

# THE Connection

Winter 2021 Volume 3, No. 4

## IN THIS ISSUE

**VFO sponsors virtual  
Gala-in-a-Box celebration**

**Getting the most out of your  
vaccination program**

**Ontario veal marketing  
programs drive demand**

**VEAL**  
Farmers  
of Ontario





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# Contents

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**4** Chair's Message

**5** Join the VFO Board of Directors

**6** Executive Director's Report

**8** Producer Profile: Brent & Kate Cronin

**10** Getting the most out of your vaccination program

**12** Colostrum therapy for diarrhea in preweaned calves

**14** Ontario veal marketing programs focused on driving demand

**16** Veal farmer shares story of family farm in Faces Behind Food

**18** Ontario's meat and poultry sector welcomes \$25 million Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund to enhance processing capacity and food security

**20** Knowing your financial ratios

**22** Implementing WHMIS and SDS on-farm

**24** Industry updates

**26** Employees handling animals?

**29** Five-year holiday planner for producers

**30** The history of veal in Ontario: Part 4

**32** Veal Market Information

**33** Veal Trade Tracker

**34** Featured veal recipe





## Chair's MESSAGE



Pascal Bouilly

# The un-hidden agenda of animal activists

Why protecting our farms matters to you

Many of you may be familiar with Ontario's *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019* (the Act). This important piece of legislation was first introduced in December 2019 as Bill 156 and received Royal assent in June 2020. Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) has been a strong supporter of this legislation since it was first introduced, and we continue to stand behind it now that it is being appealed as a constitutional challenge by the animal activists from which it was designed to protect us against.

As part of the appeal and challenge process, VFO along with other industry stakeholders are working with the Ministry of the Attorney General to provide arguments and information as to why the Act should be upheld and the importance of this Act to Ontario agriculture. In fact, I personally believe in the Act and its importance to our farmers so much so that I am standing up as part of the team defending the legislation. Together with VFO staff, I have prepared and submitted an affidavit that defends the Act and its importance to Ontario veal farmers.

Animal activist groups are suggesting that the Act prevents them from 'whistle-blowing' against animal abuse and that the legislation would prevent them from going undercover or holding on-farm vigils. Animal activists feel that their duty is to protect society from what they perceive to be the evils of animal agriculture. Is this really their agenda with the challenge and appeal of the Act? Or is their un-hidden agenda about achieving their goal of converting society to a plant-based diet and perhaps more importantly, increasing financial donations to prop up their organizations?

Ontario agriculture depends on the safety and security of our farms to raise livestock and grow and produce food that helps to maintain a strong, reliable food supply for all Ontarians. Farms are not only our places of business, but they are also our homes where we welcome family and friends and play with our children. The risk of unwanted visitors, trespassers and activists can have devastating impacts on the health and safety of our farms, families, and livestock.

Our farms have come under increasing threat from trespassers and activists who illegally enter property, barns, and buildings, breaching biosecurity protocols and causing significant disruptions to the entire agri-food sector. We are seeing that once peaceful protests are escalating to trespassing, invasions, barn break-ins, theft, and harassment. In some cases, activists have stolen private property and threatened the health and welfare of farms, families, employees, livestock, and crops, effectively

putting the entire food system at risk. On top of that, our farms are under constant attack and scrutiny from social media activists who feel it is their duty to publish addresses and farm locations and calls for protests and vigils. The impact on our mental health from this constant worry and stress should not be underestimated either.

As VFO has declared in our animal care statement (you can find this online at [vealfarmers.ca](http://vealfarmers.ca)), the health and welfare of our animals is of paramount importance to Ontario's veal farmers and to VFO as its representative organization. VFO strongly condemns any form of animal abuse, and we work closely with the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) team to address any issues that arise. VFO also supports the 2017 update of the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* (the Code), developed through the National Farm Animal Care Council's process. VFO agrees that we need balance in the animal welfare discussion to ensure we are all meeting our commitments and upholding the standards of animal care.

So why does this matter to you? If we don't defend the need for this Act now, we face the risk of losing the hard-fought protections that it provides. For this reason, VFO is stepping up to the plate to support the Act against this animal activist motivated challenge. The Act provides real consequences and makes many of the activists' tactics illegal and come with substantial fines and penalties. The Act also makes it so much harder for the animal activists to do what they do and not get away with it any longer and this is one of the main reasons why they are launching their appeal. Our farms and our families need to keep this legislation to protect our homes, our farms, our families, and our livestock.

The past year has been another interesting and often stressful year for many, and I am thankful for all the collaboration and support our industry provides one another. VFO has worked hard on your behalf, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow board members and especially our dedicated and passionate staff members for all that they do. As we approach the holiday season, I would like to extend my best wishes to all our members and industry partners for the happiest of holidays with your family and friends and all the best for a healthy and prosperous 2022. ■

# Join the VFO Board of Directors!

## Call for nominations now open

The Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) Board of Directors is seeking interested veal and male dairy calf producers to get involved in our organization. Your input into the future direction of the organization is vital to maintaining a strong and active voice for VFO. All voting producer members of VFO, with their membership in good standing, are eligible for nomination.

VFO directors are provided a meeting per diem and reimbursement for travel expenses. Directors actively participate in approximately 10 to 12 board meetings per year. Board meetings are currently virtual, but in the future may be a combination of in-person, virtual, and conference calls with in-person meetings held at our offices in Guelph. Directors work on behalf of Ontario's veal and male dairy calf sector on projects, issues, and initiatives that benefit the membership of the organization.

Interested candidates must complete a self-nomination form found at [vealfarmers.ca](http://vealfarmers.ca) and submit it no later than January 28, 2022, for review by the Nominating Committee. There will be no nominations from the floor accepted. Elections, if required, will take place at the virtual VFO Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, March 9, 2022.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Haley, Executive Director at 519-824-2942 or [jhaley@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:jhaley@vealfarmers.ca) ■



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Jennifer Haley

# It is always 'all about veal'

Perhaps the most misunderstood four-letter word (no, not those four-letter words) is 'veal'. Because of this misunderstanding it seems like our work at Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) is never done when it comes to educating the consumer about what exactly is involved in veal cattle production.

Many myths and misconceptions about what people think veal production is—thanks to a lot of misinformation perpetuated by those looking to eradicate animal agriculture altogether—continue to be perpetuated and remain a barrier to many consumers from buying and cooking with veal. It is really important to build trust with the consumer by ensuring our industry is open and transparent about what we do. As farmers, we know you are proud of the job you do raising food for the consumer, and we need to continue to tell our story.

Very few other livestock sectors face the same level of misinformation, sensationalism, and judgement like the veal cattle sector does and unfortunately, if we don't tell our story and stand up for our truths then no one else will. One of the ways we can tell our story is by opening the barn door and showing the consumer all that we do to raise veal cattle.

One of the most downloaded and searched pages of our websites—whether our consumer website or our producer website—are our consumer-focused resources about veal production. It is encouraging and good news that people are seeking out and looking for information and answers to their question of 'what is veal?'.

Our newly re-vamped and updated resource "All About Veal" answers so many of the questions we get from consumers in a way that is easy to understand and puts our veal cattle production practices into perspective

with the rest of animal agriculture. Consumers seem to have a revelation when we explain to them that veal cattle are actually one of the oldest (second to beef cattle) animals produced for food. If you would like printed copies of our updated resource to share with your customers, friends and neighbours, please call into the VFO office to let us know and we would be happy to send some your way. The more we can all do to share our story, the better.

In another opportunity to educate and bring awareness to our veal cattle sector, VFO recently participated in Farm and Food Care Ontario's (FFCO) Virtual Gala-in-a-Box as the 'appetizer sponsor'. The Gala-in-a-Box is a fundraising effort that supports the work of building public trust on behalf of all of us in the agriculture sector. FFCO has adapted the popular event to a virtual experience over the past two years given the challenges with large gatherings as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

VFO Chair Pascal Bouilly and I joined the virtual Gala and launched our "All About Veal" resource with a challenge to all our colleagues in agriculture to share the resource with a friend or a neighbour to help us educate the consumer on what veal really is. Our message to our colleagues is simple—we must all stand together united and support each other for us all to be successful against the many challenges we face.

This may sound like a simple challenge and perhaps even a no-brainer, but many in the agri-food sector do not understand each other's commodities. We are all specialists in our own areas, and it is important that we do not pass judgement or make assumptions against each other—that we all stand together united because if it is veal production on defense today it could be someone else's sector tomorrow just as easily.

**ALL ABOUT VEAL**

**What you didn't even know you needed to know!**

Veal is a high quality, nutritious and flavourful red meat. It's a lot like beef in many ways - both types of meat come from cattle and the animals are raised in similar ways on family farms in Ontario. The big difference lies in the breed of the cattle.

*Let us explain what we mean by that, along with other things you might not know about veal and veal farming in Ontario.*

**Four things you must know about veal cattle**

- 1** Veal is part of the circular economy; dairy animals that can't produce milk are responsibly raised on family farms for meat instead, ensuring everything that is produced is used.
- 2** Veal cattle are the second oldest animal we eat: they weigh over 700 pounds (340 kilograms) when they go to market.
- 3** Veal is raised no differently than other red meat: in groups, on farms by family farmers who are committed to animal health and welfare.
- 4** Veal farming is sustainable farming: many veal farms have been in the same family for generations, farmers who are committed to the sustainability of farming, the environment and rural economies.



Jennifer Haley

### Veal Escalopes alla Pizzaiola

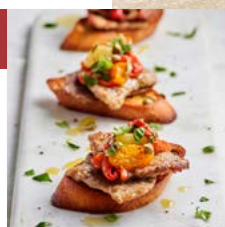
Ontario's veal farmers are proud to support Farm & Food Care Ontario and the important work they do to share the stories of Ontario's farming community and bring engaging events to people across the province. Enjoy an appetizer made with Ontario grain-fed veal as part of the special three-course meal featured in the 2021 Gala-in-a-Box celebrations. We can't wait to see how you #VealAtHome!

#### Ingredients:

1/2 lb (227 g) of veal scaloppini (two pieces)  
Salt and pepper (to taste)  
Flour for dredging (around 1/2 cup (125 mL))  
1/8 cup (25 mL) extra virgin olive oil  
1 cup (250 mL) halved Zima, or similar small tomato (teardrop, grape)

1 cup (250 mL) roasted red pepper, cut into thin strips  
1 tbsp. (15 mL) chopped capers  
1/2 tsp. (7.5 mL) minced garlic  
1/2 tsp. (2.5 mL) oregano  
20 crostini  
Chopped fresh basil (optional)

Ontario  
**VEAL**  
appeal




Pascal and I also encouraged Gala attendees and colleagues to share photos of their veal appetizers on social media to have a chance at winning some great prizes from VFO. Social media was flooded with some great pictures of our featured appetizer recipe: Veal Escalopes alla Pizzaiola.

On Gala night I can tell you that many of our industry colleagues and supporters—even Minister Thompson—were cooking with veal at home and having a fun time doing it! We received so many positive messages from folks saying that they order veal in a restaurant but had never cooked veal at home before and were excited to try it and thrilled with the results of their appetizer. This is great news, and we were thrilled to see the support from our industry for the veal sector and also for the work that FFCO does. Together VFO and FFCO have the same goals—build public trust and consumer confidence to ensure our sectors all remain viable.

We don't have the big budgets to go out with a mass advertising campaign, but VFO is working hard to tell the veal story. Every opportunity we get, bit by bit, we are trying to turn the tide and tell the true story about veal cattle production. It is always 'all about veal'. ■

Jen










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## PRODUCER PROFILE

# Brent & Kate Cronin

### Tell us a bit about your operation.

I farm in Perth County with my wife Kate and our two young children. After high school, I did a tool and die apprenticeship and gradually transitioned into full-time farming. Kate grew up in Douro, and we met through mutual friends while she was at Western. She has a Masters in Physiotherapy and works full-time off the farm, helping on the farm with the kids as needed. My dad, cousin and son help on the farm as well.

I've been finishing veal cattle for almost 20 years. I grew up farming with my dad and great uncle. We had an old barn sitting empty, so I bought one calf that turned into two, which turned into four and became what we have today.

We finish 300 head of veal cattle a year in two barns built in 2018. We have one starter barn with individual pens for calves on milk, and one finishing barn with pens of 30 veal cattle that are in there from the time they are weaned until they leave the farm at approximately 700 lbs.

We also crop 150 acres of corn, wheat, and soybeans, and I work for a cash cropper seasonally as needed.

### How do you source your male dairy calves?

We purchase our male dairy calves from local dairy farms at approximately one week of age. We look for good, alert-looking calves that have received high-quality colostrum.

### Can you describe your feeding program?

After they arrive, the calves are fed milk replacer twice daily, alongside water and calf starter for seven to eight weeks. After weaning, they're fed calf starter mixed with corn and veal supplement, and we gradually remove the calf starter over a few weeks. The veal cattle are finished on whole corn and veal supplement.

### When do you market your finished veal?

We market our veal cattle direct to packer, and aim for square, boxy-looking animals. Our target rail weight is 400 lbs.

### Can you tell us about your experience building new barns and why you chose to?

As a farmer, you are always looking for the opportunity for possible expansion. We decided to build because we wanted to grow our volume of veal cattle, while making it healthier for the animals and less labour intensive. We are constantly working on farm growth, so there is the potential for it to be carried on into future generations.

For producers considering a new build, we would recommend going to look at a bunch of different barns to help decide what would work best for you and your management style. There isn't a cookie-cutter barn style that works for everyone. Also, don't expect everything to be perfect off the bat, there are always little hiccups to work through.



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### What do you enjoy most about farming?

Things are constantly changing and there are always new things to learn. I enjoy being my own boss and watching the crops and veal cattle grow and transition throughout the year.

The best part of farming with my family is sharing your passion with your kids and seeing the enjoyment that it brings to them as well. Even when you're busy, you still get to spend time with them, even if it's in the barn or the tractor. The lessons that can be taught on the farm in terms of getting out of it what you put into it, and your responsibility to living animals, are important.

### What value does VFO provide you as a farmer?

We participate in the on-farm studies that VFO organizes to better understand the needs of our veal cattle on the farm, but to also contribute to a better understanding of veal production in Ontario. There are a lot of opportunities to be engaged in our industry through surveys, on-farm studies, and participating in events. It's a good way to make connections and find resources for different aspects of veal farming.

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

My advice is that it is not all sunshine and roses, but at the end of the day it can be very rewarding. You have to pay attention to the details to be successful. ■

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# Getting the most out of your vaccination program

Dr. Cynthia Miltenburg, Lead Veterinarian Animal Health and Welfare  
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

On behalf of the Ontario Animal Health Network



The bovine Ontario Animal Health Network is a group of veterinarians that meet regularly to discuss bovine animal health. During a recent meeting, one of our veterinarians recounted a recent conversation with a producer who had expressed frustration with the lack of success they were having with an intranasal vaccine in their veal cattle. The vet went to check out the current vaccine package and found it sitting on top of the fridge—in a nice warm spot. Although unintentionally, the producer had probably set things up for that vaccine to fail.

Vaccines, when used properly, will provide protection from disease challenges from viruses and bacteria. When we go to the expense, time, and effort to vaccinate cattle, the last thing we want to do is compromise the success of the program by storing or handling products in a way that will diminish their efficacy.

So, let's work through a few steps to take with vaccines to ensure their efficacy is the best we can expect from the product.

## Date of expiry

Starting with when vaccines are purchased, the first action is to check the expiration date and make sure the farm can use the volume before that date. Veterinary practices and distributors keep on top of the inventory to ensure a sufficient time to expiry, but if a farm is purchasing a large amount at once, the expiry might be up before that number of cattle are vaccinated.

## Transport

We want to ensure refrigeration from the time the vaccines leave the vet clinic to the time they are administered to cattle. Ideally, vaccines should go in a cooler with ice packs for any car rides they may be taking. Car temperatures quickly become warm or cold and all vaccines have a safe temperature zone for storage, usually two to eight degrees Celsius, that

they need to be kept within. We don't want vaccines to get too warm or freeze while they sit in the car, or their effectiveness will be lost.

## Refrigeration

Vaccines should always be kept refrigerated. Individual product labels will have the safe temperatures listed. By organizing according to expiry date, we can ensure earlier expiration dates are used first.

We also want to make sure the fridge used to store vaccines is in good working order. Keep a thermometer in the fridge to make sure the temperature is not fluctuating. A study from England of fridges on livestock farms found that the majority of fridges in the study failed to keep stored livestock vaccines within the recommended storage temperature range of two to eight degrees Celsius consistently. It's a good reminder to check that older fridges are working properly.

Temperatures can vary within the fridge, so it is best to keep vaccines in the middle where temperatures are most stable. Never place them in the door where they are subjected to fluctuations or against the back where they can freeze.

## Freezing risk

Vaccines generally include an adjuvant, an ingredient that helps create a stronger immune response. Freezing can alter the adjuvant making it no longer effective. Even a single exposure to freezing temperatures can destroy vaccine potency. Therefore, avoiding freezing of vaccines either in the fridge or when they are in the barn being used during cold winter temperatures is imperative.

## Heat risk

Vaccines become inactivated when exposed to warm temperatures or sunlight. For this reason, they should be used within an hour after

removing them from the fridge. Only mix/draw up enough for what can be delivered in that amount of time and return to the fridge for another batch later. This is particularly important when using a vaccine that comes in a tray of individual doses. Leave the tray in the fridge and only take enough for the number of cattle to be vaccinated imminently.

Re-cooling a vaccine exposed to a warm temperature will not restore its effectiveness and any vaccines left out of the fridge should be disposed of and replaced.

## Delivery

A new sterile syringe and needle should be used for mixing, drawing up, and administering vaccines to avoid contaminating the vaccine bottle. Two-part vaccines that come with a diluent should only be reconstituted with the diluent provided. After injecting an animal, do not put the same needle back into the vaccine vial. Although disposable syringes are preferred, some producers may choose to use reusable syringes. If doing so, the syringes must be thoroughly cleaned. The best method is to clean syringes right away before any material dries in them with warm soapy water. Separate the syringe and plunger and thoroughly rinse all detergent away, then air dry on a clean surface. Remnants of soap or disinfectant can inactivate vaccine when the syringe is used again.

It's important to check the label and be sure each animal receives the recommended volume. We also want to make sure all staff are familiar with the product and how it should be delivered. For example—whether the product is an injectable or intranasal vaccine.

For many vaccines, the entire contents must be used once opened or mixed to protect product potency. Check the label if this is the case with the vaccine you are using before putting it back in the fridge.

Finally—safely dispose of used vaccine vials and syringes in appropriate medical waste and don't forget to record the animals vaccinated and the withdrawal times.

Disease prevention strategies such as vaccination are far superior to treating ill animals—let's make sure our practices make the most of them. ■

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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# Colostrum therapy for diarrhea in preweaned calves

Havelah Carter, MSc Student  
Dr. Michael Steele, Associate Professor  
Dr. Dave Renaud, Assistant Professor

University of Guelph



The primary cause of death and disease in preweaned calves are digestive diseases, specifically, diarrhea. It is common to use antimicrobials to treat diarrhea, however, this method can pose several health and production disadvantages.

When combining the diminished immune function caused by antimicrobial use, the threat of resistance and the general concern surrounding antimicrobial use in food animals by the general consumer, there is motivation to search for alternative treatment options for diarrhea in young calves. Bovine colostrum is rich in antibodies, hormones, growth factors and nutrients naturally tailored to promote calf health and growth. Its beneficial qualities may be an attractive solution for the treatment of calf diarrhea.

A study focusing on using colostrum as a therapy for diarrhea in preweaned calves was performed at a commercial veal operation in Southwestern Ontario during the summer of 2021. During a six-week period, 107 calves were enrolled in the study.

Enrolment occurred twice per day once a calf had diarrhea. When enrolled, calves were randomly assigned to get one of three treatments:

- 1) Control (CON) group with eight feedings over four days of milk replacer.
- 2) Short term colostrum (STC) group with four feedings over two days where a mix of milk replacer and colostrum replacer was given, followed by four feedings over two days of milk replacer.
- 3) Long-term colostrum (LTC) group with eight feedings over four days of a mix of milk replacer and colostrum replacer.

Several variables were recorded throughout the study, such as serum Immunoglobulin G concentrations through blood samples, fecal scores and samples, respiratory parameters, weights, and milk refusals. These were all used to complete statistical analysis to determine differences between the treatment groups.

Feeding colostrum for eight consecutive feedings over four days (LTC) had several significant, positive results. LTC calves experienced a significant decreased time to diarrhea resolution compared to CON calves.

There were also several contributing factors that affected the days to resolution of diarrhea: severity of diarrhea upon enrolment (fecal score at enrolment) increased the days to resolution, while a higher body weight at enrolment and longer time spent at the veal facility prior to enrolment decreased the duration of the bout of diarrhea.

Morbidity and mortality were both decreased in the LTC treatment group. Additionally, LTC calves had a significantly higher average daily gain (ADG) compared to CON calves. STC calves showed no significant results proposing that this treatment must be fed for more than four feedings.

These results show that feeding a low dose of colostrum over an extended period can effectively minimize the days to resolution of diarrhea and improve ADG in preweaned calves. Further results from this study will be presented at the 41st American Dairy Science Association (ADSA) discover conference in Chicago, Illinois.

Future research on this topic could evaluate the most effective and economic concentration and duration of this treatment to improve practicality and profitability for producers. ■

References available upon request.

## Supplying Ontario Veal Producers



- Veal Feeding Programs - birth to market
- Milk Replacers
- Pelleted & Textured Calf Starters



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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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# Ontario veal marketing programs focused on driving demand

Ontario  
**VEAL**  
appeal



Jennifer Haley  
Executive Director

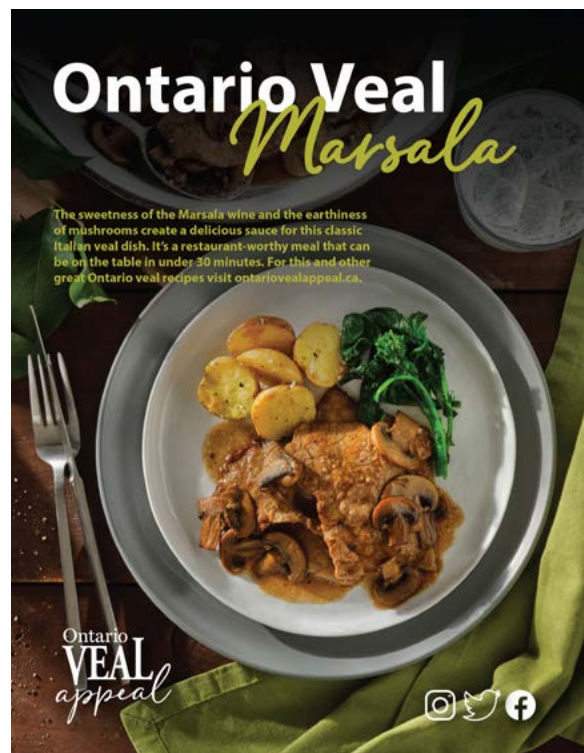
Despite our best efforts and attempts to make it all work, the 2021 edition of the *Search for Ontario's Best Veal Sandwich* (OBVS) contest had to be postponed once again due to pandemic restrictions. But inspiration comes from adversity and Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) together with our Ontario Veal Appeal team developed a unique campaign highlighting nine of our past finalists and winners.

For nine weeks, a different finalist or winner's restaurant was featured with three different videos hosted by the ever-popular John Catucci of Food Network Canada's *You Gotta Eat Here!* television show. The videos were posted to our social media channels where consumers could hear directly from the restaurants how the pandemic has impacted them and, in many cases, how they grew their business in new and different ways.

The featured restaurants were thrilled to be part of the campaign and had some amazing stories of resiliency during shutdowns and how they pivoted their businesses to meet the demands for takeout. Don't forget, our past OBVS finalists and winners are independent family businesses just like our farmers and we need each other to be viable. A goal of the campaign was to also show how our supply chain—from farmer to consumer—worked to feed people and satisfy their cravings for the delicious veal sandwiches. Thanks to VFO Director Dylan Yantzi and his family for also representing veal farmers, and creating these connections.

While it wasn't the usual contest that we had hoped for, the preliminary results of the campaign have shown that consumers are still very much interested in finding all the great locations selling Ontario veal sandwiches. Stay tuned for more details about our 2022 edition of the contest as we prepare to come back with a bang! To check out all the featured OBVS videos, go to [youtube.com/ontariovealappeal](https://youtube.com/ontariovealappeal).

With the holiday season approaching for many different cultures and



faiths, we know that veal will be part of many special occasion meals. Consumers have told us that when they want to serve something special and different as part of their celebrations, they turn to veal.

To help inspire consumers to consider veal when looking ahead to the holidays, the Ontario Veal Appeal campaign has placed print advertisements in popular publications like the LCBO's *Food & Drink*,

December 2, 2021

Facebook Twitter Instagram YouTube Pinterest

Ontario **VEAL** appeal **Vealing Delicious!**

**"If my plate is full, I'm happy!"**  
-Anonymous

Home Veal 101 Recipes Nutrition



**Veal Roast with Sage and Apple Stuffing**

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Foodism, and the *Canadian Food & Drink* magazine to name a few. Stunning and appealing photography and a call to action driving consumers to our website for the full recipe is part of the strategy.

Over 3000 dedicated consumers also receive our 'Vealing Delicious' bi-weekly e-newsletter with recipe ideas and cooking tips. Prior to COVID-19, there had been some consideration to perhaps reduce or even eliminate this e-newsletter in favour of other tactics. However, it soon became very clear that we need to keep this direct line to our consumer. Now more than ever, people are cooking at home and looking for new meal ideas. With veal having been traditionally consumed at a restaurant, we need to constantly make sure that veal is part of the menu rotation.

Combine this with our social media presence and we continue to highlight and showcase the

'appeal of Ontario veal' to consumers. Also, on Instagram, we are highlighting which grocery stores are featuring specific cuts of veal on sale and suggesting veal recipes to go with those cuts.

While we may have a limited budget for our marketing and promotions, we do work very hard to achieve the biggest bang for our buck. The marketing strategy strives for a balance of encouraging consumers to order veal at the restaurant and cook with veal at home, while also highlighting its special occasion qualities, collaborating with partners where possible, and providing veal meal suggestions and cooking information—all to help satisfy the consumer's desire for a delicious meal. Together, our marketing programs compliment each other to drive veal consumption and maintain demand for Ontario veal. ■

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Always read and follow the label instructions to ensure this product is suitable for the animal to be vaccinated.

1. Savard C, and Broes A. Bovine respiratory profiles summary in 2019. *Bovet Animal Health News* (2020) Available at [https://bovet-inc.com/wp-content/uploads/doc/info/Bovine\\_respiratory\\_profiles\\_summary\\_2019\\_rev.pdf](https://bovet-inc.com/wp-content/uploads/doc/info/Bovine_respiratory_profiles_summary_2019_rev.pdf). (Accessed November 2020).

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# Veal farmer shares story of family farm in *Faces Behind Food*

Kelly Daynard, Executive Director

Farm & Food Care Ontario



Farm & Food Care is looking for veal farmers interested in being interviewed for *Faces Behind Food*.

*Faces Behind Food* tells the stories behind the food we eat. Modeled after the internationally acclaimed *Humans of New York* initiative, it endeavours to capture many of those stories and show Ontario consumers the passion that goes into the local foods that they're buying.

Dylan, an Ontario veal farmer, was recently profiled in the project with a story that focused on his four generation family farm that dates back to the 1830's. He talked about his journey to become a veal farmer and what he likes about working with veal cattle.

The project is based on Instagram and Facebook (@FacesBehindFood).

Diversity is of singular importance for this project; it is inclusive of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures.

Over the last few months, profiles have featured butchers, flower, herb, greenhouse vegetable and microgreen growers, turkey, dairy, duck, egg and goat farmers, seasonal agricultural workers, mushroom growers, egg and meat processors, grocery store employees, chefs and more.

Profiles are created with relevancy in mind. By highlighting odd facts, funny stories, individual quirks, and the passion of each person or group, viewers will be better able to identify and connect with those featured in each piece. One recent piece, as an example, featured a former elephant handler turned livestock nutritionist who now works for an Ontario feed mill. Participants review and approve all stories and photographs before they're used. ■

Anyone interested in being profiled should email [info@farmfoodcare.org](mailto:info@farmfoodcare.org)



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# Ontario's meat and poultry sector welcomes \$25 million Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund to enhance processing capacity and food security

Ontario's processing, livestock and farm organizations welcome the announcement made by provincial government that they will invest \$25 million to help strengthen food processing capacity in Ontario.

The Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund comes in response to key issues brought to the Government through the Livestock Processing Capacity Working Group, which included several key industry organizations working collaboratively to provide insight on the challenges the sector is currently facing and possible solutions. This funding will help address the key challenges and opportunities for both processors and livestock farmers.

"The pandemic has highlighted some of the vulnerabilities in our sector, including the need to increase processing capacity," says Carol Goriup, President of Meat & Poultry Ontario. "We thank the province for their continued partnership and this crucial funding that will help our sector invest in solutions that will benefit both processors and consumers."

"Thank you to the Government of Ontario for recognizing the importance of food and beverage processing businesses to jobs, the economy and the well-being of Ontarians. To advance as an industry, employers need to grow their workforce and evolve their manufacturing practices, and the Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund will do exactly that," says CEO of Food and Beverage Ontario, Chris Conway.

"The pandemic has exposed the limited and precarious capacity of food processing in Ontario," says President of Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Peggy Brekveld. "Regulatory burdens, financial strain and labour shortages have posed a significant risk processing in Ontario, making this a welcome investment to bring stability to the sector. Securing food processing in Ontario ensures we are able to reduce our reliance on imports, while creating economic opportunities and employment in Ontario."

"Veal Farmers of Ontario appreciates the support and investment of the Government of Ontario through the Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund. This new funding program is a good indication that the livestock industry's need for additional processing capacity is being heard and these important investments will allow processors to grow, improve and innovate which will ultimately benefit all of us in the supply chain." Pascal Bouilly, Chair of Veal Farmers of Ontario.

"Ontario Sheep Farmers is very encouraged by the productive discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs leading to today's announcement of provincial funding support for Ontario's livestock processing sector," says John Hemsted, Chair, Ontario Sheep Farmers. "We have been actively engaged in discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs about the critical need for increased processing capacity in Ontario. Our industry wants to grow, and this new

support will help make that happen."

*"Veal Farmers of Ontario appreciates the support and investment of the Government of Ontario through the Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund. This new funding program is a good indication that the livestock industry's need for additional processing capacity is being heard and these important investments will allow processors to grow, improve and innovate which will ultimately benefit all of us in the supply chain."*

*Pascal Bouilly, Chair of Veal Farmers of Ontario.*

"Ontario Pork applauds the government of Ontario for its recognition of the need for increased livestock processing capacity in the province and the challenges faced by our family farms. We appreciate today's announcement as a first step in facilitating the growth of processing capacity here in Ontario, which will help strengthen the

provincial pork industry." John de Bruyn, Board Chair, Ontario Pork.

"Ontario's beef farmers are grateful for the investment announced by the Government of Ontario as part of the fall economic statement that will help promote productivity and growth in the meat processing sector," shares Rob Lipsett, BFO President. "The lack of sufficient processing capacity in Ontario has been a limiting factor to a healthy competitive market for the province's beef sector. For some time, we have been concerned about labour shortages and seasonal processing backups, which has led to lost market opportunities and depressed market prices for farmers. We are appreciative of Ontario's commitment to help address these concerns

through financial assistance programs like this, and through other measures to help position our sector to better meet the demands for Ontario beef at home and abroad.”

“Ontario’s chicken farmers are pleased to see support for the agriculture and agri-food sector as part of the Ontario Government’s Fall Economic Statement,” said Ed Benjamins, Chair of Chicken Farmers of Ontario. “Investments in the supply chain helps farmers continue to deliver a steady and reliable supply of safe, healthy, locally-grown food.”

“The processing shortage has been a major concern for farmers for many years, and the pandemic has only highlighted the problem,” says Ed Scharringa, President of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. “There is enormous potential for growth in this industry, and government investment is crucial. Through hard work and collaboration, agricultural organizations have been heard, and we thank the Government of Ontario for supporting our industry.”

Ontario’s 500+ Provincial Meat Plants have been instrumental in insuring continued supply of meat and poultry to consumers. This funding will have a direct impact on increasing capacity at processing facilities and ensuring a stable supply of food for Ontarians. ■



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# Knowing your financial ratios

Erich Weber, CPA, Business Finance Specialist

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Over the last three editions of *The Connection*, we looked at the different financial statements that your farm would be using (balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements). Once your financial statements are completed, you can look at how your farm business is performing using financial ratios. Financial ratios are calculations that can help you determine:

- Profitability
- Efficiency
- Liquidity/ability to pay debt

There are certain financial ratios that you as a farmer can use to help manage your business. There are other financial ratios that your lender would use to determine whether you have the right amount of debt, cash flow and other financial items for your business. In this article we will focus on financial ratios that you as a farmer would be using to assess your farm.

## Return on assets

$$\text{Return on assets} = \frac{\text{Net income (in dollars)}}{\text{Total assets (in dollars)}}$$

Return on assets (ROA) ratio calculation tells you how well your farm business is utilizing its assets and ultimately how it is generating profits. A higher ROA means that your business is doing a better job at utilizing its assets compared to a farm business that has a lower ROA. Normally you will do this calculation on your whole business, but you can also do this type of analysis on individual assets or group of assets if you can separate your income and expenses based on commodity (e.g., veal, corn, wheat, etc.).

## Inventory turnover

$$\text{Inventory turnover} = \frac{\text{Total purchases (in dollars or count)}}{\text{Average inventory held (in dollars or count)}}$$

The inventory turnover calculation is a great tool for farmers that deal with purchased inventory (e.g., veal, backgrounders/yearling cattle, chickens, turkeys, etc.), as it can help determine if your farm is meeting its targets of selling its inventory and buying new inventory in a timely fashion. This calculation can help identify if there were any problems faced in the year when buying or selling your veal cattle, for example:

- Market price too low for finished veal cattle, decided to keep them for

an extra week or two to sell in a higher market (while staying under the maximum weight limit)

- Supply of male dairy calves was low, which drove the price too high, held off buying calves until price normalized
- Needed more time between groups to make crucial barn repairs

## Profit margin

$$\text{Profit margin \%} = \frac{\text{Net income}}{\text{Total sales}} \times 100$$

This ratio looks at your profitability and how well your farm business is at turning sales into profit. Let's look at an example. You are comparing this year's financial performance with last year. In both years your total sales remained the same at \$70,000/year, while your net income last year was at \$4,000 and your net income is \$10,000 for this year. Based on this information your profit margin would be 5.7 per cent last year whereas your profit margin this year would be 14.3 per cent. This year your farm business did a better job converting sales into profit compared to last year. If you have a low profit margin, you should:

- Try and reduce your expenses (e.g., shop around to see if there are better prices for supplies, complete feed analysis to make sure you are using the right feed ration, etc.)
- Are you selling veal cattle on the market highs?
- Can you add value to your veal cattle to obtain higher market prices?

## Gross profit margin

$$\text{Gross profit margin \%} = \frac{\text{Gross profit (total sales - cost of goods sold)}}{\text{Total sales}} \times 100$$

The gross profit margin is similar to the profit margin but looks at how much gross profit is generated through sales. The gross profit is calculated by subtracting your cost of goods sold from your sales. Cost of goods sold are the direct expenses associated with producing and selling your crops or livestock. Some examples of these expenses are:

- Male dairy calves
- Prepared feed
- Seed
- Fertilizer

Similar to the profit margin, a high gross profit margin indicates that you are doing a good job converting your sales into gross profit. A higher gross profit means you have more sales to cover your indirect expenses (e.g., hydro, insurance, mortgage interest, etc.), debt payments, and profit. If you have a low profit margin, study:

- Your male dairy calf purchases to see if there are ways to reduce your costs (e.g., timing of purchases)
- Costs associated with your feed (e.g., is home grown feed cheaper than prepared feed and can yield the same results?)

In this article, we looked at the financial ratios that you as a farmer would be using on a regular basis to ensure your farm operation is being successful. It is always a good idea when reviewing these ratios to work with your accountant or financial advisor to see how you compare to your historical performance and to the rest of the industry.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) creates Toward Increased Profit (TIP) reports for farmers who are enrolled in the AgriStability program. The TIP reports compare the financial performance of the individual farmer to their previous five-year average and to an industry benchmark based on their farm type and income range. For more information on the TIP report program, you can visit: [bit.ly/OMAFRAtip](http://bit.ly/OMAFRAtip).

In the next edition of *The Connection*, we will examine the different financial ratios that your lender maybe using to assess your farm business. ■

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# Implementing WHMIS and SDS on-farm

Cheryl DeCooman, CHRL, President

People Management Group/UdderlySAFE



The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is Canada's national hazard communication standard. The key elements of the system are hazard classification, cautionary labelling of containers, the provision of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and worker education and training programs.

Canada's WHMIS system integrated with the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) in 2015. The GHS was developed by the United Nations to help standardize the classification of chemical products and create labels, SDS, symbols and signal words that are internationally recognized.

## Why do we have WHMIS?

Using chemicals is a part of the job that is unavoidable and necessary to get the work done. WHMIS provides information to you on how to work with hazardous substances safely, the proper PPE that is required and how to store chemicals.

### Potential hazards

Hazards vary significantly depending on the hazardous product being handled and the work conditions. Some hazards that may be present when working with hazardous products include:

- Fire and explosion
- Exposure to gas, fumes, or vapours
- Chemical burns
- Chronic and acute illness

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The type of PPE required will vary significantly depending on the hazardous product being handled and the work conditions. Review the SDS for each hazardous product you may come in contact with to identify the required PPE. PPE is a way to protect yourself from chemicals if you are required to work with them. Some examples of PPE that may be required when working with hazardous products include:

- Gloves (may be chemical-resistant or other task-specific gloves)
- Eye and face protection
- Respirators
- Protective clothing and chemical-resistant aprons

## Labels

Labels are a critical part of WHMIS. There are two types of labels: supplier and workplace.

### Supplier labels

Supplier labels that contain all WHMIS 2015 required information must be affixed to the original containers of hazardous products. Suppliers of chemicals have a responsibility to ensure each container of hazardous product has a supplier label affixed to the container. No one is permitted to remove, deface, or alter the supplier label as long as any amount of hazardous product remains in the container. If the supplier label is missing or illegible, it needs to be replaced with a new supplier label or workplace label.

### Workplace labels

Workplace labels must be affixed to hazardous products that have been transferred from the original container into another container. Often times this is required when you are transferring chemicals into a smaller container for ease of use or for transport to another area in your operation.

- Labels are not required on containers if:
  - The container is for immediate use,
  - It is under the control of and for the exclusive use of the employee who transferred it,
  - It is for use only on that shift, and
  - The contents are clearly identifiable.

Do not accept or handle any hazardous material that does not have the appropriate labels. Labels that are worn or damaged must be replaced with an equivalent label with all required information.

Remember, just because you know what is in a container, does not mean that other people do. Labelling ensures that others know what is in containers and how to handle the chemicals properly.

## Safety Data Sheets

With the updates to WHMIS in 2015 to align with GHS, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) have been replaced with a standardized SDS. SDS are summary documents that provide information about the hazards of a product and advice about safety precautions. SDS are written by the manufacturer or supplier and must contain 16 specific, standardized sections.

SDS must be obtained for all hazardous products before they are handled or used in the workplace. An up-to-date SDS must be kept on hand for every hazardous product that is handled, used, and stored at the worksite. SDS must be readily available to employees in any location they may handle or store hazardous products. SDS must be reviewed by the supervisor and all required employees to ensure they have a full understanding of all safety requirements including PPE, first aid measures, storage and handling requirements and any other information found on the SDS.

Ensure you follow the instructions found on the SDS for safe disposal of empty containers and spill clean-up.

## Training

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, an employer has the responsibility to ensure that anyone that may be working around a hazardous product receives adequate training to ensure they understand the hazards and safety requirements for working around the specific hazardous material in your workplace.

The WHMIS regulation requires employees to receive certain information as part of their training including procedures for the safe use, storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous products.

At least once a year, the employer must review the training and instruction provided to workers. This ensures that all employees understand the risks and hazards of working with hazardous products and are given information on how to properly and safely work with chemicals. ■



The image shows a large, modern agricultural building with a white roof and stone accents, identified as the Mapleview Agri Ltd. Research Facility. A sign in the foreground lists the building's functions: Office, Shipping & Receiving, and Research Facility. The company logo, featuring a red maple leaf, is visible above the building and on the sign.

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The full list of 2021 winners is published in the October issue of Report on Business magazine and online.

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# INDUSTRY

## updates



### VFO appointed to Agency marketing committee

Jennifer Haley, Executive Director of Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO), was appointed to the Marketing Committee of the Beef Cattle Marketing Agency (the Agency) following their Annual General Meeting in August. Haley joins a progressive committee of elected producers, representatives of the Canadian Meat Council, and foodservice/retail professionals.

The Marketing Committee is responsible for planning and establishing Canada Beef's strategic, business, and operational goals and objectives and for the overall management and operation of the business and affairs. "VFO appreciates the opportunity to join the committee and looks forward to contributing our expertise in veal marketing and adding value to the skill set of the committee as a whole," says Haley.

VFO and the Agency entered into agreements to strengthen Canadian veal marketing as a part of the larger Canadian beef and veal marketing initiative in early 2020.

IT'S ONTARIO  
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### VFO celebrates pride in farming during Ontario Agriculture Week

Ontario's veal is raised on family farms that support our rural communities and the Ontario economy. Held October 4 to 10, 2021, Ontario Agriculture Week celebrated the abundance of food Ontario farmers produce, and their contributions to our province. VFO used this

opportunity to thank our supply chain partners, share resources to support our industry partners, and celebrate our pride in veal farming using the hashtags #OntAgWeek and #loveONTfood on social media.

### Updated market report graphs now available

The 'Finished price compared to bob calf prices (Seven months previous)' has now been updated to compare the finished price to bob calf prices eight months prior to better reflect the age of veal cattle marketed closer to the upper weight limit. Find the new graph under Veal Market Information on page 32.

### VFO joins FPT reception with national agriculture ministers

Pascal Bouilly, VFO Chair, was invited to join agriculture ministers, staff and industry leaders from across Canada at a reception in Guelph in early November as part of federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) meetings hosted by Ontario Agriculture Minister Lisa Thompson. VFO appreciated the opportunity to share more about the grain-fed veal industry at the event showcasing Ontario's agri-food sector.



### Dairy production students learn more about veal

Kendra Keels, VFO's Industry Development Director, spoke to students in the dairy production program at the University of Guelph's Ridgeway Campus in November. She helped dispel myths about veal production, shared the work VFO does to support calf care, and created partnerships with the next generation of calf-raisers.



### New grain-fed veal fact sheets available



Deciding to raise calves for the grain-fed veal market requires thorough and thoughtful planning. VFO has developed a series of factsheets that will help answer common questions about starting and operating a grain-fed veal farm. New factsheets on balance, evaluating Cost of Production, and bunk management have now been released. Find them online at [bit.ly/GFVFACTSHEETS](https://bit.ly/GFVFACTSHEETS) and watch for more bi-monthly releases in 2022.

## Deadstock resources available for producers

Some areas of the province are currently experiencing service issues with deadstock collection. Veal cattle producers considering alternative methods of dealing with deadstock on-farm need to ensure all laws regarding deadstock disposal are followed and record-keeping requirements upheld.

More information and fact sheets about deadstock removal can be found on the OMAFRA website at [bit.ly/DeadstockDisposal](http://bit.ly/DeadstockDisposal).

The Agricultural Information Contact Centre can help answer any questions you may have, please contact them at 1-877-424-1300.

## Dairy Code update

The Code Committee is pleased to announce that it has reached consensus of the draft Code, which will advance to the comment period scheduled to start on November 29, 2021.

The Scientific Committee's report on priority welfare issues will be published alongside the draft Code when the comment period begins. The report will no doubt serve as an important reference document during the comment period as it did for committee members throughout their deliberations.

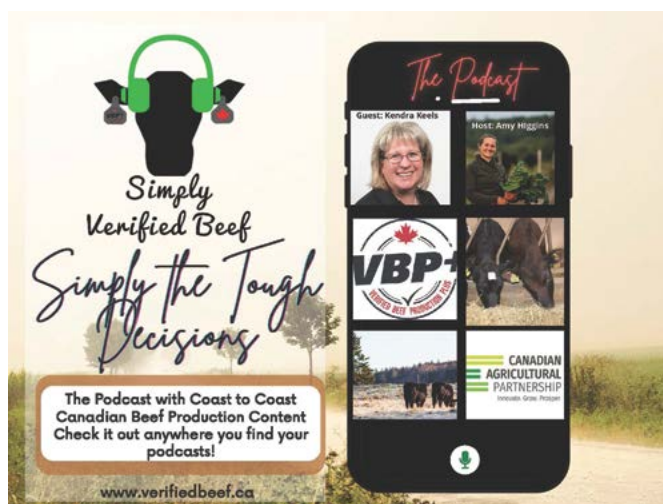
Learn more at [bit.ly/dairyupdate](http://bit.ly/dairyupdate).

## VFO joins Podcast for episode on tough decisions

As part of our continued outreach with the Maritime Beef Council, we're excited to share a new Podcast episode with Kendra Keels, Industry Development Director at VFO. She joins "Simply Verified Beef" Podcast co-host Amy Higgins, VBP+ Coordinator, to discuss the classifications of fit/compromised/unfit and how that relates to male dairy calf transport, making tough decisions on euthanasia, and the Codes of Practice.

The "Simply Verified Beef" Podcast features expert guests from coast to coast speaking on various parts of the Canadian beef supply chain from farmers and rancher to consumers.

Listen to the Podcast at [bit.ly/simplyVB](http://bit.ly/simplyVB).



## Transportation Code update

The two remaining sub-committees of the Transportation Code Development Committee (CDC) continue to develop draft common content (i.e., content that is common for most, if not all animals covered by the transportation Code). The Equipment and Ventilation sub-committee has held seven virtual meetings and has drafted text on topics that cover protecting from external environmental conditions, air quality, ventilation, and thermal environment. Next on the sub-committee's agenda will be developing common content that covers basic principles on loading densities. After review by the CDC, the species-specific working groups will provide expertise and guidance on what to consider when determining loading densities by animal type. At the same time, the Personnel and Planning sub-committee continues to meet, and has made great progress in key areas such as on-road practices, pre-transport, and contingency planning.

The goal is to complete all sub-committee work by mid-December so that the Code management team can compile all common content for the CDC to review starting in early 2022.

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

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# Employees handling animals?

## Animal care 'Code of Conduct' protects animals and businesses

Bruce Kelly, Program Consultant

Farm & Food Care Ontario

Livestock farmers and ranchers are committed to good animal care practices, but how many farmers have put their animal care commitment in writing?

Most farmers do the right thing—they follow accepted animal care standards for their specific commodity and they treat their animals with dignity. Farmers use industry Codes of Practice when developing housing systems and animal husbandry tasks that work best on their own farm.

But in addition to 'doing the right thing,' it's important farmers take the next step and tell people about it. Make it clear for your employees and customers that you have expectations around how your animals will be treated.

A Code of Conduct provides everyone on a farm or company with a clear understanding of company policies and values. It also acts as a reminder from owner, to management, to staff, about what is important to the daily operation of the company.

An animal care Code of Conduct should align with the Code of Practice developed with the farming industry, veterinarians and animal scientists through the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) and represent your company's values and expectations of itself and its employees. It is important that farm management and staff are familiar with the NFACC Code for all the species raised on a farm and that training on aspects of the Code be conducted regularly.

The NFACC Code covers all aspects of housing, feeding, breeding, transportation and approved euthanasia methods for each farm animal species. In Canada the national commodity organizations have taken the lead on developing farmer training resources that can be used to support and help explain the importance of the Code.

In farming and food-related businesses, an animal care Code of Conduct exists to protect the safety and welfare of workers and animals. It is a company's and employees' commitment to doing the right thing. It outlines what needs to happen and how things should be reported and corrected if things go wrong.

Here are some key considerations relating to an animal care Code of Conduct:

- Acknowledge that animal welfare is important every day on your farm and/or your operation.
- Referencing the NFACC Code for each species raised.
- Provide transparent understanding of what is and is not acceptable conduct at your premises. This should include not only direct animal care but also the importance of reporting witnessing any breaches of the Code immediately.
- Serves as a reminder to employees and managers of the importance of taking care of animals every day at your facility.
- Include how employees should report situations where the NFACC Code was not followed and management's response.
- Be used as a direct discussion point during the hiring and training process before any new hires work with animals. Those that will not sign the Code of Conduct should not be hired.
- Be introduced to existing employees (or re introduced) as a renewed commitment to the importance of doing the right thing every day and correcting problems that inevitably occur.

Having and enforcing an animal care Code of Conduct demonstrates a commitment to good animal care. Even if something goes wrong, and evidence is produced to show the Code may have been temporarily breached, your Code of Conduct could be your assurance for customers and the general public that it is unacceptable.

Enforcing a Code of Conduct is key. It should be reviewed with employees regularly, and it should be a mandatory document that is signed by all employees.

To view a sample Code of Conduct, visit [bit.ly/farmconduct](http://bit.ly/farmconduct).

For links to the animal care Codes from NFACC, visit [bit.ly/NFACCcodes](http://bit.ly/NFACCcodes). ■

# *Veal Pepper Steak with Mushrooms & Cognac Demi*

Choose Ontario veal tenderloin to elevate your intimate date nights and elegant dinner parties. It is a tender, premium cut that you often need to order in advance from your butcher.

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Find this and other delicious recipes at [ontariovealappeal.ca](http://ontariovealappeal.ca)!





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# Five-year holiday planner for producers

This chart lists religious holiday dates to assist with shipping planning. For veal farmers who plan their shipping, taking holiday timing into consideration is important, as it does affect pricing. For example, Easter is a time of the year when the processing plants are very busy with the harvest of lambs and kids, leaving little room in the cooler for veal.

This chart will help producers to plan accordingly, and time their purchase of male dairy calves or pre-conditioned calves by determining if they will

be ready for market around a holiday. This information applies regardless of your preferred shipping method, direct to packer or to the sales barn. Prices reflect cooler space availability.

**Note: Dates may vary based on religious calendar observed. Also note that some holidays are observed over several days. Consult with your buyer to ensure accuracy. ■**

Holidays		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Christian	Epiphany	Thursday, Jan. 6	Friday, Jan. 6	Saturday, Jan. 6	Monday, Jan. 6	Tuesday, Jan. 6
	Western Roman Easter	Sunday, April 17	Sunday, April 9	Sunday, March 31	Sunday, April 20	Sunday, April 5
	Eastern Orthodox Easter	Sunday, April 24	Sunday, April 16	Sunday, May 5	Sunday, April 20	Sunday, April 12
	Christmas	Sunday, Dec. 25	Monday, Dec. 25	Wednesday, Dec. 25	Thursday, Dec. 25	Friday, Dec. 25
Jewish	Passover/Pesach	Saturday, April 16	Thursday, April 6	Tuesday, April 23	Sunday, April 13	Thursday, April 2
	Rosh Hashanah	Monday, Sept. 26	Saturday, Sept. 16	Thursday, Oct. 3	Tuesday, Sept. 23	Saturday, Sept. 12
	Hanukkah	Monday, Dec. 19	Friday, Dec. 8	Thursday, Dec. 26	Monday, Dec. 15	Saturday, Dec. 5
Islamic	Ramadan	Sunday, April 3	Thursday, March 23	Monday, March 11	Saturday, March 1	Wednesday, Feb. 18
	Eid ul-Fitr	Tuesday, May 3	Saturday, April 22	Wednesday, April 10	Monday, March 31	Friday, March 20
	Eid ul-Adha	Sunday, July 10	Thursday, June 2	Monday, June 17	Saturday, June 7	Wednesday, May 27
	Muharram	Saturday, July 30	Wednesday, July 19	Monday, July 8	Friday, June 27	Wednesday, June 17
	Mawlid al-Nabi	Saturday, Oct. 8	Wednesday, Sept. 27	Monday, Sept. 16	Friday, Sept. 5	Wednesday, Aug. 26
Hindu	Navadurgara or Navatra Dashara or Dassai	Monday, Sept. 26	Monday, Oct. 5	Thursday, Oct. 3	Monday, Sept. 22	Monday, Sept. 22
	Diwali	Monday, Oct. 24	Sunday, Nov. 12	Thursday, Oct. 31	Monday, Oct. 20	Monday, Oct. 20
Other holidays to consider	Cinco de Mayo	Thursday, May 5	Friday, May 5	Sunday, May 5	Monday, May 5	Tuesday, May 5
	Canada Day	Friday, July 1	Saturday, July 1	Monday, July 1	Tuesday, July 1	Wednesday, July 1
	Independence Day (USA)	Monday, July 4	Tuesday, July 4	Thursday, July 4	Friday, July 4	Saturday, July 4
	Independence Day(Jamaica)	Saturday, Aug. 6	Sunday, Aug. 6	Tuesday, Aug. 6	Wednesday, Aug. 6	Thursday, Aug. 6

# The history of veal in Ontario



Kendra Keels

Industry Development Director

## How did veal get its name?

The word veal dates back to 1066, when William of Normandy conquered England and the nobles of the time spoke French and were served by the English. One can only imagine the challenges of not understanding each other's language, so when veal was served by the English it was pronounced veal. The French word for veal was vel. Vel is derived from the Latin vitulus, meaning bull calf or vitellus, meaning little calf.

Through time, one thing the veal sector has had, has been many changes. The biggest in Ontario has been with weight and diet.

As our industry began with young male dairy calves, we have since morphed into a grain-fed veal sector that more closely resembles what was once referred to as 'baby beef'.

One characteristic of veal that has and always will remain consistent is the colour. Veal continues to be sold based on colour. However, over time that colour has changed from the once highly desired white of milk-fed veal to the pink we see today.

During my time in the veal industry, veal has always been defined after harvest. In the 1980s through to late 1990s, veal was defined as the meat of a bovine animal having a carcass weight of:

- (a) Less than 165 kg (363.4 lbs.) with hide on or
- (b) Less than 150 kg (330.4 lbs.) with hide off

By September 1997 in Ontario, approximately 70 per cent of producers were targeting their veal for a dressed weight of 400 to 450 lbs. (181.4 to 204.1 kg) hide-on. The upper limits of weights were not being enforced in the plants and there was mounting pressure by packers to bring the weights under control by implementing production targets.

In 1998, through the work of the National Veal Grading Committee, an agreement was reached for the weight ranges of a veal carcass. There was a 'sunset clause' on the definitions, and the definitions would have reverted to the smaller weights (363.4 lbs. or 165 kg). Ontario worked HARD to make sure that we kept the heavier weights. It was a very uncertain time with the demands of the milk-fed sector for a lighter carcass and the grain-fed sector wanting a heavier animal.

- <450 lbs. (205 kg) hide-on can be marketed as veal
- <364 lbs. (165 kg or less) can be graded and stamped as veal
- <401 lbs. (368 kg) paper graded or else marketed as ungraded veal

This definition for veal would remain until January 1, 2001, when it was updated, and a new definition implemented, under the Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulations. It remained in place until 2020, with one amendment in 2004.

- Less than 205 kg (451.9 lbs.) with the hide on, or
- Less than 180 kg (396.8 lbs.) with the hide off

Progressing through the early 2000s, food safety was an ever-growing concern and studies were being conducted in the veal sector evaluating the removal of hides after harvesting,

reducing the transmission of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria.

Traditionally, veal was left in the cooler with the hide on until it was broken down to the primal cuts. In the name of food safety, it was decided that by June 4, 2004, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) would prohibit the hide-on dressing of calves. This then led to the long-standing definition of veal under the Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulations to be amended to the hide-off weight only.

As time went on the veal weights were creeping back up and by 2008 about 75 per cent of veal was harvested in provincial plants where the upper weight limit of veal was not being enforced, leading to inconsistencies with weights and conformation. It was a challenging time for producers and processors for marketing veal. In addition to these challenges, there was also discord between veal weights at the federal and provincial levels.

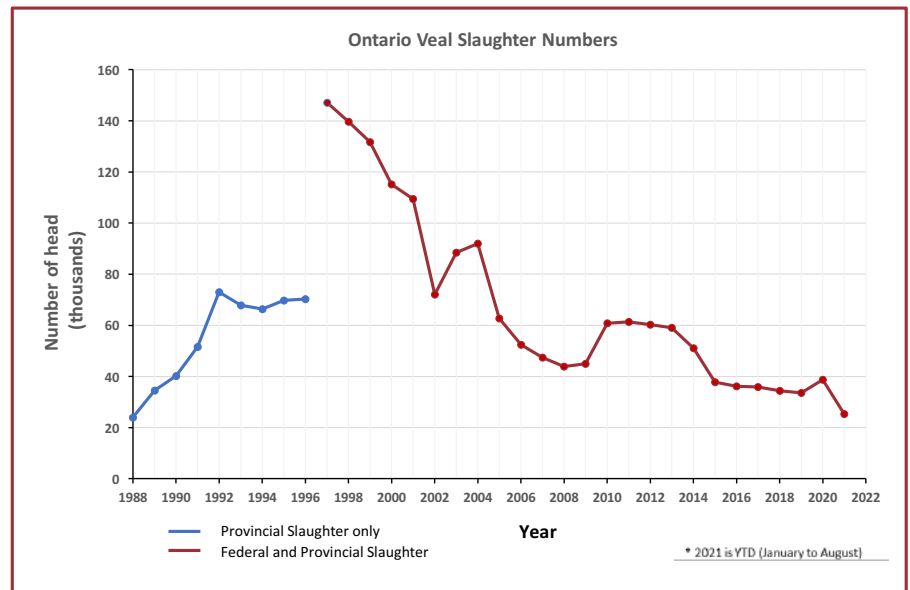
By 2009, federal and provincial inspection agreed that both levels of government would follow the Livestock and Poultry Grading Regulations under the *Canada Agricultural Products Act*. The new provincial Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grades and Sales Regulation was aligned. The regulation only allows the grading of veal carcasses between 80 and 180 kg (176.4 to 396.8 lbs.). It should be noted that

in Ontario, no grading was taking place during this time.

As previously experienced in the veal industry, by 2019 producers were finding it more challenging to achieve the desired finishes on the veal cattle at the less than 180 kg (396.8 lbs.) upper weight limit. It was estimated that approximately 15 per cent of the veal were exceeding the maximum weight limit of 180 kg (396.8 lbs.). This led to the Canadian Veal Association (CVA) applying for an amendment under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*. The CVA was the first to apply and be granted an amendment regarding a weight limit increase under the new Act. In 2020, the maximum veal dress weight was increased from 180 kg (396.8 lbs.) to 190 kg (418.9 lbs.). Grading in Ontario still does not occur and in Quebec it is used to settle price.

## Conclusion

Remembering back to the beginning of this article series, there was a quote from 1910 that mentioned, “the future of the veal industry offered great opportunities for development.” In those early years it was highlighted that veal was not part of the regular diet and more of an occasional change of diet. Today, if we think



of why people eat out, it is to have something different, something they would not eat at home. Much work has been done over the years to incorporate veal into everyday meals, it is readily available and affordable; very different from days gone by.

Over the years the veal industry developed into a viable profitable sector. There was an evolution to achieve that success, from a calf of a couple of weeks, to milk-fed veal, and later grain-fed veal. No longer is veal called veal calves, but rather veal cattle, reflecting the size

and age difference of what veal is today. The live weight has also changed substantially from a 68 kg (150 lbs.) to 340 kg (750 lbs.) animal.

Along with the increase in live weight, came diet changes, from a milk-only diet to a diet rich in corn, protein, and fibre.

As we have seen the changes over that last 100 or so years, it will be interesting to see what the next five, 10, or even 25 years will hold for the veal industry. ■



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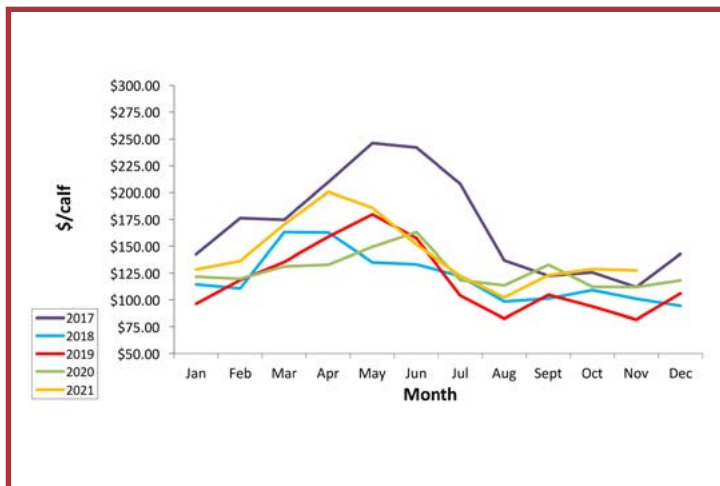
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# Veal Market Information

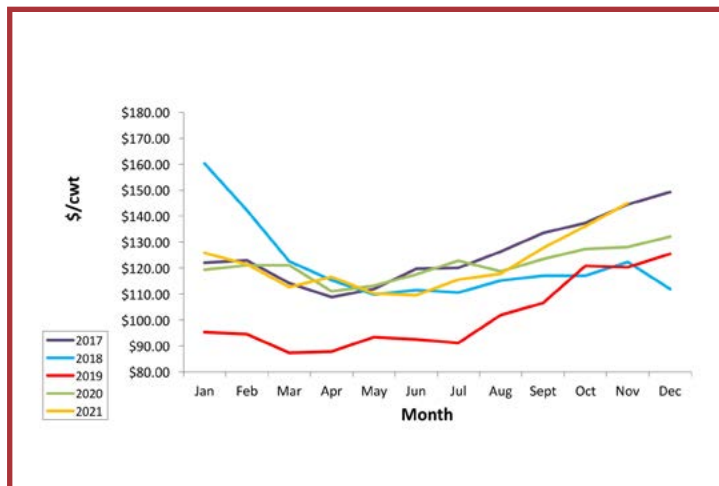
This information is collected from various sources and disseminated by Veal Farmers of Ontario.

## Bob Calf Pricing



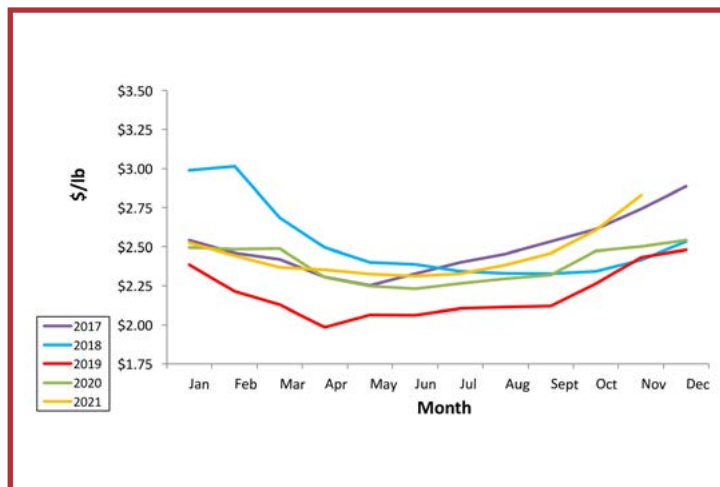
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

## Sale Barn Veal Pricing



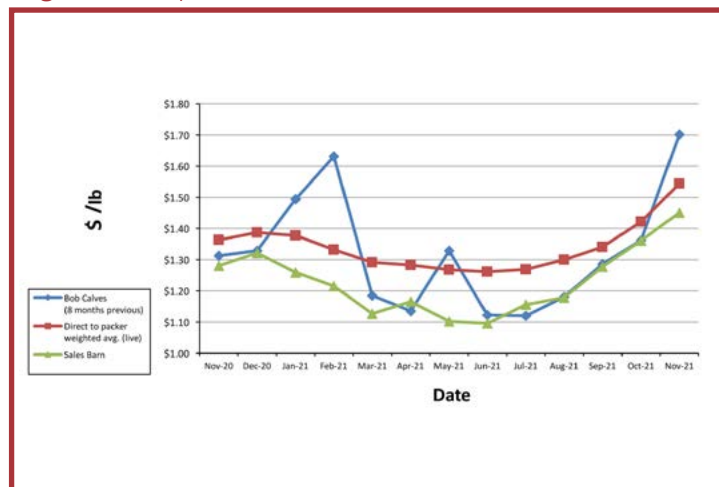
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

## Rail Grade Veal Pricing



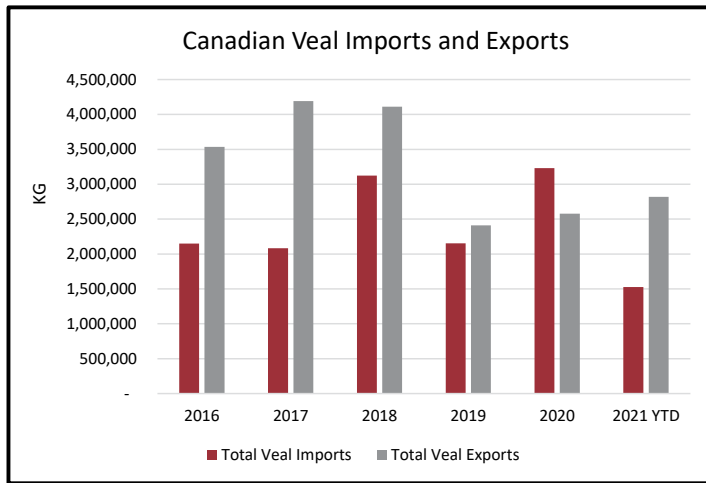
This information is collected from producer contributions on a weekly basis. Once the numbers are collected a weighted average is calculated. The weighted average gives a more realistic price of what is happening in the market. This information is used to follow trends.

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

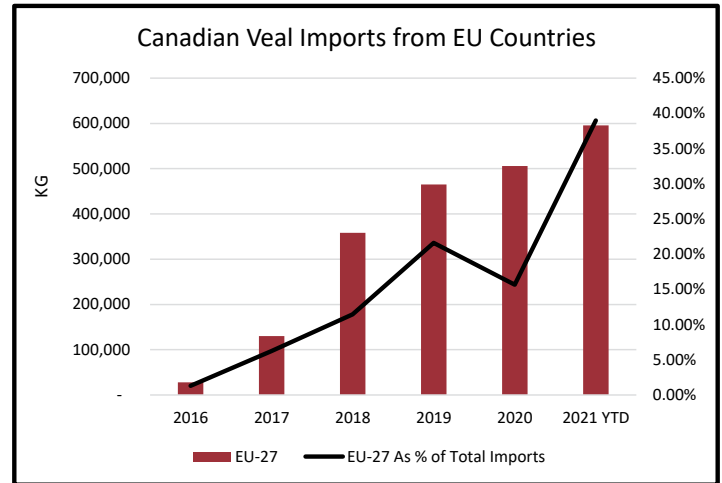


This graph is used to compare the finished price from both the sale barn and rail grade pricing to the bob calf prices eight months prior. This information could help when deciding on the purchase prices of calves and what market they will be shipped in. This information gives a quick glance at both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

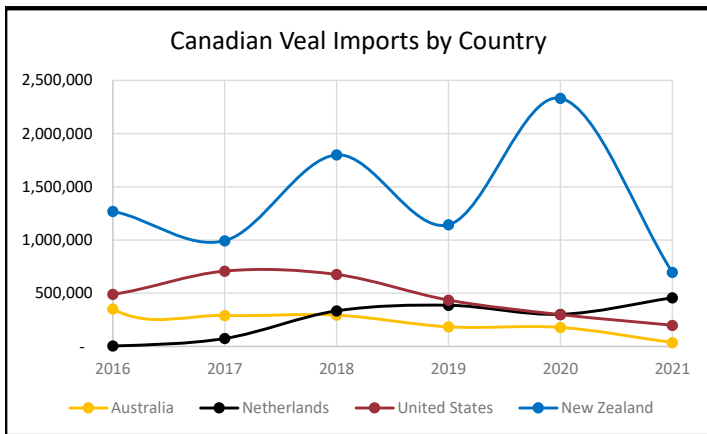
A quarterly snapshot of Canada's veal trade



2021 veal trade continues to show positive growth with exports increasing as pandemic restrictions lift. Canadian veal exports amounted to 2.82 million KGs, a year to date (YTD) increase of 56% when compared to 2020. Conversely, veal imports decreased by 12% in volume and value compared to YTD 2020, with import volumes amounting to approx. 1.5 million KGs.



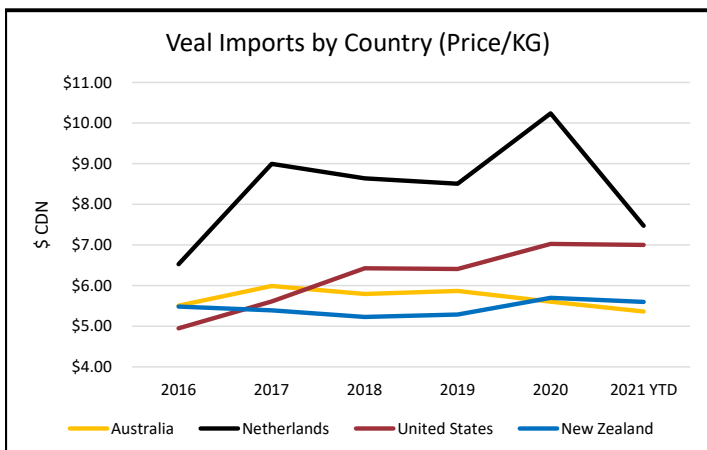
The volume of veal imports from the EU (red) is up 138% YTD, to nearly 600,000 KGs. The percentage of total imports from the EU (black) increased from 16% in 2020 to 39% in 2021. While the Netherlands still represents the largest supplier of European imports, there has been an increase in imports from Italy, and to a lesser degree Germany and France.



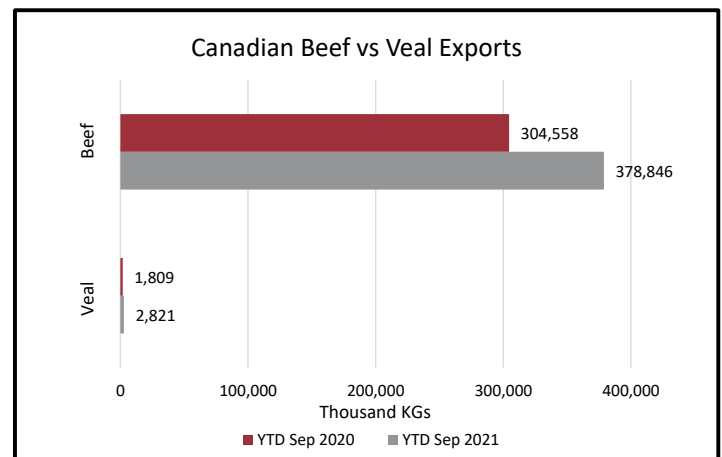
The plurality of Canada's veal imports continues to originate from New Zealand. Imports from the Netherlands have increased from 2020, while imports from the USA have declined. Few Australian imports have been reported. More veal is now imported from the Netherlands than the USA.



Veal exports to the USA increased YTD by 56% compared to 2020. A small amount of veal continues to be exported to the Middle East.



The per KG price of veal imported from the Netherlands has declined significantly in 2021. This development will be monitored closely as EU veal imports are generally higher quality cuts and usually command a price premium. The value of American cuts also remains at higher levels in 2021.



While veal represents just a small fraction of Canada's red meat trade, both veal and beef exports have increased considerably in 2021.

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

### Ontario **VEAL** *appeal*

#### Veal Escalopes alla Pizzaiola

Cut: Scaloppini/Cutlets

Guaranteed to wow at your next cocktail party, these colourful canapés are substantial without being heavy.

##### Ingredients:

1 lb (454 g) veal scaloppini  
Salt and pepper (to taste)  
Flour for dredging (around 1 cup/250 mL)  
1/4 cup (50 mL) extra virgin olive oil  
2 cups (500 mL) halved Zima tomatoes, or similar small tomato (teardrop, grape)  
2 cups (500 mL) roasted red pepper, cut into thin strips  
2 tablespoons (30 mL) chopped capers  
1 tbsp (15 mL) minced garlic  
1 tsp (5 mL) oregano  
40 crostini  
Salt and pepper  
Chopped fresh basil (optional)

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 40 canapés

##### Instructions:

With the flat side of a meat mallet, pound the veal to a uniform thickness. Sprinkle veal with salt and pepper to taste. Dredge the veal in flour and set aside, shaking off any excess flour.

Heat half the olive oil 2 tbsp (30 mL) in large skillet to medium high and cook the veal, about 1 minute per side.

Remove from skillet and set aside.

In the same pan, add remaining olive oil, tomatoes, peppers, capers, garlic and oregano and sauté until hot and glistening.

Remove tomato mixture from pan and reserve in heat-proof bowl.

Cut each piece of veal into 10 rectangles, keeping in mind the size of your crostini. Top each crostini with a piece of veal and spoon tomato mixture on top. If desired, garnish with basil. ■





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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. ■

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## **VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

**Hosted via Zoom**



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