

# THE Connection

Summer 2021 Volume 3, No. 2

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**Predicting disease with AMF**

**Exploring fibre levels in veal finishing rations**

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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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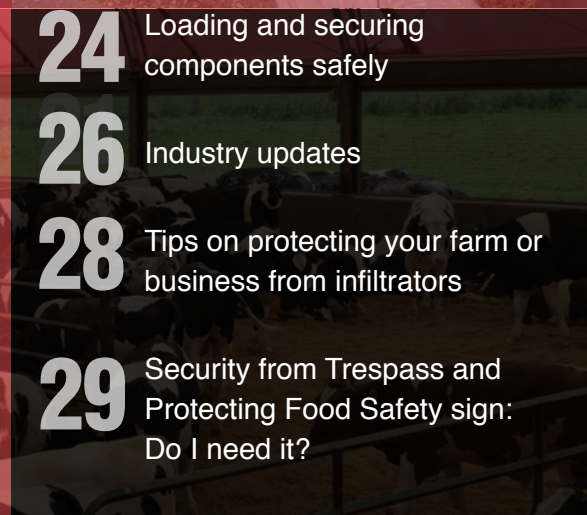
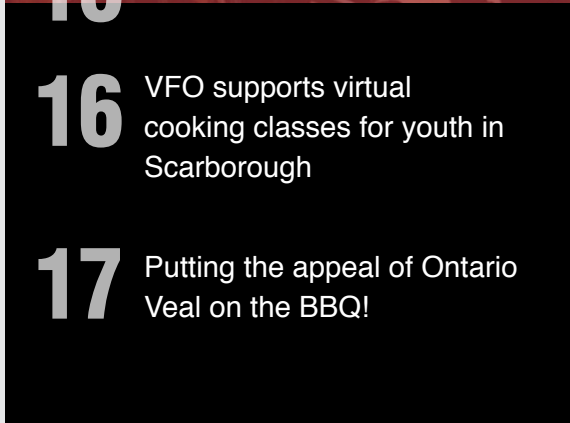
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## Chair's MESSAGE



Pascal Bouilly

# Working together and making a difference

There are several things that Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) and other commodity organizations work on in the background on behalf of all farmers that we sometimes might not realize the importance of. Some of these issues or projects would be something that individually we could not handle on our own, but that pooling our resources together makes a lot of sense to move the industry forward.

The *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* (the Code) is one of these initiatives. The Code is an important reference document for all those involved in the Canadian veal industry and sets our industry's commitment to animal care and welfare. The Code is the standard of care for our farms and one that our processing and retail partners, as well as consumers, expect to be upheld. We need to be able to portray a positive image of all the good work we are doing in the veal industry – we have a hard enough time combatting all the negative myths and misperceptions.

If you are planning any changes to your barns whether for veal or dairy-beef, I would highly recommend that you refer to the Code to ensure your animal housing complies with the Code requirements. The veal industry is also working with the Canadian dairy industry to bring synergies where our industries overlap, as they are in the process of updating their Code as well. You can access the Code on our website here: [bit.ly/VealCode](http://bit.ly/VealCode).

I am sure many of us are looking at the rising cost of feed and getting very concerned with the bottom line. Corn and soybean prices are higher so far this year and this will impact our cost of production. The supply of Holstein dairy calves is also very tight with our dairy farmers moving more and more to beef crossbred calves on the bottom part of their herd. Knowing your cost of production is critical, and there is a tool, developed with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), available on our website to help: [bit.ly/vealCOP](http://bit.ly/vealCOP).

As part of our recent Calf Health Improvement Project (CHIP) 2.0, and with funding from VFO and OMAFRA, VFO partnered with Dr. Dave Renaud, from the University of Guelph, to better understand the prevalence of *Salmonella* Dublin (S. Dublin) on Ontario's veal farms. Many veal farmers have encountered the production challenges that S. Dublin brings to the farm. VFO has had S. Dublin on our radar as an emerging issue for quite some time now, so it was important to start with a small

prevalence study to understand how widespread the disease is to develop tools and strategies to be able to manage it.

Dr. Renaud indicated that 50 per cent of the farms surveyed tested positive for S. Dublin (eight of 16 farms sampled). From this, 301 calves had blood samples drawn and eight per cent of these calves (or 28 calves) tested positive. Dr. Renaud will also be leading a study looking at the prevalence of S. Dublin on Ontario's dairy farms. It will also be important to better understand the transmission of this disease. Unfortunately, I believe it is fair to say that S. Dublin is a growing concern and has an economic impact on our farms.

To be clear, this is not just a veal industry disease challenge – it is a cattle industry challenge, and we need to all work together to find ways to reduce the financial impact it has on our operations. Whether it is improved management practices, new and improved biosecurity measures, or access to vaccines and medications, we will be collaborating with our industry partners to find solutions that will benefit all cattle producers.

We all know that owning and operating a farm business can be very stressful so please do take the time you need to practice ways that will help you improve your mental health – for the benefit of your business and your family. As we move into the summer months, I hope you all will be able to enjoy the fruits of your labour on the farm and spend time with your family and friends as we move out of COVID-19 restrictions. ■



Jennifer Haley

## Licence fees must be equitable and equal

When Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) came into force on April 1, 2015, we were given the authority to collect and administer our own licence fees that would ensure the sustainability and viability of VFO in order to benefit and support the Ontario dairy calf and veal sectors. However, with this privilege comes the expectation that VFO will do its part to hold up its regulatory requirements.

Licence fees are collected from dairy calf and veal producers on every head of animal sold. Licence fees are also known as check-off. This includes calves sold from the dairy farm privately to another farmer, calves sold at auction or calves sold to a livestock dealer, started/preconditioned calves, or finished veal cattle. Both the buyer and the seller of the calves/cattle have equal responsibility to ensure the licence fees and the required information are remitted to VFO on behalf of the seller.

These expectations are not new or unique to VFO. The same requirements were in place for all cattle producers prior to VFO separating its finances from the Beef Farmers of Ontario. VFO understands that many dairy farmers do not consider themselves to be veal farmers – however, when you sell the male dairy calf from your farm to another farm (or through a dealer or sales barn) there is a licence fee due on that calf, and as the seller you are a member of VFO.

At the heart of the VFO enforcement and compliance efforts is the expectation that all dairy calf and veal producers, livestock dealers, sales barns, processors, and others involved in the sales and purchases of cattle will be in compliance with their regulatory and legal requirements under the *Farm Products Marketing Act*.

It is VFO's strategic outlook that licence fees should be equitable and equal for all who are required to contribute regardless of the size or type of operation or at what stage in the marketing of cattle. This means that everyone who is required to contribute licence fees is expected to contribute in a timely manner. Those who chose to willfully ignore and disrespect these legal requirements are not only shortchanging their own industry, but all those who are in compliance, and ultimately this impacts all involved in our industry.

VFO appreciates the support and commitment of our industry partners who regularly remit the licence fees collected and sent in on behalf of producers. However, VFO also knows (and supports) the expectation of our

industry partners that if they are going to be in compliance, then so should everyone else in order to be fair and equitable across the whole industry. Why should one industry partner or segment of the industry be doing their part to comply, but another is not?

It may seem like a hassle, but it really is not meant to be. We are here to help. VFO Licence Fee and Compliance Officer Geoff Holwell is available to answer any questions you may have regarding licence fees and to help you become or remain in compliance with VFO's regulations. For more information or to download VFO's Licence Fee remittance forms you can go to our website: [bit.ly/licencefeeforms](http://bit.ly/licencefeeforms) or email Geoff at [gholwell@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:gholwell@vealfarmers.ca). You may also be contacted by Geoff, and we ask for your cooperation and willingness to work with VFO to ensure licence fees are applied and collected equally and equitably for all.

The success of our industry depends on our collective efforts to ensure we can pool our limited resources and work together to benefit all involved and address the many issues and opportunities to promote and ensure the viability of our industry. At the end of the day, licence fees are an investment in your industry; support your organization and the work that is done on your behalf. ■



## PRODUCER PROFILE

# Kurtis Moesker

### Tell us a bit about your operation.

I farm in Perth County with my wife Jill McCallum, three young kids aged four to eight, and in-laws John and Sheryl McCallum. We also have a great staff team of full-time and part-time employees that help us with the day-to-day chores.

We started in the calf business in 2014 with a few dairy-beef calves and have grown it over time, finishing our first veal cattle in 2016. We still do some of each. Last year we marketed around 2,700 head of cattle, roughly 60 per cent veal which was direct to packer, and the rest were dairy-beef stockers sold to feedlots that finish them.

Calves are started in hutches for eight weeks, before moving into a transition barn for five weeks. From that barn they go to a finishing barn. We find we have the best health in the young calves with hutches and well-ventilated barns for bigger cattle.

We also milk 110 cows in a naturally ventilated barn and grow corn and alfalfa on 400 acres (owned/rented).

### How do you source your calves?

We source 98 per cent of our calves from dairy farms in southwestern Ontario and pick them up once per week. Occasionally we buy a group of calves from the sales barn when numbers are low. When sourcing calves, we use age and health status as our main criteria.

### Can you describe your feeding program?

Calves are fed milk for seven weeks. We buy in commodities and corn and work with two independent nutritionists to create a balanced ration. We make/mix all feed on the farm in a TMR mixer.



### When do you market your finished veal?

We weigh calves around shipping and try to shoot for 400 lbs. on the rail. We don't want to ship heavies or too light. For us, well-finished veal cattle have nice square rumps and are round over the back, and are not too tall and skinny.

### Have you had to overcome any challenges on your farm?

We have learned many things by doing it wrong. We have a good relationship with our vet, who is young and keen, and we've figured out which vaccines work for us to reduce health issues. A good vaccine program prevents problems.

### What do you enjoy most about farming?

Love it all, and I like a good challenge. I enjoy shipping the cattle because that's when the work all pays off. Being diversified also keeps it interesting.



### Future goals for your farm or yourself?

Pay down debt and fine tune the operation. I also joined the Veal Farmers of Ontario Board of Directors this year because there was an opening, and I thought I would see if I can help shape the future.

### What is the best piece of advice you can offer to other veal producers or someone looking to get into the veal industry?

Calves can be a challenge, but they can also be very rewarding. It takes a lot of work and money to do it right. My advice to other veal producers is to control your costs and watch them. It also takes time to manage calves, if you don't have time to manage them you need very good employees. ■

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# Thinking outside the box to prevent diarrhea

Dr. Cynthia Miltenburg  
Dr. David Renaud

On behalf of the Ontario Animal Health Network

Preventing diarrhea in young calves is no easy task and a common struggle for producers raising calves. When we summarize the diagnostic laboratory submissions in Ontario, we see that the number one reason veterinarians are performing a diagnostic work-up in young calves less than eight weeks of age is to determine the cause of diarrhea.

The risk for calfhood diarrhea is multi-factorial and depends on the immune function of the exposed calves and the presence of pathogens (bacteria, viruses, and parasites) in the environment. The risk is even higher in summer months when temperatures are elevated leading to the growth and transmission of diarrhea pathogens, increasing the threat to calves.

Given the multi-factorial risk, producers with young calves can also employ a preventative plan to manage diarrhea risk. When it comes to pathogen control, the mainstays of prevention are cleaning and disinfection of feeding equipment, waterers, and the calf pen or hutch between occupants. Limiting the stocking density and maintaining all-in-all-out groups can also reduce exposure to pathogens.

The other aspect to diarrhea control is maximizing calf immunity. We already know that early consumption of colostrum is critical to calves for the transfer of immunity. The gut is open immediately after birth and able to absorb large immunoglobulin molecules that provide immune protection. However, as the gut progressively closes over the first 12 to 24 hours, the opportunity to absorb these proteins ends. Calves that do not receive this immune protection are defined as having failed transfer of passive immunity. Failed transfer of passive immunity is associated with increased risk of diarrhea, respiratory disease, and mortality.

Previously the main school of thought was the benefit of colostrum ended there. However, colostrum contains more than just immunoglobulins and researchers have been exploring the benefits of the other colostrum components and their provision beyond the day of birth. Colostrum is very high in fat and protein, and contains other bioactive compounds including hormones and other immune factors.

Research published recently has shown that calves fed pasteurized milk containing a small amount of pasteurized colostrum for two weeks after birth had positive effects on the health and growth of dairy calves. The key findings from this research were that calves fed milk containing colostrum had reduced susceptibility to diarrhea and tended to have fewer occurrences of pneumonia. Although the total dry matter intake did



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not differ between calves fed milk with colostrum and those fed only milk, calves fed milk containing colostrum had higher postweaning average daily gains which resulted in improved final body weight measured at the end of the research trial. Researchers theorized this was a result of greater feed efficiency and lower duration of diarrhea and pneumonia during the pre-weaning period.

Beyond this study, other research studies have documented similar findings. Specifically, feeding milk replacer enriched with colostrum powder led to lower scores for diarrhea and respiratory disease, and fewer antibiotic treatments. Correspondingly, extended feeding of transition milk, defined as the second to sixth milkings, has recently been documented to reduce the duration of diarrhea in preweaned calves. Researchers have also documented improved development of the gastrointestinal tract and growth.

Results from these studies highlight an alternative avenue to prevent diarrhea and promote health of calves. Improving calf immunity translates into fewer cases of diarrhea which in turn reduces the contamination and infection pressure in the calf environment. Reducing diarrhea will

also have an impact on growth of your calves, where calves without diarrhea will be about 16 kg heavier at weaning than calves with diarrhea. Furthermore, reducing disease results in fewer antibiotic treatments; a goal for all animal production.

Different approaches might work for different types of farms so it is best to speak to your herd veterinarian and nutritionist to determine what strategies are a good fit on your farm. As more published research becomes available, our confidence is building that alternative preventative strategies such as extending colostrum feeding can be introduced on farms to improve calf performance and well-being. ■

*References available upon request.*



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](http://www.oahn.ca).

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# Can we predict disease earlier using milk feeding behaviour?

Janelle Morrison, MSc Student  
Dr. David Renaud, Assistant Professor  
Dr. Charlotte Winder, Assistant Professor

University of Guelph



Producers are always looking for new and innovative ways to reduce disease in preweaned dairy calves to raise healthier and more profitable animals. Group housing of calves has increased in popularity among dairy and veal producers, as it improves calf welfare and public perception of the calf raising industry (compared to individual housing). However, the rise in group housing has amplified another on-farm problem; disease detection of calves, which can be more challenging in groups. When housed in groups, producers may have less one-on-one time with individual calves as this usually occurs around feeding times.

One promising solution to help with disease detection in group housed calves is the use of automated milk feeders (AMF). These computerized systems allow producers to feed a heightened plane of milk nutrition and access individualized feeding metrics for each calf. It is thought that some of these feeding metrics may have the ability to predict disease in these preweaned dairy calves including:

- **Milk consumption** - how much milk the calf consumes daily
- **Drinking speed** - how fast the calf consumes its daily milk allotment
- **Rewarded visits** - the number of times the calf visits the AMF and receives a milk meal
- **Unrewarded visits** - the number of times a calf visits the AMF and is turned away without receiving a milk meal due to:
  - Not enough time has elapsed since the last milk meal
  - The calf has consumed its daily allotment already

Recently, a scoping review was published that identified the current body of literature looking into the usage of AMF to predict disease. This review found that there is limited published

research in this field, however the number of papers on this topic continues to grow. It was found that the majority of studies agreed that prior to disease detection, sick calves showed reduced milk consumption, and had a reduction in drinking speed, as well as fewer unrewarded visits and rewarded visits to the AMF, when compared to healthy calves.

In follow-up to the review, another study was completed to determine how feeding behaviours measured by the AMF change surrounding disease detection in a commercial production setting. This study found similar results to that of the review, in that milk consumption and drinking speed were found to be useful predictors as early as four days prior to disease detection and unrewarded visits as early as three days prior to disease detection, when compared to healthy calves. However, rewarded visits were not found to be useful as a predictor.

But why do these feeding metrics change around time of disease detection? When the calf's immune system encounters a foreign pathogen, it mounts a defense. The immune system produces a response through the calf's blood system inducing fever. This leads to the development of sickness behaviours such as lethargy, anorexia, and general disinterest in socialization. Due to these behaviours, the calf's feeding behaviour changes – it will consume less milk at a slower pace and will only visit the feeder when necessary, to obtain a milk meal.

These computerized systems show great promise in aiding producers in predicting disease in dairy calves, however, there are on-farm factors which must also be taken into consideration before utilizing this technology. One of the most important factors to consider is the



amount of milk being fed to the calves through the AMF. When calves are fed a restricted amount of milk (four to six litres per day), the changes in feeding behaviour are not as readily observed. This is thought to occur as the drive for hunger is a stronger motivator than sickness behaviours. Therefore, it is suggested that when feeding calves on an AMF, to feed a heightened plane of nutrition (greater than nine litres per day), so changes to feeding behaviours will be more readily observed during time of illness. It is also important to consider the number of calves in each pen; large group sizes can increase competition for the AMF, changing feeding behaviours of less dominant calves.

Overall, AMF have great potential to predict disease in preweaned dairy calves. However, it is important to remember that this technology is not meant to replace daily health checks by producers. This computerized feeder instead acts as an important tool to aid producers and allow potentially sick calves to be found earlier. Additionally, this information can also be used on farms without AMF – producers can watch calves during feeding times, allowing for identification of any calves drinking less or slower and further health checks as necessary. ■

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# Combining natural ventilation with positive pressure ventilation in calf barns



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

Agricultural Engineer, DairyLogix

Calf barns or rooms can be ventilated naturally or mechanically. Natural ventilation combined with a positive pressure ventilation tube system provides the best of both.

There are four primary goals for ventilating calf barns or rooms:

1. Remove moisture in cold weather,
2. Remove heat in hot weather,
3. Provide fresh air uniformly, and
4. Provide fresh air without causing drafts.

Calves from birth to weaning require 17 m<sup>3</sup>/h (10 cfm) of fresh air per calf in the winter to remove the moisture they produce and 170 m<sup>3</sup>/h (100 cfm) of fresh air per calf in the summer to remove heat. However, the actual air exchange required is usually greater than the minimum ventilation requirements. In winter calves need four room air changes per hour, and in summer 40 or more air changes per hour. The challenge with calves is to provide the small amount of winter ventilation needed evenly, and without drafts. A draft in this case is defined as air moving at speeds greater than 0.3 m/s (60 feet per minute).

Natural ventilation makes use of natural air flow by wind, and the fact that hot air rises. Barns or rooms should be orientated so that the summer winds blow across the narrowest width of the barn to make the most of the wind that Mother Nature provides. Large adjustable sidewall openings are used 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.

Natural ventilation works quite well for most of the year, but during cold weather calves from birth to weaning do not produce enough heat to

create thermal buoyancy to draw air in through the curtains and out through chimney openings. When the temperature becomes too cold to provide a good air pattern naturally, the sidewall curtains can be closed completely, and a positive pressure ventilation tube (PPVT) system can be used to provide the minimum amount of fresh air. It 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.

A PPVT system consists of a wall mounted fan blowing fresh outside air into the calf room or barn. Attached to the fan is a distribution tube with equally spaced holes that runs the length of the room. The fan draws fresh air in from the outside, pressurizing the tube and blowing the air out of each of the holes to distribute it evenly throughout the room. The room is pressurized by the fan, and air finds its way out of the room through the natural ventilation system, usually through the chimneys, or through gaps around the curtains.

The fresh air fan is sized to provide the minimum fresh air requirement for the calves from birth to weaning, usually based on four room air changes per hour. In an ideal world a single speed fan would be used where the fan capacity would match the minimum calculated ventilation rate. In practice it may be necessary to select a variable speed fan with a manually set controller. The speed should be adjusted to provide the calculated fan capacity and left at that amount.

The number of holes, size and spacing in the air tube are designed for the geometry of the room. Tubes need to be located to best fit the size and layout of the room. Use a single tube if the room is less than nine m (30 ft.) wide, and two tubes if the room is between nine m and 18 m (30 ft. and 60 ft.) The goal is to ventilate the entire room space evenly.

The hole location and pattern are important to match the shape of the room and pen layout. The hole location will vary depending on the mounting height of the tube. Hole location is usually stated to match the



numbers on a clock face. For instance, if the tube is mounted 2.4 m to three m (eight ft. to 10 ft.) above the floor, holes punched at four and eight o'clock will provide a good distribution. If the mounting height is over three m (10 ft.) then punching holes at five and seven o'clock is better. Four rows of holes on a tube placed at four and eight o'clock and five and seven o'clock are often used to provide uniform air distribution.


Light weight plastic can be used for the ventilation tubes, but tubes constructed of woven polyethylene are more durable and hold their shape better. PVC pipe can also be used especially for smaller duct sizes.

PPVT systems can be left running year-round to provide air circulation. In hot weather they do not supply sufficient ventilation for cooling, but on still humid days when there is no wind, they will continue to circulate air. In the summertime the air should also be distributed evenly, and the goal is for air speeds of 1.3 m/s (250 fpm) for cooling.

There are other environmental factors to be considered as well. It is important to provide lots of dry, long, straw bedding when it is cold. Bedding provides insulation for the calf. There should be enough bedding for the calf to nestle down in it for further protection from drafts. Good drainage is also important to keep the bedding and calves dry.

When the temperature is less than 10° C (50° F) calves will also benefit from calf coats to provide insulation and to preserve body heat. Provide solid partitions between pens where appropriate. Solid partitions should not interfere with ventilation, but they can provide further protection from drafts. Calves like to lie along solid partitions. This includes outside walls that can draw body heat from a calf. Calves should be separated from outside walls where possible by alleyways or pen partitions.



Do not forget that providing the proper environment is only one piece of the puzzle of raising calves. Colostrum management, appropriate nutrition especially in cold weather, and the proper preventative health protocols are all important. ■



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# Exploring **fibre levels** in veal finishing rations

Megan Van Schaik, Beef Cattle Specialist  
Kathryn Kroeze, Beef Cattle Livestock Assistant  
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs



Photo courtesy of OMAFRA

The benefits of fibre in ruminant rations are well understood. Fibre is important in maintaining rumen health and function in cattle with fully developed rumens. Including adequate levels of effective fibre plays a key role in reducing risk of acidosis in finishing cattle. Offering sources of fibre in rations is also beneficial to the developing rumen of young ruminants.

The importance of fibre in veal cattle rations is recognized by various jurisdictions. The *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* (2017) stipulates that offering fibrous feeds to increase chewing activity and meal time is a feeding strategy that improves health and welfare outcomes for veal cattle. The European Union 2008 Directive on the minimum standards for the protection of calves recommends that veal calves receive a minimum daily ration of 50 g fibrous food for calves from two weeks old to eight weeks, increasing to 250 g for calves from eight to 20 weeks old.

Although fibre and/or roughage inclusion rates have been studied in veal cattle, the research tends to focus on young and milk-fed veal cattle. The *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle: Review of Scientific Research on Priority Issues* recognizes that minimum daily requirements of fibre for different veal age categories is not readily available due to lack of evidence in the scientific literature. It is well-documented and accepted that offering quality solid feed and water is important to rumen development in the young calf. A lack of fibre in the diet can lead to abnormal oral behaviours in calves, which are thought to arise due to frustrations associated with an inability to chew and ruminate on solid feed, and ultimately are associated with chronic stress and poor welfare.

It is clear that more research and information are needed to better understand fibre requirements for optimal health and performance in finishing veal cattle. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) staff have teamed up to study fibre levels in finishing veal rations over the summer of 2021. This study seeks to understand typical fibre and roughage inclusion rates in finishing veal cattle rations on Ontario farms. The study aims to understand feeding practices during the finishing phase more broadly across the sector as well as on-farm benchmarking on a sample of veal farms. Stay tuned for project outcomes. ■

*The authors would like to recognize Kendra Keels (VFO) for collaborating on this project.*

## NEW RESEARCH

### Exploring fibre in finishing grain-fed veal cattle rations

**Looking for 15 farms to participate!**

Veal Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs have partnered this summer to explore veal feeding rations.

There is very little research on feeding fibre to grain-fed veal. This summer is your opportunity to participate in research for the veal industry.

No work is needed, just allow a summer student to come on your farm to sift through a feed sample. Fibre and fines will be evaluated and recorded. It's that simple! The first 15 farms that complete an on-farm visit will receive a \$100 honorarium.

If you would like to participate in this new research for grain-fed veal, please contact Kendra Keels at 519-824-2942 or [kkeels@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:kkeels@vealfarmers.ca).

Unable to have a farm visit but still looking to participate? Producers who complete the electronic survey will be entered into a draw for a Canadian Tire gift card valued at \$100.

# OFA launches *Home Grown*

– An advocacy campaign to protect Ontario’s farmland

Michelle deNijs, Communications Specialist

Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Farmland that supports food production is a finite and shrinking resource. The new *Home Grown* advocacy campaign, launched by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), focuses on protecting and preserving farmland and domestic food production. The campaign, which launched on May 4, aims to increase awareness on the issue and enhance consumer knowledge about the negative impacts of urban development on Ontario’s agri-food system.

Based on data from the latest Census of Agriculture in 2016, approximately 175 acres of farmland is lost every day to urban development in Ontario. This equates to roughly 135 football fields, which is an extreme loss, especially when it cannot be reversed. While urban development is important to support growing populations, it’s important to consider the trade-off at hand. There are many options for intensification within cities, yet development continues to expand out into valuable farmland.

The harsh reality is that only five per cent of Ontario’s landscape can support the growth of food for human consumption. With an ever-growing population, that means farmers are dealing with added pressure by having to produce more yield with less inputs and a declining land base. The agri-food sector depends on farmland to effectively produce food, fibre and fuel for the province.

Beyond development on prime farmland, significant wetlands, key shorelines and forests are also being threatened by urban sprawl. More than just the farming population will begin feeling the effects of this urban expansion. When it comes to growth, the government has the authority to determine where and how urban development happens using Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs). The government has the ability to bypass long-standing land use processes and rezone farmland for urban uses. Since the beginning of the pandemic, an MZO has been used six times in Ontario.

Beyond just food production, farmland provides an expansive list of environmental benefits to all Ontarians – aesthetic and recreational space, air quality (oxygen production, carbon sequestration and climate regulation), biodiversity, nutrient cycling, pollination services, soil erosion control, water cycling (groundwater recharge, flood attenuation), and habitat for wildlife and endangered species.

OFA understands the importance of urban growth and development, however, we believe where our food comes from holds significant importance as well. Once farmland is paved over, it’s gone forever.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the demand for local food production. Now more than ever, consumers are looking for locally grown produce, meats and dairy products. Domestic food production is vital to consumers and the economy, it’s safe, sustainable, affordable and reliable. Farmland protection and preservation must be prioritized to ensure Ontario has viable farmland for future generations to grow grains, fruits and vegetables and to raise our livestock for meat, poultry and dairy.

OFA has created a petition to cultivate support across the province to protect our farms and food forever. Join the more than 4,800 people who have already signed on and make change happen today. For more details about the campaign, visit [homegrown.ofa.on.ca](http://homegrown.ofa.on.ca). ■



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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# VFO supports virtual cooking classes for youth in Scarborough

Ontario  
**VEAL**  
*appeal*



Jennifer Haley  
Executive Director

This past winter, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) partnered with the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities to support a new outreach program aimed at providing cooking classes to youth through the CHEF program – Cooking and Healthy Eating for Fitness.

“The purpose of the program is to teach youth cooking skills in a hands-on way,” explains Gnanushan Krishnapillai, a Child/Youth Health Program Facilitator. The goals of the CHEF program are for participants to learn fun and new nutritious recipes while practicing cooking skills and providing improved knowledge about the importance of nutrition.

Gnanushan explains that some of the other goals of the cooking program is to combat the ‘food desert’ label given to priority neighbourhoods and address issues with residents that have lack of knowledge of nutrition and as a result, poor eating habits. Gnanushan states, “Through our program, we hope to increase youth participants’ confidence in their abilities to cook and prepare culturally-relevant and nutritious food for themselves and their families. We try to make cooking and food preparation fun and exciting.”

Working with Chef Emily Richards, youth peer leaders selected veal cutlets with green beans

for their cooking class. The youth leaders chose this menu because it would be easy to follow along in a virtual cooking demonstration and adding veal would be appreciated by the students given the culturally diverse make-up of the group.

VFO provided support for the cooking class with a financial contribution to ensure each participant was able to access all the required ingredients. Chef Emily also donated her time and expertise to lead the classes. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, classes had to be conducted virtually. Ahead of time, each participant was provided with a list of ingredients and gift cards so that they did not have to spend their own funds to participate in the program.

Gnanushan explains that it is important to make sure the programs are free and accessible to all the members of their community to reach as many as possible, including those who may not have the financial resources to participate otherwise. With VFO’s support, the CHEF program was able to engage more participants and have a bigger impact on the community.



In total, there were 29 youth participating in the veal cooking class, ranging in ages from nine to 17 years old. The feedback from the class was fantastic, with participants enjoying the opportunity to learn new skills, be more confident in the kitchen, and learn creative ways that they can help feed their families.

For VFO, this was a great opportunity to participate and connect with youth who are eager to learn new cooking skills and build a foundation for including veal in their menus. Scarborough is a culturally diverse and culturally rich community with many of its residents already predisposed to including veal in their dishes. This was a great opportunity to support youth cooking classes that will make a meaningful difference for the students and their families and encourage future veal consumers. ■



# Putting the appeal of Ontario Veal on the BBQ!

Ontario  
**VEAL**  
appeal

Jennifer Haley

Executive Director

VFO's approach to our consumer marketing projects and initiatives is to drive demand for Ontario veal using a number of different marketing channels and tactics to reach and inspire the consumer.

Summer means BBQ and enjoying the outdoors. Yet veal demand in the summer months is at its lowest point of the year – in part because veal is not top of mind to put on the BBQ. Consumers shift to traditional grilling meats – beef, pork, and chicken – to cook on the grill. When talking to consumers about putting veal on the grill, the response is always the same, “Oh ya! I never thought about that but that is a great idea!”

One of our Veal Appeal campaign goals is to change this mindset by once again partnering with Chef Ted Reader, BBQ guru. Working with Chef Ted, nine new veal BBQ recipes were created for this year that will be featured on Ted's social media channels as well as our own. These posts always create a buzz with Ted's engaged followers who are carnivores to the core! As well, the recipes will be used in our consumer e-newsletter that goes out bi-weekly to over 3,000 dedicated veal consumers to inspire them to cook with veal this summer. The new BBQ veal recipes will also be hosted on our new refreshed website as well as cross posted on Ted's website.

We also have bonus opportunities pop up with Chef Ted as he is much sought-after personality for various TV appearances. This past winter, Chef Ted featured our Planked Veal Meatballs recipe as part of Super Bowl menu planning. Another of Ted's veal recipes – the Veal Meatloaf

Burgers – was also featured by Rita DeMontis in her syndicated SunMedia food column as a prelude to BBQ season.

Recently, we just wrapped up a consumer contest focused on Father's Day. One of the goals of the contest was to increase followers on all of our social media channels and our e-newsletter. Subscribing or liking our social media channels were ways to enter the contest. The prizes included Chef Ted's BBQ cookbooks, spice rubs, BBQ tools and of course fresh Ontario veal to put on the BBQ!

Included in this issue of *The Connection* is the most recent advertisement in the LCBO's *Food & Drink* magazine. This popular magazine reaches over 2.5 million consumers per issue and readers are a great demographic match for the Ontario veal consumer. With our summer ad, featuring Chef Ted Reader's Ontario Veal Street Tacos, we are trying to inspire the consumer with a meal experience, drive traffic to our new and refreshed website and profile veal in new and different ways.

The recipe included in this issue of *The Connection* is Chef Ted's take on a Philly Cheese steak sandwich using Ontario veal! You can make this delicious veal sandwich on the BBQ as simple or as complicated as you want (Chef Ted does not do anything simple) but it is meant to inspire you to try something new with veal.

The Veal Appeal message is simple: whether it is a grilled veal chop or a juicy veal burger, the possibilities for putting veal on the grill are endless! Increasing consumption of veal in

the summer helps to balance out year-round demand for Ontario veal. By targeting consumers who already enjoy veal we are trying to encourage incremental increases in purchases of Ontario veal in order to smooth out the demand dip during the summer months. So this summer be sure to get some more veal on your grill! ■

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## Grilling up good eats

By Lisa Brody - February 5, 2021, 11:32 am



Tim Eolen spent the morning with the Godfather of the Grill, Ted Reader, to grill up some Super Bowl eats.



# Canadian Veal Association update

Jennifer Haley

Executive Director

Canadian Veal  
Association



Association  
canadienne du veau

## CVA requests increase to Feeder Import timelines

The Canadian Veal Association (CVA) recently submitted a request to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to amend the *Health of Animals Regulations*, and in particular the Import Reference Document, to increase the time limit from 36 weeks to 40 weeks for imported calves brought into Canada to approved quarantined facilities.

Veal producers have used the Feeder Import program for years to bring additional male dairy calves into Canada. This requires a CFIA-approved barn where the cattle will be quarantined, and the finished cattle must go directly to processing. The program has been popular for veal cattle producers looking for a steady and consistent supply of calves and where the exchange rate has been favourable.

With the recent changes to the Canadian Beef, Bison and Veal Carcass Grade Requirements that came into effect on January 15th, 2020, the maximum veal carcass weight limit increased from 180 kg to 190 kg. This means that veal carcasses will be heavier as a result and producers will require additional time to ensure right-weighted and market-desirable cattle are finished properly and efficiently. The current limit of 36 weeks, and the restrictive quarantine process, means producers may be forced to sell poorly finished, lower value veal cattle. Increasing the limit to 40 weeks would allow producers to maximize the full value of the veal carcass.

These proposed amendments would have no impact on the strict animal health requirements and quarantine procedures that veal producers follow to ensure the safety and integrity of the Canadian food supply chain. At this time, however, it is uncertain when the CVA proposal will be reviewed by the CFIA and what the regulatory process might be for the amendments. Strategically, the CVA wants to ensure a supply of US dairy calves without compromising the timelines to finish veal cattle properly.

## Canadian Veal part of the Surplus Food Rescue Program

Last June, Minister Bibeau announced \$50 million in funding for the Surplus Food Rescue Program. This funding was designed to provide financial assistance to organizations to acquire and process surplus commodities and food that would otherwise be lost or destroyed and distribute them to populations in need. The CVA lobbied Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to ensure that veal was included as a priority commodity in this program.

The CVA collaborated with a few food security agencies on their applications for funding to address the volume of frozen veal that was piling up with both White Veal Meat Packers and Montpak. With the impact of the global foodservice and hospitality market shut down at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, both processors were challenged with a loss of markets and a growing inventory of frozen veal.

With these successful partnerships, a total of 259,343 kg of surplus veal was purchased for a total value of \$2,350,471.00. For the CVA, it was important to facilitate these opportunities to try and reduce some of the frozen veal inventory to mitigate any financial impact on the markets post-pandemic when the inventory could be sold.

## Veal Code of Practice Update

The CVA discussed the challenges of the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* (the Code) compliance in provinces outside of Ontario and Quebec and how best to approach the education and awareness of the scope of the Code with respect to starting dairy calves. There have been several animal activist social media posts targeting the veal sector even though the farms are not veal cattle farms. The Canadian veal industry has worked very hard and has progressively moved forward so it is important to ensure consistency across all provinces.

The CVA distributed information to all national and provincial cattle organizations highlighting the requirements of the Code with respect to dairy calves started for veal or dairy-beef. The CVA is also preparing for the five-year Code Review in 2022 and will be striking a Code Review Technical Panel. ■

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## ONTARIO VEAL STREET TACOS

Recipe at [ontariovealappeal.ca](http://ontariovealappeal.ca)

Ontario  
**VEAL**  
*appeal*

**With a zesty tequila lime marinade and taco seasoning, veal scaloppini is infused with Mexican flavours and transformed into authentic Street Tacos.**

These little pockets of deliciousness, created by Chef Ted Reader, are meant to be a snack but it is almost impossible to stop at one or two. Using veal scaloppini in this recipe cuts the marinating time from the the usual six hours plus to as little as 30 minutes. For the full taqueria experience serve with traditional toppings like refried beans, tomato salsa, pickled red onions and smashed avocado. You can save time and purchase the toppings pre-made or visit [ontariovealappeal.ca](http://ontariovealappeal.ca) for the full recipe. [f](#) [i](#) [t](#)

# Understanding Business Risk Management programs – AgriStability



Patrick MacCarthy  
Projects Coordinator

The federal and provincial governments offer a suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs to Ontario’s veal producers that protect against a wide range of the business and agricultural risks they face every day. As these programs evolve and change it is important for veal producers to understand what risks each program protects them against and how each program works before making an informed choice on whether they should enrol their farm. In this article, we will look at AgriStability.

## What does AgriStability cover?

AgriStability provides whole farm coverage for large declines in net income caused by production loss, increased costs, and market conditions. It directs government funds to producers in need by providing disaster assistance to program participants who experience margin de-

clines greater than 30 per cent. It provides unique coverage based on an individual farm’s current and historical income and expenses.

## How does AgriStability work?

AgriStability uses a farm’s production margin (net income) and reference margin to determine if a payment is triggered. The farm’s reference margin is calculated based on an “Olympic average” of the farm’s production margins for the previous five years, dropping the highest and lowest years. If the farm has not been in operation for five years, the past three years are used to form the average. If this is the first year of operation, the reference margin is calculated using industry benchmarks and the farm’s expected production (a farm must have at least six months of previous farming activity to be eligible).

An example for calculating a 2021 reference margin is shown below.

Reference margin calculation					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Production margin (net income)	\$67,000	\$65,000	\$75,000	\$102,000	\$86,000
Highest and lowest dropped	\$67,000	X	\$75,000	X	\$86,000
Reference margin $(\$67,000 + \$75,000 + \$86,000) \div 3 = \$76,000$					

A payment is triggered when a farm’s production margin for a given program year falls more than 30 per cent below its reference margin. The program covers 70 per cent of the decline beyond the 30 per cent level. Using the reference margin of \$76,000 calculated above, a production margin of \$41,000 would trigger a payment of \$8,450.

### Payment Calculation

Reference margin (A)	\$76,000
Support level (70% of (A)) (B)	\$53,200
Production margin for 2021 (C)	\$41,000
Decline (B – C)	\$12,200
AgriStability coverage	70%
Payment amount	\$8,540

### Sample Fee Calculation

Contribution reference margin	\$76,000
Multiplied by 0.45%	\$342
Multiplied by 70%	\$239
Total: fee amount	\$239
Add: administrative cost share	\$55
Total	\$294

## Enrolling in AgriStability

Producers must enrol in AgriStability annually. Producers currently enrolled will automatically receive an enrolment notice from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). New participants must complete a participant information form. Producers, both current and new, must also pay the fees by the enrolment deadline of April 30th (extended to June 30th for the 2021 program year only) of the program year to be considered enrolled. In Ontario, Agricorp is responsible for administering AgriStability. Applications can be made on their website here: [bit.ly/AgriStabilityEnrolment](https://bit.ly/AgriStabilityEnrolment).

AgriStability costs are minimal and are calculated in two parts; a participation fee based on the reference margin and an administrative fee. The fees are due annually and are paid regardless of whether a payment is triggered. Using the reference margin from our example, the cost of this producer enrolling in AgriStability is \$239 for the participation fee and the flat \$55 administrative fee for a total of \$294.

## Reference Margin Limit removal

At the most recent meeting of federal, provincial, and territorial agriculture ministers it was announced that the Reference Margin Limit (RML)

would be removed from the AgriStability program retroactive to 2020. It is estimated that this change will increase payments to Canadian producers by \$95 million. Furthermore, this change simplifies the program and make it easier for producers to calculate the potential benefit of enrolling in AgriStability.

## Additional resources

AgriStability is one of the BRM programs available to Ontario's veal producers to help them respond to a dynamic market and unexpected input price increases. Veal Farmers of Ontario continues to advocate for responsive support programs that meet the needs of veal producers.

Since AgriStability provides coverage that is unique to each farm, the benefit of enrolling in the program will vary for each producer.

To see what payments your farm may be eligible for, use AAFC's estimator here: [bit.ly/AgriStabilityBenefitEstimator](https://bit.ly/AgriStabilityBenefitEstimator).

Agricorp also provides a more detailed breakdown of how AgriStability works for Ontario producers here: [bit.ly/UnderstandingAgriStability](https://bit.ly/UnderstandingAgriStability). ■

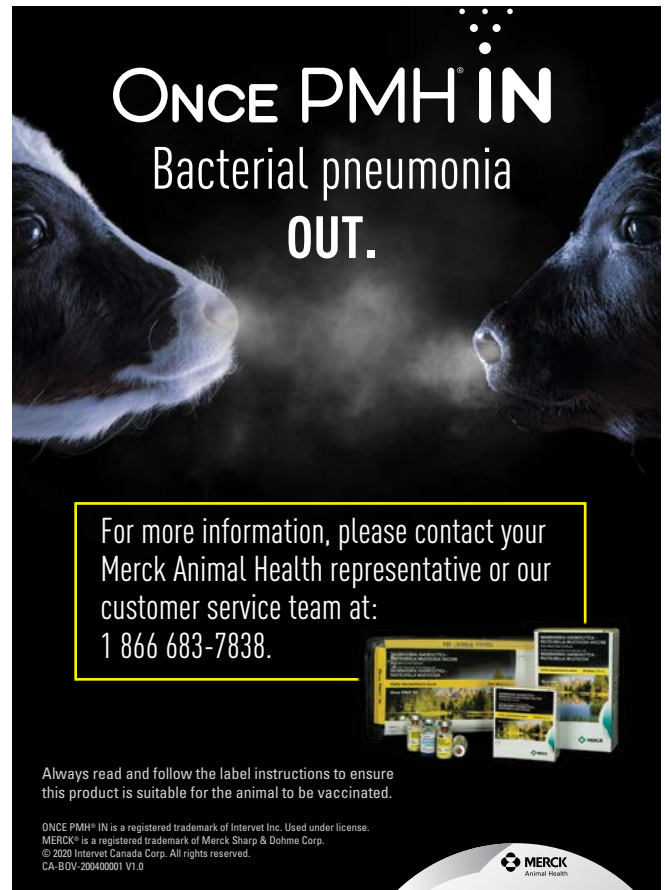


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# Knowing your financial statements – Income statements

Erich Weber, CPA, Business Finance Specialist

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs

Your yearly financial statements contain a wealth of information that can benefit your farm business. In the last edition of *The Connection*, we examined what a balance sheet is, what type of information it contains, and how to analyze that information. In this edition, we will examine the income statement, its purpose, and the analysis you can do with the information it contains.

## Income statement and its purpose

The income statement (also called a profit and loss statement) outlines all the revenues generated and expenses incurred by your farm business over a period of time. The income statement also calculates the profitability of the business. The Net Income (or Net Loss) from your farm business can be calculated from the income statement by subtracting your Expenses from your Revenues.

## Net Income (Net Loss) = Revenues - Expenses

Usually, an income statement is done on a yearly basis (for the fiscal year ended December XX, 20XX) but can be done on a monthly (for the month ended June XX, 20XX) or quarterly (for the quarter ended September XX, 20XX) basis depending on the size and needs of your farm business.

A small farm that sells veal cattle once a year may only need to do an income statement on an annual basis. A larger farm that sells their cattle every month and has different enterprises (e.g., cash crop operation in addition to the veal operation) may want to have an income statement prepared more often.

Some questions your Income statement should answer are:

- How profitable is your farm business?
- How does the farm generate its revenue?
- How does the farm spend its money?
- If your income statement is broken down by your different enterprises, are there parts of the business that are more profitable than others?

Income statements can be as simple or as complicated as your business requires. An example of a simple yearly income statement can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1

ABC Veal Farms			
Income Statement			
for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2020			
<b>Income</b>			
	Veal Sales		25,000.00
	Crop Sales		10,000.00
	<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>35,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
	Calves Purchased		10,000.00
	Purchased Feed		2,000.00
	Seed Expenses		2,500.00
	Fertilizer Expenses		5,000.00
	Repairs and Maintenance Expense		6,500.00
	Interest Expenses		3,000.00
	<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>29,000.00</b>
	<b>Net Income</b>		<b>6,000.00</b>

## How to prepare an income statement

If you use a software accounting program to do your bookkeeping, there is usually an option to run an income statement report. If you are not sure how to do this, check your software manual or get assistance from your accountant or the person who prepares your income tax.

If you use a spreadsheet to track your bookkeeping entries, you can use the Ontario Farm Accounting Workbook (found at: [bit.ly/farmworkbook](http://bit.ly/farmworkbook)). It can take you through the process of recording all of your revenues and expenses. Examining the Statement of Farming Activities (Schedule 2042 or T1163) within your income tax return can be a good start to determine what should or should not be included in your income statement.

## Analyzing your income statement

Once your income statement is completed, you can analyze the information it contains. One simple analysis you can do is called a variance analysis. A variance analysis is when you compare your current year revenues and expenses with last year's revenue and expenses. If there are any major

changes from one year to the next, you can try and determine why these changes happened. Variance analysis is a good way to determine if the changes in your revenues or expenses are a one-time situation or whether they indicate a new trend.

An example:

Figure 2: Example of Variance Analysis

Account	Fiscal Year 2020	Fiscal Year 2019	Variance (Difference)
Repairs and Maintenance Expense	\$25,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$10,000.00

You look at your repairs and maintenance expense account and notice that your repairs increased by \$10,000 compared to last year (See Figure 2). You review all the invoices that are included in the repairs and maintenance account and notice that you had a major tractor repair cost of \$10,000 in the 2020. By doing this variance analysis you can determine that a large increase in your repairs and maintenance account this year does not mean you will spend the same amount of money each year.

The information found in your income statement can be used to alert you of any possible issues that may negatively affect your farm's profitability. By preparing an income statement and analyzing the information, you have an opportunity to make changes to help your farm business profitable. In the next edition of *The Connection*, we will take a closer look at the cash flow statement. ■



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# Loading and securing components safely

Cheryl DeCooman, CHRL, President

People Management Group/UdderlySAFE



Whenever you are transporting material, whether it is big or small, it is important to ensure the material is secure and will remain secure during transportation. The cargo securement recommendations below apply when driving a pickup truck, service van, and when transporting items in a trailer.

The consequences of an accident caused by cargo that is not secured correctly can vary greatly. It may be a minor inconvenience, such as material falling in the back of a truck causing damage or leaks, or it may be a more serious situation, such as large items shifting during transport causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle and therefore causing a collision. Other potential consequences can include damage to the vehicle, damage to other vehicles on the road, and/or tickets to the driver and the company.

Anyone operating a vehicle has a responsibility to ensure that all cargo and other items, including items in the cab of the vehicle, are adequately secured before driving and during transit. Consider the driving conditions and what may occur along your trip that may cause cargo to move.

When operating a Commercial Motor Vehicle in Ontario, you must follow the specific requirements set out by the Ministry of Transportation. These very specific requirements are outlined in Module 14 of the Commercial Vehicle Operators Manual. This includes requirements for cargo placement and restraints, the proper use of tie-downs, number of tie-downs, working load limits, and much more.

## Cargo securement components

When loading cargo in any vehicle, use securing devices such as chains, straps, and hooks to secure the items to parts of the vehicle structure including floors, walls, anchor points, and posts. Blocking and bracing equipment such as chocks, blocks, or wedges may also be used to immobilize items. Make sure you inspect all components of the cargo securement system including straps and anchor points before use to make sure they are in good condition. Make sure you do not exceed 50 per cent of the working load limit of any component in the securement system.

Remember to use safe lifting practices and follow safety procedures if using material handling equipment.

Check your load to make sure everything is secured before driving and continue to monitor the load while in transit. If the load shifts or becomes unstable in any way you must pull over and make adjustments to ensure the cargo is secure.

## Additional cargo securement considerations

Equipment and cargo such as small parts, tools, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and fire extinguishers carried in cars and the cab of trucks or vans must be secured so they cannot slide or fall during transit. Make sure that nothing obscures the drivers front or side views or interferes with the ability to drive the vehicle or respond in an emergency. Tools stored in the back of trucks or vans during transit must be secured with straps, chains, or other methods. Use other appropriate anchor points when necessary. Items on wheels must be blocked or chocked and secured during transport. Wheels should be locked if possible. Items such as ladders or dollies must also be secured during transit. Use caution when opening tailgates or doors at the back of cargo vans after transit, as fallen or shifted items can fall when doors are opened.

## Loading equipment for transport

When transporting equipment, it is essential that all parts of the equipment are secured and that cargo securement requirements are followed.

## Before you load

Before you begin to load, inspect the truck, ramps, rub rail and attachment points to ensure they are in good condition. Ensure the emergency brake is on and trailer hitch, chains and other connections are hooked up. Ensure all tie-downs and hooks are in good condition and have had required inspections.

Consider the height, width, and weight of the equipment. Do not exceed allowable limits. Always try to minimize backing, check behind you before backing and use a spotter when available. Ensure the trailer is on stable ground and the weight of the load can be evenly distributed. Keep pedestrians out of the area, spotters must remain visible and wear retro-reflective vests.





## Securing the load

It is critical that you only use tie-downs and mounting points on the truck that are designed for cargo securement and that you only use designated areas on the equipment for securement. This may include eyelet, pocket, hook point, cutout or other approved tie-down location.

All tie-downs must have working load limits marked. Do not exceed 50 per cent of the working load limit on any component of the cargo securement system.

When securing the load, do not throw tie-downs in a way that could swing back at you or hit anyone else in the area. Always be aware of crushing and pinching hazards when loading and securing equipment. Use proper angles and position of tie-downs to ensure equipment cannot move (test up/down, left/right, forward/backward). Each tie-down must be attached and secured so that it does not create rub points, become loose, unfasten, or release in transport. Consider how accelerating, braking, and emergency lane changes will impact securement.

All tie-downs and securement components must be located inside any rub rails.

Removable attachments must be completely lowered and secured to the vehicle.

Equipment that can pivot, tilt, or move sideways must have a locking pin or be secured in place.

Ensure weight is properly distributed in relation to the trailer axel. Poor load balance can cause the trailer to sway, fishtail, or separate, especially if there is too much weight in the rear.

Use binders to secure long chains. Excess chain must be secured so it cannot fall off the trailer. If your chain is too short, do not attach two chains together.

Before you begin to drive, ensure that the cargo, mud, ice, or other debris cannot fall or come off while driving.

Do a final check of the equipment to ensure everything is tight and secured before driving. Remember to continue to monitor the load while you are driving. If anything becomes unstable or the conditions change you must pull over and make adjustments to ensure the equipment is secure. Always ensure the load you are transporting is stable and centered, and the minimum number of tie-downs are in place based on the size, weight and type of equipment being transported. ■



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# INDUSTRY

## updates



### Notice of federal levy amendment

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) has been advised by the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency that the check-off payable by Quebec sellers has been updated for all three classes of cattle. As such, purchasers and dealers in Ontario are now required to deduct and remit amended levies on cull cows, fed cattle and bob calves sold by Quebec sellers in Ontario.

For bob calves/male dairy calves from Quebec sellers, the rate is now \$6.05.

Please update your systems and records to reflect this increase and begin deducting and remitting the new rate for Quebec cattle effective April 1, 2021.

As a reminder, you are to remit the check-off collected from bob calves/male dairy calves from non-resident sellers to VFO at the same time you remit your provincial check-off payable by resident sellers.

### Calf care resources

Did you receive your package of calf care resources with the last issue of *The Connection*? Let us know your feedback by dropping us a line at [info@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:info@vealfarmers.ca) or [info@calfcare.ca](mailto:info@calfcare.ca).

Veal Farmers of Ontario works hard to develop resources that farmers will find helpful and easy to use. We would love to hear your comments – what you liked, what you didn't, and what you would like to see covered in future resources. Keeping up to date with current research can be a challenge for busy farmers so our hope is that these resources delivered right to your door will help you continuously improve the way calves are raised on your farm.

### OMAFRA COVID-19: farmer toolkit

This online toolkit aims to be a “one-stop shop” for farm operators on guidance, resources and

information related to prevention, control, testing and outbreak management support. Get access to agriculture-specific resources, find out how to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak on your farm and how your workers can get tested at: [bit.ly/omafratoolkit](https://bit.ly/omafratoolkit).

The Provincial Antigen Screening Program is a newly launched program that allows employers in priority settings to add an additional safety measure in high-risk and essential workplaces, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

For employers participating in the program, the provincial government will provide free rapid antigen test kits. Employers will have significant flexibility in the implementation of rapid antigen testing within their respective workplaces, so long as they adhere to the terms of the Provincial Antigen Screening Program agreement, including compliance with applicable provincial guidance.

Agri-food employers who wish to participate in the Provincial Antigen Screening Program can contact the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs at [omafra.labour@ontario.ca](mailto:omafra.labour@ontario.ca).

### Dairy Code update

Since the last update, the Code Committee reviewed the findings from six virtual focus groups. Fifty producers participated (34 English-speaking and 16 French-speaking) and the focus groups were designed to get deeper insights on producer attitudes, opinions, and practices related to stocking density; exercise and access to pasture and alternatives; calving areas; and calf housing.

The Code Committee noted similar broad themes between their own discussions and those of the focus groups, notably the need for clear minimum expectations while also allowing for farm-level flexibility and tailoring. As well, general agreement that the farmer, their management, and the facility all play a role in achiev-

ing optimal health and welfare. Participants also indicated a general willingness to consider change if supported by research and citizen and/or consumer viewpoints certainly figured into some of their discussions.

Between early December and late February, the entire Code Committee met nine times and an additional three subcommittee meetings took place. Several meetings were also devoted to the Health chapter with emphasis on calf health, calving management, and promoting hoof and leg health.

Despite good progress on many challenging topics, more time is needed to work through several health and housing topics before the full draft Code of Practice will be ready for public comment. The comment period will now take place in early fall of 2021 (rather than the spring of 2021).

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

### Transport Code update

Progress on the Livestock & Poultry Transportation Code of Practice continues, with lots of activity occurring in several areas.

Content that is considered to be common for all types of animals covered by the Code is currently being developed by Code Development Committee (CDC) sub-committees. The Loading and Unloading sub-committee has met several times online and has made significant progress reviewing content on topics related to handling, loading, unloading, isolation, and providing feed, water, and rest on fully-equipped vehicles. The Understanding Fitness for Transport sub-committee has also met a handful of times and continues to make progress populating content covering compromised and other vulnerable animals. The remaining three sub-committees (Planning; Personnel & Equipment; Ventilation) are scheduled to be activated this spring. In the meantime, efforts are under-

way to schedule a series of CDC meetings so that the full 23-member group can review sub-committee content, which will then be reviewed by reactivated Working Groups (WGs) so that they can supplement the common content with species-specific details.

While the goal is to post a draft code for public comment in the summer of 2022, the inability for the CDC and WGs to meet in-person has certainly been challenging. As pandemic-related restrictions begin to lift and people become more comfortable with travelling, it is expected that

in-person meetings will convene for CDC meetings and for other groups that have not been able to arrive at consensus on some topics.

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

## OFA project continues to gain momentum to grow Ontario's agri-food workforce



**FEEDING**  
your **FUTURE**

Michelle deNijs, Communications Specialist

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture's (OFA) labour project, Feeding Your Future, supports Ontario farmers and agri-business owners across the province to find, train, and retain the workers they need. This program offers a free job matching service to help employers develop a job posting and review all applicants. Virtual career fairs have also been coordinated to connect employers directly with job seekers. Leading up to the

2021 harvest season, these free virtual career fairs will be held in East/Central/Northern Ontario on August 18 and spanning to Southwestern Ontario on August 25. A province-wide virtual career fair will be held on September 9. To take advantage of these free job postings or register for the career fairs, email [feedyourfuture@agca-reers.com](mailto:feedyourfuture@agca-reers.com) or call 1-877-438-5729 ext. 4.

Recently hired new employees on your farm?

Online training for new workers is available through the new Ontario Agriculture Worker Safety and Awareness Certificate. This introductory training will help prepare new workers for farm operations across Ontario. For more information on the Feeding Your Future initiative, visit our website at [feedingyourfuture.ca](http://feedingyourfuture.ca). ■

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# Tips on protecting your farm or business from infiltrators



Kelly Daynard, Executive Director

Farm & Food Care Ontario

If you're a livestock farmer caring for animals in Canada today, it might be easy to feel disheartened. Headlines about animal activist protests, barn and farm break ins are still too frequent. The issue crosses all species of livestock and all parts of Ontario. Last month, there was a collective head shaking across the industry when a well-known animal activist had all charges dropped related to breaking into and entering Ontario mink farms. His lawyer's argument was that the activist did not cause damage, steal anything, or have intention of mischief – and that apparently was enough. It really makes no sense.

While realizing that it is impossible to totally guard against these undercover activities, there are steps that farmers and the industry can take to protect themselves.

One of the more common mistakes that farmers can make is thinking that because they're in rural areas or small towns, that somehow no one knows they're there. What they fail to understand is that activists who go undercover have done their research. A rural farm is every bit as vulnerable to spying. Added to that is the fact that today's miniaturized video equipment allows hidden footage to be taken without risk of getting caught. There are steps you can take to protect your farms and businesses from these threats:

- Employers must make certain that they hire the right people who are there for the right reasons. If you feel suspicious about an employee or a job applicant, there's probably a reason. It's easier not to hire than it is to fire.
- Make sure all staff understand the necessity of proper handling and care of animals and that ignoring or violating animal care and handling procedures will not be tolerated. Develop standard operation procedures (SOPs) for the running of your farm and have employee training in place based on the National Farm Animal Care Council Code of Practice for your specific animal species ([nfacc.ca](http://nfacc.ca)). Encourage immediate reporting of any animal mishandling so management can take corrective action.
- Make it easy for all animal handlers to follow proper animal care, handling and euthanasia procedures at all times. If you're

working with live animals, ensure that all staff (new and existing) sign an Employee Animal Care Code of Conduct. A sample form is available to be modified from the Farm & Food Care Ontario website ([FarmFoodCareON.org](http://FarmFoodCareON.org))

- All job applicants **MUST BE** properly vetted, including day labour. This means verifying applications, ID, work history, etc. Be especially careful when hiring for positions where the job would allow free access to the full operation. Be especially wary of unannounced visitors or "walk-ins" looking for seasonal or short time work. Double check their identification and make sure you check all references provided.
- Evaluate every request for information about your operation, even the most routine. Obtain as much information as possible (e.g., name, contact information, reason for request).
- Watch for people who are not where they're supposed to be. Make sure service personnel access only those areas of the facility that their task requires.
- Be aware of new employees who are overly curious about operations that are well beyond their job descriptions. Encourage long-term employees who are overly questioned about animal handling, care, etc. to talk with you about these encounters.
- Maintain basic security. Lock all doors,

barns, shops, and office doors, including office filing cabinets. Use computer passwords and have firewalls installed on any networked computer system. Keep all animal health products under lock and key.

- Ensure access to the facility is controlled. Establish check-in procedures for visitors. Place appropriate signs noting such procedures and require visitors to sign in and out. Use visitor identification badges. This protects your visitor as well as your operation.
- Use security lighting and alarms. Maintain fencing and gates. Post signs indicating restricted and no access areas. Use no trespassing signs at all property access points and at intervals along fence lines.
- Be observant. Report any suspicious activity, persons and/or vehicles; photograph them if possible. Be a good neighbour and watch your neighbours' farms too – and encourage them to watch yours.
- Have an emergency plan in place and ensure family and staff know what to do in an emergency.
- Develop a relationship with your local police services. If you think you might be a target, reaching out to police in advance of an incident is a good idea.

Ensuring that you and your staff are prepared, and have a plan in place, could help prevent future problems. ■

# Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety sign: Do I need it?



With the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* (SFT&PFS) now in force, you may wonder if you or your clients need new signage to protect your farm or business.

The short answer is probably not.

The legislation strengthens protection for farms, processing plants, assembly yards and other areas where livestock is held through the creation of Animal Protection Zones. Ontario farm groups have worked closely with government to understand how an Animal Protection Zone is defined, and when or if additional signage is needed.

Most livestock operations do NOT need a special sign to be recognized as an Animal Protection Zone. SFT&PFS Act (Bill 156) gives obvious animal enclosures inherent protection without a sign. Additionally, motor vehicles transporting farm animals do not need a sign to be protected under the act.

To learn if signage is required for your operation, an interactive decision tree (AboutBill156.com/signs) can be found at AboutBill156.com, a website developed by agriculture groups to provide information and dispel myths about this legislation. If a sign is required, a limited number are available through livestock commodity groups and Farm & Food Care Ontario.

As a quick guide, an Animal Protection Zone is defined as an area on the farm, facility, or prescribed premises where farm animals may be kept or located. There are three types of animal protection zones established under the Act, with examples below:

**Category A:** *No sign required*

- Barns
- Enclosed pastures
- Pens near barns

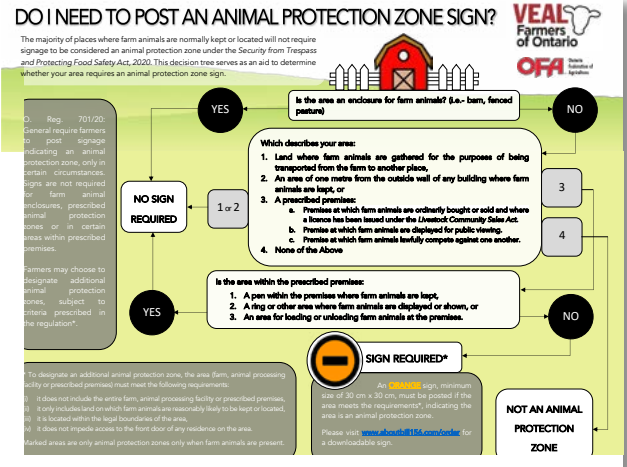
**Category B:** *Sign is required*

- Community pastures with no enclosure for farm animals
- Raceway

**Category C:** *No sign required*

- Livestock loading zones
- Rings where farm animals are being displayed or shown
- Pens in auction houses
- Rings at sales yards

For more information, please contact Bruce Kelly – [bruce@farmfoodcare.org](mailto:bruce@farmfoodcare.org) or download the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* at [ontario.ca/laws/statute/20s09](http://ontario.ca/laws/statute/20s09). ■



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# The history of veal in Ontario



Kendra Keels

Industry Development Director

Veal has always been a symbol of celebration and status in society. Today, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) works hard at changing that image of special occasions to everyday meals. At one time, restrictions had to be placed on the harvest of young bovine so it would not deplete breeding stock for the highly sought taste of veal. Calves were harvested every couple of weeks for the family and selling to the local butcher was becoming very common, a little too common.

During the late 1700s, a famous French writer and philosopher Voltaire (1694 to 1778) claimed that eating “blond de veau” (boiling veal shanks in water with carrots, onions, celery, and a chicken carcass) will help you live 100 years. This is one of the earliest references to veal in Europe.

In Canada there are multiple references to veal in the early 1900s. In addition to the market report in the last issue of *The Connection*, there are references in 1900 from the Calgary Domestic Science Department referring to favourite veal recipes of veal cutlets, veal croquettes, and veal loaf. In 1913 the Manitoba Agricultural College referred to veal as the meat from calves.

While other provinces clearly have references to veal at the turn of the twentieth century, it is Ontario and Quebec where the growth of the sector flourished because of the growth in dairy production.

Veal has been a staple of Canadian diets for many years, it was just different then it is today. As previously described in the Spring issue of *The Connection*, in those early days, calves were fed whole milk or skim milk if the cream was removed and offered hay. They would have been sent to market at less than 68 kg (150 lbs.) and under three weeks of age.

**In 1971, the average selling price for bob calves was \$35 and there were 111,900 calves sold with 42,500 mostly being raised as veal. In today's dollar value, \$35 is about \$240. The average price for calves for the month of May 2021 is around \$200.**

With the growth of the special-fed (milk-fed) veal market and the increasing difficulties to raise calves on an all-milk diet, producers were looking for ways to be efficient raising veal, but on a grain-based diet to capture some of the highs of the milk-fed veal market but with less challenges like anemia and age restrictions.

With the growing number of dairy farms in Ontario during the 70s, the number of white veal farms (now milk-fed veal) were growing and there



The Stockyard Story, West Toronto Junction Historical Society archives

was concern developing with consumers over the colour of the veal. The preferred colour for white veal was a very light pink, and a premium was paid for the colour however the challenge was obtaining that colour – there was a risk the calves would become anemic. This later became one of the criticisms of the milk-fed veal sector.

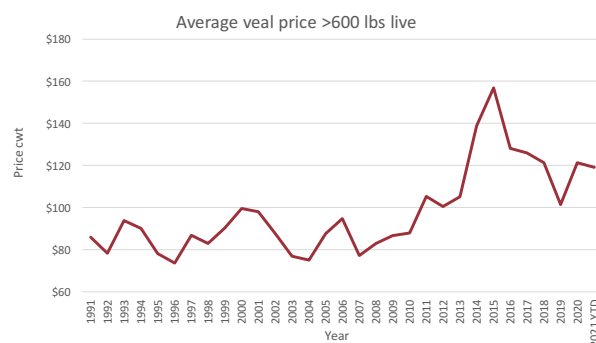
One solution was to start raising calves on a grain diet of barley or corn to provide more iron than an all-milk diet. The result was a darker colour meat – darker than milk-fed veal but not as dark as beef, and consumers liked it. This method addressed some of the welfare issues of the time.

The name given was red veal because of the darker red colour vs. white. The red veal market was growing and several packers were looking for these types of animals. The heavy calf production, referred to by some, started to boom in the 80s. The main market for these animals was the Toronto Stockyards.

As this heavy calf/red veal market was growing, more farms were becoming specialized and feeding programs were changing. Traditional oats and barley rations were changing over to corn and protein, mineral, and vitamin supplements in the form of a pellet. To the best of my research the first pellet for veal on the market was “Tender Lean” by Purina. It was quickly discovered that this feeding program of pellets combined with the efficiencies and price of corn at the time was a winning combination.

Stay tuned for the next issue of *The Connection* as the history of veal will focus on the evolution of veal carcass weights and grading. If you or anyone you know has information to contribute to the history of veal series, please contact Kendra Keels at the VFO office or [kkeels@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:kkeels@vealfarmers.ca). ■

References available upon request.



Since 1991 Veal Farmers of Ontario has tracked the sale barn price for veal greater than 272 kg (600 lbs.).



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Photo credit: Zach Harper

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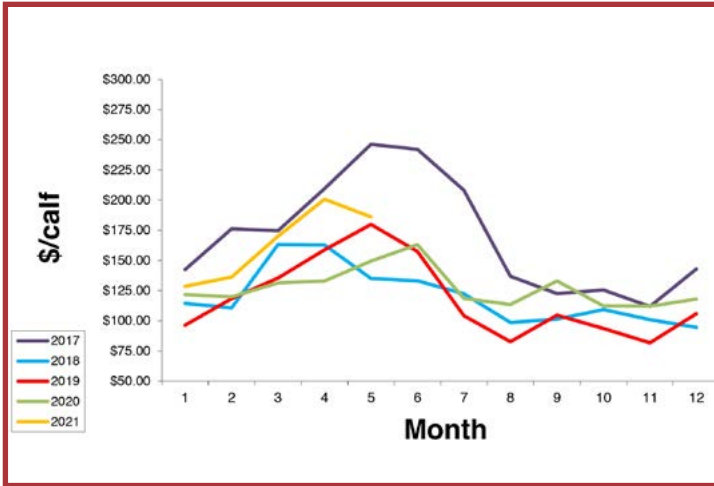
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# Veal Market Information

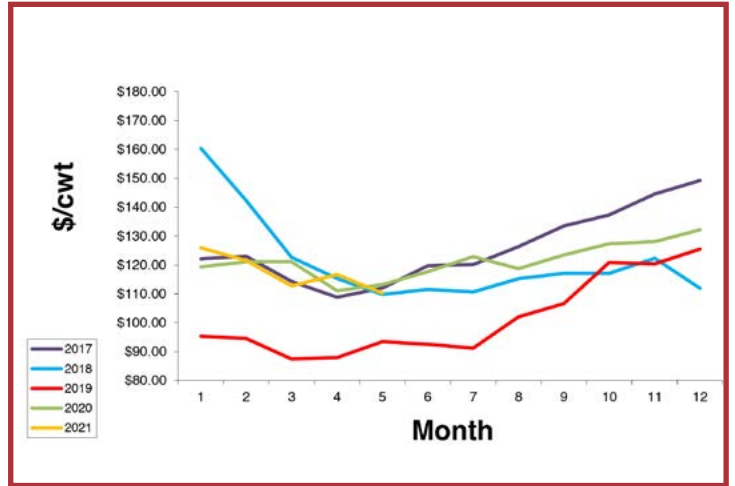
This information is collected from various sources and disseminated by Veal Farmers of Ontario.

## Bob Calf Pricing



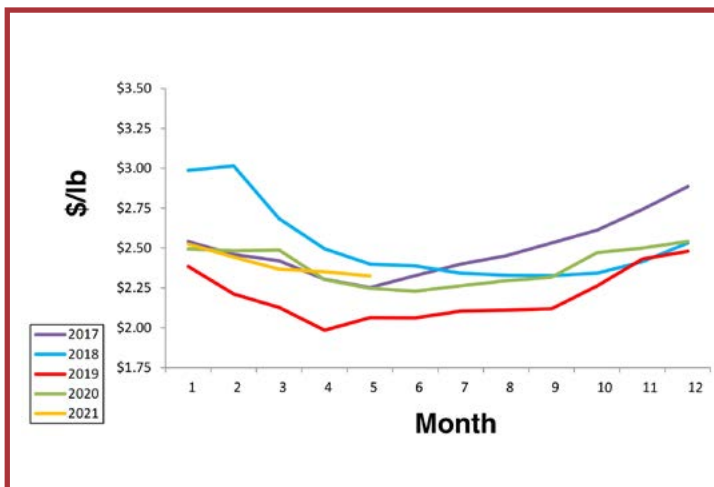
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

## Sale Barn Veal Pricing



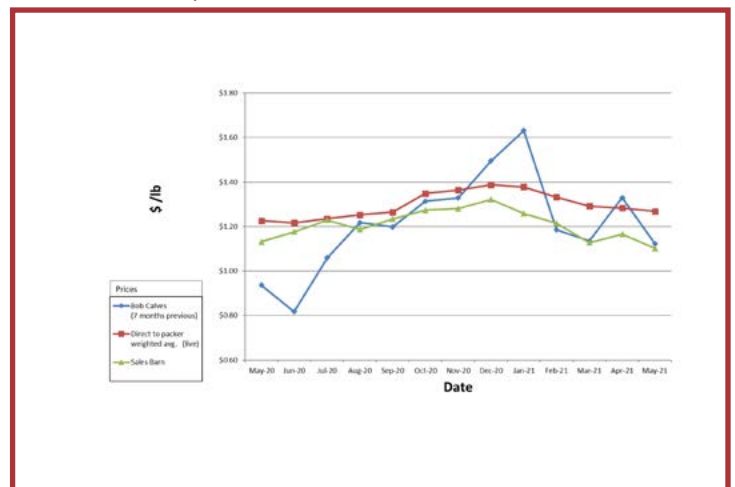
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

## 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.

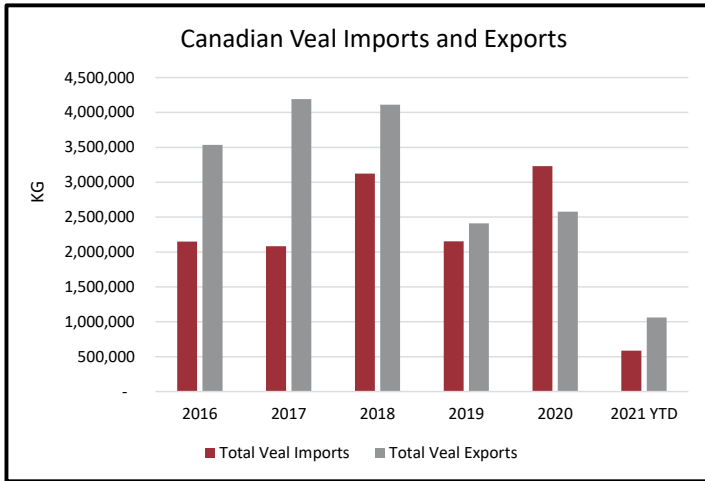
## Finished price compared to bob calf prices (Seven months previous)



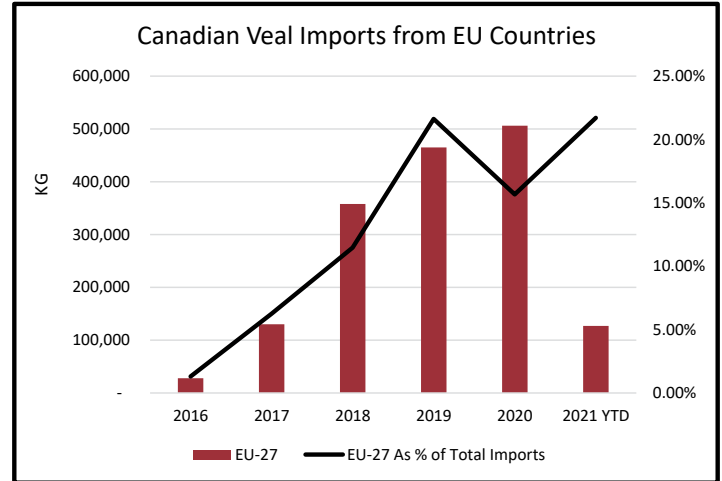
This graph is used to compare the finished price from both the sale barn and rail grade pricing to the bob calf prices seven months prior. This information could help when deciding on the purchase prices of calves and what market they will be shipped in. This information gives a quick glance at both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



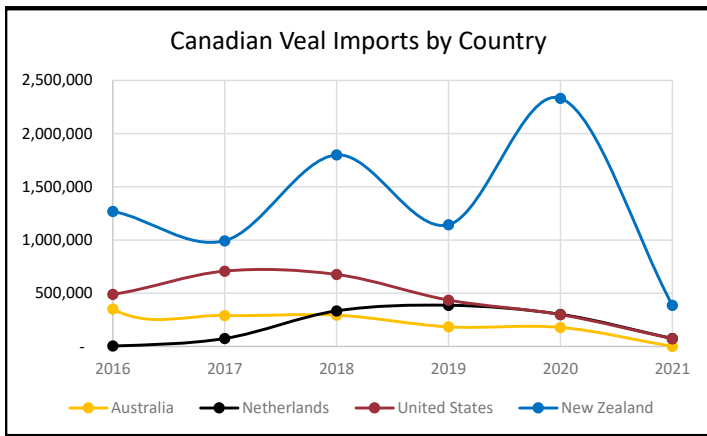
A quarterly snapshot of Canada's veal trade



The 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021 has seen strong veal exports, resulting in a trade surplus. Exports more than doubled to just over 1 million KGs, compared to 450 thousand KGs over the same period in 2020. By contrast, veal imports decreased significantly, with volumes down 50% YTD compared to 2020.



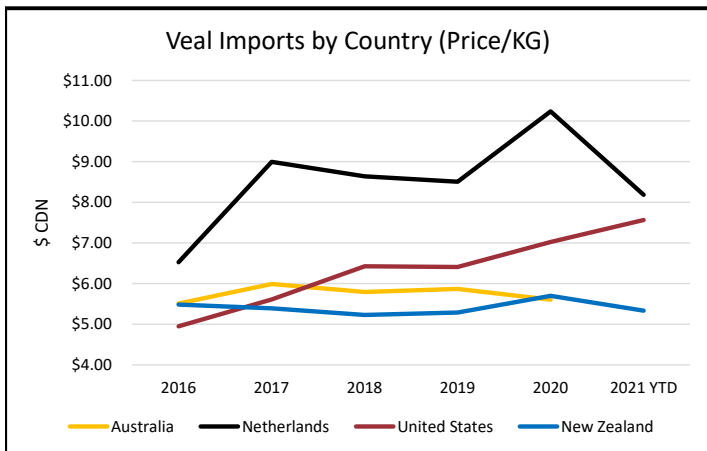
The volume of veal imports from the EU (red) is up 78% YTD with over 125,000 KGs imported in 2021. The percentage of total imports from the EU (black) increased from 16% in 2020 to 22% in 2021. While the Netherlands still represents the largest supplier of European imports, there has been a notable increase in imports from Italy and, to a lesser degree, Germany.



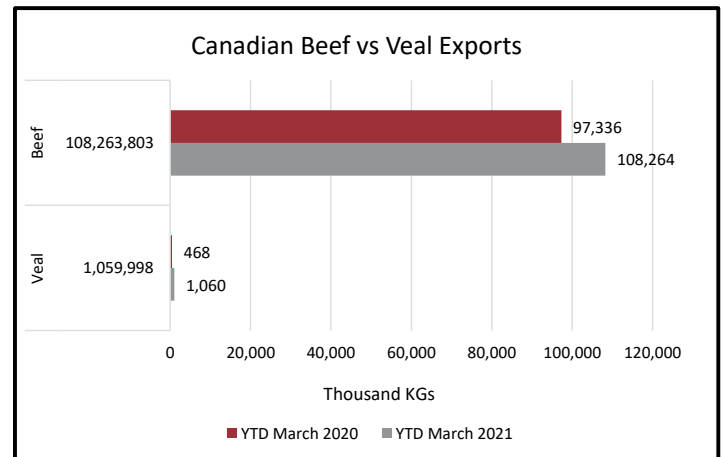
The majority of Canada's veal imports continue to originate from New Zealand. Imports from the Netherlands and USA remained steady from 2020, while no Australian imports have been reported so far this year. More veal is now imported from the Netherlands than the USA.



Veal exports to the USA, the destination for the vast majority of Canadian veal, increased by 50% compared to 2020 YTD. Japan is the second largest export market representing 20% of exports. A small amount of veal continues to be exported to the Middle East.



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 continues to increase notably in 2021. There have been no imports from Australia.



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

# Ontario VEAL *appeal*

## Veal Scaloppini Philly Cheese Steak



### Ingredients:

#### Pimento Cheese Spread

1 cup softened cream cheese  
 ½ cup shredded smoked provolone cheese  
 ½ cup diced roasted red pepper  
 ¼ cup finely diced red onion  
 1 green onion, minced  
 1 tbsp chopped fresh chives  
 Splash lemon juice  
 Salt and pepper to taste

#### Veal Scaloppini

12 slices Ontario veal scaloppini, (about 1 1/2 lbs)  
 3 tbsp olive oil  
 1 tsp granulated garlic  
 1 tsp ground black pepper  
 1 tbsp chopped fresh sage  
 1 tbsp chopped fresh chives  
 4 six-inch demi-baguettes or submarine buns

#### Garnish

2-3 tbsp olive oil  
 2 cups, white or brown mushrooms, quartered  
 2 onions, thinly sliced  
 4 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 of each red, yellow, orange, green peppers, julienned, thinly sliced  
 2 tbsp chopped fresh chives  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
 2 cups shredded or 8 slices smoked or plain provolone cheese

### Method:

#### Pimento Cheese Spread

Combine the cream cheese, provolone cheese, roasted red pepper, diced red and minced green onion, and chives in a bowl. Season to taste with a splash of fresh lemon juice, salt and freshly ground black pepper. Set aside to let the flavours develop.

#### Veal Scaloppini

Using the tip of a sharp knife, diamond-score each slice of veal scaloppini on both sides; this will allow the flavours to penetrate and the high heat from the grill to quickly sear and cook the veal. Mix the olive oil, garlic, black pepper, sage, and chives in another bowl. Mixing well, combine the veal scaloppini slices with the marinade and refrigerate while preparing the rest of the recipe.

#### Garnish

In a heavy-bottomed frypan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the mushrooms for 3 to 4 minutes until they are lightly browned. Add the onion and garlic, continue to sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring until lightly browned and tender. Taste. Add salt and pepper to season as desired. Add the sliced peppers and continue to sauté for 2 to 3 minutes until tender. Add some fresh chives and set aside to keep warm.

Warm-up a second heavy-bottomed frypan; over medium-low heat, slowly melt the shredded cheese, once it has softened, set aside, and keep warm.

Fire up the grill to high.

Grill the Ontario veal scaloppini slices hot 'n fast, about 2 minutes per side maximum, until lightly charred and tender. Stack the veal and slice it into 1-inch-wide strips. Combine the still warm sliced veal with the melted cheese to make an ooey-gooey mix.

Slice the demi-baguette or submarine buns in half and brush cut side with olive oil, lightly toast on the grill. Spread 2 tbsp of the pimento cheese spread onto one side of the baguette, top with sautéed pepper, onion, and mushroom mixture. Add the cheesy veal scaloppini cheese mixture, place the top bun, and serve immediately. ■

Source: Ted Reader BBQ for OntarioVealAppeal.ca



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## Licensed dealers

As a veal (bob calves and finished veal cattle) producer, you should be dealing with licensed 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 sales 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 licensed, ask to see the licence, check the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) website at [bit.ly/omafralicenseddealers](http://bit.ly/omafralicenseddealers) 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 Licensing inquiries, must be directed to Agricorp. Visit [bit.ly/agricorp](http://bit.ly/agricorp) or call 1-888-247-4999 for more information. ■

THE  
**Connection**

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