

THE Connection

Fall 2025 Volume 7, No. 3



Calf Care
Corner

FROM SCIENCE TO
PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

VEAL
Farmers
of Ontario
10 YEARS 2015 - 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

**VFO unveils new look for
“Calf Care Corner”**

Veal transport essentials

**Building demand for
Ontario Veal Appeal**

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THE Connection

Fall 2025 Volume 7, No. 3

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Chair's MESSAGE



Philip Kroesbergen

VFO's bold approach to industry challenges

As summer ends and fall comes, we are once again entering a period of time where things ramp up in our industry. Generally in the fall/winter, finished veal pricing strengthens, a cyclical occurrence with emphasis on the historic rise this year. Farmers are preparing for harvest, an important time where feed is stored for the animals to cover the year. And notably, the Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) board of directors and staff have been working over the summer and into the fall on matters that are important to our industry.

VFO, in concert with Quebec producers, has signed off on a veal weight limit analysis project. This project will look at the "economics on cost of production (COP) for both the producer and the packer, market analysis/competition vs. starting calves for dairy-beef, meat quality on larger carcasses and integrity of veal carcass characteristics, feedback from processors and retailers, and use the process of the analysis to build consensus with stakeholders. The analysis will also look at what other jurisdictions are doing for veal definitions (e.g., EU, US, NZ, AUS) and how this creates competitive disadvantages for Canadian producers."

I would highlight this is an important project for veal farmers because even though there was a weight limit increase four years ago, the market has evolved and getting more meat from each animal is necessary to stay competitive and incentivize domestic veal production. The goal is a win-win where farmers would be able to get more out of each animal, retailers and consumers will have the same characteristics that are desired for grain-fed veal cuts, and meat packers are able to process these animals and stay competitive as well. We look forward to seeing what can be implemented in the future.

VFO staff have also developed and are launching The Biology of Condemnations Producer Workshop, to look at the factors around organ and whole carcass condemnations. It will cover herd health and management, feed inefficiencies, and even a hands-on examination of condemned organs as well as other relevant topics. This is an excellent chance for producers to dive into this issue that has been present in the industry for some years now. In a year where health challenges and emerging diseases such as *Salmonella* Dublin are stressing the calves, any knowledge that could

aid you and your farm is valuable. At a time where any loss is financially significant, this workshop will aid in ensuring a more efficient and resilient herd and I recommend to register if you have not already.

VFO continues to work on a number of other matters that are important to our members. VFO is collaborating with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness to refine the veal Risk Management Program by stabilizing the COP model. This will address the volatile yardage costs that have been problematic over the last few years. As part of the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council, our organization has been a part of raising concerns over Bill C-202's passage. The group has warned that it could harm Canada's free trade reputation and limit market access for veal and red meat exports, particularly to the US.

The Canadian Veal Association (CVA) is working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to secure approval to extend the imported feeder calf harvest time from 36 to 40 weeks and to raise the minimum import age from eight to nine days. This will be a win for farmers that are importing calves to feed in Ontario, at a time where there is short supply, and will allow enough time to get them to weight. The CVA is also working with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to exempt Canada from EU deforestation regulations and pursuing halal market growth through Ontario and Quebec campaigns.

As the Ontario veal industry continues to evolve, VFO is committed to following our strategic plan and working on the issues impacting our members most at both the provincial and national level. While navigating the changes to our sector has not always been easy, the decisions we make now will help our industry thrive in the future. As always, I encourage you to reach out to any of your directors to discuss your concerns at any time. Best wishes for a successful harvest. ■

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Ready to roll: Veal transport essentials

Shipping finished veal cattle is the final step in a carefully managed production cycle. Proper preparation protects animal welfare, ensures regulatory compliance, and prevents costly delays. To support producers, Veal Farmers of Ontario has developed a practical **Pre-Shipment Checklist**—worth reviewing every time cattle are loaded.

Being prepared reduces stress for animals, prevents delays at the plant, and supports a smooth transition from barn to processor.

Confirm animals are fit for transport

A well-prepared load starts with a critical question: Are the animals fit to travel?

Every animal must be able to stand and walk without pain or assistance. Lamé, weak, injured, or dehydrated animals should not be loaded. Under the **Health of Animals Regulations – Part XII**, all animals must be fit for transport—no exceptions.

This is also the time to score the animals for manure and mud tags. 75 per cent of the animals should have 30 per cent or less of their abdomen covered. This is a food safety issue.

Review treatment records and withdrawal times

Confirm all medication withdrawal periods have been met, and ensure treatments are accurately recorded. Producers must also report any broken needles still present in an animal. Proper documentation protects both animal welfare and food safety.

Complete identification and paperwork

All veal cattle must have an approved RFID ear tag. Before the trailer arrives, complete all transport documentation, including emergency contacts and destination details. A **Transfer of Care form** is required for deliveries to processors, assembly yards, or sales barns—even when transporting your own animals. Commercial carriers must also complete an **Animal Transport Record**, kept for two years. Store all forms in a clearly labeled, accessible location for inspection if needed.

Prepare cattle for the journey

Feed the animals within 24 hours of loading and provide fresh, clean water until loading begins. These steps help maintain hydration, energy, and comfort during transit.

Use low-stress handling

Move animals calmly and quietly to prevent injury or agitation. Group cattle by size and temperament to reduce aggression or crowding. Before loading, check that chutes, ramps, and holding areas are safe, well-lit, and have non-slip footing.

Ensure the transport vehicle meets requirements

The trailer must be clean, well-ventilated, and bedded appropriately for weather conditions, particularly in cold months. Space and height must meet veal cattle requirements.

Plan for the unexpected

Have a contingency plan for weather delays, mechanical issues, or emergencies. Share emergency contact numbers with the driver, confirm pick-up and delivery times, and inform the processor of any special handling needs, health concerns, or broken needles.

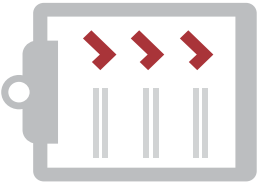
Final barn check

Before the truck departs, walk through the barn and loading area to ensure nothing was missed. Secure all gates, doors, and alleyways.

The Pre-Shipment Checklist is more than a list—it's a proven tool for smooth, stress-free shipping. By making it part of your routine, you protect animal welfare, meet regulatory requirements, and uphold your reputation for care, integrity, and professionalism. ■

For more information and specifics visit <https://vealfarmers.ca/transportation>.

This project is funded in part by the Governments of Canada and Ontario under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), a 5-year, federal-provincial-territorial initiative.



VEAL CATTLE FIT TO SHIP PRE-SHIPMENT CHECKLIST FOR FINISHED VEAL PRODUCERS

Ensuring veal cattle are properly prepared for transport is essential for their well-being, food safety, and efficiency. This checklist helps minimize stress, prevent health issues, and ensure regulatory compliance, supporting responsible livestock handling.



Your calf care partners

Shipping date: ____ / ____ / ____ Document(s) location: _____

Description		YES	NO
FITNESS FOR TRANSPORT 	Are animals able to stand and walk without pain or assistance?		
	Are animals dehydrated, emaciated, or injured?		
	Are animals compromised or unfit as per Health of Animals Regulations – Part XII ?		
	Have all treatments/medications been recorded?		
	Have all medication withdrawal periods been met?		
CATTLE CLEANLINESS 	Does the animal contain broken needles?		
	Have animals been tag scored for manure and mud tags?		
IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION 	Do 75 per cent of the animals have 30 per cent or less of their abdomen free of manure and mud tags?		
	Are animals tagged with approved tags?		
FEED AND WATER 	Have the proper transport documents been completed, including emergency contacts and destination details?		
	Have animals been fed within 24 hours prior to loading?		
Have animals had access to fresh, clean water prior to loading?			

...continued

New on-demand programs coming soon

The learning doesn't stop here, watch for these fall releases!

WEBINAR



Managing liver abscesses in cattle: Practical strategies for producers
Gabriel Ribeiro, DVM, PhD, PAg
*Associate Professor and Saskatchewan Beef Industry Chair
University of Saskatchewan*

Over the past 20 years, the prevalence of liver abscesses in beef and veal cattle across Canada has steadily increased. This webinar will explore the key risk factors that contribute to liver abscess development and highlight practical prevention strategies that producers can apply on their farms.

PODCASTS



"One cough is enough": Rethinking respiratory health and antimicrobial use
Bart Pardon, DVM, PhD, Dip. ECBHM
*Associate Professor
Ghent University*



Feeding veal cattle: Fibre, ratios, and rethinking nutrition
Holly McGill, MSc
Ruminant Nutritionist

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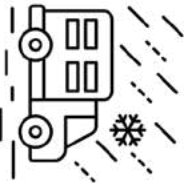
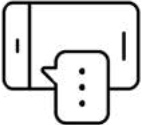


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VEAL CATTLE FIT TO SHIP PRE-SHIPMENT CHECKLIST FOR FINISHED VEAL PRODUCERS ... (continued)

	Description	YES	NO
HANDLING AND LOADING	 Have animals been handled using low-stress techniques? Are loading equipment and facilities safe, well-lit, and non-slip? Have animals been grouped by size and temperament?		
TRANSPORT VEHICLE AND CONDITIONS	 Is the transport vehicle clean, well-ventilated, and safe? Is bedding dry and appropriate for weather conditions (especially in cold weather)? Does the trailer meet space and height requirements for veal cattle?		
TRAVEL PLANNING	 Is a contingency plan in place and accessible for delays or emergencies? Are delays expected due to weather? Are emergency contact numbers accessible?		
COMMUNICATION	 Has a pick-up time and delivery schedule been confirmed with the transporter? Has the processor been notified of the expected arrival time? Has the processor been notified of any special handling needs, health concerns or broken needles?		
FINAL CHECK	 Has a final walkthrough of the barn and loading area taken place? Are all gates and doors secured?		

For more information and specifics visit <https://vealfarmers.ca/transportation>

What is pushing up feed?

productive feedlot. Pushing up feed is a key component of this management strategy. It allows for better monitoring of feed consumption and helps identify any issues with feed delivery or cattle behavior early on.

The use of automated feed pushers, which are common on dairy farms, are being trialed in beef feedlots. These devices help maintain consistent feed availability, reduce labour, and ensure feed intake is consistent both day and night. Automated feed pushers can significantly enhance the efficiency of feed management by reducing the need for manual labour and allowing for more frequent feed push-ups without additional effort.

Trials have shown that using feed pushers can lead to increased dry matter intake (DMI) and improved feeding behavior. Industry specialists like Christoph Wand (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness) highlight the challenges of keeping feed in front of cattle and the benefits of using feed pushers. These insights underscore the importance of adopting innovative technologies to improve feed management practices.

1. Consistency in feed delivery

2. Feeding frequency

3. Bunk scoring system

4. Cleanout activities

Why is pushing up feed important?

Cattle are creatures of habit and prefer routine. By pushing up feed regularly, you ensure that feed is always within reach, encouraging cattle to eat more consistently throughout the day. Consistent feed intake helps maintain stable rumen fermentation, which is essential for optimal digestion and nutrient absorption.

When feed is not pushed up, cattle may struggle to reach it, leading to increased feed waste. Feed that is out of reach can become contaminated with dirt or manure, making it unpalatable. Regularly pushing up feed minimizes waste and ensures that cattle consume the feed provided.

Feed efficiency is a key factor in the profitability of a feedlot. By encouraging consistent feed intake and reducing waste, pushing up feed helps improve feed efficiency. Cattle that have constant access to fresh feed are more likely to achieve better growth rates and improved feed conversion ratios.

Cattle that stretch or strain to reach feed are at a higher risk of injury or stress. Pushing up feed reduces this risk by keeping feed easily accessible. Additionally, consistent feed intake supports overall health by preventing digestive issues such as acidosis, which can occur when cattle consume substantial amounts of feed after periods of fasting. This can also lead to a reduction in antibiotic use with a healthier digestive system.

5. Enhances bunk management

Effective bunk management is essential for maintaining a healthy and

A simple feed bunk scoring system was developed at South Dakota State University that may help if the cattle are not performing as expected.

Score	Description	
0	No feed remaining in the bunk	If you have a bunk score of 0 three days in a row, then the cattle should be increased by .5 to .75 lbs. of dry matter.
.5	Scattered feed remaining; most of the bottom of the bunk is exposed.	Less than 5% feed remaining
1	Thin, uniform layer of feed remaining. About one kernel deep.	if you have a bunk score of 1 or higher, estimate the amount of feed left in the bunk and adjust the feed delivery accordingly.
2	25 to 50% feed remaining	10% feed remaining.
3	>50% feed remaining. Crown of feed is thoroughly disturbed.	25% feed remaining (and less than a 3" depth of feed).
4	Feed is virtually untouched. Crown of feed is still noticeable.	50% feed remaining (and more than a 3" depth of feed).
Goals		The goal is to see a bunk score of .5 one or two days a week.

Pushing up feed may seem like a small task, but its impact on a feedlot can be significant. By encouraging consistent feed intake, reducing waste, improving feed efficiency, and promoting animal health, this practice plays a vital role in the success of your operation. Incorporate regular feed push-ups into your daily routine and watch your cattle – and your bottom line – thrive. ■



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Understanding the meat inspection process at OMAFA-licensed abattoirs

Contributed by
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Agribusiness Staff



If you are sending animals to an Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAF) licensed abattoir, it's important to know how the inspection process works. These facilities follow rules set out in Ontario's *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* (FSQA) and *Meat Regulation 31/05*. The inspection process is similar to that of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and aligns with standards followed in many places across the world.

A key principle in meat inspection is that local disease or pathology requires trimming and condemnation of the affected part, whereas generalized disease or pathology requires condemnation of the whole carcass. It's important to note that this process does not aim to determine whether a carcass will cause foodborne illness. Instead, the focus is on assessing the potential food safety risks associated with any condition found in the animal or carcass. In essence, diseased carcasses or parts are not approved for human consumption because they are likely to pose a food safety risk. This approach is science-based and consistent with the approach taken by other provinces and the CFIA.

The meat inspection process can be divided into two stages:

1. Ante mortem inspection – before the animal is harvested

2. Post mortem inspection – after the animal is harvested

Both of these stages are essential to the meat inspection process. If either one is missed the meat cannot be approved for human consumption.

The meat regulation requires that a meat plant operator ensures that each animal is presented for and receives ante mortem inspection, and each carcass and its parts receive post mortem inspection. The regulations also require that inspections must be conducted under conditions that allow inspectors to perform their duties effectively, including suitable facilities and adequate lighting. Inspections are generally conducted by non-veterinary Food Safety Inspectors (FSI) who are well trained in observing for abnormalities in both ante and post mortem inspection.

Ante mortem inspection involves a visual inspection by the FSI who looks for changes in an animal's demeanor, gait, body condition, body symmetry, respiratory pattern, and any specific abnormalities such as swellings or discharges. It is not a full physical exam like the one a veterinarian would typically perform when called to assess an animal on-farm. In a case where an FSI observes an abnormal condition, the abnormality is reported to an OMAFA veterinarian for discussion and direction on whether the animal is fit for harvest. This is a requirement in Ontario's meat regulation. A veterinary inspector¹ may be called to perform an additional ante mortem inspection.

Post mortem inspection involves visual observation, palpation, and incision of specific body parts including lymph nodes, lungs, heart, kidneys, and other organs. As with ante mortem, the FSI looks for conditions which are abnormal and when an abnormality is observed, a referral to an OMAFA veterinary inspector is required. It is the veterinary inspector who makes the decision on what the abnormality means – can the carcass be approved or does the abnormal condition pose a food safety risk and require condemnation of part of a carcass or the whole carcass?

In OMAFA-licensed abattoirs, while an FSI is present during all harvest activities, a veterinary inspector is not usually on-site during routine harvest shifts. If an FSI finds an abnormality, they contact an OMAFA veterinarian by phone. These OMAFA employed veterinarians, known as Regional Veterinarians (RV) or Veterinary Scientists (VS), are given a detailed description of the issue, which may be supported by photos or videos. Based on the information provided, the RV or VS will either make a decision immediately, request additional details or order laboratory testing.

If everything is found to be normal, the FSI can approve the meat for human consumption. If the FSI identifies an abnormality, the veterinary inspector may do one of the following:

- Approve the carcass as-is,
- Condemn parts of the carcass and approve other parts,
- Condemn the whole carcass,
- Hold the carcass for testing (e.g., drug residue testing), or
- Refer the case to the CFIA if there's a suspected federally reportable disease.

Both OMAFA's and CFIA's inspection systems make use of veterinary and non-veterinary inspectors, and both also rely on organoleptic inspection (inspection by sight, touch, and smell) and have similar processes where organs/parts are observed, palpated or incised. The primary difference between the two systems is that in federal plants, a veterinary inspector is generally present in harvest plants during harvest shifts. In contrast, OMAFA-licensed abattoirs operate differently, as their system is designed to accommodate the practical needs of smaller facilities.

Meat inspection at OMAFA-licensed abattoirs ensures that every step – from live animal assessment to carcass and parts inspection – is conducted with consumer safety top of mind. Only meat that achieves these standards is approved for consumption. This robust system not only protects Ontarians but also aligns with federal and international inspection practices, reinforcing confidence in the quality and safety of our food supply. OMAFA has worked, and will continue to work collaboratively with, the Veal Farmers of Ontario to support effective inspection practices that help ensure food safety, while also supporting the success and reputation of Ontario's veal producers. ■

¹ Veterinary Inspector is a licensed veterinarian appointed under the FSQA as an inspector for purposes of the Act.

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Maximizing calf health and productivity through record-keeping



Kendra Keels

Industry Development Director

Record-keeping is a cornerstone of a broader calf health strategy that includes nutrition, housing, sourcing, and disease prevention. Calf health is not just about welfare—it directly influences future growth rates, marketing age, and days on feed. For farms, accurate and complete records are essential tools for managing health, optimizing performance, and responding to increasing public concern about antimicrobial use in livestock. Despite their importance, record-keeping practices across farms often fall short. A recent University of Guelph study of dairy producers revealed notable gaps, highlighting the need for improved methods and a stronger commitment to data collection.

While similar data is not yet available for the veal sector, anecdotal evidence suggests that record-keeping practices may be even more variable.

Some key findings included:

- **Incomplete records:** Most producers failed to document all calf health events.
- **Paper-based methods:** Farms relying on manual record-keeping had poorer accuracy compared to those using software systems.
- **Motivation through feedback:** Farmers who analyzed their records regularly saw greater value in maintaining them.
- **Location matters:** Keeping records near the calves improved completeness and timely data entry.

Time constraints are one of the greatest obstacles to effective calf health tracking, especially when records are not stored close to animal housing areas or are recorded manually. Many producers also lack clear incentives to keep detailed records—when data is not routinely analyzed or translated into actionable insights, its perceived value diminishes.

Fortunately, improvements can be made with simple adjustments:

1. **Digital solutions** – Mobile apps tailored for producers can streamline data collection, reduce errors, and provide valuable analytics. A user-friendly system that delivers meaningful insights on calf health trends could drive stronger adoption.
2. **Proximity of records** – Locating record logs in or near calf housing ensures easier access, improving accuracy and consistency. When data is recorded immediately after treatment or illness identification, it is less prone to omissions or misreporting.

3. **Regular analysis and feedback** – Reviewing data with veterinarians or farm managers helps producers recognize trends, implement improvements, and make informed management decisions. The more valuable the insights, the greater the incentive to keep detailed records. Producers can also use their records to benchmark calf health metrics—such as morbidity and mortality rates—against previous years or industry averages.

For veal farmers, record-keeping is a fundamental part of business success. The Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) provides a range of practical tools to support producers in tracking essential data. These include:

Visitors' Log – Helps trace potential disease exposure.

Livestock Movement Logs – Ensure calves are properly traced from arrival to departure.

Health & Treatment Records – Required for disease tracking and antimicrobial monitoring.

Mortality Records – Maintaining mortality records is not only a best practice—it's a requirement under the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Veal Cattle* and helps assess herd health over time.

Feed and Water Tracking – Essential for quality control and regulatory compliance.

Pest Control Log – Helps maintain biosecurity and barn management.

Downloadable and fillable templates are available here: <https://vealfarmers.ca/record-keeping-templates>.

Conclusion

Farm records tell the story of your herd and your operation. While record-keeping can seem like a tedious task, the benefits are undeniable—it drives better management, supports disease prevention, and ensures compliance with industry standards. By implementing digital solutions, maintaining records in key locations, and prioritizing routine data analysis, veal producers can take meaningful steps toward stronger calf health management.

Visit <https://vealfarmers.ca> for more record-keeping tools, resources, and insights that can help optimize your farm's productivity and ensure the best possible outcomes for your veal cattle. ■

This project is funded in part by the Governments of Canada and Ontario under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), a 5-year, federal-provincial-territorial initiative.



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Bedding, the simple solution

The power of bedding is often overlooked on the farm, but it's actually a simple and economical solution to some leading calf health challenges. In fact, deep straw bedding can help producers minimize respiratory disease, scours and reduced growth – three of the leading calf health problems – and it's a good place to start if a herd is experiencing health issues.

Veal Farmers of Ontario has a resource called *A producer guide to evaluating nesting scores* that offers practical tips and photos for producers about how to get the most bang out of the bedding buck. It's based on the nesting score system developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison to help guide producers in their calf bedding management.

Why does good bedding matter?

Calves spend up to 20 hours a day or 80 per cent of their time lying down and research suggests that just like cows produce more milk when they spend more time lying down, calves that spend more time resting are also better performers.

It's important that calves use the milk and feed they consume to grow and not to keep warm, especially in the cold winter months. Calves that experience cold temperatures can become stressed, making them more susceptible to disease and lower growth rates. That's why clean, dry, and plentiful bedding is an important part of ensuring animal welfare and keeping calves healthy.

Good bedding is also critical for newly born calves, especially as their navels are drying out and healing. If navel infections are a particular challenge, evaluating and making changes to calf bedding could be a simple and economical solution to better early calf health.

A bed of straw

Straw provides the best insulation for calves and it's also very absorbent – both characteristics that are key to encouraging good calf health. Make sure straw bedding it is at least about three inches (eight centimetres) deep and that it is clean and dry.

If the straw looks clean, but you're not sure if it's dry all the way through, there's a quick and easy way to find out: the kneel test. Kneel in the straw for 20 seconds and if your knees get wet, add another layer of bedding, or remove and replace the bedding entirely. Do this test regularly to monitor bedding quality.

Add smaller amounts of bedding multiple times instead of putting all the straw out at once. This keeps the top layer from becoming compacted and helps with dryness.

Calf Care Corner

FROM SCIENCE TO PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS



The nesting score

How much straw is required will depend on the time of year and whether or not the animals are wearing calf coats. Use the University of Wisconsin-Madison's nesting score system to determine what your calves need:

Nesting score 1: the bedding doesn't cover any part of a calf's foot or leg when the animal is lying down. This score is not appropriate for winter but is observed in the summer when calves are bedded with sand or wood shavings.

Nesting score 2: the calf is nestled slightly, with the lower leg partially covered by bedding and part of the upper leg remaining visible. In winter, this score would only be appropriate if the calf is also wearing a calf coat, which increases the nesting score by one. Without the coat, there is not enough bedding for the calf to nest in and stay sufficiently warm.

Nesting score 3: the calf's legs are not visible when it is lying down in the straw. The straw is deep enough to allow the calf to nest, trapping warm air around its body. The ideal depth is three to four inches (7.6 to 10 centimetres) of shavings, topped with 12 inches (30 centimetres) of straw.

Good bedding and plenty of it is the most economical way to keep calves healthy. Preventing or minimizing illness means avoiding costly treatments and other losses down the road. ■



Your calf care partners

A PRODUCER GUIDE TO EVALUATING NESTING SCORES

Calf managers want simple and economical solutions to their calf health challenges. Not every problem can be solved with an easy solution, but three calf care challenges—respiratory disease, scours, and reduced growth—can all be minimized with an easy fix: deep straw bedding.

Nesting scores should be evaluated when the calf is lying down. It is important to provide lots of dry, long, straw bedding when it is cold to provide insulation for the calf. There should be enough bedding

for the calf to nestle down in it to reduce heat loss and for further protection from drafts. Add bedding often instead of adding large amounts all at once. This will keep the top layer fluffy (rather than compacted) and dry.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has developed a nesting score system. During different times of year, producers may be looking for a different type of score. Adding a calf coat can also impact the nesting score.

Nesting Score		Description
1		When the calf is lying down, bedding does not cover any part of the foot or leg. This nesting score would be observed in the summer, when the calf is bedded with sand or shavings, but is not appropriate for winter.
2		When the calf is lying down, it is nestled slightly in the bedding. Part of upper leg is visible, and part of the lower leg is covered by bedding. In the winter, this score would indicate there is not enough bedding to nest in, unless the calf is wearing a calf jacket, which can increase the nesting score by 1.
3		Deep straw bedding allows a calf to nest and trap warm air around their body. When calves are lying down, their legs should not be visible. Usually 3 to 4 inches (7.6 to 10 centimetres (cm)) of shavings topped with 12 inches (30 cm) of straw is ideal.

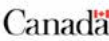
Do not forget to do the kneel test!

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.CALFCARE.CA

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Calf Care Corner

FROM SCIENCE TO PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

VFO unveils new “Calf Care Corner” look at Canada’s Outdoor Farm Show

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) proudly showcased our latest initiatives at the TD Dairy Producer Pavilion during Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in early September. The event was a fantastic opportunity to connect with veal and dairy calf producers, share valuable resources, and engage with our industry partners on key issues impacting our sector.

A highlight at our booth was the debut of the newly redesigned “Calf Care Corner” e-newsletter. While the look has been refreshed, the e-newsletter continues to deliver the same trusted, practical advice – now arriving in inboxes on the first Tuesday of each month. Visitors to the VFO booth were encouraged to subscribe at <https://calfcare.ca>.

VFO extends sincere thanks to everyone who stopped by, including current and former directors from VFO and the legacy Ontario Veal Association, as part of the ongoing celebration of our 10th anniversary. ■



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Off to a healthy start

Building and retaining demand is key for Ontario Veal Appeal

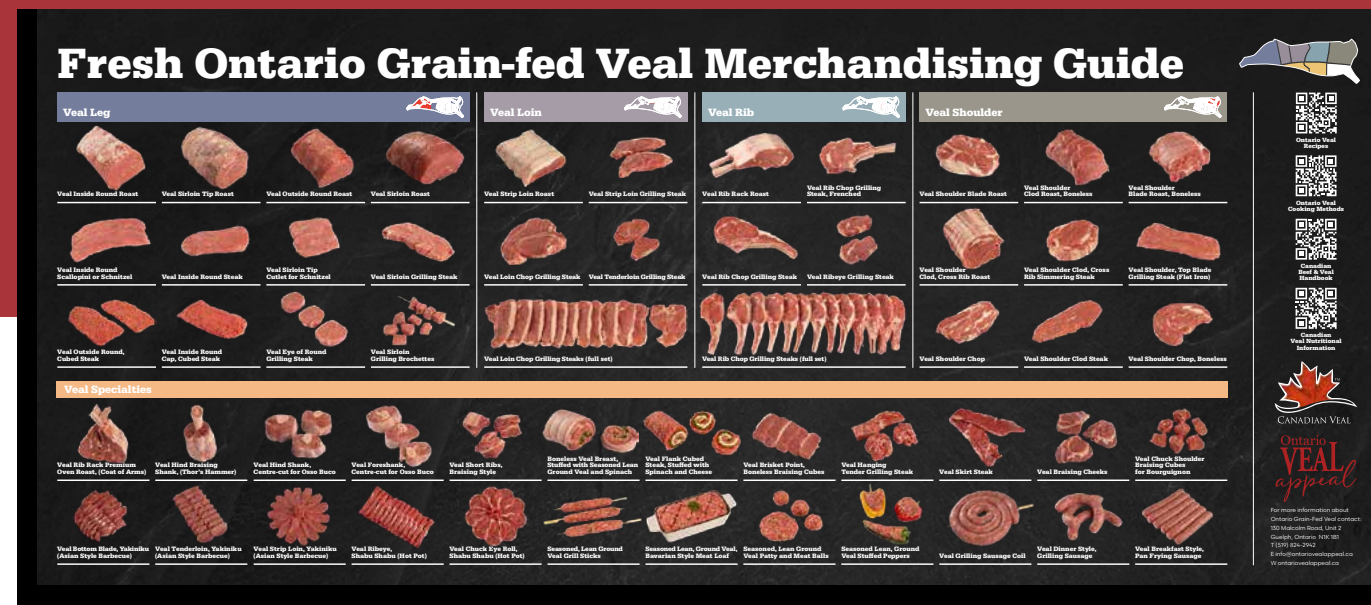


Jennifer Haley
Executive Director

Promoting Ontario veal to the consumer can be challenging when supply is tight and retail prices for veal and beef continue to climb higher and higher. While veal has traditionally been priced higher than beef, we are now seeing in cuts that beef prices have exceeded veal. With the supply chain extremely tight and short, this is exactly the time that we need to continue to invest in consumer marketing programs and promote the value that veal offers to consumers by keeping it top of mind as a protein of choice.

We may not like it very much as producers, but it is during times of low supply that the market relies on imported products – whether outside of Ontario or Canada – to maintain consumption and meet consumer demand. Consumers want to continue to purchase the products that they prefer, and retailers need to be assured of consistent supply. If there was a gap in product availability for extended periods of time, trying to regain the consumer when supply levels rebound will be extremely difficult as consumers and retailers alike will have moved on to other more readily available options.

Keeping Ontario Veal Appeal promotions and programs ‘in front’ of consumers to encourage purchase, whether at home or at a restaurant, is an important strategic goal. Ensuring that the consumer keeps veal ‘top of mind’ as a protein choice when planning meals is another objective. And lastly, leveraging audiences and consumers looking for recipe inspiration from trusted sources to help the Ontario Veal Appeal campaigns extend their reach even further.



Our new Ontario grain-fed veal cuts chart looks fantastic, and we have reached out to licensed veal packers, further processors, and distributors of veal products in Ontario, in collaboration with Meat & Poultry Ontario, to share the cuts chart with them. We have provided copies of the charts for those businesses looking to share this information with their customers.

We have connected with each of the Ontario culinary schools and colleges and have offered veal cuts charts for their students and have

begun shipping these out to schools to support the education of future chefs and culinary professionals and ensure that veal is part of the curriculum.

The nutritional profile of veal is an important story to tell and VFO has partnered with the Dietitians of Canada to be part of their regular emails to over 9,000 of their members across Canada. Dietitians and health professionals make recommendations on diet and nutrition to their clients as a trusted source of information.

By sharing this information with this audience, we are encouraging third-party endorsements to include veal as a low fat, high protein option in the consumer's diet. To start the campaign, we are seeing approximately 50 per cent click through rates which is an encouraging sign that dietitians are looking for nutritional information about veal and recipe solutions they can provide their clients.



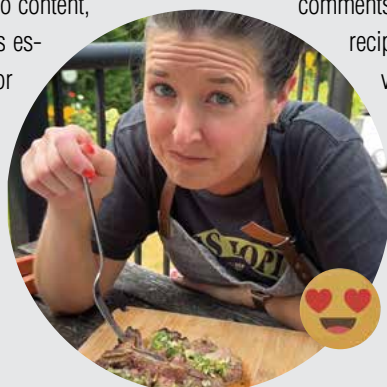
This past summer, Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) partnered with some exciting social media content creators to not only inspire new recipe ideas with consumers, but also to have the endorsement of veal as a protein choice with the popular content creators. Video is key to catching the attention of people scrolling through their feeds.

Partnering with the content creators provided VFO with new recipes to feature, an opportunity to generate additional veal recipe video content, and reach each of the creators established audiences looking for recipes and meal inspiration. Each of the creators interacted with their followers encouraging consumers to try the recipe and engagement levels were high! At the

same time, each of the recipes featured grilling cooking methods, bringing veal top of mind for the barbecue.

The results of these three recipe videos created over 13,000 views from consumers with lots of engagement in the

comments, recipe sharing, and saving of the recipes. This is a positive signal that the videos drive interactions which help to boost algorithms and organic reach. Larger creators bring more views and engagement but the micro-influencers also drive a strong engagement within the comments and feedback.



Recently, veal was featured on the very popular Breakfast Television (BT) show. Going live from Chef Ted Reader's barbecue haven of a backyard, new to the show but not new to viewers, Rick Campanelli (you may know him as a host MuchMusic or ET Canada) raved about the grain-fed veal burger that Chef Ted was creating.

This television feature promoted the attributes of grain-fed veal and directed consumers to our <https://ontariovealappeal.ca> website to find Chef Ted's "Smoked Veal Burgers with Grilled Plums, Taleggio, and Herb Honey Dressing" recipe. Smoking is a popular trend with consumers right now and Chef Ted is one of the gurus of the grill! Cross-promoting this recipe on Chef Ted's social feeds also gives Ontario veal exposure to his followers who are diehard 'meat-a-tarians'!



Chef Ted Reader
Rick Campanelli



Check out these content creators and their veal recipes:

@ftwbychefjill "Mojo Marinated Veal Chop"

@zimmysnook "Veal Chops with Dijon Caper Lemon Butter" (also our featured recipe on page 34)

@thesillykitchen "Veal Caprese Sandwich"

Over the summer we have spent some time updating our photo library and developed a few new recipes as we gear up for the holiday season ahead. With the new photos we have developed some new advertisements for the fall and holiday seasons like the one included on page 5 from the fall issue of *Foodism*. Food media continues to grow in popularity with 'foodie' consumers and we will also be featuring ads in the LCBO *Food & Drink* magazine.

THINK *Veal* ON

VFO continues to partner with Canada Beef to support the implementation of the Think Veal campaign which is the generic veal promotional program funded by levies collected on imported veal. The team undertook a Meta advertising campaign in May and June with Canadian consumers that generated over three million impressions and over 88,000 click throughs to the <https://thinkveal.ca> website. With some new summer recipes and a focus on grilling, the majority of the audience was female, and Quebec and Ontario contributed almost 65 per cent of those looking for more information which tracks with the demographics of Canadian veal consumers being concentrated in these two provinces.



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Ontario VEAL *appeal*



Coming up this fall, we have some exciting promotional programs that will have a continued focus on social media platforms and the traffic this generates with our veal consumer. VFO has established a dedicated group of followers across our channels. The Ontario Veal Appeal marketing programs will focus on generating additional engagement with these engaged consumers through a curated contest rewarding our top followers with prizes and an opportunity to win an exclusive veal cooking class and an Ontario veal dinner with our brand ambassador John Catucci!

As we continue to see the volatility in the North American cattle markets, we need to have a longer-term lens of supply and demand to ensure we remain focused on the veal consumer. Continuing to promote, engage, and interact with our veal consumer now will provide a return on investment down the road. ■



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Making investment decisions with ROI



John Molenhuis, Business Analysis & Cost of Production Specialist
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Agribusiness

The term return on investment (ROI) is used in many businesses including farm businesses. Business owners are constantly making investment decisions and trying to make the most profitable choices. ROI is a financial ratio that measures whether these choices are profitable.

When referring to investment, it is typically thought of as capital assets like land, buildings, and equipment, but it can also include production practice changes. Changes in rations, bedding material, seeding rates or fertilizer programs can all be evaluated using ROI.

The formula for ROI is:

$$\left(\frac{\text{Net return}}{\text{Initial cost of investment}} \right) \times 100 = \text{Return on investment \%}$$

The formula, typically expressed as a percentage, is simple but arriving at ROI can be complex. Net return, calculated as benefits minus costs, tends to be the complicating factor since there can be a lot of unknowns with new investments. You will need to make assumptions on the expected benefits and costs, with benefits often more challenging to estimate.

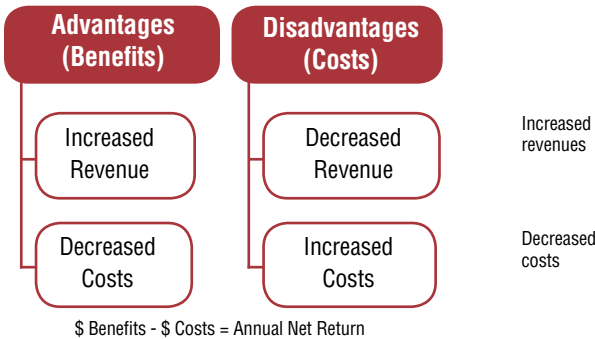
Partial budgets are a tool for breaking down what will change with investment decisions and are helpful in thinking through the choice in the following categories:

- Advantages (benefits): what are the added revenues and decreased costs,
- Disadvantages (costs): what are the decreased revenues and increased costs.

Do your best to consider all possible changes in these areas. Figure 1 shows the format of a partial budget. Positive annual net return, when benefits outweigh costs, indicates the investment makes sense for your farm. Plug the annual net return into the ROI formula to determine what the ROI is for the investment.

Figure 1: Partial Budget

What changes with the new practice/technology/equipment?



If information to help estimate the advantages and disadvantages is not available, one way to reduce the unknowns is to run small-scale tests on-farm to understand how the investment will perform on your farm. Rent equipment with the new technology first or try a new ration ingredient on a small lot of calves and track the results to see if it makes sense in investing.

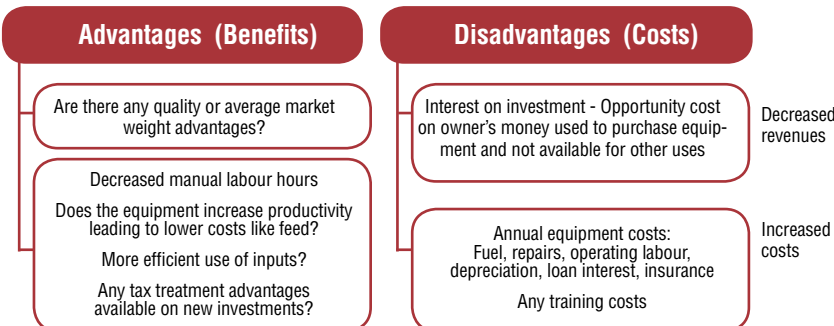
If you are looking to change a feed ingredient, for example, the cost of the investment will be the amount of the new ingredient fed multiplied by its price. The partial budget will then project any changes and calculate the net return. If the new ingredient is more expensive this will increase cost, but it may also improve productivity, which is a benefit. But how you estimate these benefits is not always easy. Productivity may increase in terms of daily weight gain or feed conversion leading to lower feed costs. There may be animal health gains lowering veterinary costs or increasing productivity. Good records on your current productivity are needed to quantify these differences.

Estimating ROI for short-term investments like production inputs that are used within one production cycle is more straight-forward as the benefits and costs occur all within the one production cycle. Capital asset investments with lifespans more than one year will take more effort in calculating ROI since benefits and costs occur over multiple years. The annual net return needs to be calculated for each year and averaged over the life of the investment to arrive at an average annual net return.

For capital assets, the initial cost of the investment is the purchase price or construction cost. The annual costs of these assets used in the partial budget will be items like fuel, repairs, labour, depreciation, interest, and insurance. Figure 2 gives an example of things to consider in an investment of labour-saving equipment. One or more of the areas may not apply; there may be no quality or average market weight advantages for instance. On tax treatment, there may be tax provisions to accelerate capital cost allowance on new equipment that will decrease the farm's income tax liability.

Figure 2: Partial Budget

Example: adding labour-saving equipment



Assess the economic impact of each of these over the life of the equipment to arrive at the Annual net return (Benefits – Costs). If the labour-saving equipment, costing \$200,000, is estimated to have an average annual net return of \$20,000 the ROI is:

$$\left(\frac{\$20,000}{\$200,000} \right) \times 100 = 10\% \text{ ROI}$$

You may have a target ROI that the investment needs to achieve for you to go ahead or you can also compare the ROI with other alternatives to decide on the best choice. When you hear ROI claims promoting new investments be sure you know what is included in their calculation to fully understand and evaluate the claims.

Farm businesses do not have unlimited funds to invest, making the best choices on where to invest is important. Whether you are considering changes to production practices or looking at new capital assets for your farm, ROI can be especially useful in making that decision. ■

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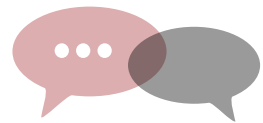
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INDUSTRY UPDATES



VFO Director re-elected VP of CVA

Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) is pleased to announce the re-election of VFO Director Judy Dirksen as Vice-President of the Canadian Veal Association (CVA), at a recent CVA Annual General Meeting. Dirksen, who first joined the CVA Board in 2009, farms with her family near Harriston. Dirksen has served as the CVA Vice-President since 2018, and brings extensive board experience to her role, serving on the VFO Board since inception and prior to that with the legacy Ontario Veal Association, where she was Chair for 10 years.

Bob Wynands, a Quebec grain-fed veal producer, was re-elected to the position of President. Joining Dirksen on the CVA Board are Philip Kroesbergen and Kyle Roes as the Ontario representatives. The CVA is the national voice of Canada's veal farmers, collaborating with industry partners to achieve common goals for the veal sector. The CVA Board is comprised of delegates from the Ontario and Quebec veal sectors.

VFO celebrates Local Food Week

June 2 to 8 was Local Food Week – an opportunity to celebrate the abundance of fresh, healthy food grown, produced, and processed right here in Ontario and our hardworking farmers who dedicate themselves every day to providing safe, nutritious food for everyone across the province to enjoy. VFO promoted Local Food Week on our social accounts, thanking our supply chain partners and sharing where to find our FarmFood360° video featuring Ontario veal farmers. Producers were also encouraged to get involved on social using #loveONfood and sharing their favourite way to choose local.

VFO joins Minister's roundtable ahead of FPT meeting

Dylan Yantzi, VFO Vice Chair, participated in a roundtable in late June with the Honourable Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness and industry colleagues to discuss key issues impacting Ontario farmers. Minister Jones was gathering feedback and insights ahead of the virtual Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Agriculture Ministers meeting in July.

Yantzi called attention to helping farmers address cash flow and inflation-

ary challenges through the modernization of AgriStability and permanently making the interest-free portion of the Advanced Payments Program \$250,000. He also highlighted the need to protect the veal and red meat sector, which are export-dependent, from US tariffs and reduce interprovincial trade barriers.

VFO hosts OMAFA staff for veal farm tour

Kyle Roes, VFO Director, and Patrick MacCarthy, VFO Policy Advisor, hosted staff from the Farm Finance Branch with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAF) for a farm tour and Risk Management Program discussion on June 26.

VFO continues to collaborate with OMAFA on a number of important files and was pleased to help our government colleagues learn more about veal production and the important contributions our sector makes to the Ontario economy.



Photo (L to R): Sami Zaher, Kellie Johnston, Kellan Eckstrom, Kyle Roes

VFO welcomes Byrne as new Chair of OFPMC

VFO welcomes Mr. Brendan Byrne as the new Chair of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission (OFPMC) following his appointment by the Ontario government, effective July 29, 2025. Having collaborated with Mr. Byrne in his previous role as Chair of Grain Farmers of Ontario through the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, VFO looks forward to con-

tinuing to work with Mr. Byrne on the issues that impact the dairy calf and veal sectors and how to ensure regulated boards can continue to advocate for their members. VFO would also like to thank Ms. Amy Cronin for her leadership, passion, and commitment to Ontario's regulated marketing boards during her time as Chair.

Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan licence fee changes

Please be advised that effective August 1, 2025:

- The federal levy collected on Newfoundland and Labrador cattle marketed in any Canadian province increased to \$2.50.
- The federal levy collected on Saskatchewan cattle marketed in any Canadian province increased to \$5.25.

As a reminder, licence fees/check-off are to be paid and remitted to VFO for the province they are sold in (Ontario) and at the rate of the province the calves were born in.

New playlists added to VFO's YouTube channel

Did you know VFO has a YouTube channel? Explore our newly curated playlists featuring expert advice from our recent on-demand webinar series and popular presentations on veal cattle nutrition.

Visit our channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@OntarioVeal>. Subscribe today and stay in the loop with the latest tools and tips to help your farm thrive!

Grain-fed veal fact sheets

VFO has developed a series of fact sheets that will help answer common questions about starting and operating a grain-fed veal farm. Recent releases include updated versions of the purchasing calves and on arrival protocols fact sheets, as well as the new deadstock fact sheet.

Learn more at <https://vealfarmers.ca/producer-information/grain-fed-veal-factsheets>.

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 producer 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. ■

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f y t i n

From the barn to the city: FARMtoberfest is coming to Kitchener-Waterloo



Jessica McCann, Communications Coordinator
Farm & Food Care Ontario

Farm & Food Care Ontario's (FFCO) 2025 Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) events kicked off on June 14, in Innerkip at Hoenhorst Farms, a fourth-generation dairy farm owned by the Arriaga-Wensink family. The event welcomed 2,200 guests, some travelling from as far as Toronto, and featured participation from more than 40 commodity groups and industry organizations with booths.

The festivities continued in Norfolk County, on August 23, where BOTF took place across two locations: the Norfolk County Fairgrounds and Schooley Orchards/Apple Hill Lavender, for a tour through an Ontario apple orchard and lavender fields. Hundreds of guests visited the two stops, where they met with local farmers and food producers to learn more about how their food is grown and raised.

Now BOTF is set to take on an urban twist. The third and final event of 2025, FARMtoberfest, is taking place during Oktoberfest in Kitchener-Waterloo — Canada's largest Bavarian festival! This unique, family-friendly event will transform the city's streets bringing the best of Ontario's farms to the heart of Kitchener on Friday, October 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This event offers an exceptional opportunity to showcase agriculture to a massive and diverse urban audience. FARMtoberfest will be joining the Willkommen Platz, which welcomes over 35,000 urban and suburban visitors annually.

Scheduled on a P.A. Day and coinciding with Thanksgiving weekend, FARMtoberfest will have something for everyone to enjoy.

- Guests can get up close with modern farm equipment
- Meet real farm animals and learn how they're raised
- Explore food and farming exhibits that connect them with where their food comes from
- Take home educational materials and lots of other fun giveaway items

Above all, guests will have a chance to connect directly with Ontario's farming community.

These events are made possible thanks to the support of industry partners like **Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO)**. From recipe booklets to

educational pamphlets, VFO's resources have been shared at each 2025 BOTF, reaching thousands of guests across the province. VFO's ongoing support — along with the dedication of additional organizations and farmer volunteers — helps make each event engaging and memorable for visitors of all ages.

As the final BOTF event of 2025, FARMtoberfest is a chance to experience the sights, sounds and stories behind farming in Ontario — as part of this already highly successful event.

For more information or to reserve your tickets, please visit FarmFood-CareON.org. For partnership opportunities, or to host a booth or exhibit at the event, please contact info@farmfoodcare.org. ■




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Biosecurity stop signs and videos

The Ontario Livestock & Poultry Council (OLPC) has biosecurity stop signs in stock and can be ordered by downloading an order form from <https://ontlpc.com/resources.html>, calling the office 519-787-4322, or emailing Susan Fitzgerald at susan.tfio@bell.net

Stop signs are \$20.00 + HST per sign. Orders will be shipped after payment is received. Payment can be made by cheque and mailed to:

Ontario Livestock & Poultry Council
195 St. David Street S., 3rd Floor
Fergus, ON N1M 2L4

OLPC also has biosecurity videos on DVD. The videos work well for training non-agricultural staff and for 4-H or school groups. You can view the videos at <https://ontlpc.com/videos.html>. There is no charge for the videos. ■





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Engineering a better farm

Livestock industry making connections with Waterloo's engineering school



Lilian Schaer
for Livestock Research Innovation Corporation



It's been a year since Dr. Mary Wells, Dean of Engineering at the University of Waterloo (UW), headlined a panel discussion on engineering a better farm at the annual Livestock Research Innovation Corporation (LRIC) symposium.

It was an early part of LRIC's work to learn what on-farm challenges – identified by Ontario's livestock commodities – could be solved with engineering while also starting to make connections with some of Ontario's engineering schools to introduce them to possibilities offered by the agriculture sector.

Early this summer, UW Engineering hosted the Future of Ag Tech Symposium, welcoming members of the livestock industry to its Waterloo campus to showcase its innovation and tech capacities.

Climate change, emerging diseases, changing societal expectations, and an evolving regulatory environment are all big picture challenges facing the livestock sector, and according to LRIC CEO Kelly Somerville, finding effective solutions will need innovation and a willingness to do things differently.

"It's still important that livestock farmers focus on continuous improvement and efficiency in production, but issues like reducing antimicrobial use or finding ways to reduce emissions also matter – and they go beyond the research and innovation capacity of a single livestock commodity," Somerville says.

This means the industry needs expertise in automation, engineering, or computer science, for example, that can be applied to support the better-



ment of the livestock sector.

That's why, for the past several years, LRIC has been encouraging cross-sectoral research approaches and building relationships with scientists and experts not traditionally linked to agriculture who can bring new perspectives to the table.

Waterloo is home to Canada's largest engineering school, which is among the world's top 50 for engineering and technology, as well as the world's largest co-operative education program. UW Engineering has an annual research budget of approximately \$80 million and more than 10,500 students.

"We don't have an agriculture or food school, but there is a lot of engineering at Waterloo with professors who are interested in the sector but don't have the connections with the industry," said Michele Van Dyk, UW Industry Engagement Manager. "We do a lot of research here, and we are looking for agtech applications."

This includes robotics and automation, vision and imaging systems, data capture technologies, wireless communications, sensor development, artificial intelligence and explainable decision-making, cybersecurity, logistics and supply chain optimization, remote monitoring, climate resilience, energy efficiency, air quality, biomedical devices, biomanufacturing, epidemiology, and more.

Wearable technologies, for example, are being developed to provide real-time health monitoring and could soon enable wearable drug delivery

systems. In robotics, new systems are being designed to automate repetitive tasks, helping to reduce labour costs while ensuring consistency in areas like livestock feed, or growing crops.

Computer vision and image analysis are being used to support remote sensing via drones and satellites, offering detailed insights into field conditions and land use. Wireless and remote monitoring technologies are enabling RFID tracking and advanced movement detection, while sensors are being used to detect water leaks and monitor gas emissions.

Meanwhile, circular economy innovations are turning plastic, crop residues, and livestock waste into sustainable products, including bioplastics and renewable fuels, such as ethanol, hydrogen, and biodiesel.

In addition to making connections between researchers and agricultural organizations, Waterloo's well-known co-op program is an excellent way to introduce engineering students to the opportunities and technology in agriculture.

Through a four- or eight-month work term, students are embedded with companies to tackle actual projects and work assignments; many students return to a former co-op employer following graduation for full-time, permanent work.

"We are developing a talent pool, and we have the skills you need in data analysis, programming, robotics, and artificial intelligence, but we also put emphasis on teaching soft skills like communications, critical thinking, customer service, and project management," explained Alyssa Kuron, Industry Strategist, Co-operative and Experiential Education at UW at the event.

This could be one way for the sector to attract a new generation of workers to help address the ongoing shortage of skilled labour in particular.

Kuron encouraged ag sector employers to think about the roles that need filling in their organizations and to consider UW co-op – not just in engineering but across all of UW's six faculties – to fill the gap. Government programs are available to support co-op student wages, she noted.

LRIC will continue to nurture its burgeoning relationship with UW, as well as work on outreach to other engineering schools, as part of its ongoing mandate to drive innovation in Ontario's livestock sector.

"New approaches and initiatives like Engineering a Better Farm that expand our horizons beyond those of just our sector are what's needed to help the livestock industry rise to the challenges of the future," Somerville says. ■

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.



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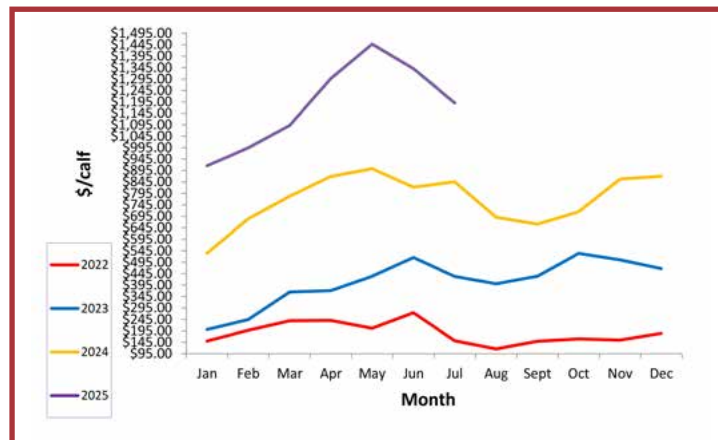


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VEAL MARKET INFORMATION

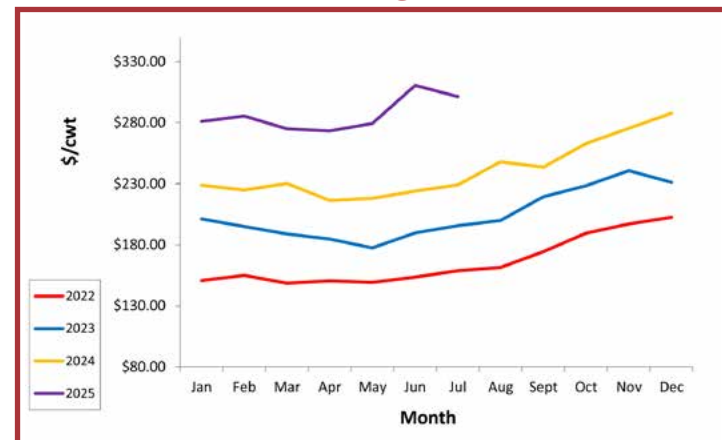
This information is collected from various sources and disseminated by Veal Farmers of Ontario.

Bob Calf Pricing



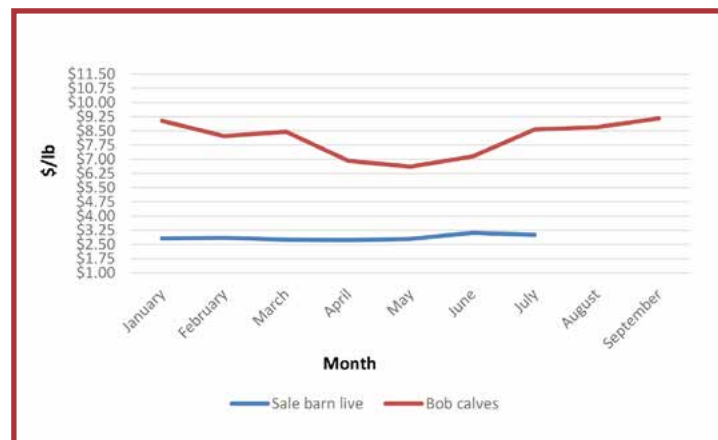
This price range is collected and tabulated from participating sale barns throughout Ontario based on average pricing. This information is used to follow trends.

Sale Barn Veal Pricing



This 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 (8 months previous)

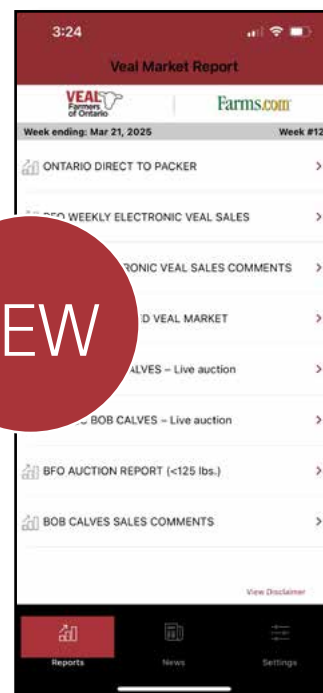


This graph is used to compare the finished price from both the sale barn and rail grade pricing to the bob calf prices eight months prior. This information could help when deciding on the purchase prices of calves and what market they will be shipped in. This information gives a quick glance at both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

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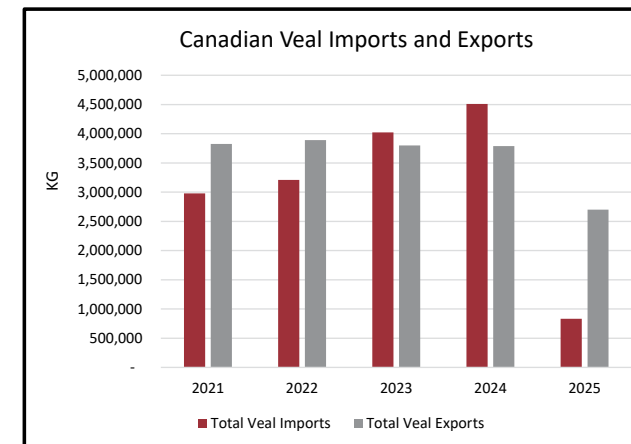


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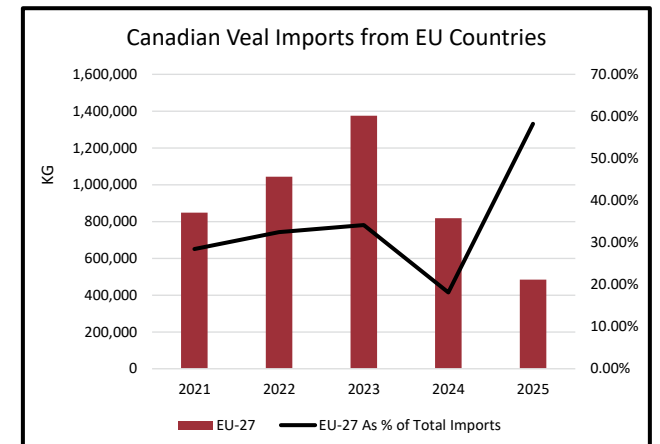
Veal Trade Tracker

30-Jun-25

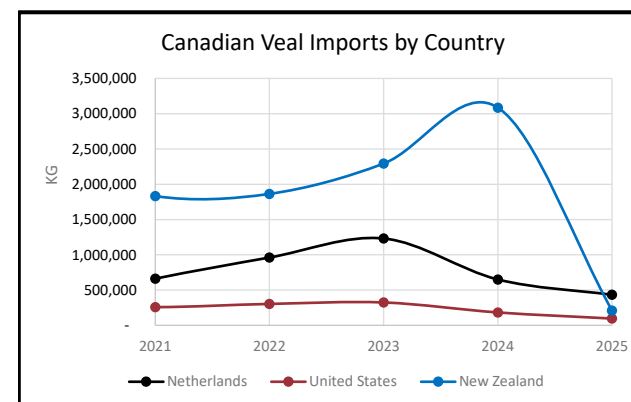
A quarterly snapshot of Canada's veal trade



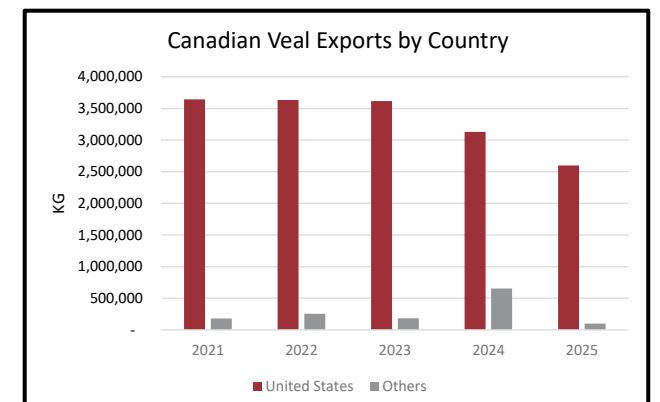
Throughout the first half of 2025 veal exports significantly exceed imports. In 2025, year to date imports (by volume) have risen by 54% compared with this time in 2024, while exports rose at an even faster pace, increasing by 71%.



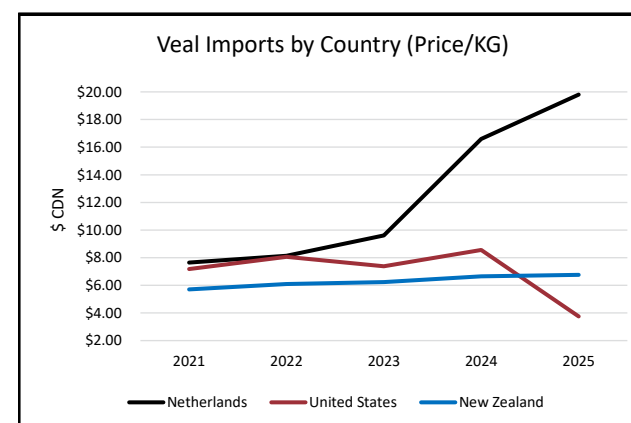
The volume of veal imports from the EU represents 58% of Canada's total veal imports (black line). Imports from the EU fell sharply in 2024 replaced by cheaper cuts from New Zealand, but have rebounded in early 2025 and are now surpassing previous levels.



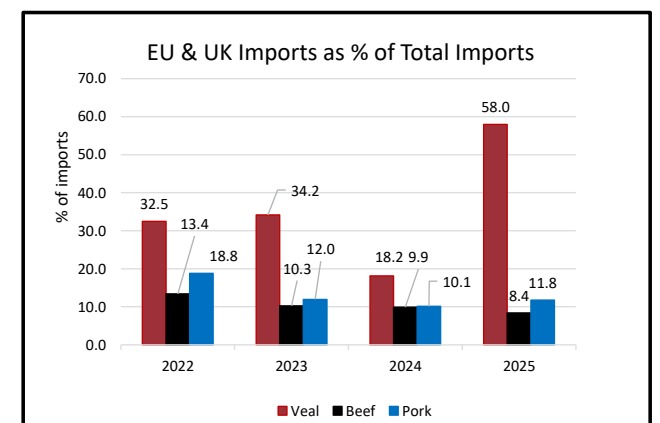
In 2025, imports from the United States are remaining consistent with 2024 levels. Imports from New Zealand have declined remarkably, decreased by half compared to this time in 2024. Half of Canada's veal imports thus far in 2025 are from the Netherlands.



The first half of 2025 saw the strongest level of veal exports to the USA in the past decade. This was likely in response to the ongoing potential tariffs proposed by the United States.



The per kilogram price of veal imported from the Netherlands rose significantly again in 2025 and remains higher than other countries. The value of American imports fell considerably in early 2025, while the value of New Zealand imports held relatively steady.



When compared to beef and pork, the share of veal being imported into Canada from the EU and UK is significantly higher. Imports in the first half of 2025 have expanded this discrepancy even further.

Data retrieved from AAFC and Statistics Canada, red meat section.

Ontario
VEAL
appeal

Grilled Veal Chops with Dijon
Caper Lemon Butter

If you have never grilled veal chops before, you are in for a treat. With just a handful of ingredients and a simple prep, you can have tender, juicy chops on the table in under 30 minutes. The grill does most of the work, giving the meat a beautiful char while keeping the inside perfectly moist.

The Dijon Caper Lemon Butter is made ahead in minutes and melts over the hot chops right before serving, adding a bright, tangy, and buttery finish that tastes like you spent hours in the kitchen. This is a foolproof recipe that is as perfect for a casual weeknight as it is for impressing dinner guests.

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 10–12 minutes
Rest Time: 5 minutes
Servings: 4

Ingredients:

For the Veal Chops

- 4 Ontario Veal Rib Chops, about 1½ inches thick
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the Dijon Caper Lemon Butter

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley
- 2 teaspoons capers, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- Pinch of chili flakes (optional)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions:

Make the butter

- In a small bowl, mix the softened butter with Dijon mustard, parsley, capers, lemon zest, chili flakes (if using), salt, and pepper.
- Spoon the mixture onto a piece of parchment paper or plastic wrap. Roll into a log and refrigerate until firm or freeze for 10–15 minutes if you are short on time.

Prep the chops

- Remove the veal from the fridge about 30–45 minutes before and let it rest at room temperature (loosely covered).
- Pat the veal chops dry with paper towels.
- Rub lightly with olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper on both sides.



Grill the chops

- Preheat your grill to medium-high heat (about 400°F).
- Grill veal chops for 4–5 minutes per side, or until the internal temperature reaches 135°F for medium. Adjust the timing for preferred doneness
- Transfer chops to a plate, tent loosely with foil, and let rest for 5 minutes.

Serve

- Place on a serving platter or individual plates, and slice a round of Dijon Caper Lemon Butter and place one on top of each hot chop.
- Allow the butter to melt slightly before serving.
- We served it here with grilled corn and a village salad. ■

Recipe courtesy of Jimmy's Nook (ZimmysNook.ca).



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Licenced dealers

As a veal (bob calves, started/preconditioned calves, and finished veal cattle) producer, you should be dealing with licenced dealers who are remitting veal licence fees/check-off on behalf of the farmers they are collecting from. If you are selling bob calves from your dairy farm, the licence fee/check-off is to be collected and remitted by the person purchasing those calves. If you sell your calves to a sales barn, the licence fees/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 licenced, ask to see the licence, check the Agricorn website at <https://agricorp.com> or contact the VFO office.

2025 VFO licence fee remittances

Ontario Regulation 58/15 Veal Cattle Marketing 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 pre-conditioned 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

Agricorn 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 Agricorn. Visit <https://agricorp.com> or call 1-888-247-4999 for more information. ■

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THE BIOLOGY OF CONDEMNATIONS PRODUCER WORKSHOP



This workshop is open to producers raising veal and dairy-beef, providing essential insights into organ condemnations and their impact on herd health, feeding efficiency, and overall production.

Each condemned organ is more than a loss — it signals potential health concerns, nutritional gaps, and management inefficiencies that could be limiting animal performance. By understanding what condemnations truly represent, producers can identify preventable diseases, refine feeding strategies, and enhance animal care to ensure optimal growth and market readiness.

Why attend?

1

Organ and whole carcass condemnations – Recognize their impact on efficiency and herd health.

2

Underperforming animals – Address feeding and management inefficiencies to improve performance.

3

Understanding the biology of condemnations – Learn what causes them and how they affect production.

Producers attending this workshop will gain practical strategies to enhance herd health, increase feed efficiency, and boost production outcomes across veal and dairy-beef operations.

Registration details

Thursday, November 6, 2025

Tavistock & District Memorial Hall
3 Adam St., Tavistock, ON N0B 2R0



10:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Registration opens at 9:30 a.m.



Producers \$30/person

Industry partners interested in attending can email us at events@vealfarmers.ca.
Registration closes Monday, November 3, 2025. Cancellations and no-shows will not be refunded. Applicable fees are extra.



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Questions?

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