

Introduction

The goal of a grain-fed veal farmer is to achieve the desired finish on veal cattle at the right weight and age. Ideally, market-ready grain-fed veal cattle should weigh between 295 to 320 kg (650 to 705 lbs.) at 28 to 32 weeks (seven to eight months) of age. To achieve this goal, it is critical to have the right feed rations and ratios.

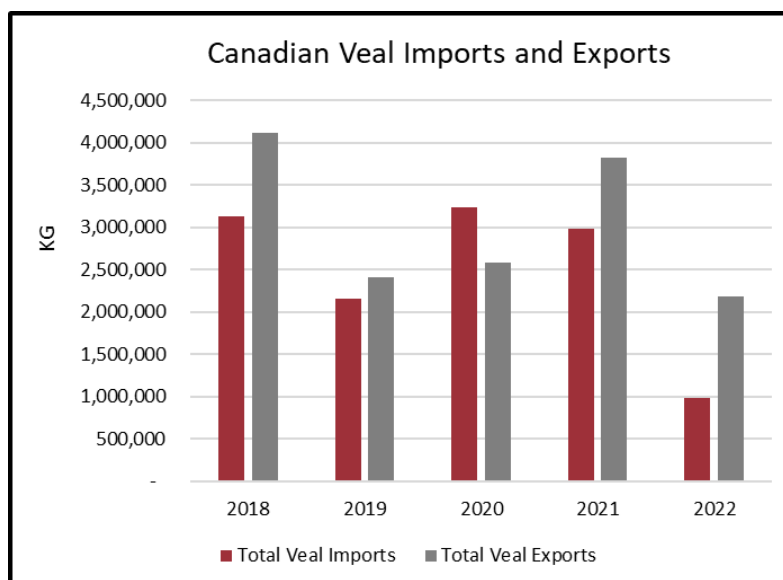
Veal is defined as cattle of any dairy breed or dairy crossbreed dressing no more than 190 kg (419 lbs.). This converts to a live weight of roughly 349 kg (769 lbs.), which is reached at approximately eight months of age. Producers are strongly encouraged to target a dress weight of 180 kg (397 lbs.) to maintain some flexibility within the system to manage veal carcass weights.

- Average daily gain (ADG) should be 1.2 kg (2.6 lbs.) or better. Targeting daily gains above 1.5 kg (3.3 lbs.) may require additional nutrient requirements.

Grain-fed veal cattle are fed a balanced ration based of grain (usually clean, whole-shelled corn) and pellets made of protein, vitamins, and minerals. A small amount of fibre should be offered daily to maintain rumen health. Cattle should also have continuous access to their feed, to encourage slower eating and stimulate chewing. Ensure there is adequate bunk space for each animal.

Imports

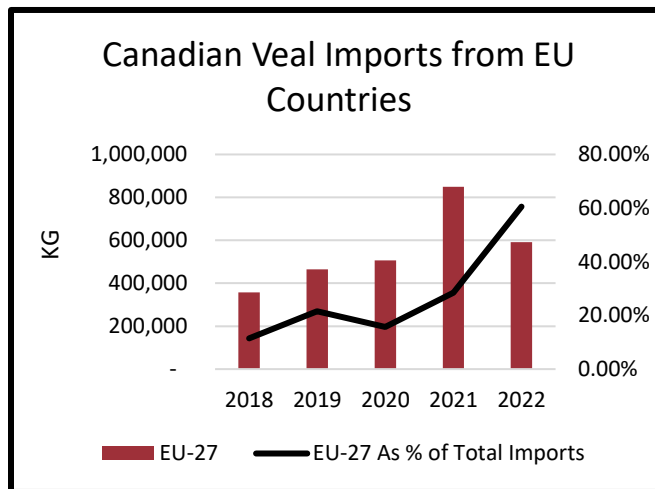
Among the strategic objectives of Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) are to “advocate for veal on government policies that impact producers” and “increase consumption and drive demand for Ontario veal”. Understanding trade markets, especially imports, represents an opportunity for veal producers. Every pound of imported veal consumed by Canadians means one less pound that needs to be produced here in Canada. Ontario veal producers are competing in a global marketplace. The average Canadian consumes 0.82 kg (1.8 pounds) of veal per year and in collaboration with the Canadian Veal Association (CVA), VFO is working towards ensuring all that veal is Canadian.



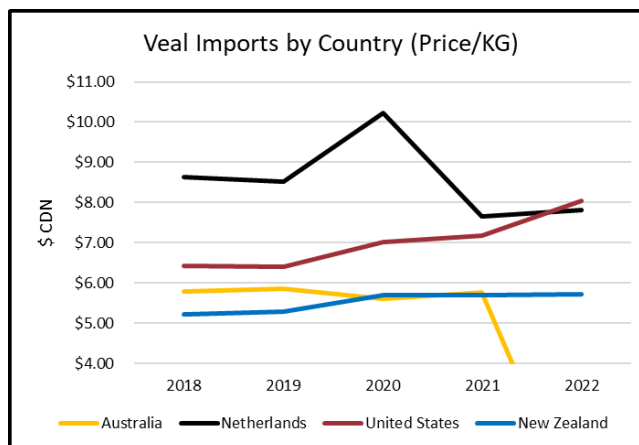
Rise of EU imports

In 2021, Canadian veal exports were just over 3.8 million kg (8.4 million pounds) valued at \$32.5 million CDN while Canada imported approximately 3 million kg (6.6 million pounds) of veal worth \$18.7 million. Since veal is such a small market any changes can cause large impacts across the industry.

A good example of this is the ever-increasing volume of imports of veal from the European Union (EU). Over the past four years veal imports from the EU have doubled from less than 400,000 kg (881,849 pounds) in 2018 to over 800,000 kg (1.8 million pounds) in 2021. Due to falling imports volumes, the percentage of veal imported from the EU has increased even more drastically. In 2021, veal from the EU represented 29 per cent of all veal imports. Year to date in 2022, veal imports from the EU represents over 60 per cent of all imports.



This is concerning as EU imports command the highest price per kg. Veal imported from the Netherlands has been consistently valued at \$8 to \$9 per kg. This is \$2.50 to \$3.00 more per kg than veal imported from countries like Australia or New Zealand. Unfortunately, Agriculture and Agri Food Canada (AAFC) does not report on which cuts are being imported. However, anecdotally VFO is aware that these are higher quality cuts (cutlets, scaloppini) that compete directly with Ontario veal. However, while EU imports are rising, exports of Canadian veal to the EU remain at near zero levels.



With Canadian veal cattle currently being in short supply, veal processors are required to import veal to meet demand. Maintaining a consistent supply of veal cattle is critical to the success and growth of the Canadian veal industry. Producers can take advantage of strong market prices to further invest in their operations. These investments can help ensure a consistent supply of veal cattle to processors, build a stronger local veal industry, and reduce Canada's reliance international imports.

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

Have any questions about veal trade markets or ideas to foster innovation? Send an email to Patrick at pmccarthy@vealfarmers.ca or call the VFO office at 519-824-2942.

Data is retrieved from the Agricultural Industry Market Information System (AIMIS) of Statistics Canada. All data is as of July 2022.

For more information:

To stay competitive veal producers should target average daily gain of 1.2 kg (2.6 lbs.) or better. Learn more about feeding veal cattle here:

- Grain-fed factsheet - Feeding for finish (<https://bit.ly/GFVFeedFinish>)
- Grain-fed factsheet - Feed ratios (<https://bit.ly/GFratios>)

As part of your research into starting a grain-fed veal farm, you are encouraged to talk to experienced veal producers, visit their farms (while following strict biosecurity protocols), and attend industry events and meetings. No two veal farms are the same and a lot of valuable information will be learned from each visit and event.

Find VFO website producer resources here: <https://bit.ly/VFOProducerResources>

Find the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* here: <http://bit.ly/theVealCode>

Find Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs veal resources here: <https://bit.ly/OMAFRAVealBusiness>

References available upon request.

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[@CalfCareCorner](https://twitter.com/CalfCareCorner)

Facebook: [@CalfCareCorner](https://facebook.com/CalfCareCorner)

[@Finishing grain-fed veal in Ontario](https://facebook.com/FinishingGrainFedVeal)

[@Marketing of male dairy calves in Ontario](https://facebook.com/MarketingOfMaleDairyCalves)

YouTube: [Calf Care Corner](https://youtube.com/CalfCareCorner)

[OntarioVeal](https://youtube.com/OntarioVeal)

Disclaimer: This resource is for educational purposes only. Veal Farmers of Ontario is not responsible for any business or management decisions made by consulting this resource.

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