

THE Connection

Fall 2020 Volume 2, No. 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Premier Ford and Minister Hardeman announce additional investment in the RMP

Healthy Calf Conference goes virtual

VFO says thank you with cookies





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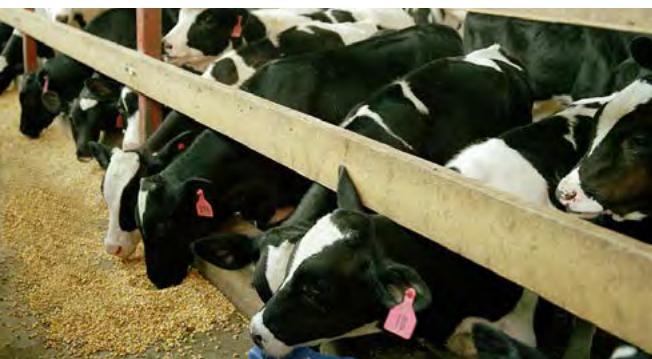
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Building the Foundation

Dairy and Veal Healthy Calf Conference

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- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 4 | Chair's Message |
| 6 | Executive Director's Report |
| 9 | Producer Profile: Dylan Yantzi |
| 10 | Ask the Expert: Disease surveillance for young calves |
| 11 | Housing and hutches, changes for 2021 |
| 12 | Building the foundation for better calf performance |
| 14 | Here comes DairyTrace! |
| 16 | 'In the Know' expands to improve farmer mental health |
| 17 | Maximizing the value of male dairy calves |
| 18 | VFO says thank you with cookies |
| 20 | Shifting online to promote Ontario Veal to consumers |
| 22 | Industry updates |
| 24 | Choosing the right business structure for you |
| 25 | Looking forward: COVID-19 and agriculture's economic resiliency |
| 26 | Your workplace health and safety communication board |
| 28 | Introducing the Veal Trade Tracker |
| 30 | Veal Market Information |



Chair's MESSAGE



Pascal Bouilly

There is strength in numbers. Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) has always believed it was important to work with our partner commodity organizations to leverage our collective ability to speak with the government on the issues that impact all farmers. Never more so has that been proven than with our recent work to lobby for additional funds for the Ontario Risk Management Program (RMP).

It was exciting to see all our hard work come to fruition when I was able to attend an event in July, with my colleagues from the livestock, grains, and fruit and vegetable sectors, to hear Premier Ford and Minister Hardeman officially announce that an additional \$50 million would be put into the 2020 RMP.

These additional funds were promised for 2021 by the provincial Conservative party when they were campaigning to be elected. But we all know we need it now, not later. That is why all our organizations worked together and lobbied for change. And thankfully, Premier Ford and Minister Hardeman heard us and responded to our request.

The timing of these funds being available could not have come at a more critical time. All farmers are facing uncertainty and market volatility—more so than ever it seems. While Covid-19 has brought some opportunities, it has also brought financial hardship and challenges for many in the agricultural sector.

But the work is not yet done! What is next on our list? VFO, along with our partners, are all resolute in working together to find solutions and improvements at the federal level for the AgriStability program. Our group has been reaching out to both the federal and provincial levels of government to raise concerns about the ineffectiveness of the AgriStability program to provide the level of support when it is needed most.

AgriStability is the main channel of delivery of funds from the federal government and it needs significant improvements to make it a realistic business risk management tool that farmers can rely on so that we can keep producing safe, quality food. Whether it is raising the reference margin limits or removing caps on the program, there is work to be done to make it more responsive and ensure farmers are protected.

For VFO, we have been dedicated to the RMP and business risk management file because we know how important this is for our farmers. Veal farmers, like other livestock and non-supply managed commodities,

Strength in numbers

Advocating for improvements to risk management programs right now

have very few effective risk management tools. And the ones that we do have do not work as well as they could or should.

VFO will continue to support the collaborative and joint efforts to make sure that government hears us. We will do all we can to try and make change happen, and work hard to protect the financial viability of our farmers and the risk management programs. We certainly could not do all this on our own, nor would any one group be as effective in getting the ear of government. However, there really is strength in numbers. ■



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Jennifer Haley

Finding efficiencies—there is always more to do!

Like many other businesses and organizations in these pandemic times, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) has found new ways of conducting its business and ensuring continuity for the organization and our members. Your Board has met regularly on Zoom and staff have been able to work remotely when needed.

In fact, being catapulted to adopting new technology also brings new efficiencies and productivity. The VFO Board has been able to meet more frequently over Zoom, with shorter meeting times and with no travel off the farm. While we miss the in-person contact, the Board has agreed that the Zoom format is here to stay in our meeting schedules.

Some days, I have participated in five or six Zoom meetings or conference calls—something that could never have been done pre-Covid if all those meetings were in-person and at different locations. While we are not able to travel, meetings that took the whole day before can now be done in an hour or two! Makes you wonder how many meetings we attended in the past that could have been done more efficiently! However, nothing will ever be able replace the value of relationships that are built when you meet someone face to face. Post-pandemic, it will likely be a blend of all meeting formats that will be used but we will not go backwards on the efficiencies we have gained.

Thank goodness for new efficiencies because it has been a busy summer with several important projects and issues on the front burner! VFO has been working with our partner organizations to address the Freedom of Information request that was submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) looking for all the names of Ontario farm businesses and Farm Business Registration Numbers. Together with our partners, VFO filed an objection on the basis that your farm name is indeed personal information that should not be shared with anyone. OMAFRA, however, has indicated that it will release the farm business names. Of course, we are all appealing this decision. We must protect our farms and our families—our businesses are located where we live, and it is irresponsible to release this information, especially considering we do not know who is asking for it. Thank you to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture for leading the charge on this important issue!

Five years after VFO came into force as a marketing board, we are taking the final step towards ensuring our regulations cover all veal producers, with the inclusion of veal cattle sold at sales barns in VFO's regulations. VFO has been working closely with the Commission and Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) to bring proposed amendments forward. Licence fees from veal cattle sold in sales barns would come to VFO and these producers will finally be recognized as VFO members—since they are

in the business of finishing veal cattle. Stay tuned for more information to come.

Everyone loves cookies and this past summer we were able to share a small token of appreciation to all our veal plants and their employees to show our gratitude for all that they have done to keep veal cattle moving through the supply chain. One of the impacts of Covid is the demand for local and it has been keeping our provincial plants very busy!

All our consumer marketing programs this summer focused on encouraging consumers to cook with veal at home and to also try it on the BBQ! While it was not what we originally planned at the beginning of the year, being able to pivot our strategies has given us the opportunity to explore some new ways of promoting veal. All reports indicate that the foodservice sector will be very slow to recover—it is estimated that between 50 to 60 per cent of restaurants may not survive. Hospitality

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and tourism even slower still. These are all prime veal markets and the decline in these sectors has greatly impacted the veal market—especially the milk-fed sector. Our processors have been freezing milk-fed veal at levels not seen since BSE in 2003. Globally, veal processors are freezing product or selling what they can—everyone is competing for the same customer. Unfortunately, this frozen stock will impact the grain-fed sector at some point when it comes back onto the market.

Together with the Canadian Veal Association (CVA), we have been working with the federal government to highlight the concerns we are facing as a sector. At the same time, we have worked collaboratively with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to draft an export protocol for the European Union with the goal of expanding our ability to market Canadian veal globally.

Other issues like the introduction of Bill 156, the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act*; ensuring business risk management programs like the Risk Management Program (RMP) are reflective of the needs of our sector; the collection and remittance of National Check-off; preparing for the 2020 virtual Healthy Calf Conference; communications regarding the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* requirements; and more keep us busy! It is a good thing we have found some efficiencies because the issues keep coming and there is always more to do! More to do on behalf of our members—working with a purpose. ■



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PRODUCER PROFILE



Dylan Yantzi

Birchview Farms

Tell us a bit about your operation.

Our farm is located in the northeast corner of Oxford County. We house our calves in individual pens or outdoor hutches for the first five to six weeks before moving them into a renovated bank barn where they're grouped based on age and size. We market approximately 200 veal cattle a year.

I have been involved in the family farm my whole life. My dad and brother are involved in the operation and help with daily chores and decision-making. My wife Hannah and I have been married for a little over two years. I graduated from the University of Guelph in 2017 and work off the farm full-time as a ruminant sales representative with Yantzi's Feed & Seed, primarily working with dairy producers in Waterloo, Wellington, and Perth Counties. We cash crop corn, wheat, and cranberry beans.

How do you source your bob calves?

We source 95 per cent of our calves from local dairy farms. I have agreements with a few farms to take all of the bull calves they have, and usually pick them up around 10 days of age. When they are short on calves and we have space in the barn, we will buy some two to three week old calves from a sales barn.

The farms I pick-up from all do an excellent job with the newborn calves and I never pick-up calves that are scouring or have any respiratory issues.

What are the most effective tools you use to manage your herd?

We work with the local vet clinic and have our vet come out a few times a year to check on things. We value the expertise they have with setting up vaccination protocols and giving recommendations on a positive pressure tube system for our youngest calves. Since putting in a posi-

tive pressure tube and more exhaust fans, our health struggles in young calves have decreased substantially.

Can you describe your feeding program?

Our calves are fed milk replacer starting out at six litres per day and then increased to eight litres per day within a few weeks. They are slowly stepped down once they are seven weeks old. We start our calves out on a 20% textured calf starter for the first four weeks and then start to mix in whole corn and 36% red veal supplement pellets. After the calves are fully weaned at around eight weeks, they are moved into larger groups. We have three large groups with the feed program ranging from 3:1 to 5:1 corn to pellet ratio based on size of the calves. We also top dress some dry hay twice a day.

When do you market your finished veal?

We follow market trends and will ship our calves accordingly. When there is little to no difference for heavier cattle, we will let them get heavier (740 to 750 lbs), if lighter cattle are bringing a premium, we ship them lighter (665 to 680 lbs). My opinion on what finished veal weight should be is 700 to 715 lbs. I find the last 50 to 75 lbs creates a nice finish on the cattle, filling out their frame a bit more.

We like to see cattle that are round over the back and back end. We have lots of clean straw and like to see the cattle go to market with clean, shiny hair coat. We use our own wheat straw for bedding.

Where do you see the veal industry in the next five years?

I see the veal industry growing in Ontario. I think consumers are finding that veal is a great product to cook with and is very versatile. Just



recently our local grocery store started carrying some Ontario Veal products which was very encouraging to see.

I see the value in the Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) by having the best interests of veal farmers in mind while working with government and industry to ensure a fair market for farmers. Events such as the Healthy Calf Conference provide a lot of value to veal producers and helps create more of a working relationship between dairy and veal producers. I also think the VFO is doing a great job at working to expand the market for veal in Ontario locally, with programs such as the #VealatHome contest.

What is the best piece of advice you can offer someone entering the veal industry?

The first three weeks of being on the farm are critical to future growth and health. Young calves that get pneumonia or scours do not have the average daily gain of calves that have little to no health problems in the first three weeks. Have well-ventilated housing and keep calves well-bedded, especially for the first six weeks. ■

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Disease surveillance for young calves



The Ontario Animal Health Network (OAHN) regularly monitors data from laboratory submissions to look for trends among bovine disease in Ontario. The bovine network summarizes the data from samples submitted for postmortem analysis and a variety of other diagnostic tests to understand the most common challenges producers and veterinarians are facing. Over the last year, the most common reason for submitting samples from young calves under two months of age is diarrhea.

For veal farms, research has shown that calves entering a veal facility with diarrhea have a much greater risk of dying during the growth period. Diarrhea can also affect calf growth and increase susceptibility to other diseases. Diarrhea pathogens may enter the facility with affected calves or may be long-standing in the barn environment already. The laboratory data collected in Ontario shows the most frequent causes of neonatal diarrhea diagnosed among dairy, beef, and veal calves over the last year were viral (Rotavirus and Coronavirus) and parasitic (*Cryptosporidium*). Bacterial pathogens such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella* were also found, but overall were diagnosed less frequently. It should be noted that many diarrhea cases have mixed infections where more than one pathogen is present.

Regardless of which pathogen is causing diarrhea, affected calves suffer from fluid and electrolyte loss which can range in severity. The core of treatment to address diarrhea is to treat this fluid loss. This typically involves oral electrolytes, but more severe cases will require intravenous electrolytes. Depending on the pathogen and severity of systemic signs, further treatment such as antimicrobials may be required. Where bacterial pathogens are not involved, antimicrobials will be ineffective.

The herd veterinarian is best positioned to conduct a diagnostic work up and put protocols in place for treatment and prevention of diarrhea, including where antibiotics are necessary. Veterinarians use laboratory sample submissions to understand which pathogens are affecting a herd, particularly when timing or severity of the diarrhea has changed. A specific herd prevention plan can be put in place to prevent diarrhea from reoccurring or affecting new calves. A prevention plan will address calf sourcing, feeding, grouping, and cleaning and disinfection. Good

hygiene will help protect calves and people and complete records will help understand the extent of the problem and higher risk times for individual facilities. While diarrhea may be a common diagnosis, it should not be considered normal, and there is opportunity to address and reduce the occurrence. ■



The Bovine Ontario Animal Health Network is a group of veterinarians and specialists working in government, university research and laboratory, and in beef, dairy, and veal practice who meet regularly to monitor and discuss disease trends in Ontario. Our goals are to facilitate coordinated preparedness, early detection, and response to animal health and welfare in Ontario. For our recent reports or more information visit www.oahn.ca.



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Housing and hutches, changes for 2021



Kendra Keels

Industry Development Director



December 31, 2020 will bring some changes for veal producers housing calves in hutches and outdoor enclosures with tethers. The *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* (the Code) has a requirement coming into effect that will no longer allow calves being started for the veal or dairy-beef markets to be tethered.

Effective December 31, 2020, calves in hutches and outdoor enclosures must not be tethered and calves in hutches must be able to access an area outside the hutch.

What exactly does this requirement mean? Likely, the first thing most producers will think of is, “I will add a bar across”, keeping the calf in the hutch only. However, the rest of the requirement states calves must be able to access an area outside of the hutch. As the Code is outcome-based, it may be hard for some to know exactly what that means, and why it is included in the Code.

Access outside the hutch was included in the updated Code because calves are social animals and need visual contact with other calves. Providing an area outside the hutch gives the calves the ability to come out of the hutch to look around at other calves. Just popping their head out and hoping their neighbour is doing the same is not sufficient to meet the need for visual contact.

The more we learn about calves, the more we can create an environment for them that meets their needs and helps them grow. Researchers are exploring new ways we can help improve the well-being of calves and allow them to express their natural behaviour. By adapting our calf management as new guidelines are intro-

duced, we are giving the calves an opportunity to have their best start in life, which we know will impact their future production, regardless of their destination.

To help visualize the area outside of the hutch, measure an eight-week-old calf from nose to tail, and add a few inches to allow for a calf of that size to step outside of the hutch and turn around, clearing all sides of the pen. To err on the side of caution, measure a bigger eight-week-old calf.

In addition to no longer using tethers, producers must ensure that calves in hutches and outdoor enclosures are able to stand fully upright without touching the top of the enclosure, lie down, turn completely around without assistance, groom, adopt sternal (resting upright on the chest with legs tucked under the body) and lateral (a resting position in which an animal lies on either side of the body with legs extended) resting postures, and have physical or visual contact with other cattle.

Calves in hutches and outdoor enclosures must be able to easily stand up and lie down, turn completely around without assistance, groom, adopt sternal and lateral resting postures, and have physical or visual contact with other cattle.

Quite often we are asked how the requirement of no tethers came into being. The easiest answer is that our retailers are asking for veal that has not been tethered because their customers are asking for it. At the end of the day, we all are in the business of sales and supplying what customers want.

Remember, the Code is our industry standard and is in effect for all of Canada. Veal Farmers of Ontario does not have the authority to mandate the Code, however if the Provincial welfare inspector is called to investigate your operation, the standard will be the requirements in the Code. On January 1, 2020, the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act replaced the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) Act and all investigations are done with Provincial welfare inspectors.

As an industry we strive to improve the health and welfare of the cattle we raise. It is not easy, but it is necessary. To quote the author John C. Maxwell, “Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.” ■

REMINDER: As of July 1, 2018, calves must be grouped as young as possible and no later than eight weeks of age.



Building the foundation for better calf performance

Biennial Healthy Calf Conference brings international experts to virtual platform this fall

Healthy calves are the building blocks of every successful dairy, veal, or dairy-beef operation. Investing in calf health and welfare can translate into lower mortality rates, reduced use of livestock medicines, improved cost of production, and ultimately, less stress for calf-raisers, all while laying the foundation for future performance and profitability.

Hosted by Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO), the Healthy Calf Conference will bring together dairy, veal and dairy-beef producers, industry partners, and leading calf care experts to address common calf raising challenges. The late November event will be going virtual for the first time ever, offering the same exceptional experience conference participants expect, while ensuring the safety of our attendees, speakers, and sponsors.

"Our 2018 event reached nearly 550 attendees and sold out at one of two locations. Producers are still looking for those practical tips that they can implement on farm right away, a hallmark of the Healthy Calf Conference, and we're pleased to bring the event to more calf-raisers this year," said Kendra Keels, Industry Development Director, VFO.

With a new virtual format, the Healthy Calf Conference will deliver the same high quality content from an international panel of experts, but in a more flexible way, with two live presentations and four pre-recorded sessions, to allow

attendees to access the conference material at a convenient time. This new approach may also appeal to calf-raisers that may not have been able to attend traditional conferences in the past. Providing further value, the registration package also includes access to exclusive calf care resources and a digital copy of the proceedings.

The program

This year's interactive, virtual conference will feature a dynamic program covering health, nutrition, welfare, and housing, with some of the most respected professionals in the field of calf management. Attendees will gain insight into practical ways to take their calf management to the next level and improve the well-being and performance of their calves.

Live presentations

Dr. Joao Costa, assistant professor in the department of animal and food sciences at the University of Kentucky, headlines the live program with insights into group housing calves, including how to best transition the calves to reap long-term benefits of early socialization and proper nutrition while avoiding challenges with health and behaviour. His research focuses on animal science, with an emphasis on animal behaviour, nutrition, and precision technologies.

NEW this year!
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The live program also features the Saskatoon Colostrum Company's director of veterinary technical services, Dr. Michael Nagorske, who will break down the latest research in bioactives in colostrum and reinforce the importance of colostrum's role in calf health and disease resistance, and Aaron Keunen, Mapleview Agri, discussing attributes of effective electrolytes for calves.

Pre-recorded sessions

Dr. Mike Van Amburgh, professor in the department of animal science and a Stephen H. Weiss presidential fellow at Cornell University, will share ways to reduce weaning stress, the impacts of starter mixes, and how manure can be a good indication of weaning success, as part of the pre-recorded sessions.

These sessions will also feature Dr. Steve Roche, ACER Consulting, explaining how to work with your veterinarian to incorpo-

rate calves into routine herd health visits and improve the profitability of your future herd, as well as dairy farmer and veterinarian Dr. Jodi Wallace, Ormstown Veterinary Hospital, who will share her vision of how producers can bring their operations closer to zero mortality to reduce stress and improve their own mental health.

"The basic principles of calf raising are the same, whether your calves are destined for the milking herd or meat production, and I look forward to highlighting key aspects of early calf

raising that will improve the value of male dairy calves leaving the farm," said Keels, who will also provide a pre-recorded presentation. "We want all calves to get off to a healthy start," she added.

For veterinarians

In previous years, an evening program was offered for veterinarians unable to attend the full-day conference. This year, VFO welcomes them to join our full conference at their convenience, and to access our Veterinarian Portal at <https://calfcare.ca/veterinarians/> for more resources.

"Your veterinarian is an extra set of eyes in the calf barn and can be key in overcoming common calf challenges," said Keels. "Animal care is a top priority for VFO and this conference has been an important way for us to bring the latest information to Ontario producers, veterinarians, and industry partners. We look forward to extending our reach even further as we host our ninth Healthy Calf Conference this year." ■

Event details

The virtual Healthy Calf Conference will be held Tuesday, November 24, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. A special 2020 rate of \$25 + HST per person will be offered this year, thanks to the generous support of our sponsors. The registration brochure has been mailed with this issue.

Producers can register online at 2020healthycalfconference.eventbrite.ca until Monday, November 23, or by contacting the VFO office at 519-824-2942 or info@livestockalliance.ca. Find more details at <https://calfcare.ca/healthy-calf-conference/> and follow and like us on Facebook for updates.



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Here comes DairyTrace!

Brian Van Doormaal, Chief Services Officer

Lactanet Canada



This article is the first of a two-part series examining DairyTrace and the role of veal farmers in the national dairy cattle traceability system.

What is DairyTrace?

DairyTrace is the new national dairy cattle traceability program officially launching on October 5, 2020. The DairyTrace vision was established in 2016 and its four-year development and implementation has been led by a collaboration between Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) and Lactanet Canada. Funding for this major industry initiative was received from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) through its Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program. A key feature of DairyTrace is that it takes advantage of existing expertise and services provided by dairy industry partners to deliver an effective and cost-efficient national dairy cattle traceability system across Canada.

How is DairyTrace structured?

The first key element of the DairyTrace program is its governance structure. In partnership with DFC, Lactanet Canada formally submitted a request to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) that it be granted the status of Responsible Administrator for dairy cattle traceability in Canada. In June 2020, the formal agreement with CFIA was signed, recognizing Lactanet Canada as the national administrator responsible for dairy bovine animals under Part XV of the *Health of Animals Regulations* effective October 5, 2020.

As the responsible administrator, the Lactanet Board of Directors has the governing authority of the DairyTrace program within the terms and conditions of its agreement with CFIA. DFC is the governing body for the proAction® initiative, which includes a Livestock Traceability module, and therefore established the traceability requirements to be respected by Canadian dairy producers. Separate from the proAction® traceability module, the DairyTrace program includes the following key components:

- Program administration, under the leadership of the DairyTrace Program Manager employed by Lactanet Canada.
- The DairyTrace portal, which includes the user interface for dairy producers and other stakeholders to report traceability events, as well as the DairyTrace mobile app. The entire DairyTrace database and associated software development has been built by Agri-Traçabilité Québec (ATQ), using the existing SimpliTRACE system in Quebec as the starting point.
- The sale and distribution of dairy tags, which continues to be done through ATQ in Quebec and through the National Livestock Identification for Dairy (NLID) program in other provinces, which will continue to be offered by Holstein Canada.

- Customer services for producers and other stakeholders, which continues to be provided by ATQ in Quebec and by DairyTrace customer services provided through Holstein Canada for other provinces.
- DairyTrace communications, including a DairyTrace website available starting on the launch date, an introductory "Welcome Kit" of information for dairy producers and other stakeholders to help adapt to the new national traceability program, social media posts, videos, and tutorials.

Why now?

Dairy producers across Canada understand the value and benefits of a national traceability system for providing protection, prosperity, and peace of mind to the Canadian dairy industry and its customers in the event of emergency management. While provincial-level traceability

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has existed in Quebec for more than 18 years, known as SimpliTRACE, the vision of national traceability has not been achievable until now. DairyTrace represents the outcome of an effort led by DFC and Lactanet to take the destiny of dairy cattle traceability into the hands of the dairy industry.

What bovine animals are considered “dairy”?

The definition of “dairy cattle” established by CFIA is based purely on the number series of the ear tag applied at the time of birth. Under DairyTrace, the vision is that all animals born on a dairy farm, regardless of breed composition, sex, or eventual destination/purpose, will be identified using dairy tags and therefore be part of the national dairy cattle traceability database. Outside of Quebec, all bovine animals identified with tags sold through NLID that have an RFID number series less than 100 million (i.e.: 124 000 100 000 000) will be considered dairy whereas animals identified with Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) tags that have an RFID number series of 140 million (i.e.: 124 000 140 000 000) or higher are considered beef and their traceability data falls under the responsibility of the CCIA. In the province of Quebec, a dedicated tag number range of 120 million (i.e.: 124 000 120 000 000) to 140 million has been allocated for dairy animals. The SimpliTRACE system also includes bovine animals with a tag range between 100 million and 120 million that are considered dairy when labelled as such at birth by the dairy producer. Lastly, cattle imported from the United States with an RFID number starting with “840” (instead of “124” for Canadian-born cattle) also qualify as dairy when registered with the national breed association or when reported by a dairy producer as part of their herd inventory.

How is DairyTrace paid for?

Under the guidelines defined by CFIA, DairyTrace must be operated on a cost recovery basis and financially self-sustainable into the future. The reality is that the main source of revenue for all such livestock traceability programs comes from the sale of tags, which will also be the case for DairyTrace. During the period of development and implementation leading up to the launch of DairyTrace as well as for an initial period of extended development post-launch, federal government funding has been secured through the CAP program of AAFC. During this same period, some level of revenue from tag sales will be allocated to supporting the DairyTrace program with the aim of achieving financial sustainability within the next few years.

A look to the future

October 2020 will mark an historical time in the history of the Canadian dairy cattle industry with the arrival of DairyTrace – Canada’s national dairy cattle traceability solution. With the CFIA approval and support from several key industry partner organizations as well as Canadian dairy producers, Lactanet Canada will take on the role as administrator responsible for dairy bovine animals under Part XV of the *Health of Animals Regulations*. As a parallel program to the proAction® initiative of DFC, DairyTrace completes the three pillars of traceability, namely unique animal identification, premises identification and tracking of animal movements from birth to death. Once established, the benefits of DairyTrace are expected to expand beyond just animal traceability but also to offer significant opportunities that add value and provide protection, prosperity, and peace of mind to Canadian producers, the Canadian dairy industry, and Canadian consumers. ■



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'In The Know' expands to improve farmer mental health

Dr. Briana Hagen, Postdoctoral Fellow

University of Guelph

Farmer mental health is a priority public health concern in Canada. In May 2019, the Canadian House of Commons' Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food reported that farmer mental health is a priority for the Canadian government, and further, the committee put forward 10 recommendations to improve farmer mental health, including recommendations for more research as well as more mental health programming geared toward farming populations.

Over the past five years, Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton has developed a comprehensive research program aimed at understanding how farmers experience mental health, including a national epidemiological survey assessing the prevalence of mental health outcomes such as stress, depression, anxiety, burnout, and resilience. The results of this study showed that farmers are experiencing these negative mental health outcomes at an increased prevalence and resilience at a decreased prevalence, compared to normative populations.¹

In order to better understand how farmers' experience mental health, Dr. Briana Hagen joined Dr. Jones-Bitton's team in 2017. As part of her doctoral research, Dr. Hagen conducted 75 in-depth one-on-one interviews with farmers and other individuals who work in agriculture. This research showed that farmers were more likely to seek help or guidance around their mental health when a mental health program or service was developed through a farm lens, a notion deemed "farm credibility".

So, 'In the Know' was developed using both research evidence and close collaboration with Ontario farming communities, through semi-annual meetings with an agricultural stakeholder working group. Once the program content was developed, it was piloted with the stakeholder working group and revised based on the group's feedback. Then, 'In the Know' was evaluated to ensure its effectiveness, with results indicating that this mental health literacy training program for farmers, and people who work with farmers, increased participants' mental health knowledge and confidence in recognizing mental health struggles, speaking about mental health, and helping others who are struggling.² The program provides education on

topics such as stress, depression, anxiety, substance misuse, and how to start a conversation around mental well-being.

Recently, Drs Hagen and Jones-Bitton have built a new partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario Division. With the support of CMHA, 'In the Know' will be disseminated more broadly across Ontario farming communities. ■

References available upon request.

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a cow's head and upper body, looking directly at the camera. The cow has a white blaze on its forehead and white markings on its nose and lower legs. It is standing behind a metal fence. To the left of the cow, text reads: "Supports Immune System Function and Optimal Daily Gain". Below the cow, a large red oval contains the brand name "DairymansChoice®". At the bottom of the red area, the website "animalproducts.com" and phone number "1.800.420.3633" are listed. To the right of the red area, the text "Robert Fera, AAHR" and "Animal Health Specialist" is followed by the phone number "519.362.2640" and email "rfera@animalproducts.com". The background of the ad is a dark, textured surface.

MAXIMIZING THE VALUE OF MALE DAIRY CALVES

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1 IS THE CALF HEALTHY?

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- NORMAL CALF TEMPERATURE 38.5°C



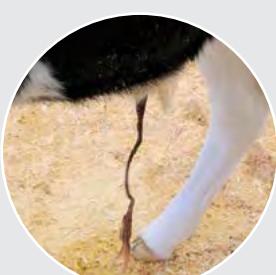
2 WAS THE CALF FED COLOSTRUM AT BIRTH?

- FEED FOUR LITRES WITHIN SIX HOURS OF BIRTH
- FIRST FEEDING SHOULD BE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE



3 IS THE CALF OVER 90 LBS?

- STRONG AND HEALTHY
- STANDING AND WALKING ON ALL FOUR LEGS



4 DOES THE CALF HAVE A DRY HEALED NAVEL?

- IF THE NAVEL IS UNHEALED IT IS UNFIT, CANNOT LEAVE THE FARM UNLESS TO RECEIVE CARE RECOMMENDED BY A VETERINARIAN

5 DOES THE CALF HAVE SCOURS?

- DO NOT SHIP!
- TREAT, IF NECESSARY, OBSERVE MEAT WITHDRAWAL



6 IS THE CALF EIGHT DAYS OR OLDER?

- YES-THE CALF CAN GO TO A SALE BARN OR ASSEMBLY CENTRE
- NO-THE CALF IS PROHIBITED FROM GOING TO A SALE BARN OR ASSEMBLY CENTRE
- SEND RECORDS, BIRTH AND TIME OF LAST FEEDING



7 WHEN WAS THE CALF LAST FED?

- IS THE CALF IN GOOD BODY CONDITION?
- DOES THE CALF HAVE A FULL ABDOMEN?



8 DOES THE CALF HAVE AN EAR TAG?

- MALE DAIRY CALVES LEAVING THE FARM MAY BE IDENTIFIED WITH A SINGLE RFID APPROVED BEEF EAR TAG



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Veal Farmers of Ontario says thank you with cookies

Because who does not like cookies?

Jennifer Haley, Executive Director

and Kendra Keels, Industry Development Director

Perhaps 2019 was not the best year for many of us, but who would have guessed that in 2020 a pandemic would hit. COVID-19 has thrown a curve ball that has changed many things for Ontarians.

In the beginning of COVID-19 there was fear that there would not be enough food, we heard of meat processors across Canada being shut down because of positive cases, and the price of meat started to climb. These signals were cause for concern for Ontario veal producers. What if one of the veal plants gets shut down with COVID-19? What would that do to our ability to market finished veal? These questions and many more had veal producers thinking.

Fortunately, through the commitment of the veal processing facilities and their loyal staff, the Ontario veal supply chain continued to run smoothly and veal producers in Ontario were able to continue shipping their veal. The plants incorporated new policies and procedures to take the necessary steps to protect staff and keep high-quality Ontario veal available in our communities and on the plates of consumers.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been a stressful time for everyone, and despite that staff came to work every day to keep the veal processing facilities operating and for that VFO is truly appreciative," said Pascal Bouilly, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) Chair. "Without their dedication, the Ontario veal industry may have had a very different story to tell," he added.

As a gesture of appreciation from Ontario's veal farmers for their hard work and dedication during the COVID-19 pandemic, over 450 individually packaged gourmet cookies from a local County of Brant bakery were delivered to Ontario veal processing facilities in mid-August to recognize each of the essential workers responsible for keeping Ontario's veal supply chain moving.

"During this pandemic it was clear that the work our veal processing facilities do is a vital part of keeping Ontario veal available for our consumers, and we are grateful for all they have done to keep the facilities operating during these challenging times," commended Jennifer Haley, VFO Executive Director. "They are an essential part of our industry, espe-



Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair

cially during these unprecedented times, and the cookies are our small way of saying thank you for all you do."

It has been said that meat processing plants and their employees are the unsung heroes here in Ontario for all they have done to keep veal being processed, as evidenced by the increased slaughter numbers during COVID-19, but it really demonstrates the importance of our supply chain and the key role that the veal processors and their hard-working staff represent. And for that VFO is truly grateful. ■



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Shifting online to promote Ontario Veal to consumers

Jennifer Haley

Executive Director

One of the silver linings of the pandemic, and not being able to hold in-person events, is that Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) has been able to develop new consumer marketing initiatives that have required us to shift our resources to build a greater online presence. With a strategic focus on the veal consumer, our goal has been to maintain veal purchases to sustain demand. As we move into the Fall, we continue to build and adapt our consumer marketing programs so that we can remain flexible to respond to the changes in the marketplace.

#VealAtHome Contest

VFO launched this social media contest and awareness campaign in mid-April with the goal of creating engagement with our online followers as well as providing an incentive to cook with veal at home. The contest featured monthly prizes for each of our social media channels (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, as well as email entries) and a Grand Prize draw in September from all eligible entries. The campaign has certainly generated a lot of engagement and 'buzz' with consumers and their followers as well. The contest has also driven an increase in our website traffic and our #VealAtHome contest page.

Getting Ontario Veal on the BBQ with Ted Reader

The BBQ season is traditionally veal's lowest sales period of the year, with consumers focusing on other proteins. VFO partnered with the 'godfather of the grill' Ted Reader to create a summer grilling campaign and leverage the BBQ enthusiasts who follow Ted on his social media channels. Showcasing a variety of cuts of veal, the campaign featured a weekly Ontario Veal BBQ recipe created by Ted Reader, highlighted on his popular social media accounts and in VFO's *Vealing Delicious* e-newsletter that goes out to over 3,000 subscribers each week. The recipes have also been cross-posted to www.tedreader.com and www.ontariovealappeal.ca. As a bonus, Ted has promoted Ontario Veal on the BBQ during many of his media interviews, including on camera with Breakfast Television and Global News, and over the radio!

Food & Drink advertising campaign

Food & Drink magazine, distributed through the LCBO, has over 2 million readers per issue and is very targeted to our veal consumer with messaging and driving consumers back to our website. The Summer edition focused on grilling veal recipes. The Fall edition's theme is comfort foods, and the Holiday edition will be focused on entertaining.

FoodNetwork.ca campaign

Another segment VFO wanted to target was the consumer who enjoys ordering popular veal dishes at their favourite restaurant. Our goal was to create interest in cooking chef-inspired veal recipes at home. Leveraging our partnership with John Catucci and his affiliation with Food Network Canada, VFO launched a new contest to encourage visits to our website as well as create new sign-ups for our e-newsletter. The contest offered some great prizes including *Ontario Veal Appeal* BBQ tools and kitchen gear, a new BBQ, fresh veal delivered to your home, as well as autographed copies of John Catucci's *You Gotta Eat Here* cookbook! VFO also curated a selection of veal recipes that were endorsed and created by popular Food Network chefs and hosts, and available online. The four-week campaign was launched on June 22nd and included geo-targeted display advertisements on www.FoodNetwork.ca, box advertisements in the Food Network's e-newsletter, and inclusion in Food Network Canada social media boosted posts. ■



Autumn Indulgence

RESTAURANT-WORTHY DOMESTIC DINING

Typically the bastion of high-end restaurants, it is now easier than ever to enjoy butcher-crafted veal cuts for an upscale in-home, dining experience. Grill tender veal steaks to a perfect medium rare or braise veal shanks to melt-off-the bone osso buco perfection. A simple veal scaloppini quickly transforms into a classic veal marsala or veal piccata. Ontario grain-fed veal is naturally lean and tender with a mild flavour that pairs beautifully with everything from fresh herbs and vegetables to bold sauces and seasonings.



Ontario
VEAL
appeal

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and chef tips at ontariovealappeal.ca   

updates



Local Food Week

June 1 to 7, 2020 was Local Food Week, an event designed to celebrate local food and inspire consumers to incorporate more local product in their meals. Now more than ever, buying and supporting local food creates jobs and economic growth in communities across the province.

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) engaged with consumers through our social accounts, shared veal recipes featuring Ontario-grown products, and directed them to the Meat & Poultry Ontario website to source veal locally. Producers were encouraged to get involved on social using the #loveontfood hashtag and sharing their favourite way to choose local.

VFO applauds passing of Bill 156 and advises increased vigilance

VFO, along with Ontario's farm and commodity groups, applauds the Ontario government for the Third Reading passage of Bill 156, the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act*, 2020. Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair, spoke on behalf of the veal sector during the hearings.

VFO believes that Bill 156 will help to ensure

food security from the farm to the consumer, protecting not only our food supply, but the farm families that produce it. Farmers need equal protection under the law when their homes, property, and workplaces are threatened. As Canadians, veal farmers support peaceful protests on public property, however, when the law is broken and those protests occur on private property, there needs to be consequences for breaking the law and meaningful prosecutions which act as a deterrent to future crimes.

Find more information about Bill 156, what it means for Ontario farmers, truckers and processors, and how you can show your support on social media at <https://aboutbill156.com>.

Ontario farmers follow standards of care outlined under science and consensus-based national codes of practice to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our animals.

We ask that you please support Bill 156 for the safety of our families, the health of our animals, the well-being of our workers, and for a strong food supply.

SUPPORT BILL 156



VFO applauds investment of additional \$50 million to the RMP

Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair, joined Premier Ford, Minister Hardeman, and our commodity organization colleagues for an important announcement on July 16th that will see an additional \$50 million invested into the Risk Management Program (RMP) in 2020, bringing forward the Premier's campaign promise by one year. This brings the total annual investment into RMP to \$150 million. This funding will support farmers with unforeseen challenges such as fluctuating market prices, extreme weather events like flooding or drought, and disease. Approximately 80 per cent of eligible commercial production in the



cattle, hog, sheep, veal, grains and oilseeds, and edible horticulture sectors in Ontario is covered by the provincial RMP.

"On behalf of Ontario's veal farmers, thank you Premier Ford and Minister Hardeman for listening to us and bringing these funds forward when we need them most," said Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair.

"Bringing forward these funds ahead one year and into 2020 is perhaps one of the most important investments to be made to the Ontario livestock industry and specifically the veal sector. With the economic uncertainty of the markets looking forward, rising costs of production and navigating the supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19, veal farmers depend on the RMP as part of their business risk management strategy," he added.

Amendments to VFO regulations proposed

VFO is taking the next step towards finalizing its regulations with respect to how licence fees (check-off) are applied to veal cattle in Ontario. VFO, with the support of the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO), has been working with the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission (the Commission) on amendments which would

include VFO being able to collect licence fees on veal cattle marketed and sold at sales barns. "We are thrilled to finally close this remaining file that has been open since our inception as VFO in April 2015," said VFO Chair Pascal Bouilly.

The amendments clarify the definition of veal cattle and will see VFO collect licence fees on veal cattle marketed at both the sales barns and direct to packer sales. Bouilly added that the amendments are more of an administrative clarification between beef and veal cattle and what organization the licence fees go to. "These amendments are the culmination of collaborations and industry-led solutions between the VFO and BFO. I want to thank all those involved for their support in helping us get to this point and we look forward to the next steps in this process," stated Bouilly.

The Commission posted the proposed amendments for the required 45-day comment period, which ended on September 21, 2020.

Transport Code update

Five sub-committees have been established to review and provide input on various subject-related topics that impact the transportation of all animals covered by the Code. The sub-committees will be responsible for content that falls in the following categories: Personnel & Equipment, Loading and Unloading, Pre-Transport Planning, Ventilation, and (Understanding Implications of) Fitness for Transport.

More details can be found at:

<https://bit.ly/transportcode>

Dairy Code update

The Code Committee had a series of online meetings over two consecutive days in June. The first sessions were devoted to housing, and each member had an opportunity to speak to their stakeholder's overall hopes for the updated housing chapter.

The main areas of focus were stall design, animal comfort, and various options for offering cows and calves freedom of movement – all of which were among the topics most frequently raised by stakeholders who participated in the top-of-mind survey.

More details can be found at:

<https://bit.ly/dairyupdate>

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- Nutra-Glo calves had significantly reduced scours especially under 28 days!
- Nutra-Glo helps reduce antibiotic costs and time spent treating sick calves!
- Nutra-Glo helps raise healthier calves and stronger profits!
- Nutra-Glo the Original Glo!



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Nearly 100% of herdsman who use NUTRA-GLO notice significant improvements in the overall health and production of their herds.

"Since feeding Nutra-Glo thru the automatic calf feeder we have noticed a significant drop in calf scours. The calves have more "Spunk". For us Nutra-Glo has made a big change in our overall calf health and daily gain." **Matt Berlett, Berlett Dairy / Listowel ON**

I have been feeding Nutra-Glo sine June 2017. I have noticed significant improvements in my calves and wouldn't want to be without it. Nutra-Glo helps control calf scours which makes for healthier calves and happier farmers! **Marvin S Martin, Willow Brook Holsteins / Conestoga ON**

Since Sept 2018 we have been giving Nutra-Glo to our baby calves once a day to prevent calf scours. Nutra-Glo is easy to give in the automatic calf feeder or on top of the pellets. Nutra-Glo helps to improve the immune system. We find a lower amount of lung problems. **Ed and Anita / Bruce County ON**

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Choosing the right business structure for you

Erich Weber, Business Finance Specialist

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

There are many ways that a farm business can be structured and understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each one will help you decide which one is right for you. The three main business structure options are:

sole proprietorship

partnership

corporation

It is a good idea to talk with your farm business advisors on a regular basis to see if your current business structure is working for you or if there is a better option.

Sole proprietorship

According to the 2016 census, 51 per cent of Ontario farms are sole proprietorships, 26 per cent are partnerships, and 22 per cent are corporations.

The two main benefits of a sole proprietorship are:

- 1) that they are simple to setup and run, and
- 2) you have full control over the direction/decision-making of your farm business.

Under sole proprietorship the business is running under your personal name and will be taxed on your personal tax return. As the sole proprietor you can use the profits from the farm business any way you would like. Under other business structures, the profits from the farm business must stay with the farm business or be withdrawn from the business using wages or dividends.

The downside of a sole proprietorship is that you are personally liable for all business decisions and performance. That means that if your farm business has financial difficulties, your creditors could take your non-farm business or personal assets as collateral or as payment on any outstanding debt.

Partnership

A business partnership occurs when there are two or more individuals involved in owning the farm business which means that any business risk is shared between multiple individuals. It also means that you may not have full control over the farm business as you would under a sole proprietorship.

The benefit to having other people involved in the business is that they can bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise that you may not have otherwise (e.g. bookkeeping, product marketing, etc.).

A possible downside of the partnership structure is that there is a higher chance of disagreements or conflicts with the other owners of the farm business. One way to alleviate this issue is to have a written partnership agreement which details how your partnership will operate, how you will resolve conflict, and what happens if the partnership is sold or winds down. From a taxation perspective, your share of the business revenues and expenses would be added to your personal income tax return.

Corporation

A corporation business structure is a separate legal entity. While this structure helps to protect your personal assets from any farm business losses, you will have additional requirements and costs that include:

- initial incorporation setup fees,
- additional tax filings,
- yearly lawyer fees to complete minutes of the board of directors and shareholder meetings, and
- costs to wind down the corporation.

A corporation can provide flexibility to farm owners who want to transition the farm to the next generation. From a taxation perspective, another benefit is that farm profits generated through a corporation are taxed at a lower rate than those generated through other types of business structures. However, the profits must be either reinvested in the corporation or be withdrawn from the corporation as a wage, dividend, or shareholder loan. If you withdraw money from the corporation, it will be taxed at your personal tax rate.

While these three business structures are not the only options for Ontario farmers, they are the most popular choices. Before setting up your business or making a change, do your research on which farm business structure is right for you. To learn more, please visit <https://bit.ly/OMAFRAbusinessstructure>. You can also talk with your farm business advisor who can walk you through different scenarios and help complete any paperwork that may be needed if a change is warranted. ■



Looking forward: COVID-19 and agriculture's economic resiliency

Patrick MacCarthy

Communications Intern

The nature of farming results in producers being faced with tough situations on a regular basis. They are forced to make difficult decisions that impact the future of their business. However, producers have an innate ability to adapt and respond to market changes. COVID-19 continues to be a large market disrupter and its impact will be felt for years to come. The following economic snapshot, based on data shared with Veal Farmers of Ontario from Brett House and the team at Scotiabank Economics, aims to provide some context to the deluge of numbers and information available to producers.

Overall, the Canadian economy is expected to contract 7.3 per cent in 2020, with Ontario's gross domestic product (GDP) expected to drop by seven per cent. Economic recovery is expected to begin in late 2020 (and has been seen in the latest monthly job reports), with a full recovery not being complete until 2022 at the earliest. However, any economic recovery is conditional on the state of the pandemic.

The Canadian agriculture sector has remained resilient, in large part due to its nature of being an essential service. Overall, employment

levels and the number of hours worked has held steady despite other sectors seeing large decreases in both these metrics.

The foodservice sector has been especially hard hit by the pandemic and will be among one of the last sectors of the economy to return to normal. As most Ontario veal is typically purchased by the foodservice sector this will prove challenging for the industry. Yet, a shortage in beef supply has helped keep demand for veal high. These COVID-19 disruptions come at a time when livestock prices have been growing faster than crop prices. The largest increase in prices has been amongst cattle and calves, while dairy has held relative stable (see figure 2).

flexibility to take additional debt at a lower cost. However, interest expenses continue to make up an increasing part of producers' fixed costs (see figure 3) and Canadian producers already hold record debt levels.

In addition, at the onset of COVID-19 it was thought that there would be a cooling in the housing market. However, while sales volume has dipped slightly prices have remained high. It is predicted that the housing market will be back to normal by early 2021. This is important to note for producers whose operations are at the edge of suburban boundaries or within city limits as COVID-19 will not slow the increasing pressures of urbanization being felt across Southern Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area.

Overall, the agri-food sector will continue to face challenges as the economy begins to re-open. Foodservice demand will continue to remain low and supply chain resiliency will keep being tested. Yet, despite the pressures of the pandemic, producers' adaptability and decision-making experience will allow the industry to confidently face the challenges ahead. ■

The road to recovery

In order to stimulate economic recovery, the Bank of Canada has lowered its overnight interest rate (used by banks to trade with each other) to 0.25 per cent and it is expected to remain at this level until 2022. This represents a significant drop from the pre-COVID level of 1.75 per cent. This lower rate can give producers the

Figure 1

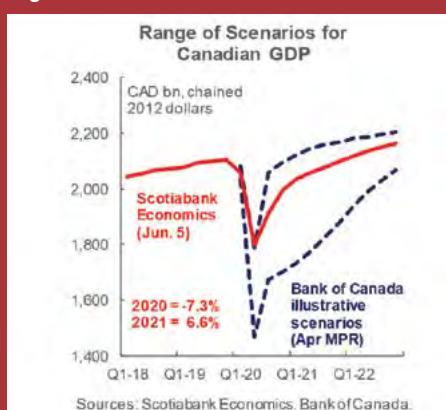


Figure 2

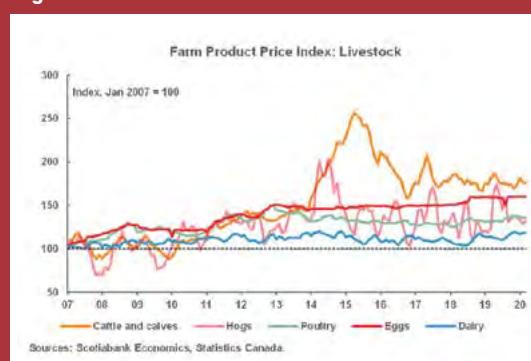
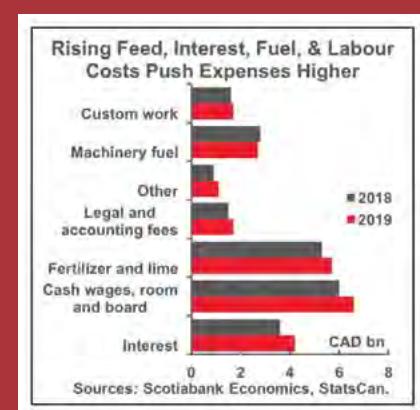


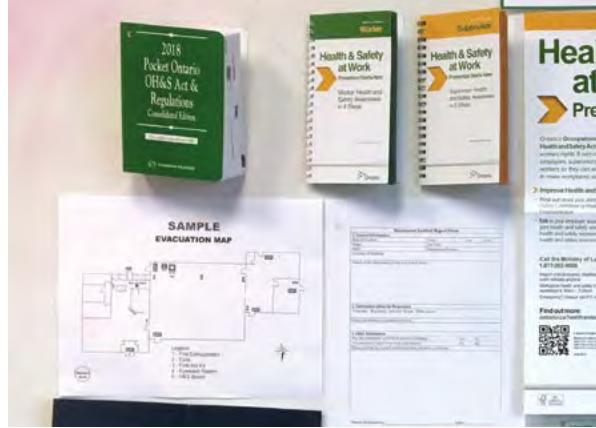
Figure 3



Your workplace health and safety communication board

Cheryl DeCooman, CHRL, President

People Management Group/UdderlySAFE



Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (2000), every workplace must have health and safety policies and posters visible for all employees in the workplace. It is best to create a health and safety communication board that has all of the required posters and materials in one place. Health and safety boards must be located in public/common areas. An easy way to do this is to set up a large corkboard in a lunchroom, or in a room or hallway that employees pass by daily.

Your health and safety board is required by law to have the following items, which can be downloaded or ordered in hard copy from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/posters-required-workplace>

1) *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*

You can print out a copy from

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/posters-required-workplace#section-4> or you can hang your Green Book (OHSA and Regulations consolidated edition) on the board.

2) *Health and Safety at Work: Prevention Starts Here* poster

This poster states the responsibilities and rights of workers, supervisors and employers under the OHSA. You can print out a copy from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/posters-required-workplace#section-2>

3) *In Case of Injury (Form 82)* poster

This poster shows the four steps that workers, supervisors and employers must follow if there is an injury in the workplace. You can print out a copy from

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/posters-required-workplace#section-3>

4) Your operation's health and safety policies

These are your operation's policies on health and safety, workplace violence, and workplace harassment. Every workplace is required to have policies on these topics, and these policies should be posted on your health and safety board. The owner should sign a copy of these policies that are posted on the health and safety board. These policies must be reviewed on an annual basis. You are required under the OHSA to have these policies when you have six or more employees, however, it is highly recommended that every employer creates, posts and reviews these policies.

5) Name(s) of the Health and Safety Representatives

For operations with six to 19 full time employees, there must be at least one health and safety representative. Their name should be posted on the health and safety board. If your operation has 20+ em-

ployees, it is required to have a Joint Health and Safety Committee with two employees and their names should be posted on the board as well. Please note that the Health and Safety Representative cannot be a management team member who has the responsibility to hire, discipline, or terminate other employees.

The *Employment Standards Act* (Version 8.0) poster is no longer required to be posted in the workplace however, it is mandatory to distribute it to all employees and provide proof that you have done so. You should include it in your new hire package. It can be found at <https://files.ontario.ca/employment-standards-in-ontario.pdf>

When conducting a new hire, and you are giving a tour of your workplace, ensure you are showing new employees the health and safety board.

The five requirements listed previously are only the minimum, and best practices suggest you should provide more information. Here is a checklist of everything I highly recommend you include on your health and safety board:



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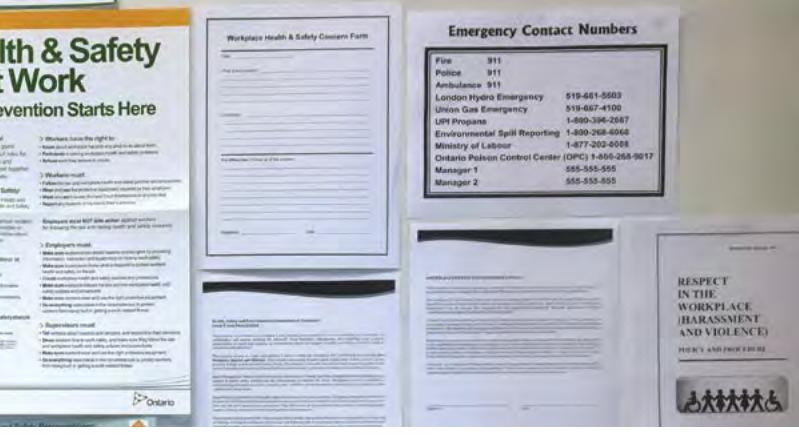
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Health and safety board checklist

- 1) Ontario Health and Safety Act and Regulations (Green Book)
- 2) Health & Safety at Work: Prevention Starts Here (poster)
- 3) In Case of Injury (poster)
- 4) Health and safety commitment statement and policy (signed and dated 2020)
- 5) Workplace violence, harassment and bullying statement and policy (signed and dated 2020)
- 6) Name(s) of your Health and Safety Representative(s)
- 7) First Aid Requirements and Regulations 1101
- 8) Name and certificate of First Aid Providers who work at that location
- 9) Emergency contact numbers
- 10) Emergency evacuation map
- 11) Emergency evacuation procedures and policies
- 12) Reporting forms
 - a. Workplace violence, harassment, bullying and sexual harassment complaint reporting form
 - b. Safety concern reporting form
 - c. Incident investigation reporting form
- 13) Current monthly safety talk
- 14) Completed monthly inspection from the previous month
 - a. It is required by law under the OHSA that workplaces must be inspected every month.
- 15) Ministry of Labour reports (if any)
- 16) WHMIS (GHS) Pictograms and Hazards (poster)

Failing to have a health and safety board can result in a work order and fines.

Please note, you are only required to have a health and safety board when you have one paid employee. It does not matter if this person is a family member, once they are on payroll, the OHSA applies. An operation that only has the owner employed, is not required to have a health and safety board. ■

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Introducing the Veal Trade Tracker

Patrick MacCarthy

Communications Intern

Among the strategic objectives of Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) are to "advocate for veal on government policies that impact producers" and "increase consumption and drive demand for Ontario veal". Developing new trade markets represents an opportunity for VFO to deliver on these objectives.

To underline the importance of new trade markets and to develop a clear picture for veal producers as to the impacts of trade, VFO has created the Veal Trade Tracker. Updated quarterly, the Veal Trade Tracker will give producers a straightforward picture of the state of veal trade and the impacts that changing trade conditions may have on their operation.

The graphs on the opposite page represent a snapshot of the most recent veal trade statistics. In general, the data is reported for Canada as a whole, but where possible Ontario trade data has been broken out. The synopsis below will provide additional understanding for the accompanying graphs and provide the context in which VFO analyzed this data.

Setting the stage

In 2019, Canadian veal exports were just over \$22 million (CDN) while Canada imported \$13.2 million worth of veal. This represents the third year of declining imports and exports of veal. In addition, veal exports are decreasing faster than imports making the trade surplus (exports minus imports) shrink.

To put the volume of veal traded into context, in 2019 Canadian beef imports and exports were valued at over \$1.8 billion. Since veal is such a small market, any changes can cause large impacts across the industry. A good example of this is the ever-increasing amount of imports of veal from the European Union (EU).

Over the past five years, veal imports from the EU have increased from less than 50,000 kg in 2015 to almost 400,000 kg in 2019. In the first half of 2020, veal from the EU represents 42 per cent of all veal imports. This is concerning, as EU imports command the highest price per kg. Veal imported from the Netherlands has been consistently valued at \$8 to \$9 per kg. This is \$2.50 to \$3.00 more per kg than veal imported from countries like Australia or New Zealand.

Unfortunately, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) does not report on which cuts are being imported. However, anecdotally VFO is aware that these are higher quality cuts (cutlets, scaloppini) that compete directly with Ontario veal. However, while EU imports are rising, exports of Canadian veal to the EU remain at near zero levels (Canada exported just 236 kg last

year). This is despite the market access advertised upon the signing of the Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA). Gaining market access to Europe continues to be a strategic priority for VFO.

COVID-19 disruptions

COVID-19 has made 2020 an unpredictable year for trade. Travel restrictions and the closure of the hospitality industry has caused major supply chain challenges as consumer switch to at-home consumption. Yet, despite the declines in demand veal imports have not fallen. Imports volumes are up 21 per cent and in May 2020, Canada imported over 39,000 kg of veal from the Netherlands (the majority being imported into Quebec), the highest import volume month in over a year.

Throughout the recent trade and market uncertainty VFO continues to be a strong advocate for producers, working with our industry and government partners to build a strong, innovative, and resilient veal sector. ■

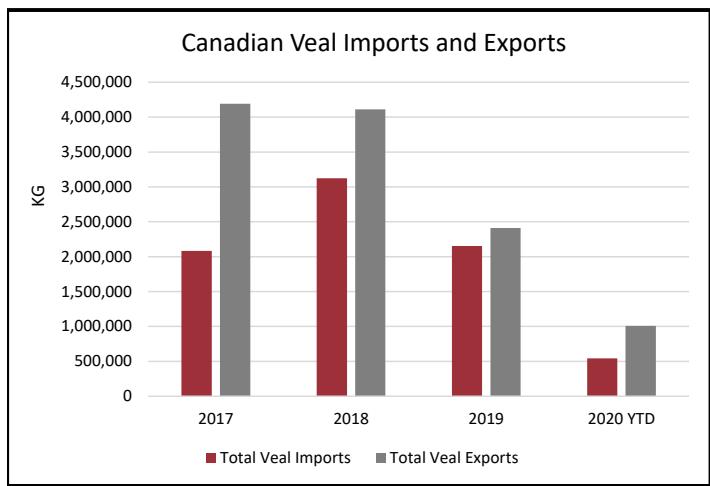


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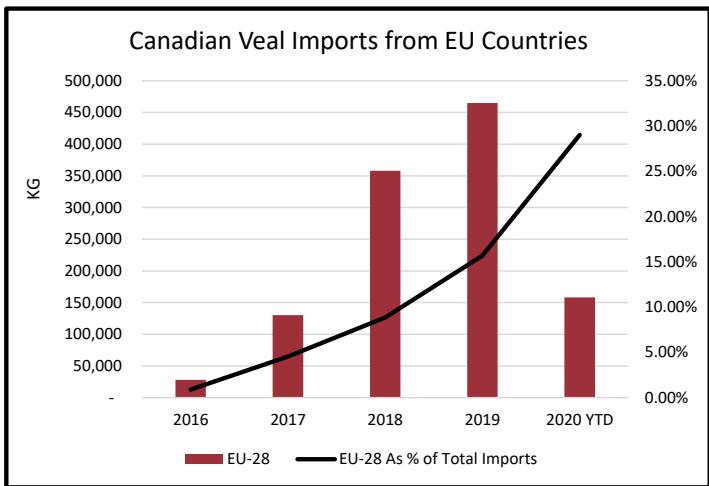


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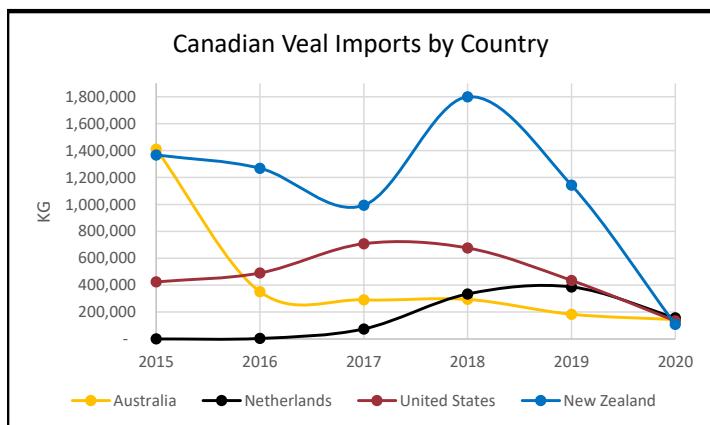
A quarterly snapshot of Canada's veal trade



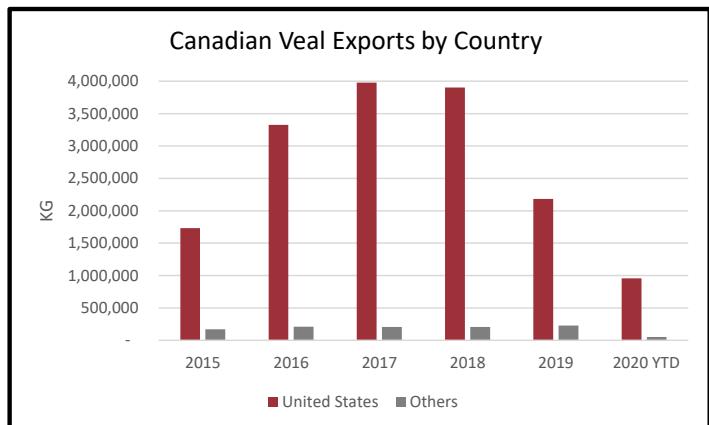
While veal has maintained a trade surplus (exports>imports), in recent years exports have been declining faster than imports. 2020 appears to be continuing this trend with exports volumes down 37% and import volume down only 21% year to date (YTD).



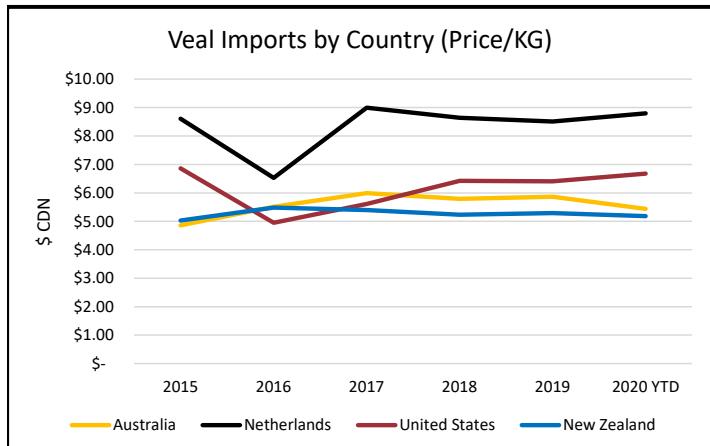
The volume of veal imports from the EU (red bars) and the percentage of total imports from the EU (black line) has been increasing since the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was signed with the EU. The Netherlands represents over 90% of EU imports.



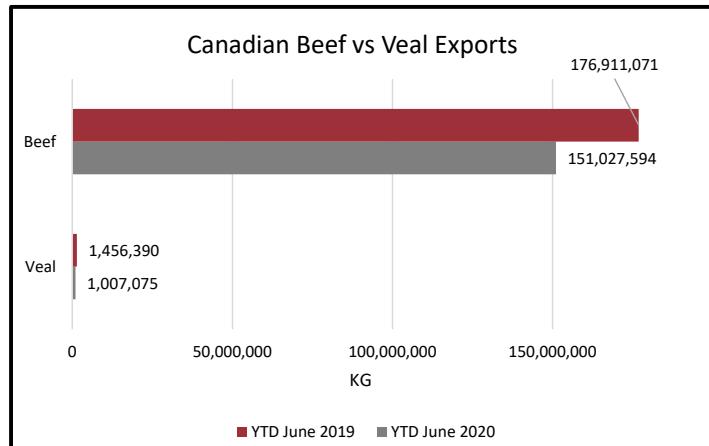
The plurality of Canada's veal imports come from New Zealand. Recently imports from the Netherlands have seen growth while US and Australian imports continue to decline. 2020 numbers are YTD.



The vast majority of Canadian veal is exported to the United States. A small amount is exported to the Middle East, namely to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.



Imports from the Netherlands are higher quality cuts and command a higher price when compared to the value of imports from other countries. All prices are in Canadian dollars.



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

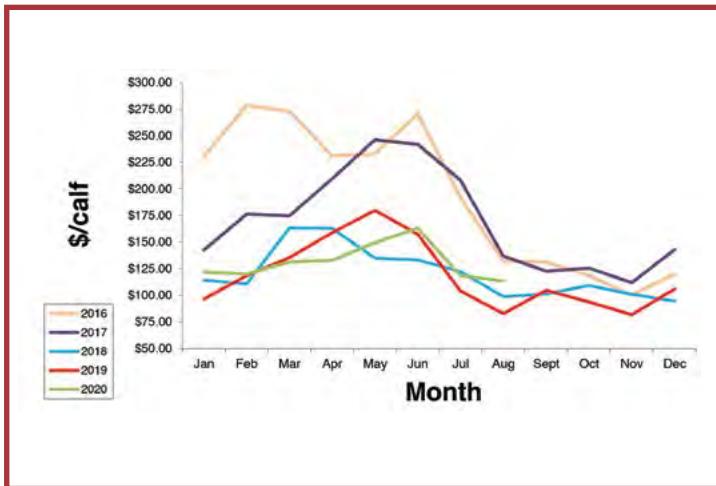
All data retrieved from AAFC and Statistics Canada, red meat section.



Veal Market Information

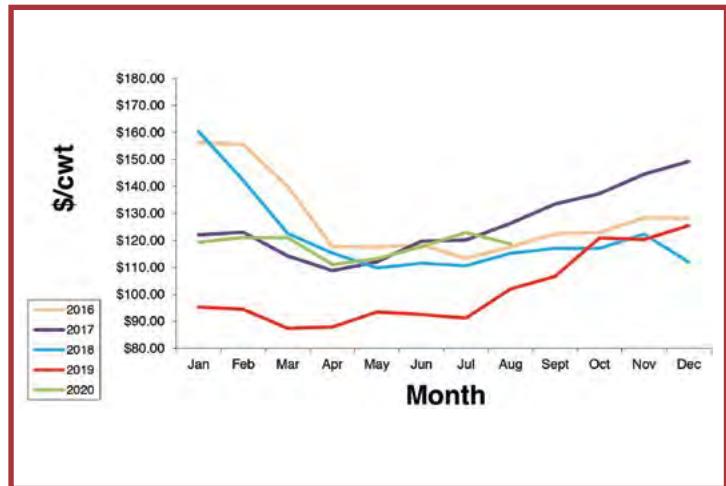
This information is collected from various sources and disseminated by Veal Farmers of Ontario.

Bob Calf Pricing



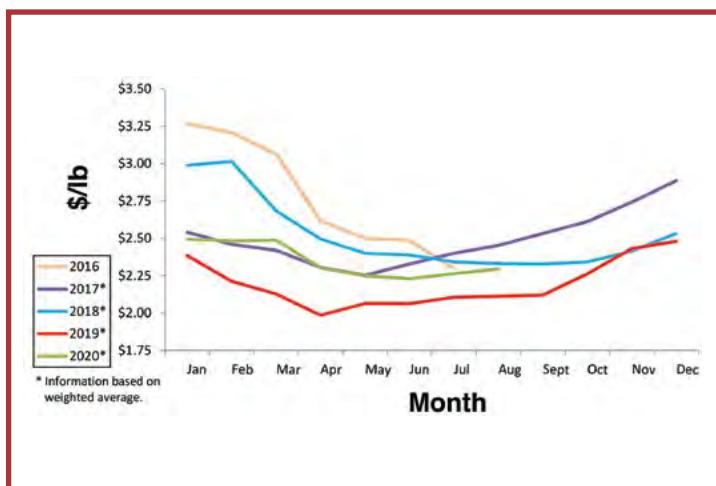
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

Sale Barn Veal Pricing



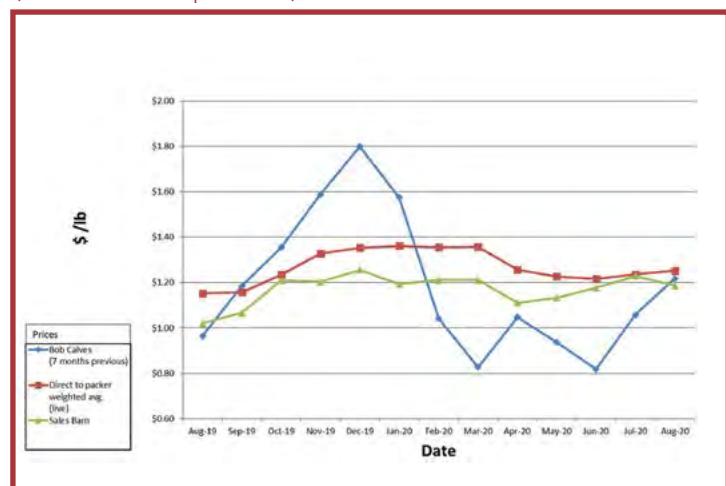
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

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.

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 e-mail address.

If you are dealing with an unlicenced 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/omafralicenceddealers or contact the VFO office.



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Licence fee reminders

In order to assist those who have not yet remitted their bob calf 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, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

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 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 e-mailed, 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/licencefeetforms 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 Licensing inquiries, must be directed to Agricorp. Visit bit.ly/agricorp or call 1-888-247-4999 for more information. ■

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