veal



# 2020 Farm & Food Care Year in Review



Madeline Rodrigue, Communications Manager

Farm & Food Care Ontario

As COVID-19 realities landed early in 2020, Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) was faced with some challenging but necessary decisions to cancel all planned physical events for the year. FFCO was able to shift strategies and activate a number of meaningful virtual programs that made this a remarkably successful year, despite the complicated circumstances.

Key to that success was the continued support of Silver members like Veal Farmers of Ontario. Here are some highlights of FFCO's activities in 2020.

## FARM FOOD 360°



### The Real Dirt on Farming

2020 marked the launch of the fifth edition of *The Real Dirt on Farming*, which includes new topics, as well as a significant focus on careers across Canada's agri-food system. A new, interactive website ([www.RealDirtOnFarming.ca](http://www.RealDirtOnFarming.ca)) will provide opportunities for digital learning and content sharing, and can be updated to reflect advances, global events, and changing consumer questions. A supplementary Teachers' Guide created in partnership with Agriculture in the Classroom Canada will be distributed in 2021 to educators across Canada.

### FarmFood360°

The addition of three new farm tours capped off a tremendous year for FarmFood360°. This immersive technology allows Canadians to tour farms and food processing facilities using virtual reality (VR) headsets, and mobile and desktop devices. The website ([www.FarmFood360.ca](http://www.FarmFood360.ca)) welcomed over 835,000 users and 2.95 million page views in 2020, a 1222 per cent and 470 per cent increase over 2019 respectively.

### Virtual Food & Nutrition Forum

FFCO looks forward to connecting with an audience of food writers, bloggers, chefs, Registered Dietitians, culinary instructors and students and professional home economists each year. With farm tours impossible, FFCO partnered with the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair to host a virtual version of the annual Food & Nutrition Forum and connect with 250 attendees from the same target audience. Wanting to focus on livestock and sustainability as a key topic; the event featured Dr. Sara Place of Elanco as one of two keynote speakers.

### Farm to Facebook

A move to online learning sparked a partnership between FFCO and AgScape to offer a series of Facebook Live farm tours throughout 2020. Farm to Facebook allows viewers, including students and teachers, to connect with farmers in real-time. A total of 17 tours were hosted by farmers and agri-businesses of all types from across the province and attracted upwards of 93,429 views.

### Faces Behind Food

*Faces Behind Food* continues to highlight the diversity of people and career opportunities within the Canadian agri-food system. In 2020, 104 people were profiled for a growing audience @FacesBehindFood. *Faces Behind Food* also received recognition at the Best of CAMA awards with a Certificate of Merit in the category "Social Media Campaign Directed at the General Public".

### Farm Animal Care Council

In 2020, three Farm Animal Care Council meetings provided a helpful space for cross-commodity dialogue, especially as COVID realities landed across the industry. These meetings, currently virtual, provide FFCO's Platinum, Gold, and Silver level members an open forum for dialogue, ideas, and proactive thinking on farm animal care issues. Input from the councils gives direction to the issue-specific work that FFCO is doing in this area.



## Livestock emergency and farm fire awareness projects

FFCO's Livestock Emergency Training course was offered virtually in 2020 and is designed to give first responders a better understanding of animal behavior and management during livestock emergencies— such as truck rollovers. 60 first responders from across Ontario, plus veterinarians and other livestock stakeholders were trained throughout four online workshops. FFCO filmed two instructional videos detailing the mechanics of livestock trailers and proper extrication techniques to supplement the course.

## Special Interest Groups and Bill 156

In 2020, FFCO participated in numerous meetings, consultations and discussions related to

the activities of Special Interest Groups and new legislation in Ontario. FFCO conducted a number of speaking engagements and coordinated industry workshops offering advice on how to protect farms and businesses from potential threats. FFCO worked alongside livestock commodity groups and general farm organizations to interpret and comment on the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*. FFCO will continue to provide specialized and individualized support to its members on related issues.

## Looking ahead to 2021

As we plan for 2021 and another year of uncertainty, we are confident in the new and re-imagined programs and initiatives that will allow FFCO to connect meaningfully and safely with

our target audiences. We will continue to collaborate with other like-minded groups in 2021 and utilize the strengths and expertise of each organization.

## TO LEARN MORE

To learn more about all of FFCO's outreach, animal care and environment initiatives, visit [www.FarmFoodCareON.org](http://www.FarmFoodCareON.org) and subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter. Comments and questions can always be directed to FFCO staff directly at [info@farmfoodcare.org](mailto:info@farmfoodcare.org). ■



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# Knowing your financial statements— Balance sheets

Erich Weber, CPA, Business Finance Specialist

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs

Knowing and analyzing how your farm is performing is one of the most important jobs you, as a farm business owner, should be doing on a regular basis. Most farmers will analyze how well their veal cattle have grown/performed on a regular basis, which is a great thing to do. However, how often do you look at your financial performance or year-end financial statements? There is important information contained in your financial statements that is used by your lender, your advisor, and by you, as the owner.

Over the next few issues of *The Connection*, we will look at: the balance sheet, the income statement, the cash flow statement, and the different ratios and analysis that can be completed so that you can make good financial decisions. In this article, we will look at the balance sheet.

## The balance sheet and its purpose

A balance sheet is a list of all the farm business assets, liabilities, and owner's equity/net worth at a certain point in time (i.e., as of December XX, 202X). The statement has to “balance” (thus the name) because it tells the story of what is owned (assets) and how they were purchased (liabilities—i.e., debts; and owner's equity—i.e., what the owner contributed). The formula for a balance sheet is:

$$\text{Assets} = \text{Liabilities} + \text{Net Worth.}$$

Some of the questions that your balance sheet should be able to answer are:

- Does the business have the assets to generate income?

- Can the farm have enough cash or similar assets to pay off debt that is due within the next 12 months?
- How much of the business is financed through debt?
- If I sell the farm business, how much money would be left over after all of the assets are sold and debts are paid?

Balance sheets that are prepared for a year end, will outline all the assets and liabilities as of the year end. Your balance sheet can be summarized or detailed. A summarized balance sheet (Figure 1) provides a good overview of your farm business' financial position. A detailed balance sheet would be better used for more detailed analysis and answering other specific questions (i.e., how much of the veal inventory are for veal cattle that are close to market weight, compared to just purchased?).

## How do I prepare a balance sheet?

If your accountant/bookkeeper does not prepare a balance sheet, that is no problem. If you use a software accounting program to do your bookkeeping, there is usually an option to run a balance sheet report. If you are unsure how to do this, you can consult your software manual, or talk with your accountant or income tax preparer and they can assist.

If you use a spreadsheet to track your bookkeeping entries, you can use the Ontario Farm Accounting Workbook found at [omafr.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/download/wkbk\\_ontfarm.htm](http://omafr.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/download/wkbk_ontfarm.htm), which can take you through the process of recording all of your assets and liabilities. If you work with a lender, you have most likely provided them with a listing of your assets and liabilities. This is a good place to start preparing/updating your balance sheet.

Figure 1

ABC Veal Farms			
Balance Sheet			
as of December 31, 2020			
Assets		Liabilities	
Cash	1,000.00	Accounts Payable	250.00
		Credit Card Payable	500.00
Inventory			
Veal Calves	10,000.00	Farm Mortgage	750,000.00
Grain Corn	2,000.00	Total Liabilities	750,750.00
Equipment	50,000.00	Equity	
		Capital Invested	310,250.00
Land	1,000,000.00	Retained Earnings	2,000.00
		Total Equity	312,250.00
Total Assets	1,063,000.00	Total Liabilities & Equity	1,063,000.00





I have prepared a balance sheet, what is next?

Once you have prepared your balance sheet, it is time to start analyzing your business. The Quick Ratio or Acid Test is an important financial ratio for you to understand and review on a regular basis. This ratio shows how well a business can pay off its current liabilities (debt due within 12 months), using cash or cash-like assets (e.g., cashable GICs). A Quick Ratio or Acid Test less than one, means that your business does not have enough cash or cash-like assets to pay off your current liabilities. This is not the most ideal situation for your farm business to be in. Whereas a Quick Ratio or Acid Test greater than one is what you would want to aim for.

$$\text{Quick Ratio or Acid Test} = \frac{\text{Current Assets} - \text{Inventory}}{\text{Current Liabilities}}$$

This ratio is important, but as a word of caution, balance sheet ratios are for a specific point in time, so they are just one aspect of a financial ratio analysis to look at. There are other ratios that can also help further analyze your farm business financial situation. We will be discussing these in future articles, so stay tuned.

Preparing and analyzing your balance sheet is a great way for you to examine how your farm business is doing. This information can be used to forewarn you of possible issues that may negatively affect your farm's financial position, so that you can make changes to prevent the situation. In the next edition of *The Connection*, we will take a closer look at the income statement. ■



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# Prioritizing your mental health

Cheryl DeCooman, CHRL, President

People Management Group/UdderlySAFE



According to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), one in five Canadians will experience a serious mental illness or addiction problem in their life. Additionally, one in two Canadians will have faced their own experience with mental illness by the age of 40. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the rates of mental illness are expected to rise for all Canadians, regardless of age.

The CMHA's Mental Health Week is May 3 to 9, 2021. The CMHA hopes to promote genuine human connection and destigmatize mental health through their activities and events during this week.

What can you do to prioritize your mental health? Especially when you believe your mental health is suffering, the first step is to recognize it. Watch for certain negative thought patterns or behaviours, such as being continuously angry or upset, having self-doubt, ruminating on thoughts, etc. You know yourself better than anyone else, so you can identify when you are not really feeling like yourself, or something is off. The CMHA has also created a free mental health meter—a quick survey to assess your well-being. The meter does not require you to input any personal information, it is simply a tool you can use to assess your mental health. You can find it at: [cmha.ca/mental-health-meter](https://cmha.ca/mental-health-meter).

There are also many other things you can do to help yourself and your mental well-being:

- **Create a routine.** Humans have evolved to be creatures of habit and be more successful when they follow routines. You do not have to plan every minute of your time but start by exploring different routines and finding ones that work for you, such as going for a walk at the same time three days a week.
- **Exercise.** Many research studies have shown that exercise reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as increasing individual's self-esteem and cognitive functioning. Exercise does not need to be two hours of lifting heavy weights, it can be as simple as taking a walk around your property.
- **Sleep.** According to numerous studies, the body requires seven to nine hours of sleep per night.
- **Connect with others (virtually).** Humans are social creatures. It impacts all of our mental well-being when we cannot see our loved ones to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Set up weekly or monthly video calls with your friend group. Plan for virtual cooking and dinner calls with your extended family. Simply sending a message to a friend to check in can make a big difference in someone's day.
- **Take breaks.** Social media, the news, and all things COVID-19 can be overwhelming. It is okay to take breaks from television, media, and your phone to unwind and relax. Watch a movie with the people you live with, bake some treats, go for a walk, or read a book.
- **Journal.** Research shows that journaling is a way for people to release stress and help to manage depression and anxiety.
- **Mindfulness.** Mindfulness is the practice of reflecting on your feelings and emotions, and the day overall. Practicing mindfulness is a way you can become more aware of your own emotional responses in the moment, to feel less overwhelmed and help reduce the likelihood of potentially overreacting in a situation. Anyone can practice mindfulness without needing training, it simply starts by taking a deep breath and thinking "Wow, I am very overwhelmed in this moment, I am going to take three deep breaths before I respond."
- **Build up to things.** You would not wake up one morning and run a marathon without training beforehand. Your mental health is the same, it takes time to build good routines and strategies that work for you. Expect that there will be setbacks, but they are an opportunity to evaluate and try out new strategies. Mental health is a continuous, ongoing process. It is okay to take the time for yourself and take the time to explore things that work for you.
- **Use mental health resources.** Below is a list of free resources you can access for support. There are also private practice therapist options for individualized support. ■

## Resources

**Do More Agriculture Foundation**  
[domore.ag](https://domore.ag)

**Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs**  
[omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/mental-health.htm](https://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/mental-health.htm)

**Ontario Federation of Agriculture**  
[ofa.on.ca/issues/mental-health](https://ofa.on.ca/issues/mental-health)

**Connex Ontario**  
[connexontario.ca](https://connexontario.ca)

**Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario**  
[ontario.cmha.ca](https://ontario.cmha.ca)

**Crisis Services Canada**  
[crisisservicescanada.ca](https://crisisservicescanada.ca)

*References available upon request.*





# COMMODITY LOAN PROGRAM

## Cash Advances for Ontario Farmers at preferred rates

The Commodity Loan Program (CLP) was developed in 1992 to assist farmers in financing their crop planting, cultivating, and harvesting expenses in Ontario.

This means improved access to lower cost financing, supplementing cash flow throughout the year, while paying less interest.

The Commodity Loan Program is offered through Agricultural Credit Corporation. ACC specializes in offering low cost operating loans to producers across Canada.

The expertise of ACC is built upon experience gained in offering loans, producer credit review, managing large loan accounts, meeting government loan guarantee parameters and collection of loan repayments.

### Agricultural Credit Corporation

201-660 Speedvale Avenue West  
Guelph, Ontario N1K 1E5

1-888-278-8807  
info@agcreditcorp.ca  
www.agcreditcorp.ca



#### Program Details:

##### HOW MUCH CAN I QUALIFY FOR?

Under the Commodity Loan Program, you can access cash advances of up to 75% of the market price of your crop production each year to cover your crop planting, cultivating, and harvesting expenses.

Production Insurance is required to qualify for this program. Advance amounts are based on your *anticipated production* within the current production period. Advances are available for:

- Grains and oilseeds (i.e. corn, soybeans, wheat)
- Apples
- Processing Vegetables (i.e. tomatoes, cucumbers, sugar beets)
- Tobacco (black, burley, air-cured)
- Check our website for other products

##### WHEN CAN I ACCESS THE FUNDS?

Generally funding is available beginning in November of each year and dependent on what you are producing in the current year.

**Up to \$750,000 available per year**

**Advances based on up to 75% of the value of the agricultural product**

**Interest Rate: Bank Prime Rate**

**Up to 23 months for repayment**

##### WHEN DO I REPAY THE FUNDS?

Repayments are made as the current crop is sold, with a final repayment deadline of *September 30 of the following year*

##### WHAT CAN I USE THE FUNDS FOR?

There are no restrictions on how you use the funds under the Commodity Loan program. You use the funds as you feel appropriate for your operation.

##### WHAT DO I NEED TO QUALIFY?

- Canadian citizens
- Must be age of majority
- Majority owned Canadian Corporations
- Be producing and marketing the agricultural products for which you are applying.

##### HOW CAN I APPLY?

**Just call us and we will do the application over the telephone with you at: 1-888-278-8807**



### Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020 now in effect

Along with our commodity group partners, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) was pleased to join Minister Ernie Hardeman and the Ontario government virtually as they announced the proclamation of Bill 156, the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*. Beginning December 5, 2020, the Act protects Ontario's food supply chain, from farm to table, without infringing on the right to peacefully protest and, in conjunction with the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act (PAWS), 2019*, ensure animals are protected and cared for properly.

VFO, along with Ontario's farm and commodity groups, worked collaboratively on this issue, releasing a joint media statement to applaud the efforts of the Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ontario government in working diligently to support the needs of Ontario's food producers.

### Trespass signage now available for producers

The majority of places where farm animals are normally kept or located will not require signage to be considered an animal protection zone under the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*. A decision tree is now available as an aid to determine whether your area requires an animal protection zone sign. Learn more about Animal Protection Zones and find the decision tree and printable signs at [aboutbill156.com](http://aboutbill156.com).

### Celebrating Canada's Agriculture Day on February 23

On February 23, 2021, VFO celebrated Canada's Agriculture Day by taking part in the #BurgersUpOnt challenge with our commodity group partners, encouraging our followers to fill their plates with local ingredients for their burger creations and share photos on social media. VFO shared the French Onion Soup Burger recipe for inspiration. Canada's Agriculture Day celebrates each member of the agri-food supply chain that works hard to ensure Canadian plates remain full of local, nutritious, and affordable food.



industry advisors) primarily focused on housing topics. Initially intended to help us adapt to online meetings with such a large group, the presentations have evolved into a nice way to lean on the team's experience and expertise, build understanding across this diverse group, and allow for different proposals to be brought forward for consideration.

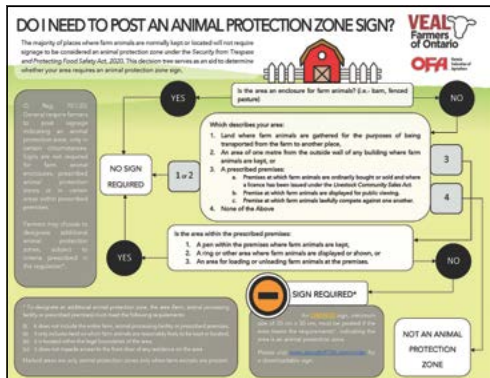
The Scientific Committee's report on priority welfare issues is now finalized following its peer review. The report will be released publicly when the draft Code is released for public comment.

Learn more at [bit.ly/dairyupdate](http://bit.ly/dairyupdate)

### Transport Code update

The 23-member Code Development Committee (CDC) met for the first time in its entirety in mid-September. Of course, due to the restrictions linked to the pandemic, the meeting of the full CDC was held in virtual format, and that in and of itself presented several challenges for such a large group. As such, the two-hour session was used to "kickoff" the process and to introduce CDC members who represent the primary users of the Transportation Code of Practice: livestock and poultry transporters.

Learn more at [bit.ly/transportcode](http://bit.ly/transportcode)



### Dairy Code update

The Code Committee has been busy this fall with four meetings of the entire committee and eight subcommittee meetings. Recent meetings have included presentations from committee members (producers, processors, animal welfare advocates, researchers, and

### Calf manual now available for purchase

VFO's updated calf care manual, *Building the Foundation for Healthy Calves II*, is now on sale.



Highlighting the latest best management practices and written by leading experts in calf



management, this manual will help farmers establish sound calf care protocols that improve growth, prevent disease, and optimize production.

Available while quantities last! Get yours at [calfcare.ca/shop](http://calfcare.ca/shop)

## New virtual speaker series recordings available throughout April

During the month of March VFO held a series of six webinars designed to connect veal and male dairy calf producers with leading experts sharing the latest research and practical advice for managing calves and veal cattle.

Find recordings of the live talks from the 2021 Ask the Expert Virtual Speaker Series, and bonus access to a special pre-recorded talk from the 2020 Healthy Calf Conference at [bit.ly/3thEMA](http://bit.ly/3thEMA)

Check back often, a new talk will be released weekly in April.

## Grain-fed veal fact sheets

VFO has developed a series of monthly fact sheets that will help answer common questions about starting and operating a grain-fed veal farm. Releases for 2021 include pellet quality, calf starter, and water.

Learn more at [bit.ly/gvffactsheets](http://bit.ly/gvffactsheets)



# Dealing with escaped livestock


Susan Fitzgerald, Executive Director

Ontario Livestock and Poultry Council


There have been an increasing number of instances of loose animals reported in Ontario. This is a biosecurity hazard for other farms and livestock and a human safety concern. In February, a motorist was killed when he hit a loose horse on a road in Oxford County which emphasizes the seriousness of this issue.

There are a number of acts and associated regulations in Ontario, as well as municipal bylaws, that specify livestock owners' obligations to keep their animals under their care, and to get them back under control when out of containment.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has produced two animal at large info sheets which are available on the Ontario Livestock and Poultry Council website: [ontlpc.ca/news.php](http://ontlpc.ca/news.php)





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# The history of veal in Ontario



Kendra Keels

Industry Development Director

This article is the first in a four-part series examining the history of the veal industry in Ontario.

In a conversation with a long-time grain-fed veal producer, it was evident that not a lot is written about the history of the veal industry in Ontario. It is important that while long-time veal producers are still around, some active, some not, and many new younger producers start, the history of how we got here is captured.

As veal producers, what is known about the history of veal? We know it is referenced in the bible as the “fatted calf”. It has also been mentioned throughout history in literature, for example, *Don Quixote* a famous Spanish novel by Miguel de Cervantes, states “veal is better than beef”.

Until the 1960's, veal in North America was largely “bob” veal. Bob veal was somewhere around 150 lbs. live and less than three weeks of age. Sometime during in the mid-1800s the term bob veal was coined because the young calves would bob their heads in a short jerky motion, giving the name “bob calves”. As calves grew in numbers the term bob calves grew not only in North America but in other parts of the world like Australia and New Zealand. It was not uncommon to hear the term bobby veal, which represented the meat of those young calves. Today, in Ontario we do not have a bobby veal market, however there is a small market still in the United States and other parts of the world.

In Ontario, the sixties was a time of increased demand for milk and milk products, and in 1965 the Dairy Producers of Ontario was established as the regulatory organization to balance out the supply and demand of milk. As the dairy industry was growing so were milk by-products now referred to as co-products like skim and whey, and the surplus of male dairy calves known as bob calves.

This bob veal market was the precursor to formula-fed veal. In the Netherlands during the early seventies a lot of research was being done on raising calves on formula and in confinement housing. It was thought that confinement housing would improve efficiencies for the growing number of farms raising veal. It did not take long for this method of raising veal to become known in Ontario where formula-fed calves began to increase in popularity among producers looking for alternatives to traditional farming.



Bezant, Graham 1973  
Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Collection

Throughout the century's veal (the fattened calf) has always been considered a luxury meat, there are reports that when veal was served no other meat could be served with the veal. The earliest known veal recipes date back to the 1300s in France.

As production began with formula-fed veal (later renamed special-fed veal, fancy veal, white veal, milk-fed veal and nature-fed veal) there was also a growing consumer demand for the light-colored, tender veal. It was becoming popular in fine dining restaurants. More producers began to raise white veal in Ontario and the industry transitioned away from the days of the bob veal at 150 lbs. and less than three weeks of age, to a heavier weight of 225 lbs. to meet the growing consumer demand and to improve efficiencies.

Stay tuned for the next issue of *The Connection* as the history of veal will be continued. If you or anyone you know has any information to contribute to the history of veal series, please contact Kendra Keels at the VFO office at [kkeels@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:kkeels@vealfarmers.ca). Now is the time to get the veal story written down! ■

References available upon request.



Below is a veal market report from the Toronto market in the early 1900s, as reported by the Farmers Advocate, London, ON.

**Notes:**

These calves would have weighed less than 150 lbs.  
cwt = 100 lbs. of live weight

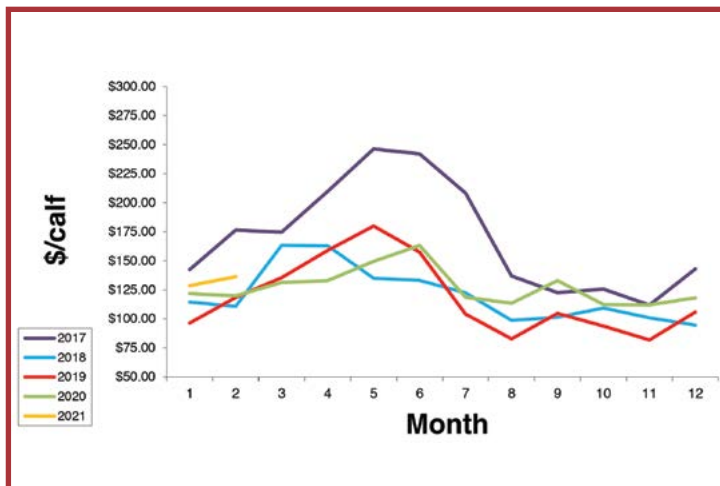
Date	Comments
<b>1908</b>	
October 1, 1908	Receipt's light, prices range from \$3-6.50
October 15, 1908	Receipts of veal calves were lights, with prices firmer, at \$3 to \$7 per cwt. And one extra quality calf brought \$7.50 per cwt.
November 8, 1908	Receipts were moderate, the bulk of which were of the coarse "horsey" kind. Prices were not as good on account of poultry having become plentiful and cheaper. Prices ranges from \$3.50-\$6.50, with a few at the latter figures.
December 17, 1908	Receipt's light, market steady, at prices ranging from \$3-\$6.50 per cwt.
December 24, 1908	A few choice Christmas calves sold at \$7 to \$8.50 per cwt. Common to medium sold at \$3 to \$6.50 per cwt.
December 31, 1908	Not many veal calves on sale, prices unchanged at \$3 to \$6.75 per cwt.
<b>1909</b>	
January 7, 1909	Veal of high quality was in demand. The average was about \$6.00.
January 14, 1909	Deliveries light; prices firmer at \$3.50-\$7.00 per cwt.
January 21, 1909	Deliveries were light. Demand greater than supply with prices firmer at \$4 to \$7.50 per cwt.
February 4, 1909	Receipt's light, but prices have been easier at \$3 to \$6.50 per cwt.
February 11, 1909	Receipts were larger, but few of good to choice quality. Prices ranged from \$3 to \$6.75 per cwt.
February 18, 1909	A fair supply of veal calves sold at steady prices from \$3 to \$6.50 per cwt. With a very few choice quality at \$7 per cwt.
February 25, 1909	\$3-\$7 per cwt.
March 4, 1909	Receipts moderate, prices firm at \$3-\$7 per cwt.
March 11, 1909	Receipts moderate, market strong at \$3 to \$7 per cwt.
March 18, 1909	There was a strong market for veal calves all week. Prices ranged from \$3 to \$7 per cwt., with very few at \$7.25 to \$7.50 per cwt.
March 25, 1909	Receipts were larger and prices firm at \$3 to \$7.25 per cwt.
April 1, 1909	Receipts were fairly liberal. Prices were a trifle easier at \$3-\$7 per cwt.
April 8, 1909	Receipts are increasing as the season advances. Prices held about \$3-\$7 per cwt.
April 22, 1909	Receipts were the largest for some time. The quality of the bulk of the calves being offered is poor. Too many of them are less than a week old, and butchers complain that it is difficult to get enough good veal, let alone choice to supply their customers. Prices were lower at \$3 to \$6.50 per cwt.
May 20, 1909	Receipts large, quality generally not good. Prices ranged from \$3 to \$6.50 per cwt.
May 27, 1909	Receipts large, prices easy, \$3-5.50 cwt.
June 17, 1909	Receipts were liberal and prices steady at \$3 to \$5.50 per cwt.
June 24, 1909	Receipts were large, quality a little better than usual. Prices ranged from \$3 to \$5.50 per cwt., for the bulk, but a few choice, new-milk-fed calves sold at \$6 to \$6.50 per cwt. More calves of the latter class would sell readily.
July 15, 1909	Receipts were liberal at unchanged prices at \$3 to \$6 per cwt. With a few selling at \$6.50 per cwt.
July 29, 1909	Receipts were liberal and prices going for the bulk going lower as lambs become cheaper. Prices ranged from \$3 to \$6.00 per cwt.
August 5, 1909	Receipts large, prices the lowest of the season, \$3-5.50 cwt with a few of the best at \$5.50.
August 12, 1909	Moderate receipts sold at \$3 to 6 per cwt. The bulk selling from \$4.50 to 5.50 per cwt.
September 2, 1909	Prices for calves were a little firmer, \$3.50-6.50 cwt and \$7 per cwt, was paid for a few new milk-fed-calves.
September 16, 1909	Receipts were liberal with prices steady at \$3 to 6.50 and a few new milk fed calves at \$7 per cwt.
September 30, 1909	Receipts of veal calves were moderate, selling at steady prices, from \$3 to 6.50 per cwt.
October 21, 1909	Receipts were moderate at unchanged prices, which ranged from \$3 to \$7 per cwt. The latter price being for choice, new-milk-fed calves.
November 25, 1909	Heavy, rough, horsey calves, that may have been on grass sold at \$3 per cwt. Medium to good calves \$5 to 6.50 prime new-milk-fed calves were readily picked up at \$7-7.25 per cwt.
December 23, 1909	Light receipts, sold at firm prices ranging from \$4 to \$7 per cwt.



# Veal Market Information

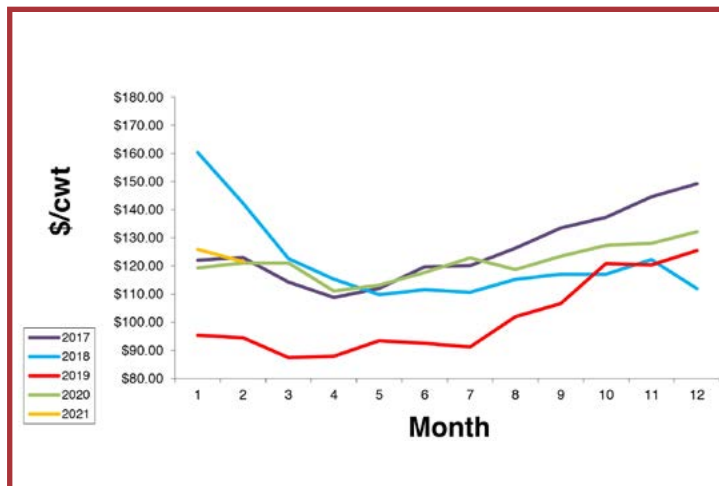
This information is collected from various sources and disseminated by Veal Farmers of Ontario.

## Bob Calf Pricing



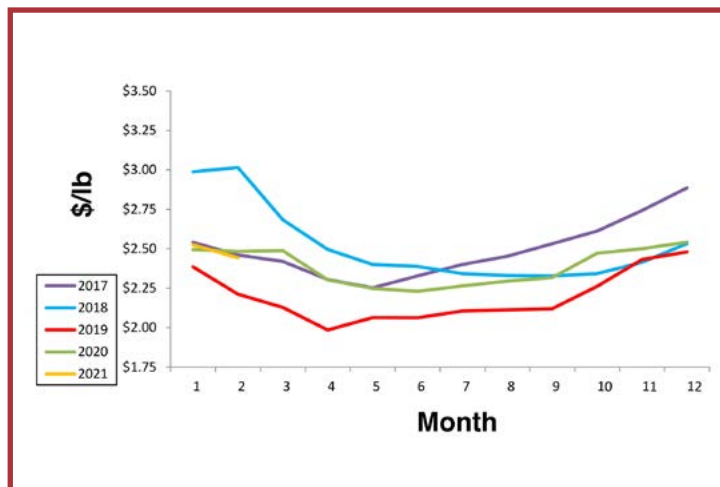
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

## Sale Barn Veal Pricing



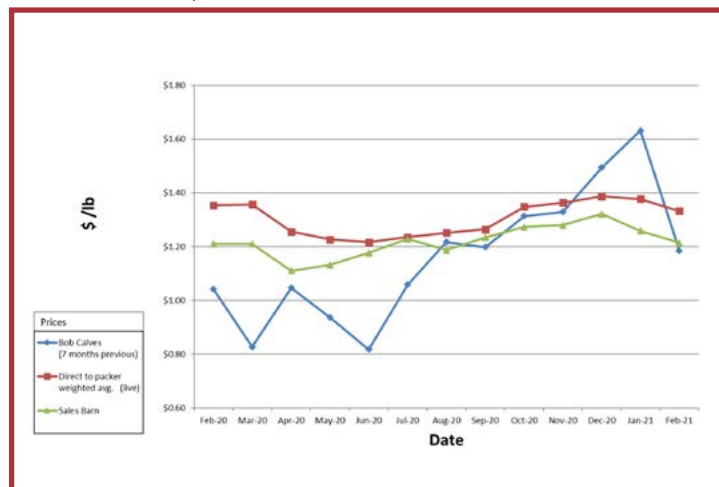
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

## Rail Grade Veal Pricing



This information is collected from producer contributions on a weekly basis. Once the numbers are collected a weighted average is calculated. The weighted average gives a more realistic price of what is happening in the market. This information is used to follow trends.

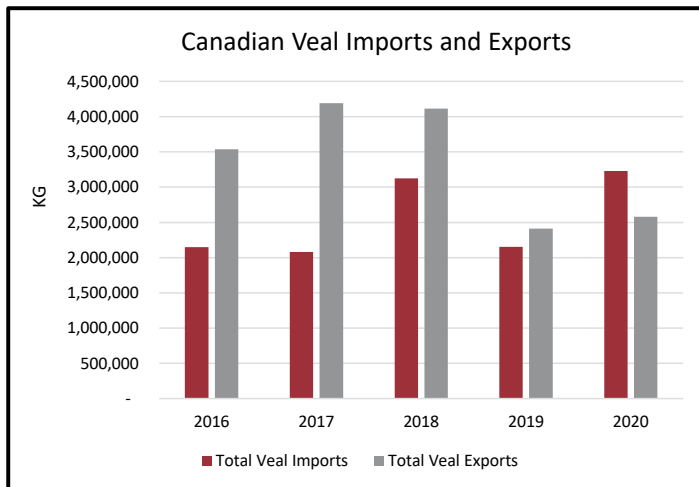
## Finished price compared to bob calf prices (Seven months previous)



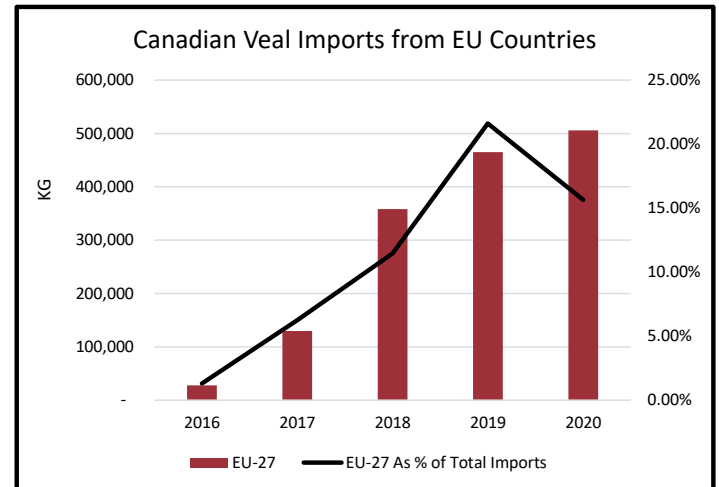
This graph is used to compare the finished price from both the sale barn and rail grade pricing to the bob calf prices seven months prior. This information could help when deciding on the purchase prices of calves and what market they will be shipped in. This information gives a quick glance at both bob calf pricing and finished veal pricing.



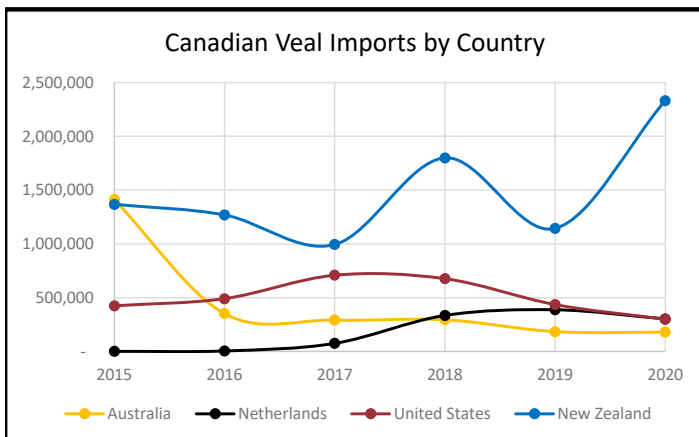
A quarterly snapshot of Canada's veal trade



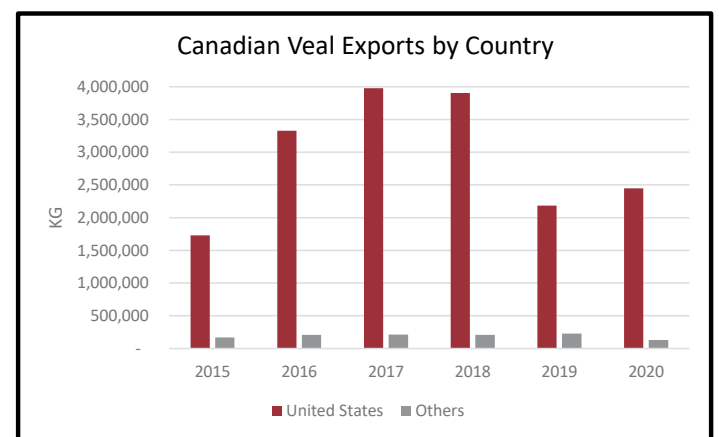
While in previous years veal has maintained a trade surplus, Canadian veal ended 2020 in a trade deficit. Exports grew by 7% to just over 2.5 million kilos. However, imports of veal increased greatly with over 1 million additional kilos being imported, a 50% increase from 2019.



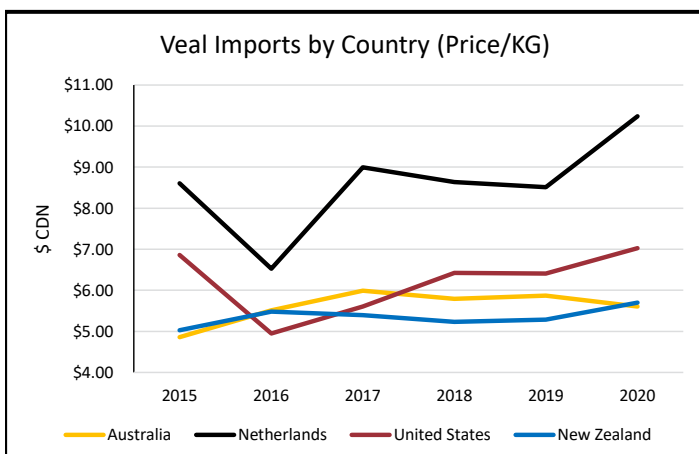
The volume of veal imports from the EU (red bars) continued to increase in 2020 to over 500,000 KG. Due to a large increase in imports the percentage of total imports from the EU (black line) fell slightly from 20% in 2019 to 16% in 2020. The Netherlands represents over 90% of EU imports, with the remainder coming from Italy.



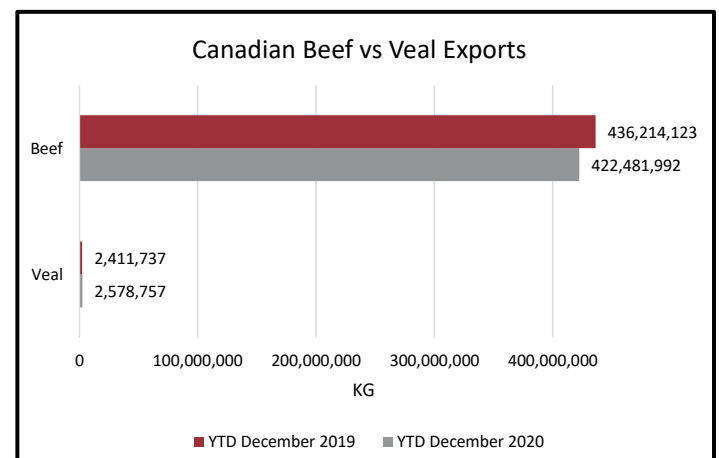
A large majority of Canada's veal imports came from New Zealand in 2020. Imports from the Netherlands and Australia remained steady from 2019, while American imports continued to decline. More veal is now imported from the Netherlands than the USA.



Veal exports to the United States, the destination for the vast majority of Canadian veal, increased by 12%. While exports to the Middle East, namely to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates fell by 40%.



Imports from the Netherlands are higher quality cuts and command a significantly higher price when compared to the value of imports from other countries. The value of American cuts also increased notably in 2020.



Veal represents just a small fraction of Canada's red meat trade.

All data retrieved from AAFC and Statistics Canada, red meat section.

# Ontario VEAL appeal

## Plank Grilled Veal Meatloaf Balls with Mashed Potatoes & Craft Beer BBQ Gravy

Serves 8

### Grill Temperature:

350-425°F (176-218°C)

**Grill Time:** 45 minutes

### Gear:

1 x 4 oz (120 mL) ice cream scoop

1 plank ½ inch (1.25 cm) thick, 12 x 8 inches (30.5 x 20.3 cm) soaked in water for a minimum of 1 hour

Meat thermometer

### Ingredients:

6 large Yukon gold potatoes, about 1 ½ lbs (750 g), peeled and quartered

3 tbsp (45 mL) sour cream

1 cup (250 mL) grated cheddar cheese

2 green onions minced

Salt and pepper, to taste

2 lbs (1 kg) ground Ontario veal

2 tbsp (30 mL) softened butter

1 cup (250 mL) finely diced sweet onion

6 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup (250 mL) hickory sticks

1 tbsp (15 mL) Dijon mustard

½ cup (125 mL) chopped fresh herbs (parsley, dill, oregano, dill, rosemary) your choice

1/3 cup (80 mL) grated parmesan cheese

2 mozzarella cheese strings cut into 4 equal portions each

### Instructions:

Boil potatoes in salted water until tender. Drain and mash, transfer to a bowl and allow to fully cool. Cover and refrigerate for 2 to 4 hours or overnight. Mash the

cold potatoes. Add sour cream, cheddar cheese and green onion. Season to taste with salt and pepper and mix well.

Using a 4 oz (120 mL) ice cream scoop, scoop the potato mixture into 8 uniform flat-bottomed balls. Cover and refrigerate.

In a large bowl combine ground veal, butter, onions, garlic, hickory sticks, Dijon mustard, chopped fresh herbs and parmesan cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Using the ice cream scoop, scoop into 8 flat-bottomed balls. With your finger, poke a hole in the center of each veal meatloaf ball. Insert one piece of cheese string and cover with ground veal. Repeat with remaining balls.

**Tip:** Pack the ice cream scoop firmly with the mashed potatoes and veal this will remove most of the air in the mixtures and them from falling apart.

Remove plank from water and pat dry with paper toweling. Brush lightly with a little vegetable oil and season the plank with a little salt n pepper.

Place the veal meatloaf balls in a single line evenly spaced along one side of the plank, leaving an inch border from the edge of the plank. Line up the mashed potato balls beside the meatloaf balls. Cover and refrigerate to rest for 1 hour.

Fire up your grill to 350-425°F (176-218°C).

Place planked meatloaf balls and mashed potatoes on the grill, close lid, and plank for 10 minutes. The plank will start to smoke and crackle. Reduce heat to medium to medium low and continue to cook meatloaf for 20-30 minutes longer until the meatloaf balls are fully cooked and still juicy, the cheese filling is melting and

the mashed potatoes are golden brown hot on the inside and crispy on the outside.

Remove from grill and allow to rest for 10 minutes then serve ladled with BBQ gravy (recipe follows).

### Beer BBQ Gravy

¼ (60 mL) butter

½ cup (125 mL) diced onion

3 cloves garlic, minced

¼ cup (60 mL) all-purpose flour

½ cup (125 mL) your favorite local craft beer

1 ½ cups (375 mL) beef stock

½ cup (125 mL) smoky BBQ sauce

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Sauté the onions and garlic for 1-2 minutes or until tender and transparent, stirring frequently. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, forming a roux. Continue to stir and add the beer and beef stock ½ cup (125 mL) at a time, stirring constantly, until smooth and thickened.

Stir in the BBQ sauce, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Strain and adjust seasoning.

Makes approximately 4 cups. ■

Source: Ted Reader BBQ







#### CHAIR

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519-276-7314

**Brian Keunen**  
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519-577-3730

**Dylan Yantzi**  
Tavistock, ON  
226-880-0849

**THE**  
**Connection**

449 Laird Road, Unit 12  
Guelph, Ontario, N1G 4W1

Tel: 519-824-2942  
Fax: 519-824-2534  
info@vealfarmers.ca

## Licenced dealers

As a veal (bob calves and finished veal cattle) producer, you should be dealing with licenced dealers who are remitting veal licence fees (check-off) on behalf of the farmers they are collecting from.

If you are selling bob calves from your dairy farm, the \$5.50 check-off is to be collected by the person purchasing those calves. If you sell your calves to a sale barn, the check-off is remitted on your behalf. Please contact the Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) office to ensure we have your updated contact information, including your email address.

If you are dealing with an unlicensed dealer, you are not protected under the Ontario Beef Cattle Financial Protection Program (OBCFPP). You could be in jeopardy of losing the money from the sale, especially if you received a cheque for payment. If it is unclear if the dealer is licenced, ask to see the licence, check the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) website at [bit.ly/omafra/licenceddealers](http://bit.ly/omafra/licenceddealers) or contact the VFO office.

## Licence fee reminders

In order to assist those who have not yet remitted their male dairy bob calf (up to 150 pounds) and preconditioned intact male dairy calf (up to 450 pounds) purchases from private treaty or dealer sales, the VFO has a **Monthly Licence Fee Remittance Worksheet** available to assist in calculating remittances from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

Please take the time to fill this worksheet out if you are not currently remitting on a regular basis. As a reminder, Regulation 58/15 (i) requires any person who receives veal cattle to deduct from the money payable for the veal cattle any licence fees payable to the local board by the person from whom the veal cattle is received and to forward the licence fees to the local board. Bob calves and preconditioned calves are considered veal cattle.

If you have not already sent in Form 1 identifying yourself as a veal producer, please do so. They can be emailed, faxed, or sent by regular mail to the office.

If you require additional copies of the **Monthly Licence Fee Remittance Worksheet, Form 1** or **Form 5**, please visit [bit.ly/licencefeeforms](http://bit.ly/licencefeeforms) or contact the VFO office.

## Ontario Beef Cattle Financial Protection Program

Agricorp is the Delivery Agent of the OBCFPP and Administrator for the Livestock Financial Protection Board. All communication, including but not limited to: Late Payments Reports, Claims to the Fund, and Licencing inquiries, must be directed to Agricorp. Visit [bit.ly/agricorp](http://bit.ly/agricorp) or call 1-888-247-4999 for more information. ■

## Coordinates and Staff

**Jennifer Haley**  
Executive Director  
[jhaley@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:jhaley@vealfarmers.ca)

**Molly Mazerolle**  
Administrative Assistant  
[info@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:info@vealfarmers.ca)

**Kendra Keels**  
Industry Development Director  
[kkeels@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:kkeels@vealfarmers.ca)

**Geoff Holwell**  
Inspection and Compliance Officer  
[gholwell@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:gholwell@vealfarmers.ca)  
519-277-2371 (cell)

**Jennifer Bullock**  
Projects & Communications Manager  
[jbullock@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:jbullock@vealfarmers.ca)

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Reference: 1. Dunn TR, Ollivett TL, Renaud DL, et al. 2018. The effect of lung consolidation, as determined by ultrasonography, on first-lactation milk production in Holstein dairy calves. *J Dairy Sci*;101(6):5404-5410.

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