

# THE Connection

Spring 2024 Volume 6, No. 1



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of Ontario

IN THIS ISSUE

**2024 AGM highlights**

**Why feeding fibre makes sense**

**Kicking off the search  
for OBVS 2024**





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## THE Connection

Spring 2024 Volume 6, No. 1



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# Chair's MESSAGE



Philip Kroesbergen

## Remaining viable and sustainable requires investment

The Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) Annual General Meeting (AGM) marks the end of one year and the start of another for the organization. I would like to welcome new board members Tom Oudshoorn and Cory Streicher to our table. It is great to have a full board with a wide range of veal farmers to represent the industry.

It was a pleasure to welcome Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, Lisa Thompson, to our AGM this year to bring greetings on behalf of her ministry. I just recently met with Minister Thompson, her staff, and my fellow leaders from the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition (OASC) to discuss the importance of the Risk Management Program (RMP) to Ontario's veal farmers. As inflationary costs continue to impact farmers, it is important that the RMP is able to cover the risks associated with growing food for Ontarians. And while market prices for many commodities may seem high, the margins continue to be squeezed with the steady increases in the cost of production. RMP is designed to be a sort of insurance to help farmers when they need funding to cover losses and to taper off when the market is performing well. That is why it's important to OASC that we maintain our lobby efforts to seek additional government investment into this program to ensure farmers remain sustainable.

Much of our work last year was focused on updating VFO's strategic plan. VFO's strategic vision for the 2024 to 2028 time period is to provide proactive and engaged leadership for Ontario dairy calf and veal cattle farmers. There has been a lot of change in the dairy calf and veal cattle sectors these past couple of years. As the sectors continue to evolve and change, VFO will remain flexible to adapt as needed. VFO's foundation is rooted in organizational excellence and a focus on ensuring all that we do delivers value back to our members.

One of the most important responsibilities for VFO is fiscal oversight of the organization's resources to ensure that the organization is not only viable and sustainable, but also able to meet the expectations of our members and industry partners and address the needs of the sector. As with increased costs on the farm, the costs associated with all facets of VFO, including those from our service providers, have also been impacted by inflationary increases. These increased costs, along with the volatility in the cattle market, have impacted VFO's annual budget. In order to ensure a viable and sustainable organization that is able to achieve our mandate on behalf of all

members, the VFO board conducted an analysis of its licence fees and the impact of overhead and cost reduction measures and has determined that an increase to licence fees is required at this time.

As a result, effective July 1, 2024, the VFO licence fee will be increasing to \$7.50/head for every head of veal cattle sold as outlined in VFO's regulated definitions. This increase from \$5.50 to \$7.50 is consistent with the increased market prices being realized for both the dairy calves and finished veal cattle. With the increase in licence fees, VFO has prioritized two main areas for investment – research and marketing. VFO will be able to invest in priority research projects that will support Ontario's veal farmers and calf-raisers. Also, VFO will invest and expand its marketing efforts to leverage opportunities to maintain and grow consumer demand.

VFO has the authority to raise or lower licence fees, when necessary, as a regulated marketing board. This authority has not been used often as the organization has had the financial resources to run effectively for long periods of time. This will be the first increase in VFO licence fees since November 2019 and it is a critical and timely investment in our industry and our organization in order to continue the important work on behalf of all dairy calf and veal cattle farmers. I thank you all in advance for your support and understanding of the licence fee increase and expect there will be a smooth transition.

As spring begins and the weather warms, I wish everyone a safe and successful planting season and healthy animals. VFO board and staff continue to work hard on your behalf on the many pressing issues as we experience the roller coaster ride of the North American cattle market. ■

## Licence fees increase July 1

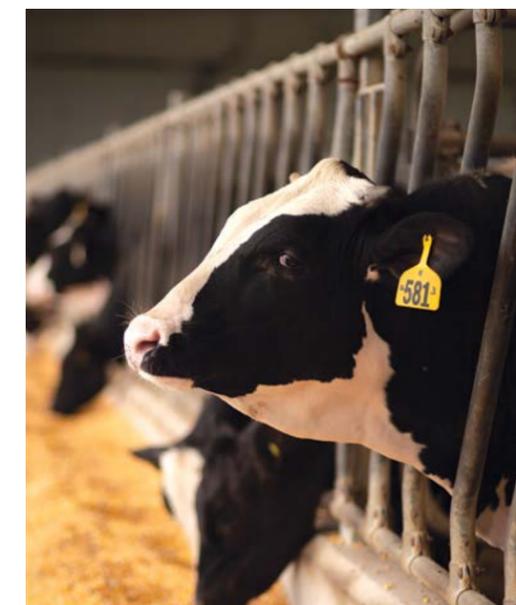
Effective July 1, 2024, please be advised that the Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) licence fee will be increasing to \$7.50/head for every head of veal cattle sold as outlined in VFO's regulated definitions.

As outlined in *Ontario Regulation 58/15 Veal Cattle Marketing*, "veal cattle" means cattle produced in Ontario that consists of,

- a** male calves or freemartin female calves of any dairy breed or crossbreed, each weighing no more than 150 pounds (68 kilograms),
- b** intact male calves of any dairy breed or crossbreed, each weighing no more than 450 pounds (204.1 kilograms),
- c** calves of any breed, each weighing no more than 769 pounds (348.8 kilograms), that are sold for slaughter at an auction or through a livestock dealer, or
- d** calves of any breed that are sold for slaughter to a processor to be processed into a veal carcass within the meaning of section 304 of the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* (Canada). ("veaux de boucherie") O. Reg. 58/15, s. 1; O. Reg. 725/20, s. 1 (1).

**Please ensure you update your reporting information and use the correct forms for VFO licence fee remittances. For updated forms, questions and more information please go to <https://vealfarmers.ca/about-us/licence-fees/> or contact us at [inspection@vealfarmers.ca](mailto:inspection@vealfarmers.ca) or 519-824-2942.**

- Like increased costs on the farm, the costs associated with all facets of VFO, including those from our service providers, have also been impacted by inflationary increases. To maintain organizational viability and sustainability in fulfilling our mandate for all members, VFO has determined a licence fee increase is necessary at this time.
- With the increase in licence fees, VFO has prioritized two main areas for investment:
  - Priority research projects that will support Ontario's dairy calf and veal cattle farmers.
  - Expanding marketing efforts to leverage opportunities to maintain and grow consumer demand.
- The VFO Board of Directors, as a regulated marketing board, has the authority to raise (or lower) licence fees as outlined in the *Farm Products Marketing Act* and *Ontario Regulation 58/15 Veal Cattle Marketing*.
- This increase from \$5.50 to \$7.50 is consistent with the increased market prices being realized for both the dairy calves and finished veal cattle.
- This is the first increase in VFO licence fees since November 1, 2019.



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# 2024 AGM highlights



Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) was pleased to welcome attendees to our 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Producer Education Day on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at The GrandWay Events Centre in Elora, Ontario. Industry leaders shared an overview of the projects, activities and initiatives undertaken by VFO in 2023, highlighting the opportunities this past year has provided to connect with our members, industry partners, and government to work together and achieve our goals.

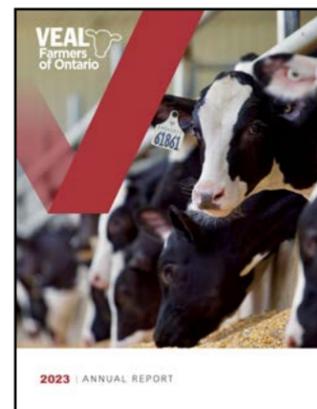
Thank you to our attendees, special guests, sponsors, Board of Directors, and staff – everyone had a vital role in making the 2024 AGM a great success!



VFO was pleased to welcome the Honourable Lisa Thompson to our 2024 AGM. Minister Thompson delivered greetings and a message on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).



VFO was also pleased to welcome Amy Cronin, Chair of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission to our 2024 AGM. Cronin provided greetings on behalf of the Commission to VFO and the membership.



Learn more about VFO's 2023 initiatives highlighted in our Annual Report, available online at <https://bit.ly/2023VFOReport>.

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

Recognizing dedication and service to the veal cattle industry



Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) was pleased to announce this year's VFO Board of Director's Award winner at its recent Annual General Meeting and Producer Education Day held Wednesday, March 13, 2024, in Elora, Ontario.

The VFO Board of Director's Award recognizes the contributions that many make to help the VFO Board achieve our mandate of supporting a viable livestock sector in Ontario and creating a proactive and engaged Ontario veal cattle and dairy calf industry. This year, Michael Young, President of Canada Beef, was recognized for his many contributions to the Canadian red meat industry and specifically for his support of the Ontario veal sector.

"Michael Young has been instrumental in supporting the collaborative relationship between VFO and Canada Beef, and for his support of the Canadian veal sector as a whole, whether at home or abroad," says Philip Kroesbergen, VFO Chair.

Young has worked in the Canadian red meat industry for over 45 years, specializing in beef, veal and pork sales, marketing, product development, and education in the domestic and export marketplace. "It has been a privilege to be able to work with Michael on a number of veal-specific projects over the past few years," says Jennifer Haley, VFO Executive Director. "Michael has a wealth of knowledge and expertise in all facets of marketing in the red meat sector and VFO has been fortunate to have benefitted from this," she adds.

"We want to acknowledge Michael's contributions and also wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement and thank him for his leadership and collaboration across the red meat sector," says Kroesbergen. ■



## Producer Education Day

Maranda Klaver, Ontario veal farmer and past Ontario Queen of the Furrow, kicked off our Producer Education Day, discussing what it's like being a woman in agriculture and her Queen of the Furrow journey that led her to become an advocate for farmer mental wellness.



Melinda German, General Manager and Brad McCallum, Manager, Compliance and Education, from the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency (the Agency) explained more about the value your licence fees bring through programs administered and worked on jointly by the Agency and VFO.



Steve Duff, Chief Economist for OMAFRA, offered an update on Ontario's veal market over the past year and where feed costs and veal pricing appear to be headed for 2024.



Michael Young, President of Canada Beef, provided a keynote address covering challenges and opportunities facing the Canadian red meat sector in 2024 and beyond. His presentation focused on emerging trends, merchandising innovations, and consumer marketing tactics that target success, growth, and prosperity in the domestic and export marketplace. ■

# Veal Farmers of Ontario announces leadership for 2024

## Re-election of Kroesbergen as Chair, Yantzi, Vice Chair

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) is pleased to announce the re-election of Middlesex County veal producer Philip Kroesbergen as Chair and Dylan Yantzi as Vice Chair, at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors.

Kroesbergen, who joined the VFO Board in 2017, farms full-time with his father and brother near Strathroy. Their family operation, Creekside Acres, has been producing veal exclusively for over 30 years. Kroesbergen previously served as Vice Chair in 2020, returning to the Executive in the fall of 2022.

"It is a privilege to lead this sector, and I am pleased that our board is now full," says Kroesbergen. "As Chair, I look forward to the year ahead as we implement our new strategic plan and focus our attention on the issues, initiatives, and projects that will best support our members and our industry."

Yantzi, who was appointed to the VFO Board in 2021, raises veal cattle near Tavistock with his family.

"As Vice Chair, I look forward to working with my fellow directors to strategically address issues directly impacting dairy calf and veal cattle producers," says Yantzi. "Continued collaborations with our industry partners and colleagues will be a focus for the organization in the coming year as we work together on key issues impacting the Ontario agri-food sector."

Kroesbergen, along with Judy Dirksen (Harriston) and Tom Oudshoorn (Auburn), were acclaimed to the VFO Board at the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on March 13 in Elora, Ontario and will serve three-year terms. Oudshoorn has previously served on the VFO Board of Directors from 2015 to 2016 when the organization transitioned from the Ontario Veal Association.

Joining the VFO Board of Directors is Cory Streicher, a veal cattle producer from the Newton-area. Streicher fills a one-year appointment by the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, that will end at the 2025 AGM.

Returning to the eight member VFO Board of Directors are Aaron Keunen (Palmerston) and Kurtis Moesker (Stratford).

"I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their leadership and service to the Ontario veal industry," says Kroesbergen. "We look forward to the perspective Tom and Cory will bring to the Board and I am pleased to see the diversity of veal production in our industry represented on the Board. We have a great group of people committed to serving our industry." ■



Philip Kroesbergen, Chair



Dylan Yantzi, Vice Chair

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# A practical look at why feeding fibre makes sense

Veal producers share their experiences

Lilian Schaer, Agricultural Writer

For Veal Farmers of Ontario

Feeding fibre to veal cattle is widely promoted and accepted in the veal industry as a best practice. Mixing clean, whole-shelled corn and protein pellets with a small amount of fibre – most often straw – boosts rumen health and results in well-finished cattle that reach market weight at seven to eight months of age.

Adding fibre to veal rations can improve feed efficiency and rumen function and reduce behaviours like tongue rolling and sucking on inanimate objects like pen bars, as well as the risk of bloat and ruminal acidosis.

It's generally recommended that producers start their cattle at a mix of two parts corn and one part pellet at weaning (2:1 ratio), which gradually

increases to a 5:1 corn to pellet ratio at age five months through to finishing. The amount of fibre in the diet, however, stays constant.

While it sounds relatively simple, feeding veal cattle can be a challenge and requires daily attention to ensure the animals have not just enough feed, but enough of the right kind of feed. An unbalanced ration can create animal health and performance issues, resulting in economic losses that will impact a farm's profitability.

We spoke to three veal producers who share their story about why and how they feed fibre to their veal cattle and what impact that has had on their operation.



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Ryan and Laura Parish with their kids Claire and Benjamin. Absent is Conner, their oldest son, who works off the farm.

## Ryan & Laura Parish, Lindsay, ON

Ryan and his wife Laura and their three children farm near Lindsay, with Ryan also working off the farm as Sales Manager at DLF Canada. Their veal business started with a small group of 10 calves and kept expanding, leading to a new calf nursery and a finishing barn. Today, they finish about 200 head a year, in addition to having some beef cattle and a few dairy cows on the farm that aren't milked commercially.

It was their veal nutritionist who suggested adding some fibre to the ration to help with weight gain.

"Before going into group housing we introduce a small amount of hay, usually some nice second or third cut baleage, and that seems to help them with the transition," explains Ryan. "We've found this gives them an added protein source too, and if we don't give them a bit of hay at night, they just end up eating their straw bedding – they're looking for that fibre."

The calves start on milk, and a small amount of hay is introduced as they go through the weaning process. As they transition from individual to group housing and move from eating whole grain calf starter to a pellet and whole corn ration, what stays constant throughout is the small amount of hay – literally a handful to each animal – that they're given.

The hay is on the farm already for the dairy animals, and although it would be cheaper to feed straw, the Parishes' feeding system isn't set up to blend straw into the ration. At the same time, the volume of hay being fed is relatively low – Ryan estimates he uses about one four-foot round bale every two weeks.

An added benefit, he notes, is that when the cattle come up to the feeder to get their hay, it gives him an opportunity to identify any animals that might be having problems – an extra way to monitor their health and catch any issues early.

"As the cattle transition from group to group, we find they're maintaining and gaining their weight now whereas before, we'd see them lose weight," he says. "Our cattle are extremely healthy, and they gain fast, getting to 750 pounds in seven months, and they're wanting a fibre source so the alfalfa baleage is giving them the fibre and added protein they need."

"It's taken us a long time to get to where we are now. We've been doing veal for about eight years, and we continue to finetune our program to make improvements," he adds.

## Dan Stewardson, Thedford, ON

Dan and his wife Sarah are part of his family's southwestern Ontario farming business that includes dairy and broiler production. They started with veal in 2021, raising the calves from the main dairy operation, and now finish about 400 head a year.

For the first year and half, the ration was just a corn-pellet blend and the Stewardsons were noticing a lot of bloat and discomfort issues in the animals. They began adding finely chopped straw about three quarters to one inch in length, which reduced bloating, acid reflux and discomfort in the calves.

In one feeding per day, veal cattle start on a one part pellet, three part corn ration with 10 kg of straw. This is top dressed on their calf starter a week before weaning; the calf starter is fed the whole time the calves are in individual hutches. As they grow, the pellet to corn ratio changes, reaching 1:7 in the final finishing period; the amount of straw, however, stays consistent at 10 kg.

"It makes the biggest difference when they are small; top dressing it on the calf starter helps them get a taste for the feed and helps with transition," says Dan. "We've really noticed a decrease in cases of bloat, and we've only had to do one major intervention to treat bloat since we switched to adding straw in the ration, which is a big benefit."

Dan estimates he uses about 100 kg of straw – or the equivalent of a large square bale – per week. Economically, that makes it an inexpensive additive and since it's part of the ration for the main dairy herd too, it works easily with the farm's feeding system.

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"We do feed chopped straw to the main dairy herd so I have an easy source; it would be much harder if I had to put in my own equipment to chop and store," he says.

### Kyle Roes, Millbank, ON

Kyle Roes and his wife farm near Millbank, where they started in the veal business game a little more than a decade ago when Kyle's father-in-law wanted to put a few calves into his old empty tie-stall dairy barn. They've long outgrown that facility, and now finish about 900 animals a year in a new purpose-built veal barn.

In weighing veal cattle weekly, Kyle noticed some animals that just weren't gaining weight well. At the same time, some younger calves were having trouble transitioning to starter, and in taking part in a manure analysis study by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), he learned that the animals weren't absorbing as much of the starch from their corn ration as they should be.

Talking to a nutritionist and reading articles convinced him to add some fibre to their diet and since he had some extra hay available at the time, he decided to give that a try.

"They seemed to really like it. We bed with straw and we noticed that as soon as you put fresh bedding down, they're starting to chew away on it," Kyle says. "In talking to different people, I got the sense that maybe this (feeding fibre) fills them up a bit more."

Now, he feeds a freshly made ration every morning, with straw always

accounting for three per cent of the total mix, regardless of the remaining composition of the feed, which changes as the cattle grow and approach finish weight.

Gradually, he has been finding fewer and fewer animals that weren't gaining, and is seeing less whole corn in manure, meaning the cattle are getting better at converting the feed they were consuming. The biggest benefit has been in the economics, however.

"I ship direct, get paid on the rail and I'm getting the same rail weight but shipping lighter, so the animals are yielding better. I used to ship around 740 to 750 pounds live and now it's 710 to 720 pounds, so that's a week's worth of gain," he says. "This has been my biggest change in the past year – and it would be interesting to repeat that OMAFRA nutrient study again to see the difference." More resources about feeding fibre are available from Veal Farmers of Ontario at <https://vealfarmers.ca>.



Farm & Food Care Ontario

# Why do I need to clean the water bowls?

## The importance of clean water bowls for successful calf raising



Ask **Kendra**

Kendra Keels,  
Industry Development Director

As calf-raisers, we should understand the significance of providing the best care for our calves. One area that sometimes gets overlooked is cleaning the water bowls or any vessel used for water, whether a bucket, trough, or tank.

Why is it necessary to clean bowls, especially when they appear visually fine and aren't green or black?

Recently, while cleaning my dog's water bowl I noticed the bottom of the dish was slimy, the overall appearance of the dish was fine, the water looked fine, but the bottom was not. That slimy stuff on the bottom of the dish is the same material that is in the calf's water bowl – biofilm.

Biofilm is the breeding ground for harmful bacteria. Cleaning water bowls may seem like a mundane chore, but it plays a crucial role in maintaining the health and well-being of calves. Just like my dog's dish, if neglected, calf water bowls can become slimy and gross, requiring more time and effort to clean. This is a scenario no calf raiser wants to encounter.

Even if the bowls appear clean, it is essential to consider the biofilm that may be building up. Take a moment to run your hand along the bowl's surface, feeling for any sliminess. This simple act can help calf-raisers understand the potential bacterial load in the water bowls.

In the world of calf-raising, progress over perfection is a good place to start. Taking any step to maintain clean water vessels is better than doing nothing at all. Fresh, clean water is the cornerstone of successful calf-raising, alongside quality bedding. Just as humans prefer clean drinking water, calves also thrive when provided with the same quality.

A 2018 study by Wickramasinghe et al. revealed that newborn calves consume about 0.75 litres of water per day during their first 16 days of life. After weaning, this increases to about 0.82 litres per day. Fully weaned calves, at 49 days of age, drink approximately 5.3 litres daily. Older calves weighing around 180 kg may consume up to 30 litres daily, emphasizing the need to monitor water quality for calves of all ages.

In most situations the source water is excellent quality, however the delivery vessel may not be consistently optimal. Maintaining the cleanliness of water bowls guarantees the provision of quality water to calves. Scrubbing the bowls with a brush and thoroughly rinsing may help eliminate biofilm, preventing the bacterial load from reaching harmful levels. This practice is crucial for calf health and significantly reduces the need for antibiotics.

Veal Farmers of Ontario recognizes the importance of this and many other calf care practices, investing many resources in developing farm-friendly materials that emphasize the essentials of calf care. As calf-raisers, let us get back to these basics, remembering clean water is a foundation to the health and well-being of calves.

**?** Have questions about farm protocols, recommendations, or the science behind them? Reach out – we are here to assist you in providing the best care for your calves! For more information visit <https://calfcare.ca>.

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# Riding the veal price surge: Profit or pitfall?

This year, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) was an exhibitor at the Canadian Dairy XPO, where we experienced an unprecedented level of interest from individuals interested in starting calves for the veal and/or dairy-beef markets. The volume of inquiries we received during the event surpassed inquiries over the event's 10-year history.

This level of inquiry prompted this article to remind producers and potential producers that starting in the calf business may seem attractive due to high finished veal prices, but the real question is, is it profitable?

The recent price surge represents a blip in the graph (see Figure 1). Similar blips occurred in 2015, leading to low prices by 2019.

Historically, veal pricing follows a clear trend, and today's pricing is the exception, not the rule.

It is important for producers to consider outside factors like the beef market. The Canadian cattle herd is at its lowest level in more than 30 years. This low level of cow-calf herds creates a hole for the feedlots. Feedlots are now looking to fill with dairy-beef cross calves vs. natural beef calves because of lack of supply.

This creates competition for male dairy calves that traditionally the veal sector purchased and is now driving the price up for bob calves. This increase in calf prices decreases veal producers' bottom line. The questions that come to mind are: how much can veal producers afford to pay for bob calves, what will be the finished veal price be at the time of marketing, and are you making a profit?

To help producers, VFO and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) have developed the veal cost of production (COP) calculator. The veal COP calculator provides producers with the tools to analyze input costs and forecast potential returns, enabling producers to make informed decisions. The veal COP calculator can be downloaded from the VFO website here: <https://vealfarmers.ca/producer-information/veal-cost-of-production-tool/>.

Before spending \$1,000 or more on a calf, do the calculations, and remember purchasing calves is making an investment for eight months from now.

Another factor to consider is the emergence of imported European veal. This imported veal is priced lower than Canadian veal and poses a threat to domestic market share, highlighting the importance that packers have options. Yes, Ontario is an open market, and it is about supply and demand, but how high is too high before it falls? A saying comes to mind, "When everyone is yelling, that is when you should be selling. When everyone is crying, that is when you should be buying."

As there are factors at play, inside and outside of the veal market, now is the time to sit back and watch how 2024 shakes out before making any big decisions like expanding or building a new barn. Think twice before overpaying for calves – you do not want to be caught when the price drops. The veal sector does not have any futures or forward contracting, so we never know what the price is until the week the animals are sold.

In summary, while the current veal prices are enticing, producers must carefully evaluate profitability, and navigate market dynamics to make informed decisions. The veal sector's success hinges on understanding both short-term fluctuations and long-term trends. Remember to use the veal COP calculator to make well-informed choices for your business! ■



Figure 1: The latter part of 2022 through 2024 has witnessed a significant surge in finished veal pricing, surpassing expectations within the industry. While these elevated prices may be attractive, they prompt key questions regarding sustainability and broader implications for the veal sector.

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## Looking beyond the cost of bob calves and feed – Yardage costs

John Molenhuis, Business Analysis and Cost of Production Specialist

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs

When referring to yardage costs as a single cost, it sounds simple enough to produce a number for it. However, there is more to unpack in yardage to arrive at that single cost line. Since yardage represents 20 to 30 per cent of total veal costs, it is worth the effort to calculate to have a better understanding of the impacts to the veal operation.

Yardage is all costs not related to bob calf purchases and feed cost. It includes fixed costs, as well as variable costs such as health, labour, building repairs, fuel, financing, and overhead.

Yardage also includes cash and non-cash costs, for example, machinery and buildings will depreciate over time and eventually are replaced. Including depreciation is important to reflect the enterprise's ability to reinvest when these assets are due to be replaced. Unpaid labour is another often overlooked cost, whether that is yourself or other family members, so be sure to account for the labour needed to run your operation.

If there are more enterprises on the farm than veal, then the first step will be to figure out the proportion of the costs associated with the veal operation. Yardage costs are less directly related to the enterprise and, as a result, are more challenging to allocate to individual enterprises.

One common approach is to allocate costs by percentage of gross sales, for example, if veal is 60 per cent of the farm gross sales, 60 per cent of overhead costs are allocated to veal. Another approach is to calculate by percentage of gross margin however, this is a bit more involved but may be more accurate. Gross margin is revenue minus direct variable costs which for veal is bob calf purchases and feed. Calculating gross margins for all enterprises will show what each is contributing to paying indirect variable and fixed costs.

Be careful not to double count costs. Homegrown feed costs will include not only crop inputs but machinery costs of fuel, insurance, repairs, depreciation, and interest on homegrown feed cropping equipment. The machinery costs attributed to homegrown feeds will need to be allocated out. They will be in feed costs so be sure they are not also in yardage costs. There will still be machinery costs in yardage from activities like taking the feed crops out of storage and delivering to the veal cattle, barn equipment, and manure handling.

Total yardage cost is largely fixed costs. Knowing capacity impacts is useful in understanding their effects on per unit costs. Keeping capacity as close as possible to 100 per cent spreads yardage across more production, reducing your per unit cost.

For example, if an operation has capacity to finish 1,500 head per year and their total yardage costs are \$525,000 their per animal cost is \$350 at 100 per cent capacity. At 80 per cent capacity, marketing 1,200 head, their per unit yardage cost increases to \$438 per calf.

The decision timelines on bob calf purchases may be tight, so having a good handle on yardage costs upfront will help in the decision-making as it relates to capacity.

Infrastructure of buildings, barn equipment, and feeding systems are unique to each farm and will also impact yardage. Farms with older facilities that are paid off will have different costs than those with new facilities that are heavily financed. The strategy is to make the most efficient use of land, labour, and capital resources.

Investment in equipment is expensive and knowing how that will impact yardage costs is a big factor in that decision. There are many considerations when deciding on the best option for accessing equipment from purchasing, leasing, renting or custom hiring, but costs are at the forefront with the rise in equipment and machinery operating prices. The equipment should be used to its full capacity to spread the fixed ownership costs.

In summary, the things to keep in mind with yardage costs for veal production:

- ✓ Include only costs related to the veal enterprise.
- ✓ Do not forget to add non-cash costs such as depreciation and unpaid labour.
- ✓ Avoid double counting costs for items like cropping equipment used to grow homegrown feed.
- ✓ Understand the impact of capacity and investment decisions on per unit yardage costs. ■



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# It's back! The search is on again for the best veal sandwich



Jennifer Haley  
Executive Director

Veal Farmers of Ontario's (VFO) flagship consumer marketing campaign – the search for Ontario's Best Veal Sandwich (OBVS) – is back in 2024. While a lot of planning and back-channel work went on behind the scenes this past fall and winter, the contest was officially launched in April at the Restaurants Canada Show in Toronto, where the VFO team interacted with many different types of restaurants and foodservice operations across the province.

The lure of mini veal parmigiana samples brought so many people to the booth to talk about the contest, how they can participate, ask questions about how to procure Ontario veal for their menus, and of course meet our contest ambassador John Catucci from Food Network Canada's popular show *You Gotta Eat Here!* Chefs, business owners, managers, independent and chain operators – all interested in elevating their veal menu offerings or adding veal to their menu!

To help increase awareness for the program with restaurants and to encourage participation in the contest with new entries, we have added some new elements, while also maintaining the core of the contest and well-known consumer marketing program.

One of the lessons learned from previous years was that the procurement and the foodservice supply chain lacked awareness of the OBVS contest in order to promote it to their restaurant customers in advance of the judging period. To address this gap, VFO has built a foodservice distributor contest with prizes and cash incentives to encourage the sales staff to promote the contest to their restaurant customers – both existing veal customers and new potential customers. VFO has also worked with veal processors who sell to distributors or direct to restaurants to offer price features on veal cuts and also incentivize sales staff to promote the contest with their customers. With these new features, we will track new entrants to the new contest as well as those restaurants adding new veal menu items.

Another new twist on the contest this year is opening up the opportunity for others to join in judging the veal sandwiches. Every year that VFO has held the OBVS contest, we receive so many enquiries from people who also love their veal sandwiches, wanting to know how they too can become a judge. With more and more restaurants entering the contest, we knew it was time to expand our judging team, engage the veal sandwich-loving consumers and also ensure that the veal sandwich experience is the same that any customer would receive.

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The application window opened on April 8 and to date, over 1,000 people have submitted applications to become mystery judges for the contest this year! VFO will be training the mystery judges and sending out only the best applicants, and using their feedback as a guide, the OBVS team will narrow the nominations down to 10 semi-finalist veal sandwich-makers. These semi-finalists will receive a visit from John Catucci and the judging team to narrow it down to two finalists who will compete for the title of Ontario's Best Veal Sandwich 2024 on August 17 at the Canadian National Exhibition Celebrity Kitchen Stage!

In order to simplify the process, this year restaurants just need to make sure they nominate themselves to be on our judging list. We want to find all the restaurants serving up great veal sandwiches. The judging period begins May 9 and continues until July 11, 2024. During this time, VFO will be sharing the sandwich reviews and promoting the participating restaurants on all its social media channels @OntarioVealAppeal.

Do you have a favourite restaurant that should add a veal sandwich to their menu or maybe they already have a veal sandwich – then get them to enter the contest too! The more restaurants participating the better so we can amplify all the family businesses and restaurants serving up delicious veal on social media. Previous contests have shown that nominated restaurants see an increase in business because of participating and those that make it to semi-finals and finals even more so! Stay tuned for updates. For more information email [info@bestvealsandwich.ca](mailto:info@bestvealsandwich.ca).

## You too can get paid to eat Ontario's Best Veal Sandwiches!

### KEY DATES

- 🚀 **May 1-9**  
Competition launch & media tour featuring John Catucci, Food Network Canada host of *You Gotta Eat Here* & *Big Food Bucket List*
- 🗨️ **May 9 - July 11**  
Mystery judges travel the province seeking Ontario's Best Veal Sandwich. Veal sandwich reviews & restaurant promotion is featured in social & traditional media channels & online
- 👥 **July 15-31**  
Top 10 sandwich-makers receive a visit from John & the judging team. Media is invited to each event!
- 👑 **August 17 - Finale at the CNE Celebrity Kitchen Stage**  
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# Research & innovation key to successful future for Canadian livestock industry, report says

Lilian Schaer, Agricultural Writer  
for Livestock Research Innovation Corporation

A new report puts research, innovation and a comprehensive policy approach as core pillars underpinning the successful future of Canada's livestock industry.

The *Forces Impacting Animal Agriculture in Canada: A Synthesis* report by the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) says that the complexity and interconnectedness of animal agriculture means its value and impact can't be measured with simple metrics. Many of the challenges and opportunities are shared across members of the sector.

"This report offers a compelling narrative of the challenges, opportunities and policy landscape that come together to shape the future of this vital Canadian industry," says Mike McMorris, CEO of Livestock Research Innovation Corporation (LRIC), one of the organizations who sponsored the research.

This means the industry needs common solutions to improve economic, environmental and social sustainability. These include growth-oriented policies, investment in research and innovation and in transportation and other infrastructure, and an enhanced data framework.

At the same time, risks facing animal agriculture are growing, like disease, loss of land or markets, and extreme weather, and require greater focus and innovative policy solutions to provide meaningful impacts.

"Canada is in a unique position to meet the growing global demand for proteins because of our land base, water resources, efficient production systems and low carbon emissions relative to other countries," says report co-author Al Mussell, CAPI's Director of Research.

In fact, the report notes that Canadian animal agriculture has among the lowest emissions intensities in the world, so policies that integrate sustainability, food security and growth can help meet climate targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and build Canada's comparative advantage on the world stage.

Animal agriculture also has a key role to play in meeting the objectives of other initiatives, such as the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)'s Grow Ontario Strategy announced in 2022, which contains ambitious production and export growth goals for the agriculture sector.

To help reach those goals, there is need to increase agri-food innovation and adoption through research infrastructure, ensure translation of research into practical solutions and encourage uptake of those solutions, and increase the use and measurement of data-driven solutions.

The findings of the CAPI report support LRIC's A2B approach to research and innovation – where are we, where do we want to go and what are the steps we need to get there, which can include innovation, research, regulation, policy and advocacy, for example.

"Important for success is considering what matters to industry, to consumers and to government – and looking for commonalities," says McMorris.

For the industry, key issues are antimicrobial resistance, climate change impact and adjustment, emergency preparedness, labour, animal welfare, water, soil health and alternative protein consumption.

Consumers, by comparison, care about their health, the health of the planet and animal welfare, for government, it's the economy, the environment and food security that matters.

To help bring all of that together, LRIC has been encouraging the sector and its stakeholders to view innovation as a circular system that includes funding, research priorities, project management, getting research into practice (GRIP) and commercialization.

LRIC has also taken proactive approaches to help give the livestock sector the tools it needs for success. The LRIC Emerging Trends and Opportunities Committee provides direction to the LRIC board on creating and increasing awareness across the sector regarding emerging trends and their research and innovation requirements.

The LRIC International Research Advisory Committee provides input from beyond Canada's borders, including helping ensure we are aware of global developments and how the Ontario livestock sector can adopt or adapt international research approaches toward improved progress.

LRIC has also developed a mentorship program for early career faculty to help them make better connections with industry and bolster the relevance of their research to addressing real problems farmers face. And its Early Career Research Award is designed to foster more collaborative and cross-sector research.

All of this is aligned with LRIC's new five-year strategic plan, which has a three-fold approach:

- Provide members services and a centralized hub for livestock research, innovation, networking and mentorship.
- Seek and stimulate continuous improvement of the innovation system by all stakeholders.
- Be the trusted intermediary between industry, government and academia.

The CAPI study *Forces Impacting Animal Agriculture in Canada: A Synthesis* was funded by LRIC, Grand River Agricultural Society, UFA Co-operative, Dairy Farmers of Canada and Canadian Cattle Association.

*Livestock Research Innovation Corporation is funded in part by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), a five-year, federal-provincial-territorial initiative. This article is provided by LRIC as part of its ongoing efforts to report on research, innovation, and issues affecting the Canadian livestock industry.* ■



### VFO celebrates Canada's Agriculture Day

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) celebrated Canada's Agriculture Day on February 13, using the opportunity to thank each member of the agri-food supply chain that works hard to ensure Canadian plates remain full of local, nutritious food. VFO also shared "Life of a veal farm family", part of the suite of videos we partnered with Farm & Food Care Ontario to create, and celebrated our pride in veal farming using the hashtag #CdnAgDay.

### VFO attends South Western Ontario Dairy Symposium

VFO attended the South Western Ontario Dairy Symposium (SWODS) on February 22, connecting with members, discussing industry issues, promoting calf care and distributing resources. VFO encouraged producers to visit our booth, posting throughout the day and promoting our location



on our social media channels. Attendance at events alongside our industry partners will continue to show our commitment to the dairy calf and veal sectors.

Ontario Veal on a bun was served to attendees for the second year in a row as part of the Food From our Farms lunch. Thank you to SWODS organizers and Highland Meat Packers for your support!

### VFO applauds proposed updates for Act

VFO was pleased to see the announcement proposing the updated *Enhancing Professional Care for Animals Act*, that will broaden the scope of practice for registered veterinary technicians and ensure Ontario's veal farmers continue to have access to the animal health and welfare expertise of our trusted animal care partners. Veal farmers, like our livestock sector partners, work closely with our herd veterinarians and veterinary technicians, and together provide essential care for our livestock.

### Join VFO's private Facebook groups

VFO has two private Facebook groups to help foster connections between members, share timely sector updates, and provide a space for discussing production and industry issues.

The *Marketing of male dairy calves in Ontario* group is designed for dairy and veal producers, and for those starting calves for the dairy-beef market. The *Finishing grain-fed veal in Ontario* group is geared towards producers finishing male dairy cattle for veal markets.

To join, send a request! Both are great forums to ask questions and start important conversations.

### VFO joins call to pause carbon tax hike

VFO has signed a letter along with our agriculture and food industry partners calling on the federal government to pause the 23 per cent carbon tax increase that came into effect on Monday, April 1, 2024. VFO appreciates the support of Minister Thompson and is proud to collaborate with our industry partners on this important issue for Ontario farmers.

### VFO talks with producers at Canadian Dairy XPO

VFO attended Stratford's Canadian Dairy XPO in early April, connecting with veal and dairy producer members, discussing industry issues, promoting calf care, and distributing resources.

Thank you to everyone who dropped by our booth, we're looking forward to seeing you again at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in September. ■

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# Farm & Food Care Ontario's 2023 Year in review

Jessica McCann, Communications Coordinator

Farm & Food Care Ontario



Jennifer Haley presenting 'Veal 101' to Toronto-area food influencers on a FFCO and VFO-partnered tour.

Delicious veal lunch enjoyed on the food influencer tour.

Jennifer Haley presenting answering Registered Dietitians' questions about veal cuts, nutrition, cooking methods, and sourcing veal products.

Thanks to the support of longtime members like Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO), Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) and its partners across the industry provided opportunities for farmers, food producers, and agribusinesses to meet and interact with urban and suburban consumers in 2023, giving those customers the chance to know more about food and farming. In 2023, FFCO and VFO partnered on many in-person activations and virtual initiatives to spark conversations and answer consumer questions about veal and veal farming in Ontario. FFCO appreciates the continued support of VFO's Silver level membership as members like this are foundational to FFCO's successes and enable FFCO to continue working to build public trust in Ontario agriculture.

## Breakfast on the Farm

Three Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) events were held across the province. This year, BOTF events took place in Huron County (dairy and beef farms) on a Napanee dairy farm and on a Brussels sprouts farm near Chatham. Over 3,300 guests were in attendance at these events to meet farmers, view displays, see livestock and enjoy all-Ontario breakfasts. At these events, FFCO, in partnership with VFO, was able to distribute veal brochures, information sheets and culinary guides to many guests. Feedback for these events continues to be exceptionally positive.

## Farm tours

2023 was an exceptional year for FFCO's on-farm tours with a record 10 tours taking place across the province. These tours included hosting three tours for more than 70 food influencers and Registered Dietitians as well as four culinary student tours that help form connections with more than 145 of tomorrow's chefs and food influencers.

This year, VFO partnered with FFCO on two farm tours with the objective of providing credible information to influencers, chefs, Registered

Dietitians, dietetic interns, and professional home economists. This first tour took 20 food influencers from Toronto to the Ontario Dairy and Beef Research Centres and Soil Health Interpretive Centre at Elora. Jennifer Haley, VFO Executive Director, joined the tour representing VFO and delivered a 'Veal 101' presentation that covered everything from animal care and comfort to cuts, cooking methods and more. Guests were then treated to a gourmet Taste of Ontario lunch featuring veal. The second tour took 30 Registered Dietitians and dietetic interns to a bison farm as well as a blueberry farm and apple orchard. Jennifer again joined the tour to speak with the group after a veal-themed lunch to discuss cuts, nutrition, cooking methods, and sourcing veal products across Ontario. Both presentations were extremely well-received.

In the case of each tour, every single participant (100 per cent), answered that YES, they feel food grown in Ontario is safe after having completed the farm tour. This shows the value of an in-person farm tour experience.

## The Real Dirt on Farming

FFCO unveiled the sixth edition of *The Real Dirt on Farming* in November of 2023. The booklet is available in English and French. In early 2024, a digest version will be available, a digital educator resource will be released this winter by Agriculture in the Classroom Canada, and a new 4-H manual is in development by 4-H Ontario.

Veal continues to be an area of focus in *The Real Dirt on Farming* publication with VFO staff providing input on content before the booklet went to press. This edition answers questions on the topics of food costs, food safety, and food labelling, livestock in relation to healthy soil, and climate change. It discusses diets for cattle, cattle rearing, and animal welfare. More than five million copies of *The Real Dirt on Farming* have been distributed since 2006.

## Events

In 2023, FFCO returned to the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) with an 'Ask-a-Farmer' video booth and spent the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair sharing FarmFood360° virtual tours – including a virtual veal farm tour – with the public. These types of events offer invaluable opportunities for FFCO to facilitate conversations between farmers and their urban and suburban neighbours about how food and farming relates to all of us here in Ontario.

## Digital outreach

Digital outreach plays a key role in FFCO's work. The online *Faces Behind Food* campaign told the stories of 79 individuals from a diverse cross-section of commodities and food service types and answered 38 "Ask-a-Farmer" questions while garnering over seven million impressions on Instagram and Facebook. In 2023, veal farmer Maranda Klaver was featured as a part of the *Faces Behind Food* project.

In 2023, FFCO in partnership with AgScape, hosted 17 virtual field trips. It is estimated that these trips reached more than 83,869 people.

## Training and workshops

FFCO continues to offer media and Speak Up training and commodity-specific updates, with 46 presentations and training sessions in 2023.

Additionally, FFCO was able to present to insurance and commodity groups information surrounding how to approach on-farm emergencies and strategies for fire prevention.

Sixteen Livestock Emergency courses were held in 2023 for 339 fire-fighters and first responders across Ontario. The three-year total is 1,112 first responders taking the course online or in person. The course covers factors critical to the decision-making processes for accidents involving livestock trailers, including trailer design and the implications for extrication points, animal behavior, laws and regulations, euthanasia protocols, and how to develop response teams.

FFCO also worked with commodity groups on 13 Animal Care Helpline calls in 2023, on cases of concern such as animals on the loose and provision for animals in extenuating circumstances. ■

## TO LEARN MORE

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

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## How to reduce the risk of fire with new barn design

Bruce Kelly, Program Consultant

Farm & Food Care Ontario

You are considering a new farm building for your family's future, something to be proud of for the next generation to continue your family farming tradition. Some of the key features you will be looking for in the design are animal comfort and productivity, a pleasant environment for you and your family to work in, easier to clean and move animals, manure, and equipment around in, and it has to be cost-effective. But you should also consider other factors in the overall plan, such as the flexibility to change equipment, future expansion, and ways to reduce the risk and impact of fire. Let's apply what we have learned about the common causes of past farm fires to design and build better farms for the future. The most common causes of farm fires are electrical (corrosion), hay storage, hot works like welding and grinding, and equipment fires — hot tractors or block heaters.

The concept of the bank barn, or all-under-one-roof, has largely been abandoned in favour of more specialized farm structures. Machinery and hay storage each have distinct fire risks associated with them, and to reduce the risk to the livestock operation, a better strategy is to have separate buildings for each use.

Recent changes to the electrical code for farm buildings that mandate the use of NEMA-4 (waterproof plugs) are expected to dramatically reduce the number of electrical fires related to corrosion. Still, the codes do not replace a thoughtful building layout and careful risk analysis by the farmer, builder, and an insurance risk assessment.

For example, hay and straw storage structures have a very high risk of burning at some point. Even with good harvest practices and temperature monitoring, with every harvest of hay cut and added to the storage, weather, moisture, and how they are stacked present a unique risk of fire over the next several weeks. Don't let one wet hay bale bring down your whole farm; there is no need to risk the farm with every haying decision. This is why hay storages are now built as separate buildings to reduce the risk to livestock operations. Why would we have only one if we assume hay storage is at a high fire risk sometime over its lifespan? All your eggs in one basket... two smaller storages might be a little more costly upfront, but they would reduce the risk of losing all your feed supply and give you a roofed area for half the year to store other things.

Based on the insurance industry's experience and analysis of past farm fires, we can begin work on a "Generally accepted farm best practices statement" for farm fire prevention in new buildings.

### The list includes things like:

- Develop a comprehensive site plan for the entire operation. Consider all the old and new buildings, road access, laneways, manure, feed, biosecurity considerations, and utility flow.
- Install electrical system monitoring devices (these are quickly moving from an "interesting idea" to a required item in new larger builds by insurance providers). They measure losses to ground through corrosion and improper connections and are proving invaluable in reducing electrical fires on farms adopting this new technology.
- Water and electricity do not mix, so consider new utility spaces carefully. A "dry" electrical room separate from any plumbing or water treatment systems, and not part of any wash-down area, will be much less prone to corrosion over time.
- As good practice:
  - Separate buildings for hay storage and consider more than one building, as these pose a VERY high fire risk over their lifespan.
  - Separate machinery storages/shops and never storing any machinery/vehicles in active hay storage (even better reason to have more than one hay storage).
  - Concentrating hazardous activities outside the barn or hay storage areas where they can be monitored (welding, grinding flammables). Welding and cutting tasks have safety protocols and wet-down procedures.
  - Keep yard maintenance equipment — mowers and hobby projects like ATVs, dirt bikes, car repairs, welding, etc., in a separate shop designed for such and consider fire suppression systems/equipment in these buildings.
  - Do not park machinery within 25 feet of a livestock barn when not in use.

Building a new barn or barn complex is a daunting task for any farm family, with only one chance to get it right. Work with an experienced farm design and building team. Don't forget that your insurance company might have some guidelines on farm building spacing to ensure they can offer the most coverage at an affordable premium.

Some of our largest farms are built on a scale with many commercial buildings, and considerations for thoughtful site planning are a must. Decisions made now in design can not only help reduce the risk of a fire ever happening, but they can also reduce the financial impact on the operation should one occur. Considering ways to protect your investment from fire will be time and money well spent.

For more information on lessons learned from years of farm fire assessments, look at this Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) fact sheet: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/10-ways-reduce-risk-barn-fire>

Find other Livestock emergency resources at the Farm & Food Care Ontario farm fire page: <https://www.farmfoodcareon.org/livestock-emergencies/>.



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# Five-year Ontario Veal market calendar

Veal is often consumed during the celebration of various holidays, recognized by numerous ethnic groups worldwide, and those who now call Canada home. This resource was designed to help you, the producer, plan production to meet the demands of the flourishing ethnic market for veal in Ontario.

**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. ■**

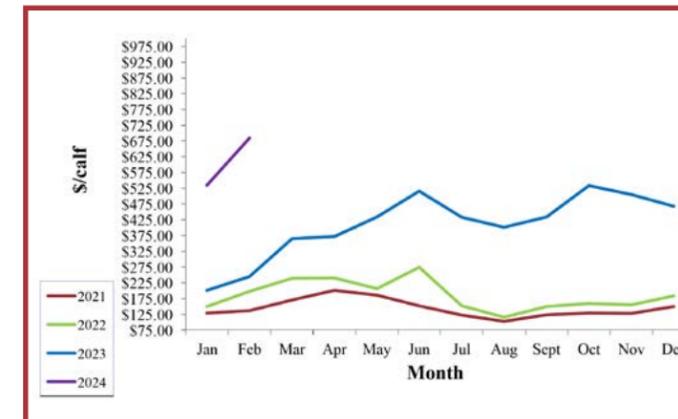
	Holidays	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Christian	Epiphany	Saturday, Jan. 6	Monday, Jan. 6	Tuesday, Jan. 6	Wednesday, Jan. 6	Thursday, Jan. 6
	Eastern Orthodox Christmas	Sunday, Jan. 7	Tuesday, Jan. 7	Wednesday, Jan. 7	Thursday, Jan. 7	Friday, Jan. 7
	Western Roman Easter	Sunday, March 31	Sunday, April 20	Sunday, April 5	Sunday, March 28	Sunday, April 16
	Eastern Orthodox Easter	Sunday, May 5	Sunday, April 20	Sunday, April 12	Sunday, May 2	Sunday, April 16
	Christmas	Wednesday, Dec. 25	Thursday, Dec. 25	Friday, Dec. 25	Saturday, Dec. 25	Monday, Dec. 25
Jewish	Passover/Pesach	April 22 to April 30	April 12 to April 20	April 1 to April 9	April 21 to April 29	April 10 to April 18
	Rosh Hashanah	Oct. 2 to Oct. 4	Sept. 22 to Sept. 24	Sept. 11 to Sept. 13	Oct. 1 to Oct. 3	Sept. 20 to Sept. 22
	Hanukkah	Dec. 25 to Jan. 2	Dec. 14 to Jan. 2	Dec. 4 to Dec. 12	Dec. 24 to Jan. 1	Dec. 12 to Dec. 20
Islamic	Ramadan (start)	Monday, March 11	Saturday, March 1	Wednesday, Feb. 18	Monday, Feb. 8	Friday, Jan. 28
	Eid ul-Fitr	Wednesday, April 10	Monday, March 31	Friday, March 20	Wednesday, March 10	Sunday, February 27
	Eid ul-Adha	Sunday, June 16	Friday, June 6	Wednesday, May 27	Sunday, May 16	Friday, May 5
	Muharram	Monday, July 8	Friday, June 27	Wednesday, June 17	Sunday, June 6	Thursday, May 25
	Mawlid al-Nabi	Monday, Sept. 16	Friday, Sept. 5	Wednesday, Aug. 26	Sunday, Aug. 15	Thursday, Aug. 3
Hindu	Navratri Festival	Thursday, Oct. 3	Monday, Sept. 22	Sunday, Oct. 11	Thursday, Sept. 30	Tuesday, Sept. 19
	Diwali	Friday, Nov. 1	Tuesday, Oct. 21	Sunday, Nov. 8	Friday, Oct. 29	Tuesday, Oct. 17
Other holidays to consider	Chinese New Year	Saturday, Feb. 10	Wednesday, Jan. 29	Tuesday, Feb. 17	Saturday, Feb. 6	Wednesday, Jan. 26
	Cinco de Mayo	Sunday, May 5	Monday, May 5	Tuesday, May 5	Wednesday, May 5	Friday, May 5
	Canada Day	Monday, July 1	Tuesday, July 1	Wednesday, July 1	Thursday, July 1	Saturday, July 1
	Independence Day(USA)	Thursday, July 4	Friday, July 4	Saturday, July 4	Sunday, July 4	Tuesday, July 4
	Independence Day (Jamaica)	Tuesday, Aug. 6	Wednesday, Aug. 6	Thursday, Aug. 6	Friday, Aug. 6	Sunday, Aug. 6
	Thanksgiving (Canada)	Monday, Oct. 14	Monday, Oct. 13	Monday, Oct. 12	Monday, Oct. 11	Monday, Oct. 9



## VEAL MARKET INFORMATION

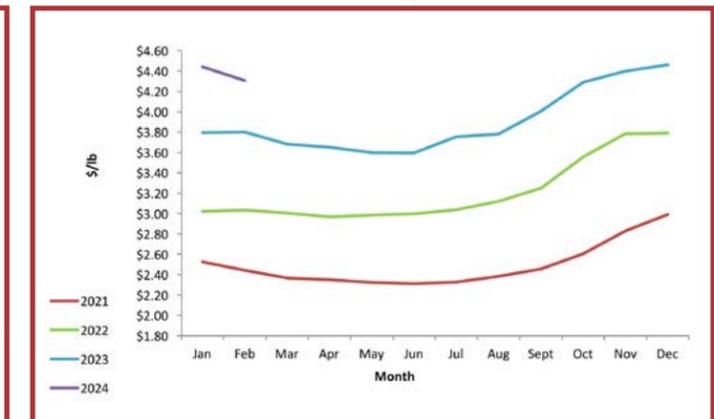
This information is collected from various sources and disseminated by Veal Farmers of Ontario.

### Bob Calf Pricing



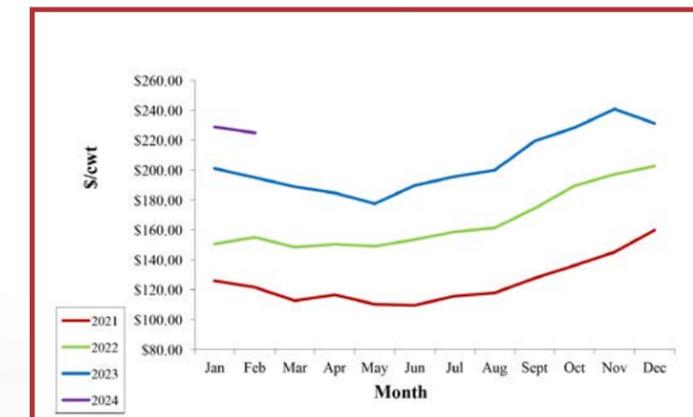
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

### 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.

### 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.

## FEATURED VEAL RECIPE

# Ontario VEAL appeal

## Barbecue Veal Meatballs

Cut: Ground/Minced | Servings: 4 to 6 | Prep Time: 25 minutes |  
Cook Time: 25 minutes  
Refrigeration Time: 1 to 24 hours

### Ingredients:

2 lbs ground Ontario veal  
2 slices white bread  
¼ cup milk  
¾ cup onion, finely diced  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tbsp Dijon mustard  
2 tbsp barbecue seasoning  
To taste salt and pepper  
2 large onions, quartered  
2 tbsp vegetable oil, divided  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tbsp brown sugar  
¼ cup craft beer, your favourite  
1 cup barbecue sauce, your favourite

### Instructions:

Place the veal in a large bowl.

Soak the bread in the milk and break up. Add to the bowl.

Add the diced onion, garlic, Dijon, barbecue seasoning, and salt and pepper to the bowl and mix well with gloved hands. Form into 16 equally sized balls and chill in the refrigerator for about an hour up to 24 hours.

Heat the grill to medium high heat (375-450°). Set the onion quarters on the grill to lightly char. Cool and slice.

Bring grill up to 450-500°. In a heavy cast iron pan, add 1 tbsp of the oil and sear the meatballs over the high heat to brown quickly on all sides. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Reduce heat to medium high. Add the sliced, lightly charred onions to the pan with the rest of the oil. Sauté until the onions begin to be translucent and a bit browned at the edges. Add in the garlic and continue cooking for 1 to 2 minutes.

Add brown sugar, craft beer and the barbecue sauce and bring to a boil. Add the meatballs. Reduce heat to medium to medium low 300° and simmer for 15 minutes until fully cooked and tender. Look for an internal temperature of 160°. ■

Source: Ted Reader BBQ



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## Licensed dealers

As a veal (bob calves, started/preconditioned 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 Agricorp website at <https://bit.ly/Agricorpdealers> or contact the VFO office.

## 2024 VFO licence fee remittances

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. This regulation also includes veal cattle that are sent for custom slaughter.

If you are purchasing male dairy and dairy crossbreed bob calves (up to 150 lbs.) and preconditioned intact male dairy and dairy crossbreed calves (up to 450 lbs.) licence fees are required.

If veal cattle are purchased from a sale barn this does not apply.

Licence fee remittances are due on the 15th of the following month.

Forms 4 and 5 are available on <https://vealfarmers.ca> or contact the VFO office to have copies mailed.

## Ontario Beef Cattle Financial Protection Program

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

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