



OCA Weekly Update – January 8, 2010

Please note that there will be no weekly Update on January 15, 2010.

The weekly update will return on January 22, 2010.

Happy New Year.



Herd Health Problems?



Ask the OCA Vet on Call!

- Valid questions from Ontario beef producers will all be answered in due time
- Out-of-province beef producers' questions will be answered or rejected at the discretion of OCA staff and Dr. Mac Littlejohn, although it is preferred that your provincial resources be exhausted beforehand
 - If you are not a valid beef producer, your question will not be entertained

Submit your question via <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/ask-a-vet/vet-form.asp>

All submissions will be reviewed for validity before a response is issued.

Please expect at least a 2-day wait, depending on Web traffic.

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A) Request for Proposals – Phase II of the Farm Innovation Program (FIP)

The Farm Innovation Program (FIP) is a \$12,000,000 program that is part of Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The FIP is one of the Innovation and Science Suite of programs for Growing Forward in Ontario.

FIP is aimed at boosting agricultural research, competitiveness, and productivity in Ontario's agricultural sectors. The FIP will be administered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC) on behalf of Agriculture, Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

OCA will be managing the projects for the beef sector. All applications for beef projects must be submitted through OCA for approval.

Phase II applications are due to OCA by *January 25, 2010* via email to jennifer@cattle.guelph.on.ca.

For more information, a letter from the OCA Research Committee Chair and relevant forms, please go to www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/research/schedule.asp

B) Nominate a Greenbelt Grower/Producer for the Friend of the Greenbelt Award 2010

Do you know a grower/producer in the Greenbelt who deserves to be recognized for their leadership, innovation and sustainable farming practices? If you do, now is the time to nominate them for the Friend of the Greenbelt Award and help us recognize and celebrate growers/producers in the Greenbelt. To enter for a chance to win, applicants must, by January 18th, 2010 email a completed form (available at www.greenbelt.ca) to nomination-at-greenbelt.ca or fax to 416-960-0030 or mail the completed form to:

Greenbelt Growers/Producers Nomination Committee
Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation
68 Scollard Street, Suite 201
Toronto, Ontario M5R 1G2

You can download copies of this form as well as the Official Nomination Rules (including information on the nomination process, the review process and the timeline) at www.greenbelt.ca or contact us at (416) 960-0001 or nomination-at-greenbelt.ca for more information.

C) Attention Greenbelt Growers/Producers - Sign up Now for the Greenbelt Farmers' Online Market

The Greenbelt Farmers' Online Market makes it easy for Greenbelt farmers to connect to consumers and institutions by providing information about their farm – what they grow and when they grow it. Users searching the Marketplace to buy food for their families are directed to pick-your-owns and on-farm markets and corporate/ institution/ wholesalers/ and food service purchasers are directed to farms who wholesale their products.

If you're a grower/producer in Ontario's Greenbelt region, the *Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation* along with the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance and the Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Committee

(GTAAAC) are asking you to add your farm profile to the Greenbelt Farmers' Online Market found at www.greenbeltfresh.ca.

Creating a farm profile is free and simple. Visit www.greenbeltfresh.ca and click on "Attention: Growers and Producers" to access the online data sheet. If you would like to fill out a paper form instead simply contact the *Greenbelt Foundation* at www.greenbelt.ca or call us at 416.960.0001.

Are you (or do you know) a University or College student looking for the opportunity to enter a cash prize contest that will allow the participant to share their ideas? Send a video submission to the Excellence Award for Agricultural Students for your chance to earn \$1000!

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council wants to help agricultural students develop their communication skills by providing them an opportunity to give an oral presentation on a subject related to farm management. The oral presentations will be submitted in form of a video blog sent in by email or regular mail. The email can contain the video itself or a link to the video on a site, such as YouTube.

Videos should include your name, year and field of study, program, and school attending. Your video should be 3-5 minutes in length and answer the question "How do changing consumer trends affect farm management responsibilities and styles?" The content should keep the attention of the audience while being informative and innovative.

The five winning videos will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and will be posted on our Web site.
<http://www.farmcentre.com/>

For more information about this year's award click here.
<http://www.farmcentre.com/Features/TheNewFarmer/Resources/StudentAwards/apply.aspx>

D) Ontario Independent Meat Processors' 30th Anniversary: Proud of our history and prepared for the future

Ontario Independent Meat Processors (OIMP) is celebrating 30 years as the representative voice of the province's independent meat and poultry processing industry. The association is commemorating its growth and accomplishments over the past three decades, while taking steps to prepare the industry's workforce for the future.

"We enter the new decade as an association that is bigger and stronger than ever," said Tony Facciolo, President, OIMP. "With more voices and more collective experience behind us, we're better equipped to help Ontario's family-owned and operated meat processing and retail businesses meet the challenges they face now and in the years to come."

Among the biggest hurdles ahead is a demographic shift in the industry's workforce. OIMP recently developed *The Business Case for Training Investment in Ontario's Meat Processing Sector*, a document that sets out five goals for 2015 and provides seven recommendations to ensure the sector is ready for the future. "Ensuring our people have the right skills is one of the keys to our sustainability and our future success," said Facciolo. "With our workforce facing ever-increasing retirements over the next decade, we believe the only choice is to be proactive and prepare."

OIMP's anniversary celebrations began in the fall of 2009, with the distribution of 20,000 copies of the *Ontario Finest Meat 2010 Calendar* throughout the province. The association will mark the milestone at OIMP's 30th Annual Conference – *The Meating Place* – in Niagara Falls, February 26-28.

"In addition to presenting a full slate of professional development and networking opportunities, our Conference will give us an opportunity to look at how far we've come as an association, as an industry, and as a community, and to set the tone for the next 30 years," said Laurie Nicol, Executive Director, OIMP.

Ontario Independent Meat Processors (OIMP) is the representative voice of the independent meat processor in Ontario, working closely with agricultural and commodity organizations and various levels of government for over 30 years. OIMP's membership includes 205 Business Members (meat and poultry processors, retailers and wholesalers); 56 Associate Members (industry suppliers); and five Affiliate Members (not-for-profit

organizations that support OIMP's objectives). The meat sector represents 20% of Ontario's food manufacturing industry, contributing over \$6.5 billion to the province's economy.

For more information, visit www.oimp.ca.

E) Agricultural Adaptation Council 2009-2010 Board of Directors Elected and Leadership Changes Announced at the 14th Annual Meeting

The Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC) held its 14th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 3, 2009. It was the largest annual meeting in the history of the AAC, with a total of over 200 stakeholders and agricultural leaders attending the event, held at the Delta Hotel and Conference Centre, Guelph.

The AAC's 72 member organizations elected 16 individuals to comprise the AAC Board of Directors. The AAC Board consists of 16 voting members and two non-voting ex-officio liaison representatives from the federal and provincial governments. The AAC Board represents various agricultural sectors in Ontario. All funding decisions are made by the 16 voting members.

Elections for executive positions were also held on December 3, 2009. The new executive for the AAC Board is as follows: (complete board list attached)

- Chair: Jim Rickard, Horticulture
- Vice Chair: John Kikkert, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
- Treasurer: Fred Wagner, Grains, Oilseeds and Specialty Crops
- Secretary: Kristin Ego MacPhail, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Kim Turnbull, Past-Chair of the AAC, announced, at the AGM, that the Executive Director, Angela Stiles, will be pursuing her life-long dream of policing, and will begin Police College in the New Year.

Angela joined the AAC as its second staff member in 1996 and has brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to the AAC team. "Her professionalism and leadership have made significant contributions to the Council. We will miss her but understand and support her decision," says Jim Rickard, AAC Chairperson.

The AAC Executive has appointed Terry Thompson, Operations & Finance Manager, as the interim Executive Director, to provide continued support to the Senior Management team and the AAC Board during this time of transition.

Since the AAC's inception, the Council has been responsible for approving over 2,400 projects, allocating more than \$190 million in funding. Projects supported by the AAC have increased profitability, improved product quality, developed new technologies and new products and markets for Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sector, as well as enhanced the economic viability of the province's rural communities.

The AAC is a non-profit grassroots coalition of 72 agricultural, agri business and rural organizations dedicated to providing financial resources to assist Ontario's agriculture and agri-food industry remain profitable and to grow and maintain its economic strength.

F) Ontario Forum on Agri-Food Traceability

What is traceability and how can I benefit? How should Ontario's traceability system continue to grow?

To answer these and other questions, join us at the Ontario Forum on Agri-Food Traceability. Registration information and the full agenda are now available online at: www.ontario.ca/traceforum.

To register for the forum, call 1-877-424-1300.

Register before December 18 for the early bird discount of \$80. Even better, receive a further \$20 discount if you have a premises identification number with the Ontario Agri-Food Premises Registry. To obtain your premises identification number contact OnTrace at 1-519-766-9292 or www.ontraceagrifood.com.

Following the Forum, on January 29, 2010, OnTrace will be hosting an educational workshop on implementing traceability in your own facility. Space is limited so register early.

The Ontario Forum on Agri-Food Traceability is put on by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/traceforum. To register for the forum or to find out more about the OnTrace workshop, call 1-877-424-1300.

G) Better Business Decisions with BIO

It's a fact that informed beef producers make intelligent decisions. The amount of information you need to know in order to run your business effectively continues to grow - and it can become overwhelming to manage this information effectively.

So let BIO help! Our new bioTrack system, developed with OCA support, lets you capture and use information on an animal – from pedigree to cooler - easily and the way you want to!

bioTrack not only let's you manage data, it provides: easy and automatic age verification with linkage to the CCIA database every 6 hours; the ability to easily get information (within herd indexes or across herd EPD's) on your cows; help with sire selection; and feedlot health, management tools and carcass data .

Another important benefit of bioTrack is that you don't have to worry about losing information if your computer crashes.

If you would like to learn more about bioTrack, please call Brittney Livingston at (519) 767-2665 Ext. 316 or Jamie O'Shea at (519) 400-8974. Ask for a free demonstration of bioTrack either by phone or in person and enjoy special introductory pricing.

H) Amendments to ESA Regulations

See attached flyer

MNR is holding open houses for Habitat Regulation under the *Endangered Species Act* for the American Badger, Barn Owl, Jefferson Salamander, Peregrine Falcon, Wood Turtle, Eastern Prairie Fringed-orchid, Engelmann's Quillwort, Few-flowered Club-rush and the Western Silvery Aster. County Federations and individual farmers may be interested in attending one of the sessions in the attached list. Further information on these sessions is available from the local MNR office. No sign-up is necessary.

I) Farm Credit Canada Forum – "Big Ideas for Your Future"

March 9
Woodbridge, ON
The Royalton
10:00am - 3:00pm

March 11
Kingston, ON
Kingston Gospel Temple
10:00 am - 3:00pm

Cost: FREE

Deadline: February 28, 2010
Sponsored by: Farm Credit Canada

Join us for this special event. FCC Forums are an opportunity to learn, inspire big ideas and network with business owners and operators just like you. Peter Mansbridge, award-winning anchor and interviewer, is keynote speaker at this year's FCC Forum. Lunch is provided.

Contact: 1-800-332-3301

J) Agricultural Symposium

Wednesday, January 13, 2010
A few seats are still available...call now: 705-743-0777 Ext. 2136
[See the attached document for all the details](#)

K) BIC Partners with abc Country Restaurant to Launch Canadian Beef winter Promotion

The Beef Information Centre is partnering with abc Country Restaurant to launch a comfort food promotion featuring several new menu items.

With 30 locations throughout Alberta and British Columbia, abc Country Restaurant's new promotion features include a steak burger 'Benny' and a winter salad topped with sliced steak filet. The promotion runs from December 14 to February 5.

abc Country Restaurant uses Certified Angus Beef (CAB) sourced 100 per cent from Canada, including ground chuck, ground sirloin, bottom round roasts and sirloin filet steaks.

"There are some very creative menu items utilizing beef on this menu," says Judy Nelson, BIC vice chair and a cow-calf producer near Lundbreck, Alta. "Taking the traditional breakfast favourite – Eggs Benedict – and adding Canadian beef is a great idea, as is using the steak filet on a hearty winter salad."

The sirloin filet steak is an innovative example of increasing carcass value. Cut from the bottom muscle of the sirloin – sometimes referred to as the 'chicken muscle' – it is usually ground for stew. Trimming it to produce the filet steak (usually between 4-5 ounces) creates a much higher valued product.

"This is a terrific partnership between BIC and abc Country Restaurant," says Nelson. "Not only do we have an opportunity to drive volume and enhance the reach of the Canadian beef brand mark, abc Country Restaurant recognizes that Canadian beef will positively impact their business and are investing a considerable amount to ensure success."

The promotion features point-of-sale materials, regional marketing, billboards and television advertisements, most featuring the Canadian beef brand mark.

BIC's efforts to maximize demand for Canadian beef and optimize the value of Canadian beef products is funded in part by cattle producers through the National Beef Check-Off, and through beef industry market development funds provided by the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada.

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This report prepared with the assistance of Dr. Doug Powell's team at Kansas State University. This service does not allow emails to be sent by responding to this email directly. If you have questions or comments, please contact Lianne Appleby at lianne@cattle.guelph.on.ca

A) Olympics offer defining moment for food culture

January 03, 2010

OWEN ROBERTS

As Canadians look back on what defined our food culture for the past decade and what shapes the next one, two milestones come to mind: our lone BSE cow, back in 2003, and more lately the impact of the Governor General's appetite for seal heart.

Canada's response to the BSE situation galvanized us as a food nation. Pundits expected beef consumption to plummet when a cow in Alberta tested positive for BSE, sending a panic through the food sector and prompting the U.S. to close its border to Canadian beef. But instead, Canadians rallied behind the sector, and consumption increased.

We knew Canadian beef was a quality product and we put the incident in perspective, while others were using it as an excuse to bar imports. Prices and export markets were slow to come back, though, and the sector has yet to fully rebound from the BSE catastrophe.

But the one-for-all feeling surfaced again in May when Governor General Michaëlle Jean dropped in on one of the country's northernmost communities, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. There, Jean took part in a traditional Inuit ceremony that called for gutting a seal, then eating parts of its innards raw.

Crouching over the carcass, she asked for a piece of the heart and proceeded to swallow the bite-sized piece whole. Doing so made headlines around the world, as her actions came on the heels of the European Union ban on Canadian seal products.

In fact, her indulgence was more than a cultural snack — it was as anti-colonial a statement as they come. Propelled by the publicity, in November the hoity-toity Parliament Hill restaurant added seal to its menu. Like bison and salmon, it became a Canadian delicacy. Even though it's not uniquely Canadian, we have cornered the market on seal.

This isn't exactly the kind of publicity Canada's culinary crowd was anticipating, but they'll take it. They tirelessly extol the virtues of Canadian food to the world, and rarely get this kind of a window to jump through. Now, what will they do with it? Well, there's no question they'll build momentum over the next few weeks with the Winter Olympics. Elora culinary diva Anita Stewart is immersed in the event — she's been summoned by Ottawa to bring chefs from across Canada to Whistler to fashion a coast-to-coast Canadian food extravaganza for media.

And for the agri-food sector, that's a great move. Stewart is skilled at promoting and explaining farming's role in Canadian food, making sure those who raise the food are as lauded as those who prepare it. The whole world will hear about it, courtesy of the global media who'll be covering the Games.

But inevitably the Winter Olympics will end, federal politicians will eventually get back to work and escalating issues will once again rise to the fore, such as world hunger and climate change. Through research, agriculture

has figured out ways to respond to both matters. A lot of work remains, but we've learned how to efficiently produce crops and livestock in one of the agricultural world's most harsh and diverse climates.

This is knowledge that can help feed those who are struggling. Principles behind some of the same technologies and techniques that work in Canada can work elsewhere, too. Harsh is harsh, whether it be cold or hot, arid or wet.

In this new decade we need champions, such as Stewart, who'll stand and be counted on behalf of Canadian agriculture and food. We also need support from those who believe in her Canada-first message. With the media's instant, global reach, it doesn't take many resources to make a big difference.

Owen Roberts teaches agricultural communications at the University of Guelph. His column appears Mondays.

B) Farming future dismal, farm leaders agree; The disappearing family farm

The Post (Hanover)

Fri Jan 8 2010

Page: A5

Section: News

Byline: JON RADOJKOVIC, FOR THE POST;

Dateline: GREY COUNTY

Some hard questions and solutions are being pondered by all three Grey County farm organization leaders and the future doesn't look too good, although there is a possible bright side.

With prices at a dismal low for beef and pork producers, high input costs and general low prices for all commodities, farmers are quitting or leaving in droves. This has resulted in an emptying of the rural countryside which, in turn, is being bought up by large agri-corporate interests.

"I'm not too optimistic right now," said Simon DeBoer, Grey County president of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. "The strangle-hold the large corporations have on farmers frightens me," he added. Grey County Ontario Federation of Agriculture president Ann Marie Watson wants to see the development of a National Food Policy and not the continuation of the "cheap food policy," she said. "[The government] is always encouraging the cheapest, lowest price and that is bad for farmers but also for imports it means health and safety be damned."

"There is no one thing out there, no commodity, to say you can make money from right now," said Sean McGivern, the new Grey County National Farmers Union president. Farmer Michael Schmidt was elected as the vice-president.

Farmer demonstrations in the past few years at Queen's Park and Ottawa have resulted in some attention by urban consumers of the farmer's plight but politically there have been no lasting results.

"We have to show a strength of spirit and be louder but more locally," Watson said.

She was especially exasperated by large recalls of meat and meat products, such as the listeriosis scare, and having the small abattoirs sharing the blame. "The problems were all at the big corp. meat packers but the small guys took the hit," she said. More rules and regulations over these meat crises caused by the big packers have resulted in local closures of small meat suppliers, such as one in Durham last year.

"Just too many regulations that affect the small guy," DeBoer agreed.

In fact, all three local farm association leaders have been agreeing on a lot of issues and have been meeting together to try and solve some local farm problems. "It's been very exciting to be in this group," said Watson. Plans are to continue meeting in 2010 and next, to ask local politicians to join in the discussions.

All three leaders agree that exporting raw food commodities and competing on the world scale is not working here. "Who can make a living farming based on world prices?" asked DeBoer, who farms near Tara.

All three agree the solution has to be supplying and eating local food and finding out what can be grown successfully and locally. McGivern would like to see Grey County have a sales representative go out on the road in Ontario to sell Grey County farm products. This has worked well in other counties such as Prince

Edward County. At the same time our own local county politicians could start the ball rolling by saying there must be a certain percentage of local food in all county-operated operations such as nursing homes, courts and the county administration office. Huron County politicians have enacted a 10 per cent local food requirement in their county-owned operations. As well, the Bluewater school board could also say so much local food must be in school cafeterias.

"The 'Eat Local Movement' is here," agreed Watson. There would be many challenges in supplying local food locally and province-wide, such as distribution, processing plants and the education of consumers.

"When has it become counter-culture to eat food grown locally?" asked DeBoer. "Certainly the carbon footprint would be much better."

A disappointment from 2009 has been the much hyped Canadian Food Labelling legislation passed by the Harper government where retailers can label food that is grown in Canada. The problem is the legislation has no teeth, as it's all voluntary.

"If there is a cost to it, retailers won't spend it if they don't have to," Watson said. "Consumers are not benefitting, farmers are not benefitting. It's been deliberately misleading."

"No matter how much they've worked it's been heartbreaking to see so many family farmers leaving because in the end they have no control over what's going on," said Watson, who lives near Clifford.

"It's a tough thing to make a living on the farm," McGivern says. He works 1,500 acres and has a grain processing operation around Desboro.

C) Fruit, veggie growers 'feeling defeated'; AGRICULTURE: Suspending Parliament hurts efforts;

The St. Catharines Standard

Fri Jan 8 2010

Page: A1

Section: News

Byline: TIFFANY MAYER , STANDARD STAFF;

Count Len Troup and Brenda Lammens among Canadians unimpressed by the recent prorogation of Parliament.

Halting business on Parliament Hill has thrown a kink in the plans of the fruit and vegetable growers who have been lobbying for a cost of production insurance program that would provide their industries with some financial stability in the face of rising labour costs.

"Everything's come to a standstill right now," said Lammens, chairwoman of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association and a Norfolk County asparagus grower.

During a meeting Thursday with The Standard's editorial board, the duo said that without a federal-provincial risk management program, the future looks grim for an industry bombarded by costs they can't control, particularly minimum wage hikes and artificially low prices paid for their produce in grocery stores.

When the hourly pay hits \$10.25 in March, growers' payroll will have increased 28% -- or \$73 million -- in three years, they said. That will slash already slim profits in half for some growers.

The George Morris Centre, an agriculture think tank in Guelph, predicts Niagara's tender-fruit industry could shrink between 40% and 70% as a result.

"The numbers are falling, falling, falling and I don't see any evidence of it stopping because prices in the marketplace are not coming up," Lammens said.

Troup, chairman of the Tender Fruit Producers Marketing Board, who farms in Jordan, and Lammens, said they have worked with hard-hit beef, veal and pork farmers to convince Ontario Agriculture Minister Leona Dombrowsky of the merits of a risk management program that would pay farmers when market prices fall below cost of production.

Farmers would pay the premiums, they said, and similar programs already exist for grains and oilseeds growers.

But, Troup said, it's been left up to them to sell the joint program to Ottawa and the rest of the country in order for Dombrowsky to commit ministry resources to help develop the program.

"It's a situation of I will if he will," Troup said.

They hoped to plead their case at a federal-provincial agriculture ministers meeting this winter. However, those plans were scuttled when Prime Minister Stephen Harper pulled the plug on Parliament last month. As another growing season nears, financial worries are taking their toll emotionally, Lammens said.

"We're being hit in so many different directions right now; we're feeling defeated," she said.

Meanwhile, Lammens and Troup are trying to convince the consumer and grocery chains to be the heroes by paying more for Ontario produce and the benefits they said it offers over imports, including nutritional value, freshness and safety.

But the extra dollar they would like grocery stores to charge on a basket of peaches, for example, should go back to the farmer, not supermarket coffers, they said.

"We wouldn't need to see a lot of increase to make a difference," Lammens said. "It comes down to social conscience."

And some soul-searching. "Do we really matter?"

That's the question a lot of us are asking. Are we important? We're not a big industry. If we went away, there would still be food in grocery stores," Lammens said. "I can't see any solutions immediately."

D) Speaker not sure how beef farmers survive

The Owen Sound Sun Times

Fri Jan 8 2010

Page: A6

Section: News

Byline: JIM ALGIE, FOR THE SUN TIMES;

Quebec beef farmer Gib Drury had a group of Ontario cattle producers licking their chops over provincial subsidy programs not available here.

Drury, chairman of the Canadian Beef Export Federation and a veteran of Quebec farm politics, addressed about 150 farmers Wednesday in Elmwood. He was one of eight speakers during the opening day of Farmers' Week, an annual speakers' series organized by farm groups in Grey-Bruce.

"I don't know how you as beef farmers still survive in the marketplace with us spoiled boys in Quebec next door and equally spoiled boys in Alberta," Drury told his Elmwood audience.

He was at the event to warn of a likely increase in Canadian Cattlemen's Association fees to pay for promotion of Canadian beef here and abroad, but the question of differences in support programs in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta came to dominate the day's discussions.

The talks included an afternoon panel featuring most of the day's speakers, including Drury, Ontario Cattlemen's Association vice-president Curtis Royal and former OCA executive director Mike McMorris, on the future of the province's beef industry. Other speakers were Maple Hill Auction sales manager Andy McCulloch of Hanover, Port Dover-area farmer and independent meat processor Cory Van Gronigen and Larry Thomas, national coordinator for a new, national beef information recording system.

"We're in your market not only buying, but we're selling," Drury said. "It's unfair competition, quite frankly. Many of those who raised questions later agreed.

McMorris, who headed the Ontario Cattlemen's Association during rocky times after the BSE crisis, said "balkanization" of the industry among major beef producing provinces is "one of the really big challenges we face."

Now chief executive officer for a new breeding improvement program for cattle, McMorris said the problem of sorting out interprovincial conflicts is "going to be huge."

"This balkanization makes it very difficult to do things on a national basis," McMorris said. "You see it at the producer level, you can see it at the government program level." Beef producers face low prices after successive years of poor returns caused by a variety of crises. The recent relatively high value of Canadian currency and extremely high grain prices have eaten into profitable beef production for Canadian farmers. A longer-term slump began with the discovery of BSE in an Alberta cow seven years ago, but Drury said beef production has been unprofitable "probably since 1985."

Quebec farmers have the advantage of provincial laws and jointly funded federal-provincial programs that essentially cover farmers' costs, including a calculation for the labour of the farmer. The Quebec insurance plan includes an annual salary calculation of \$42,000 for an average cow-calf producer.

Ontario farm support programs don't come close, Royal said.

Quebec and Alberta have "recognized . . . the value not just of the beef industry but agriculture in their province. I think that's the biggest issue," Royal said. "It's to recognize the value that we put into the economy and we lobby hard to get that point across."

"They come back and tell us they haven't got the treasury," Royal said of recent Ontario government responses to beef farmers' concerns. "The cupboard is bare, that's the new buzz word."

Drury also figures Quebec's richer farm supports are due to the efforts of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles. It's a single general farm organization that lobbies government on behalf of all farmers, while Ontario has three general farm organizations and a variety of independent commodity groups.

"I attribute a big part of the financial crisis to unequal power relationships and the complete inadequacy of farm organizations," Drury said. The former president of the English-speaking Quebec Farmers Association, is also a director of the central UPA, which has taken a strong activist role not only in government and public relations but through capital investments in processing facilities.

The difference in Quebec is that farm protection is a basic element of life, Drury said.

"We have laws in place that protect farmers, to make sure that the Quebec consumer has Quebec products available to them, to create an environment where farming can be sustainable," he said.

Farmers' Week was to continue yesterday with a series of speakers for Dairy Day. Separate sessions are planned on goats today, with sheep and ecological farming Saturday and horses Sunday.

E) We have food issues

The Ottawa Citizen, January 7, 2010

The British government has a new strategy to ensure a sustainable, secure food supply for the next 20 years. Canada's political leaders, by contrast, haven't even begun to talk about this.

This unpreparedness will almost certainly cause unnecessary hardships for Canadian farmers and consumers, sooner than we think. The global crisis in food prices in the second half of the past decade was mitigated somewhat by the global recession, but prices are still high and aren't likely to go down.

A report last year from the respected British think tank Chatham House warned that consumers in the rich world can't expect cheap and abundant food forever -- or at least not if the food system continues as it is, without a major shift in the way food is produced, transported and consumed.

Already, farmers and consumers in wealthy countries have seen some changes. For example, the price of U.S. corn and soybeans -- two major feed crops for livestock -- more than doubled between 2005 and 2008.

Chatham House warns that despite good harvests in most of the world over the last few years, demand outstrips supply. As consumers in countries such as China get wealthier, they adopt a diet that "consumes available resources to no good effect, adding to the upward pressure on prices." Meat, dairy and processed foods require more land, more feed crops, more energy inputs.

Agriculture -- particularly conventional fertilizers and livestock production -- is a major contributor to global warming, which in turn threatens crops, land quality and water supplies. The concept of "food security" must now include environmental sustainability.

The British strategy, Food 2030, recognizes that food production can't be dealt with by a single department. Food safety, nutrition and zoonotic viruses affect human health; agricultural practices, transport, packaging and food waste affect the environment; trade regulations affect international development; food prices affect the economy. Even international security is linked to food: Chatham House predicts the emergence of a new colonialism, in which countries such as China start to use countries such as Sudan as sources of agricultural land.

Interestingly, the British strategy doesn't swallow whole the accepted wisdom of urban eco-foodies. Local food can be best in some sectors, but the British research shows that transportation is actually a fairly small contributor to the overall environmental impact of food. "Not all systems of production have the same greenhouse gas impact and in many cases, emissions from transporting food will be offset by lower production emissions compared to a local alternative." Open international trade has many benefits that shouldn't be discounted out of a slavish adherence to the 100-mile diet.

The strategy is also open to exploring the potential of genetic modification -- a hugely unpopular practice in Europe. If Canada is to develop its own food strategy -- and it should -- it should also be willing to take an objective look at the facts and the big picture. In Canada, it's pointless to have a conversation about agriculture that doesn't include an honest assessment of the supply management system for dairy, eggs and poultry. Whether at the family dinner table or in the House of Commons, food is one topic that is sure to rouse strong opinions. But we can't afford to remain silent and hope that Canada's food supply remains sustainable and secure over the next century despite so many global threats.

F) Cattle/beef sector high priority for federal gov't

Yorkton News Review

Thu Jan 7 2010

Page: A3

Section: News

Byline: Garry Breitzkreuz

Column: Parliamentary Report

Source: Special to the Yorkton News Review

Our cattle and beef sector has been getting a rough ride internationally, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is working overtime to set the record straight by promoting the quality and safety of Canadian products.

Our government knows that profit margins increase in lockstep with market access. That's why we have opened beef markets in Colombia, Jordan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia and expanded key export opportunities for Canadian beef in Hong Kong through ministerial missions abroad. We also increased access for Canadian beef and genetics for a potential value estimated to be worth up to \$72 million.

The government is working to open and expand additional key markets around the world for Canadian beef through ministerial missions to Washington, Mexico, Cuba, Japan,, Korea, India, Morocco, United Arab Emirates, Peru, and the European Union. We also launched a World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement process to deal with the United States government's mandatory Country of Origin Labelling rules on October 7.

Following numerous efforts to regain access to the Korean beef market, including ministerial interventions, Canada launched a WTO dispute settlement process earlier this summer, as well. The WTO Dispute Settlement Body accepted Canada's request to establish a dispute settlement panel to review Korean measures affecting the importation of bovine meat and Canadian meat products.

Our government is also working with European Union officials to identify a possible compensation agreement to the long-standing beef hormones dispute and consulting with the cattle industry to ensure its interests are addressed as part of any agreement. And, we launched the Trade and Market Development Program, including

\$88 million for the AgriMarketing initiative, to enhance the marketing capacity and competitiveness of the Canadian agriculture, agri-food, fish and seafood sectors.

This government understands the needs of farmers and food producers. We are providing an expected total of \$1 billion to livestock producers, primarily for cattle and hogs, under AgriStability and AgriInvest for the 2008 and 2009 program years. We amended the Agricultural Marketing Programs Act to provide for emergency advances to be issued for 'severe economic hardship' of up to \$400,000, based upon the expected production of a producer, in 2008-09. We also issued some \$634 million in emergency and regular advances to eligible cattle and hog producers.

We will continue to help farmers and producers compete on the world stage.

G) Taiwan lawmakers vote to ban some US beef imports, reversing deal with Washington

The Canadian Press

Tue Jan 5 2010

Section: Foreign General News

TAIPEI, Taiwan _ Taiwanese lawmakers voted Tuesday to ban imports of some kinds of U.S. beef over concerns about mad cow disease, reversing an earlier deal the government had negotiated with Washington.

The legislature's move to reinstate a ban on U.S. ground beef and offal reflects public concern that Taiwanese health officials lack sufficient safeguards to prevent mad cow disease. Mad cow disease is a brain-wasting disease in cattle, which in humans can cause a variant form, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

While the U.S. voiced its disappointment with Taiwan's move, it is unlikely to have serious consequences for relations between the sides _ including American arms sales to the island.

Taiwan purchased \$128 million in beef products from the United States in 2008. In 2002 _ the last full year that the banned beef items were sold on the island _ they constituted about 13 per cent of total U.S. beef imports. Long-running negotiations between the sides to drop the partial U.S. beef ban were concluded in October. Influential congressional representatives from beef-producing states had pressed Taiwan to allow all kinds of U.S. beef to enter the island.

But after the ban was reversed, protesters staged rallies in Taiwan to denounce the move, and the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party exploited fear of mad cow disease to undermine support for the government of President Ma Ying-jeou during local elections in December.

The U.S. has consistently argued that its beef exports are safe. After Tuesday's vote, the American Institute in Taiwan _ the de facto U.S. embassy on the island _ slammed the move, saying "it undermines Taiwan's credibility as a responsible trading partner."

"The U.S. deeply regrets the decision to restrict U.S. beef imports," the institute said in a statement. "The legislature's decision to abrogate the bilateral protocol we negotiated in good faith disrespects both science-based standards as well as the findings of Taiwan's own risk assessment."

Speaking to reporters after the legislative action, Ma said he respected it.

"Although there's scientific basis for the (beef) imports and they are in accord with international standards, the public still had its doubts and the legislature's decision reflected this," he said.

While Washington switched its recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, it remains Taiwan's most important foreign partner, providing it with crucial weapons systems to help it defend itself. Tuesday's legislative action is not expected to seriously affect that alliance.

The Obama administration is widely expected to notify Congress over the next several months about the sale of various arms promised by the Bush administration. These include UH-60M Black Hawk utility helicopters, the remainder of an ongoing Patriot PAC-3 missile-defence package, an initial design study for diesel submarines, and the second phase of a sophisticated command and control system.

H) Beef farming isn't all gravy: producer

By TOM KEENAN, SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The future for Algoma District beef farmers continues to deteriorate.

And if things don't start picking up soon, smaller Ontario beef farmers fear they will go the way of the dinosaur, says a local producer.

Sault Ste. Marie NDP MP Tony Martin is trying to make the case for regional producers, inviting Tarbutt farmer Jack Tindall to Ottawa a few weeks ago to outline to the NDP caucus the problems that he and thousands of his Ontario counterparts face.

Tindall later met with federal NDP leader Jack Layton, who, in turn, has promised to help remedy the problem. Tindall said farmers are motivated not by merely generating income, but by a passion for their work.

"It is just a love of what (we) do that is built into our character," he added.

Ontario beef farmers say they continue to face mounting debt due to a support program that is not paying them, the strong Canadian dollar that hurts potential sales to the U.S. and an unequal playing field with farmers south of the border.

Beef farmers say that cattle prices are as bad today, or worse, than they were between 2003 and 2006 when mad cow disease began playing havoc with Canada/U. S. cattle trade.

"And the United States, in effect, closed the border to Canadian imports where 50 per cent of our sales went," Tindall said.

With cattle prices taking a dive during that period, the border was reopened in small steps over the next several years until it was supposedly fully reopened in 2006.

"Then in 2006, the United States passed the country of origin labelling (law), which means that all beef products had to be labelled as such," Tindall said.

"And the restrictions on the processors proved so stringent that processors in the United States didn't want to be bothered with so many details. And as a result, our cattle exports dropped 50 per cent."

Tindall said the higher Canadian dollar plays havoc with sales. And while the Alberta and Quebec governments subsidize beef farmers, Ontario does not.

Tindall said these two provinces are literally carving up Ontario "to suit their operations."

Despite 27 years in the business, Tindall said he is still learning the "ins and outs of it."

"I will admit that I have a ways to go yet until I can fully understand it," he added.

Tindall now has a beef cattle herd of 150, but had 300 head prior to the mad cow disaster.

"This business is in our blood and most of us just cannot stand the thought of quitting," he said, adding most, if not all, beef farmers now work a full-time job off the farm to pay bills for what many now refer to as "our hobby."

Coupled with the difficulties of selling their products, producers must contend with the fact the cost of raising cattle has skyrocketed, including rising fertilizer prices.

"Actually, selling is not as much of a problem as the low cost per pound compared to the 2002 start of the (mad cow) disease," Tindall said.

In 2002, the cost of a ton of fertilizer was \$350, whereas today it is in the \$1,200 range. And then the world got turned on to ethanol, a corn byproduct, to power gas-guzzling cars and trucks. Corn producers were looking at huge profits, and fertilizer prices took off. But when ethanol hopes went bust, it didn't reflect in a lowering of prices for fertilizer.

Tindall relates how there was a time when farming used to be sustainable, with farm families raising beef and having some dairy cattle, hogs, rabbits and chickens.

"And there was a source of fertilizers (manures) to put onto your land," Tindall said.

"But now, Canada and the United States are into factory farming where there are literally many, many thousands of animals on one huge factory farm.

"When you get into this type of farming, you start to find animals getting various diseases. Then they pump them up with antibiotics. It is thought that the average person would still like to purchase their foods minus hormones."

Tindall said area residents tell him they want local beef, adding Algoma products are not factory farmed.

"We are trying to recapture the good old days when you could purchase your farm products locally," he added.

"And if we are ever able to get some help with farm programs, then we can do it."

Algoma farmers are asking the federal government to "put some teeth back" in farm programs, which have been diluted since the 2003 mad cow crisis when the U.S. closed its border to Canadian products, and Ottawa started to slowly pull money out of programs.

"What I would ask every beef producer to do is to ask federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz why the agri-stability program (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization) is not working for the average beef farmers," he added.

"Then I would ask that beef producers go to their MPs and ask them that question. If enough people ask, who knows, maybe we will be able to compete again. We have the talent, we need the support."

In 2004, there was an insurance program in place to protect against loss of revenue regarding farm incomes.

"Since 2004 they have quietly changed this program so that farmers are no longer eligible," Tindall said, adding securing federal NDP support is a "significant first step" for area farmers.

"With the NDP agreeing to help us in any way they can, it is a start," he added.

"And we will continue to try and get the buying public to better understand our troubles, which, in turn, if solved, would benefit them in the food stores."

I) Taiwan news agency says USA "regrets" legislature's move on beef

BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific

Tue Jan 5 2010

Section: Taiwan

Source: Source: Central News Agency website, Taipei, in English 0741 gmt 5 Jan 10

[By Chris Wang and Alex Jiang]

Taipei, Jan. 5 (CNA) - The United States "deeply regrets" the Legislative Yuan's move to impose restrictions on US beef products and urged the island to abide by the protocol on beef signed two months ago, a spokesman for the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) said Tuesday.

"The United States deeply regrets the Legislative Yuan's decision to restrict US beef imports and the legislature's decision to abrogate the bilateral protocol being negotiated in good faith," said AIT spokesman Christopher Kavanagh.

"This regards both science-based standards as well as the findings of Taiwan's own risk assessment," he told the Central News Agency.

The legislature earlier in the day passed a controversial amendment to the Act Governing Food Sanitation that will ban imports of specific beef products from countries with documented mad cow disease cases over the past decade.

The legislation will effectively bar US ground beef, beef offal and other beef parts such as the skull, eyes and intestines from access to Taiwan's market, in contravention of a bilateral beef trade protocol signed by the two countries in October.

"This action also undermines Taiwan's credibility as a responsible trading partner and will make it more difficult for us to conclude future agreements to expand and strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties going forward," Kavanagh said.

The spokesman described passage of the amendment as "particularly disappointing" because the United States has long been one of Taiwan's most important trade and investment partners and a strong supporter of

Taiwan's participation in the global trading system, including its membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

"In light of this legacy and the continuing importance of our bilateral economic relationship, we urge Taiwan to honour its commitment and to implement the beef protocol as negotiated," Kavanagh said.

The Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) will issue a joint statement on the issue later, according to the AIT.



If you would like to post your cattle industry news or event, send your information by Thursday at 4pm to lianne@cattle.guelph.on.ca or submit through the OCA Web site: <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/calendar/calendar.asp>.

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