



OCA Weekly Update – January 29, 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) OASC Update

On January 19th the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition (OASC) sent a letter welcoming the newly appointed Ontario Minister of Agriculture the Honourable Carol Mitchell. The letter congratulated her on her new position, explained who the coalition is and what their objectives are.

It requested that the Ministry continue to actively participate in the development of a business risk management program (BRMP), provide retroactive implementation of BRMP from January 1, 2009 as well as making retroactive changes to AgriStability.

Also sent with the letter was an outline of the BRMP prepared by the OASC. A copy of the letter sent to Minister Mitchell can be found on the Ontario Cattlemen's Association Website www.cattle.guelph.on.ca

B) CCA Participates in Minister Ritz's Trade Mission

Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) President Brad Wildeman and staff travelled to Colombia and Mexico with Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz in support of his efforts to open markets for Canadian beef.

"Improving access to international markets is extremely important for adding value to Canadian cattle. We appreciate the Minister's tireless efforts to promote Canadian beef and eliminate barriers," commented Wildeman.

In Colombia, potential import customers and Colombian officials were treated to a feast of Canadian beef at a barbeque to celebrate the lifting of trade restrictions. Once the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement is implemented, further opportunities will emerge as the 80 per cent import tariff on Canadian beef is eliminated. The CCA strongly supports that Agreement and encourages Parliament to ratify it as soon as possible.

In Mexico, the Minister's and the CCA's efforts were focused on achieving the expansion of market access to include beef from cattle over thirty months (OTM) of age. Following the CCA's meetings with its Mexican industry counterparts and the Minister's meetings with the Mexican Secretaries for Agriculture, Health and Trade, Wildeman highlighted the need to remain fully engaged and establish a timeline in which access will be achieved.

Wildeman stated: "I am pleased that the Minister delivered a diplomatic, yet strong message that the patience of the Canadian cattle industry is running out. I believe the Mexicans understood that we need to make progress in expanding trade in beef. Now the job is to ensure we capitalize on this momentum."

The CCA is also very pleased that Minister Ritz attended the conference of State Agricultural and Rural Legislators (SARL) in Orlando and drove home Canada's concerns over the US mandatory country of origin labeling law (COOL). Since that law came into effect a little over a year ago, we believe it has cost Canadian cattle producers over a quarter of a billion dollars.

With the support of the CCA, Canada has requested the World Trade Organization (WTO) to rule on the consistency of COOL with US trade obligations. A first level decision in the case is expected by late spring or early summer at the earliest.

"We felt that a WTO case was needed to get the attention of US legislators and make them aware that this provision has negative repercussions for the United States' best export customer: Canada. The Minister's participation at SARL tells me that they are starting to pay attention," said Wildeman.

C) Government Cost-Share Programs Support Best Practices On Ontario Farms

Ontario's agri-food sector is getting additional support to improve biosecurity on poultry farms and to boost food safety and traceability through the development of educational and training programs. The Farm Biosecurity Program will provide funding to individual poultry producers to help them implement or improve biosecurity measures that are based on the [National Avian On-Farm Biosecurity Standard](#). Strong biosecurity helps reduce the risk of disease, pests and pathogens.

In addition, the Food Safety and Traceability Education Program will help organizations to develop and deliver educational and outreach programs to promote best practices to Ontario producers and processors.

Both programs are part of the Best Practices Suite of programs under Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

“Farmers across Ontario can take pride in their animal handling practices. Our Governments are working together so that farmers have access to the latest and best farm animal care techniques. This investment will help farmers build new trade opportunities and boost their bottom line and Canada’s economy.”

— MP Dave Van Kesteren, on behalf of Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz

“These programs give producers and processors the tools they need to produce safe healthy food. They are part of our ongoing investments to encourage innovation, competitiveness and sustainability on Ontario farms and throughout the entire agri-food sector.”

— Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

QUICK FACTS

- Canada and Ontario will fund these programs through Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative to support the development of a profitable, innovative agriculture sector that is adept at managing risk and responsive to market demands.
- The Farm Biosecurity Program is part of a \$9.3 million investment in biosecurity under Growing Forward.
- In Ontario, Growing Forward supports best practices in four key areas: environment and climate change; food safety and traceability; business development; and biosecurity.

D) Economic Action Plan to Help Quebec Livestock Sector

While in Terrebonne, the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture), was pleased to announce that as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan, the Government of Canada will be investing in Canada's red meat sector through a loan of up to \$2.7 million to assist Écolait, a Quebec firm specialized in the slaughter and processing of milk-fed veal calves. The federal support will help Écolait improve its storage capacity and upgrade its slaughterhouse plant technology.

Écolait processes more than 100,000 head of veal in its facilities annually, raised by over 150 of its producer partners. With 50 per cent of its products exported, the company plays a major role in expanding market access for Canada's producers. This federal investment will help the company achieve major savings which will help to increase the profitability of its plant and that of its partners.

"In this current global economy, Canada must be able to rely on a strong and profitable red meat industry," said Minister Blackburn. "This investment will help Écolait cut its costs considerably and improve its operations, which by extension, will help Quebec producers capture new domestic and international markets."

Since its establishment in 1979, Écolait has made several major acquisitions and has grown to a staff of 350 employees. The company currently holds substantial market shares of 61 per cent in Quebec and 68 per cent in Canada.

About the Slaughter Improvement Program

With a budget of \$50 million, the Slaughter Improvement Program makes federal repayable contributions available to support sound business plans aimed at reducing the costs, increasing the revenues and improving the operations of meat packing and processing operations in Canada.

This is the second project announced in Quebec under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Slaughter Improvement Program.

With more than \$20 billion in sales, the red meat industry is the single largest food industry employer in Canada.

For more information on this program, visit www.agr.gc.ca/slaughterhouse. For more information on Canada's Economic Action Plan, visit www.actionplan.gc.ca.

E) Intensive Grazing School Sponsored by Ontario Forage Council (OFC)

*Steve Kenyon
Greener Pastures Grazing Management Ltd.
Busby, Alberta*

*February 16th & 17th at Douro, Ontario
February 18th & 19th at Markdale, Ontario*

This Intensive Grazing School by Steve Kenyon will focus on a number of areas, including economics, finances, human resources and cell design. Steve has a major focus on grazing principles to develop more sustainable pastures to maximize greater profitability on a per acre basis. Steve has a proven track record of delivering an amazing program and has a technique of passing on the knowledge he has demonstrated on his own ranch. Steve does a great job of localizing the information and techniques to encompass the local situation here in Ontario.

This course has been approved for Cost/Share Funding through the Growing Your Farm Profits (GYFP) Program. Contact your local GYFP Program Rep or the Ontario Forage Council (OFC) for details.

This Intensive Grazing Course will certainly provide a practical take-home message that can make a difference. *"Weaning a couple of extra calves off the pasture this year will more than compensate for the investment in this course"*.

Registration will be limited, so please enroll early to avoid disappointment. To register or obtain more information, contact the OFC Office. 1-877-892-8663 or 519-986-1484

F) 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.

G) 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

H) US Retailers Discover it's COOL to Sell Canadian Beef

Now that country-of-origin labelling (COOL) is a reality, US retailers are leveraging the label requirements to build unique and differentiated store brands using Canadian beef.

For the past five years, the Beef Information Centre's (BIC) has worked with US clients to build branded programs designed to meet the unique demands of individual retailers and their customers. Retailers recognize that development of private label and branded beef programs are key to profitability and that Canadian beef can deliver on the consistency and quality attributes required for a successful branded program.

"Under BIC's Partners Program, we work with clients to build customized beef programs designed to deliver consistent quality and enhanced profitability," says John Gillespie, BIC chairman and a feedlot operator at Ayr, Ont. "The target is regional retailers who, in order to stay competitive, are looking to develop a brand – a brand that can deliver specific desirable attributes for their market, every time, and at the volumes required."

Canada is the largest supplier of grain fed beef to the United States with more than 300,000 tonnes exported each year. That preference demonstrates that Canadian beef has always met the demands of the US market and enjoys a favourable reputation with American consumers. In a study of US consumers done last fall, product identified as Canadian beef drew a strong response – when the US consumer was asked if Canadian beef is a premium product, over 76 per cent agreed. The study also found that Canadian beef has a positive position in consumers' minds – 59 per cent agreed with the statement that Canadian beef came from a wholesome, natural environment.

An example of one partnership involved Stauffers of Kissel Hill (SKH), an innovative retailer with eight stores in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania region. SKH wished to develop a brand that would be widely recognized and accepted in its market area, with attributes that could not be easily matched by the competition. The resulting program paired SKH with a Canadian packer to source a certified corn-fed, AAA grade Canadian beef program. The program is labeled "Stauffer's Choice Beef" and the on-pack labels identify the beef as Product of Canada.

"The program has been extremely successful, with SKH reporting a strong double digit increase in meat department sales over the past two years," says Gillespie.

According to John Gerlach, SKH meat manager, Canadian beef has answered their needs for the beef case. SKH shoppers have accepted the brand and its Canadian sourcing because the eating experience has consistently met or exceeded their expectations. This reinforces Gerlach's belief that delivering great taste and eating experience every time goes long way to developing shopper loyalty.

Another success story is the partnership between the Panam Supermarkets, a Maryland-based retailer selling primarily to the Hispanic market, and the Canadian packer, Cargill Better Beef. Panam is selling product under their own brand, associated with Better Beef's brand, and is promoting Canadian beef and its quality attributes as its point of differentiation from the local competition.

The Hispanic consumer prefers bright red meat colour and white fat, two attributes that Canadian beef delivers consistently. Under the Canadian grading system, only carcasses with white fat and bright red meat are selected for the top grades – Canada Prime, AAA, AA or A. These colour requirements are unique to the Canadian grading system, part of a list of unique attributes of the Canadian Beef Advantage (CBA).

Indeed, the CBA helps retailers increase customer satisfaction and maximize profitability. Canada takes a world class systems based approach to beef production from genetics, on-farm food safety programs, mandatory cattle ID system and grain finishing in a pristine, uniquely Canadian environment, to modern USDA-approved processing facilities with mandatory HACCP programs and quality grading systems.

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.

I) Date Changes: OnTrace Producer Traceability Workshops

OnTrace has adjusted its Producer Traceability Workshop series dates for the remainder of the spring, so as not to interfere with spring planting season and to better serve their producer audience.

The new schedule has all workshops ending by the end of March 2010.

Please see attached the revised ads, one with location detail information and one with workshop detail information.

Please be aware that the Guelph and Kemptville sessions are very close to being at capacity, so please sign up without delay.

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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) Government money announced for federal-provincial food biosecurity program

ROB O'FLANAGAN

GUELPH — In her first Guelph appearance as Ontario's new Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Carol Mitchell helped announce millions for a new federal-provincial program that will give producers opportunities to enhance food security in their operations.

Speaking at the Ontario Forum on Agri-Food Traceability, Mitchell, a former parliamentary secretary in Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, said agriculture is changing rapidly and adapting to change is vital if the industry is to remain strong and responsive well into the future.

Traceability, a growing movement in agri-food, is based on the idea of knowing exactly where the food you eat comes from, from field to fork. Having such knowledge better protects consumers and producers from food-borne diseases, pests and pathogens by making it easier to trace their origins and address problems more quickly and efficiently.

Last July, Mitchell said, agriculture ministers from across Canada began working on a national traceability system for livestock and poultry. With Dave Van Kesteren, MP for Chatham-Kent-Essex, Mitchell announced the new \$8 million Farm Security Program to help Ontario farmers adapt food safety, biosecurity and traceability measures on their farms.

The majority of that money, about \$5.3 million, will help producers cover the costs of things like equipment, software, structural modifications or veterinary fees needed to enhance biosecurity and traceability in their operations.

Van Kesteren said Ontario and the federal government see eye-to-eye on the importance of food traceability. He said that as federal Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz travels around the world, he meets buyers who are demanding increasing amounts of information on products.

"More and more, traceability is an important issue when it comes to growing our agriculture business globally," Van Kesteren said. "Canada's Economic Action Plan supports agriculture as a core economic driver in this country. And that includes investing in traceability initiatives."

The rest of the funding will support farm organizations in building better food safety and traceability systems. In an interview, Mitchell spoke of some of the opportunities that exist in Ontario agriculture.

"We see how well received local food has been by the public," she said. "People have a very strong linkage in their minds between the food that they eat and their overall health, and not only how it is important to them, but important to the local economy."

A logical next step in the development of Guelph's agricultural sector, and rural communities in general, she indicated, is to develop food processing capacity locally. Taking that step would align with the growing movement to eat food with local origins, food that can be traced to its source.

Local food production and processing is good for rural communities, she said.

"We have opportunities to continue to expand that," she said. "The consumer has a far greater interest in where their food comes from, and the fresher we can make it and the less we move it, in my mind we all win." Traceability, she said, enhances consumer confidence, strengthens and protects the agricultural industry, and generates opportunities for Ontario's agricultural products.

If consumers want to eat certain foods, she said, the agricultural industry will grow it. Adapting to changing tastes and trends is vital.

B) NZ launches tracing scheme for meat exports

Agra Europe Weekly

Thursday January 28 2010

Despite bitter opposition from farmers, the New Zealand government this week gave the go-ahead for a national scheme that will trace beef and venison exports back to the farm they came from.

Agriculture minister David Carter announced on January 27 that the government would fund the scheme and

pass legislation making it compulsory for cattle farmers from October 2011 and for venison producers a year later. It is expected to be extended to sheep farmers later.

Carter said the National Animal Identification and Tracing (NAIT) scheme was about "future-proofing New Zealand agriculture". There was a strong business case for the scheme and its benefits far outweighed its costs - estimated at NZ\$7 million for establishment and \$8.67m initial operating costs, falling to \$6m annually. "NAIT will help maintain the confidence of export markets in the safety and disease-free status of New Zealand's livestock products," Carter said. "It will also boost our ability to prepare and respond to animal disease outbreaks."

'Unnecessary cost'

However, Federated Farmers said no export market was demanding such a scheme at present and the cost to its members was well over the \$2-3 estimated price of the electronic ear tags. Given the significant economic pressures farmers currently faced, there was no need for a compulsory scheme at this time.

Instead, the organisation favoured a voluntary, market-led system with price signals from the processors to drive stock enrolment. Such a system could be introduced and refined until markets ultimately required it for trade access.

Federated Farmers also rejected the claim that NAIT would guarantee New Zealand's biosecurity, saying it would not cover sheep, feral animals or several hundred thousand livestock on small holdings and lifestyle blocks.

Industry bodies pleased

But Meat and Wool New Zealand, the Meat Industry Association, DairyNZ and the Dairy Companies Association of New Zealand (DCANZ) applauded the move.

Meat and Wool New Zealand chairman Mike Petersen said it would be "a cost effective and robust" system to ensure continued access to world markets.

DairyNZ chairman John Luxton said, "Given the importance of the dairy industry to the New Zealand economy, it is vital that we have the best biosecurity protection and response in the world. This includes being able to rapidly and effectively manage and contain any animal health outbreak to minimise the negative economic impacts on farmers and the industry."

And DCANZ chairman Malcolm Bailey said consumers wanted to know their food was safe. "The dairy industry can trace back when, how and where a product is produced, but it hasn't been able to pin it to a particular cow, and consumers want to know that now."

C) Laroche announces new abattoir

The Record (Sherbrooke)

Fri Jan 29 2010

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Section: News

Byline: Stephen McDougall

Source: The Record

Thirty new jobs are forseen when the Laroche meatpacking company completes the building of its \$11 million slaughterhouse this spring, it was announced Thursday in Asbestos.

"This is a dream I have waited years to achieve and it is not over yet," said a teary-eyed Claude Laroche in front of bureaucrats and elected officials Thursday morning.

"Our family company now has a chance to develop and grow. That is why my eyes are watering up. I am worse than Celine Dion when I get emotional."

The slaughterhouse project has been on the drawing board for six years, but construction on the actual building did not start until last fall in the town's industrial boulevard.

Laroche's happiness was helped by a number of loans and grants from the federal, provincial and municipal governments totalling over \$1.5 million, along with a capital assistance program offered by the Quebec Federation of Labour fund worth \$2.5 million. The federal government's share is a \$900,000 loan, while Quebec is doling out \$136,000 in subsidies and \$364,000 in loans. The Des Sources municipal regional council is also lending the company \$175,000.

"We want to put Quebec on your plates," stated Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, head of the province's treasury board, when announcing her government's contribution to the project.

"This abattoir will be an asset in developing our domestic beef market and proving that our meat is of the best quality."

For the past six years, the company has been selling a select type of meat called VSC, or Viandes Selectionés des Cantons. It touts the meat as free of hormones and antibiotics and can be traced back to the producer via a computerized network.

The marketing program came out at the height of the so-called Mad Cow scare, when Canadian producers were temporarily shut out of their international markets because several animals from Alberta were found to have deadly spongiform virus.

At the time, Laroche had also proposed the building the abattoir, but was blocked by the UPA, the Quebec farmer's union, because they were not included as partners in the project. The UPA, which was negotiating the purchase of the Colbex abattoir in Drummondville at the time, threatened to block the sale of Quebec cattle to Laroche if he built his abattoir without their permission.

Yesterday, Laroche said the UPA now expressed no opposition to the abattoir project.

"I cannot speak for the UPA, but I presume they want to help develop the beef industry in Quebec and do not see us as competition to their Colbex operations," said Laroche.

"We are making and selling quality meats and their products are coming primarily from surplus cull cows." Laroche said the new abattoir will also save 57 jobs and should be ready for operation by May of this year.

D) Cattle price insurance being studied

The Outlook

Fri Jan 29 2010

Page: 7

Section: News

Byline: Kevin Hursh

Column: Agrologist

Source: The Outlook

Saskatchewan is working on a cattle price insurance program. This wouldn't solve the ongoing lack of profitability in the beef sector, but it would be a useful tool in certain market situations.

Provincial cattle analyst Grant Zalinko explained the proposal at the recent Saskatchewan Beef Industry Conference in Saskatoon. Alberta initiated a price insurance program for fed cattle last September and the U.S. has a price insurance scheme. There has been no political decision for a program to proceed in this province, but at least it's being studied.

It should be noted that this is not a program that covers the cost of production for producers. This is simply a way to lock in favourable prices for a future date, when and if those prices materialize. The program would be completely voluntary with cattle producers monitoring insurable prices and corresponding premiums and deciding when to act.

The insured price is determined by using forward prices from American futures markets. This is adjusted for the Canadian exchange rate and for the basis, which is the difference that exists between American futures prices and Canadian cash prices.

Because of all the variables, it's virtually impossible for an individual producer to effectively use the American futures markets. There's no cattle futures market in Canada, so there's a need for government to backstop such a program and offer it in a way that's user friendly.

Here's an example. A producer in the spring might be able to lock in a mid-October price of \$1.04 per pound for 600 pound steers for a premium cost of 4 cents a pound.

For the purposes of the program, it doesn't matter what price the producer actually gets. If the weekly average market price for 600 pound steer calves ends up being lower than the locked-in price of \$1.04, a participating producer would receive the difference in a payout.

If the average market price in mid-October is higher than the locked-in price, there would be no payment. The cost to the producer is only the set premium of 4 cents a pound. The insurable prices and premiums would fluctuate on a daily or weekly basis and producers would have to decide if and when to purchase price insurance.

Under the proposal, calves and yearlings would be insurable. There isn't a big volume of fed (slaughter weight) cattle produced in Saskatchewan, so for those it's proposed that Saskatchewan participate in the Alberta program.

Provincial officials in concert with beef producers have done a lot of work on how the program might work. A significant amount of technical work remains, but the program looks promising.

Saskatchewan producers are asking for government cost sharing of premiums, similar to what happens with Crop Insurance. In fact, some prominent cattle producers such as Brad Wildeman believe that government sharing of premiums is necessary for the program to be successful.

There is a possibility that government money within such a plan could be a trade irritant with the Americans. The U.S. government subsidizes the price insurance available in that country, but the trade rules might still enable the Americans to take a run at this sort of subsidization in Canada.

However, from a policy point of view, this would be a logical way to assist the industry. Production insurance has long been promised for the livestock industry, but has never materialized. Price insurance would be much easier to establish and it wouldn't likely be a big ticket item.

The Saskatchewan government hasn't announced whether or not it will proceed, but if the provincial wants to preserve the beleaguered beef industry, price insurance would be one mechanism to equitably offer a bit of assistance.

Kevin Hursh is a consulting agrologist and farmer based in Saskatoon. He can be reached at kevin@hursh.ca

E) Food policy could end agriculture's perpetual crisis

January 27, 2010

There's a crisis in agriculture. It's an oft-repeated statement, one that at times comes from beef and pork farmers, and other times from the grain or the fruit and vegetable growers. In fact, it seems as though there's always a crisis in agriculture – perhaps in different sectors at different times, but it always seems as if someone is teetering on the brink of disaster and asking for help.

I've written about this crisis in farming in this column before – and I also work for and with farmers on a daily basis so I know that the hurt is there and that it's real. Help is definitely needed, and given that agriculture is now considered by many to have surpassed the auto industry as the largest contributor to Ontario's economy, I don't think that's out of line. After all, what's at stake is not just our food but also 740,000 jobs across the entire agri-food industry.

It's true that sometimes there specific, extenuating circumstances that will land a sector in crisis. BSE and H1N1 come to mind. And there are normal ups and downs in any industry, but the problems that have been plaguing agriculture are deeper. There's a need to look beyond the short-term causes – like a higher dollar, a closed border or a drastic spike in fertilizer prices – so that we can find a sustainable, long-term solution that will help ensure our farmers aren't forced to continuously lurch from crisis to crisis. It would also mean an end to the ongoing need for government help.

The answer for farmers – and taxpayers – may well lie in a national food policy or food strategy. It's something that Canada does not currently have, but it's high time we did.

Most of us – accustomed to supermarket shelves brimming with low-cost food – likely don't give food and farming issues a second thought. We have no concept of what it could mean to depend solely on other countries to provide us with what we eat. After all, we buy and use imported goods all the time: our clothes, our electronics, our household goods and many other every day items.

But perhaps, along with worries about jobs, mortgages and credit card bills, we should spare a few minutes to consider how we want our children and grandchildren to live, and how we want them to nourish themselves. What kind of value should our society be placing on homegrown food? How important is it that we have farmers in our communities and in our economy? How can we protect and nurture our environment while at the same time sustaining food production for ourselves and others?

In Britain, the department for environment, food and rural affairs has just launched a national food policy. Food 2030, the British government's vision of what the nation's food system should look like 20 years hence, focuses on sustainable, environmentally responsible food production for both domestic and export markets, and how this can be achieved in the face of climate change and a growing global population. Alongside this is a focus on farmers who are competitive and profitable, and consumers who are informed and healthy eaters. Here at home, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has been advocating for a national food strategy and, together with other farm groups across the country, is involved in a consultative process to explore the issue further. The OFA began discussions around what this strategy could look like at meetings with its members across the province this month, and the Future of Food is the theme of the upcoming Canadian Federation of Agriculture annual conference. It is hoped that the outcome will be an official food policy that can be adopted by Ottawa and the provinces to ensure a homegrown food supply that is sustainable for all – and in doing so, also spell an end to the ongoing crisis in agriculture.

Lilian Schaer is a Guelph-based agricultural writer and communications specialist. She writes about the farming side of food at www.foodandfarmingcanada.com.

F) USA to seek enhanced trade with South Korea

BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific

Thu Jan 28 2010

Section: Skorea

Source: Source: Yonhap news agency, Seoul, in English 0458 gmt 28 Jan 10

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27 (Yonhap) - US President Barack Obama Wednesday pledged to seek new markets in South Korea, Colombia, Panama and other countries to increase exports that can help boost job creation and fuel an economic recovery in the country.

Obama named South Korea and two other countries with which the US has signed free trade deals without specifying whether or when he will move to seek Congressional approval for the agreements.

"We have to seek new markets aggressively, just as our competitors are," Obama said in his first State of the Union address. "If America sits on the sidelines while other nations sign trade deals, we will lose the chance to create jobs on our shores. That's why we will continue to shape a Doha trade agreement that opens global

markets, and why we will strengthen our trade relations in Asia and with key partners like South Korea, Panama, and Colombia."

Obama, however, stressed that any effort by his administration to seek new markets would come with the understanding that "realizing those benefits also means enforcing those agreements so our trading partners play by the rules."

Obama has in past statements cited the imbalance in auto trade and restricted shipments of US beef as major obstacles to early ratification of the Korea FTA.

His administration is also focusing its energies on passing health care reform and safeguarding an economic recovery amid the country's worst recession in decades, possibly delaying ratification even further.

Obama said he hoped to double US exports within the next five years.

"We need to export more of our goods because the more products we make and sell to other countries, the more jobs we support right here in America," he said. "So tonight, we set a new goal: We will double our exports over the next five years, an increase that will support two million jobs in America. To help meet this goal, we're launching a National Export Initiative that will help farmers and small businesses increase their exports, and reform export controls consistent with national security."

Earlier in the day, Kurt Campbell, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, called on South Korea to remain patient in the ratification of the pending free trade deal, citing the need to address other pressing issues such as health reform and the economy.

"I would just simply say, yes please have patience," Campbell told a group of South Korean correspondents here. "Put it in a larger context. We are doing many other things that could not be more supportive of South Korea. So we ask you to take that into consideration."

Campbell also noted the victory of Republican Scott Brown in a special election in the eastern state of Massachusetts last week that broke the Democrats' filibuster-proof 60-seat majority in the Senate, jeopardizing Obama's health care reform, economic stimulus measures and other key issues.

"Last week's election in Massachusetts changes many things," Campbell said. "Calculations on domestic politics widen. It is still too early to say what this means over the course of the next couple of weeks. We will need probably a little more time to reflect on some of the implications of the recent election in Massachusetts."

South Korean officials and analysts have expressed hope that the passage of health care reform in the US will pave the way for early congressional approval of the Korea FTA.

South Korea is pressing Obama to submit the pact by this summer, fearing that failure to do so could push ratification to 2011 or after the mid-term elections in November of that year.

Campbell would not elaborate on a timeline for the FTA's ratification.

He noted, however, that US Trade Representative Ron Kirk "understands very clearly the importance of this and has talked a little bit about what the timing might look like later in the year."

US officials have said they want to address concerns about imbalances in auto trade and beef exports in side agreements without revising the text of the deal, signed in 2007.

Campbell reiterated the US commitment to ratifying the Korea FTA.

"All I would tell you is the determination and the statements made by the US side about their desire to move forward remain unchanged," he said. "Ultimately, I am quite confident, and I know there will be a process put in place. The timing of it... we'll have to wait and see."

The official said the Obama administration is currently focusing on the economic recovery.

"One of the points the President and the senior economic team tried to make is the unprecedented level of the economic challenge the United States faces right now," he said. "It's very real. This is an enormously challenging time for the United States."

He said, however, that Obama was impressed by South Korean President Lee Myung-bak when they met in Seoul in November.

Lee and other South Korean officials have asserted that the FTA's implementation will help boost both the US economy as well as South Korea's.

Independent studies show the implementation of the FTA with Korea, the seventh biggest trading partner for the US, will create 240,000 jobs and increase annual two-way trade by more than US\$20 billion from the current \$83 billion.

"One of the points Lee Myung-bak [Yi Myo'ng-pak] made was... China's trade imbalance with the United States is not in the same, nowhere near... the healthy trade balance in relations between the United States and South Korea," Campbell said. "He wants to be viewed in that context. I think that's an appropriate point to make. The president and the senior team came away very much impressed by such remarks."

Obama said in Seoul that he is ready to deal with South Korea separately from other Asian countries, such as China, which has been accumulating a huge surplus in trade with the US

"Those imbalances are not as prominent with Korea," Obama said.

Obama also said he was pleased to have more tools to persuade Congress, Seoul officials said, adding Lee told Obama that South Korea's trade surplus with the US was around \$8 billion, far less than that of China and Japan, and that the US deficit is easily neutralized once the US financial surplus with South Korea is included.

G) Defiant cattle dealer prodded again

January 21, 2010

The man at the centre of a large meat scandal seven years ago and additional offences in the years since is zapped with a \$15,000 fine

by BETTER FARMING STAFF

On Jan. 11, Justice of the Peace Dan M. MacDonald sentenced Richard Walter (Butch) Clare, Burford and two associated companies, to pay \$15,000 in fines for dealing in livestock without a licence.

According to a news release issued today by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, for 10 weeks in the summer of 2007, Clare and the two companies — 1553603 Ontario Inc. and 1648291 Ontario Inc., operating as Butch Clare Livestock, purchased 2,156 head of cattle from various licensed livestock dealers for about \$1.35 million. Clare and the companies were convicted in the Ontario Court of Justice in Brantford in October.

"That's a huge business not to be having a license," says Bob Brander, Cheltenham, who chairs the adjudication board of the Ontario Beef Financial Protection Program. Brander describes the \$15,000 fine as "fairly hefty." He thinks it's the maximum allowed for dealing cattle without a license under the Livestock and Livestock Products Act.

A cattle dealer license only costs \$25, says Brander. But a cattle dealer must provide either financial statements or put up a bond equivalent to the value of cattle that would pass through their hands in a year. If Clare still doesn't have a license "anybody who deals with him won't be covered" under the Ontario Beef Financial Protection Program if they aren't paid for cattle, Brander warns.

Clare may be Ontario's most notorious cattle dealer

On May 11, 2007 Aylmer Meat Packers Incorporated and its president, Clare pleaded guilty in the Ontario Court of Justice in London to offences under the Meat Inspection Act and the Food and Drugs Act. On Dec. 14 of that year, Mr. Clare was fined \$5,000 and \$10,000 on the Meat Inspection Act and Food and Drugs Act charges respectively. Aylmer Meat Packers Incorporated was fined \$10,000 and \$100,000 on the Meat Inspection Act and Food and Drugs Act charges respectively.

These fines arose from a widely publicized investigation and subsequent Meat Inspection Act charges laid by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in March 2005 and Food and Drugs Act charges laid by Ontario Provincial Police in September 2004. Clare's abattoir was shut down by inspectors in 2003.

"I never, ever sold a piece of meat I wouldn't eat myself, Clare told the judge. By their guilty pleas, however Aylmer Meat Packers Incorporated and Clare acknowledged that between July 23 and Aug. 21, 2003, the company sold meat that was unfit for human consumption.

On Nov. 1, 2007, Butch's son Jeffrey Clare, on behalf of 1648291 Ontario Inc., also operating as Butch Clare Livestock, entered a guilty plea in the Ontario Court of Justice in Brantford to an offence under subsection 65(1) of the Health of Animals Act, resulting in a fine of \$25,000. Clare was charged for exporting cattle to the United States on January 19, 2006, that were over 30 months of age. The age restriction was imposed on Canadian cattle when cattle trade was partly reopened following the detection of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Canada in May 2003.

On October 21, 2008, the elder Clare pleaded guilty in the Ontario Court of Justice in Kitchener to one count under the Livestock and Livestock Products Act. He was fined \$9,000 plus a victim surcharge. The court heard that between June 1 and 29, 2006, and between Sept. 15 and Oct. 16, 2006, Clare had been engaging in the business of buying and selling cattle without a dealer's licence as required under the act.

Clare also pleaded guilty to a second count under the act, as an officer and director of 1553603 Ontario Inc., for dealing cattle without a licence between July 5 and September 14, 2006.

Agriculture ministry spokespeople didn't immediately return phone calls after issuing their press release late this afternoon.

Butch Clare, contacted on his cell phone this evening, said he was at a cattle sale in Kitchener. "I don't talk to reporters. I think you are a bunch of f***ing low life wh***s."

Update Jan 22, 2010

Gwen McBride, director, food safety programs branch at the Ontario agriculture ministry says there is a minimum fine of \$2,000 under licensing offenses for a first offence under the licensing provisions of the Livestock and Livestock Products Act and a minimum of \$5,000 for subsequent offenses.

McBride says that Richard (Butch) Clare had no history of violating livestock licensing rules prior to his being charged in 2007. Even though Clare was deemed a first offender, he received a bigger fine than the minimum that can be applied.

Asked if the fines were a deterrent, McBride said the penalties "are up to the courts, not the ministry. . . . It's the court decision. You would have to talk to the Justice of the Peace." BF

H) Rancher hands out beef to highlight problems

Winnipeg Free Press

Wed Jan 27 2010

Page: B3

Byline: Larry Kusch

Langruth rancher Kerry Arksey handed out beef to passersby in front of the Legislative Building Tuesday afternoon to call attention to what he says is government neglect of the cattle industry.

The 55-year-old fourth-generation producer has sold off virtually all his cattle and plans to exit an industry he's been in all his life. In exchange for the beef -- he had 400 pounds worth in individually wrapped packages in his truck -- Arksey was accepting donations for the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line, a service he has used.

"I have lost \$200,000, plus a couple of hundred thousand dollars in equity," he said. "If I carry on any longer, I'll have to start mortgaging land."

Arksey said federal and provincial governments have failed to help cattle producers, who have been reeling financially ever since the BSE infection crisis in 2003, when the U.S. closed its borders to Canadian beef. The borders later reopened.

Government programs aimed at providing assistance have missed the mark, Arksey said, adding that the final straw was a feed assistance measure last year that paid him only half of what was promised. "I spent \$9,000 on feed. I should have been entitled to \$7,000 or \$8,000. They sent me a cheque for \$3,900," he said.

Sheila Mowat, general manager of the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, said Arksey's situation is far from unique. The association doesn't keep statistics on the number of producers who have left the industry in

recent years, but estimates that the number of cattle herd liquidation sales has doubled over the past two years.

Most of the problems ranchers face -- from a high Canadian dollar and high feed costs to trade protectionism and onerous regulations not faced by foreign competitors -- are out of their control, Mowat said. The association is lobbying federal and provincial governments for several measures, including price insurance similar to that offered to crop growers, improved hay and pasture insurance to guard against feed shortages, and special payments recognizing the industry's role in protecting wetlands and fragile soil.

Late Tuesday afternoon, Arksey and his wife Sharron met with Agriculture Minister Stan Struthers. Afterwards, the minister congratulated the couple for "drawing attention to a real problem."

He also pledged to improve programs for cattle producers, noting that the industry's troubles will be discussed at a federal-provincial agriculture ministers meeting in Toronto next week.



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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