2018 Fall Economic Statement contains key points for agriculture

Last week’s 2018 Fall Economic Statement presented by Federal Finance Minister Bill Morneau contained several key points of interest for beef operations and Canada’s $58 billion agri-food export industry. This includes a new $1.1 billion Export Diversification Strategy to maximize opportunities for exporters in new markets through improved infrastructure and export market support, including an expanded Canadian Trade Commissioner Service.

A commitment to both removing barriers to trade within Canada and improving Canada’s regulatory system are positive developments also, with the latter slated to be achieved through measures including the introduction of an annual modernization bill and the launching of a Centre for Regulatory Innovation.

The government also announced material change to Capital Cost Allowances which includes measures to allow businesses to immediately write off the full cost of machinery and equipment used for the manufacturing or processing of goods; and businesses to immediately write off the full cost of specified clean energy equipment. The CCA is actively pursuing further detail on these and related initiatives to better understand how they may pertain to beef operations. Watch Action News for further details.

The CCA, as a member of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, also welcomes the commitment of $25 million over the next five years devoted to enhancing federal capacity to address non-tariff and other trade barriers specific to agri-food. As noted in the CAFTA news release, such barriers often prevent exporters from taking advantage of new export opportunities.
CCA’s latest Canadian red meat mission to the EU

CCA and Canadian Pork Council (CPC) representatives undertook a mission to Germany, Poland and Spain November 14 - 23, 2018. The objectives of this latest in a series of missions to EU countries are to continue to build cooperation and collaboration for commercially viable two-way trade of meat products between Canada and the EU as envisaged by the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

As example of this nascent reciprocal two-way trade relationship under CETA, in 2018, from January to September 241 tonnes of veal from the EU was imported into Canada, with the majority coming from the Netherlands, along with 2,255 tonnes of beef valued at $13.2 million. Exports of Canadian beef alone to the EU for the same period reached 520 tonnes valued at $8.2 million, representing a 45 per cent increase in volume and a 45 per cent increase in value compared to a year earlier.

Building relationships with EU contacts will also help pave the way for future technical and business exchanges in support of commercially viable two-way trade of meat products. It also helps to clarify various aspects of the technical and regulatory review and approval processes to maximize the potential for Canada’s applications for approval of citric acid and peroxyacetic acid (PAA)-based solutions, both commonly used interventions approved in Canada, in beef and pork production to be considered and succeed in a timely manner.

In Germany, CCA and CPC visited with the Ministry of Agriculture and officials with the Canadian Embassy as well as the Association of German Meat Industry and the German Farmers Association. Excellent discussion on common challenges for German and Canadian beef and pork producers plus positive trade opportunities for both under CETA were entertained. In the context of these discussions, it was apparent that Canada Beef efforts at the SIAL Food Show in Paris a month earlier were noticed by German meat importers and sparked interest.

In Warsaw, the team was supported by Canadian Embassy trade officials, and met with the Polish Meat Association, Polish Associations for Beef Cattle and Swine/Pork Breeders and Federation of Agricultural Producers Union. The meetings were positive. Polish farm leaders admitted they did not originally support CETA as they had been concerned about a large and sudden influx of Canadian beef. Following our discussions, they acknowledged that their fears had been unfounded and they have realized that there is opportunity for both sides. They are planning to undertake market development missions to Canada in the coming year and we agreed that we can support each other's efforts to grow in both directions.

The Polish Beef Cattle Breeders Association also expressed their vision of wanting to reverse the current situation where most Polish beef is produced from dairy cattle. They noted that as Poland grows economically, the Polish people are eating more beef. In the past few years, Polish per capita consumption of beef has increased from less than 2kg/year to approximately 3.4kgs. This is still small, but the trend is promising and they believe improving the quality of Polish beef via genetics and knowledge inflow from Canada is a path to future success.

In Madrid, Spain, the team met with Provacuno, the organization that represents the Spanish beef industry, and a number of trading companies and investors who have interest in determining the potential of beef trade with Canada. For these meetings it was valuable to have the newly hired consultant for Canada Beef in Madrid accompany the team and it is anticipated there will be some rewarding follow-up from those commercial connections.

The mission wrapped up with a day trip to Barcelona to meet with ANAFRIC and FECIC, the two organizations that represent the Spanish meat business.

The more meetings CCA has in Europe, the more evident it is that the demand and incentive for increased EU-eligible beef production in Canada. As our production and shipments to the EU do in fact grow, it is vital that we have positive relationships with European producers who also value their opportunities to do business in Canada.

CCA in Warsaw with Canadian Embassy trade officials and Polish agricultural associations, and with the German Farmers Association in Berlin. Photo credit: Submitted.
Maritime beef producers bring regional growth strategy to Ottawa

Cattle producers from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, collectively representing the Maritime Beef Council (MBC), travelled to Ottawa recently for a day of meetings with Members of Parliament, Senators and political staff. The group, consisting of Nathan Phinney and Cedric MacLeod (New Brunswick), Jeremy Stead (PEI), and Larry Weatherby and Brad McCallum (Nova Scotia), discussed a number of priority issues to support the growth and competitiveness of the beef sector in the Maritimes.

The majority of time with Atlantic policymakers was spent discussing the Maritime Beef Sector Development and Expansion Strategy developed by the three Maritime beef associations. The goal of this comprehensive strategy is to increase the regional cow herd by 20,000-head over 10 years (or 2,000 breeding cows per year) to help satisfy strong market demand for finished cattle in Eastern Canada. A high emphasis is placed on utilizing the region’s undersubscribed pastures while adopting innovative grazing techniques and feed efficient genetic traits that have been proven to increase productivity. In addition, the strategy includes key components to encourage growth in the beef sector through investments in education and extension that support new entrants along with investments in physical and human infrastructure to take advantage of new market access for Canadian beef.

While there has been significant progress on the strategy’s implementation, opportunities still exist for collaboration between industry and government to further develop this regional beef value-chain growth initiative. Many MPs within the Atlantic Caucus agreed that the strategy provides a roadmap to drive rural economic prosperity in the region and can play a key role in growing Atlantic Canada’s agriculture exports. The MBC and CCA look forward to working with Atlantic policymakers to continue driving this expansion strategy forward.

As Parliament’s fall sitting continues to roll along, Canadian beef producers will continue to have an active presence in Ottawa with Alberta Beef Producers and Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association joining CCA on November 27 and December 4.
Bovine TB found in B.C. cow

Last month, a suspected case of Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) was detected during a routine post-mortem examination of a mature beef cow at a processing facility in Alberta and confirmed through testing by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The carcass was condemned and did not enter the food chain. The animal was traced back to a farm in British Columbia. The CFIA, in conjunction with the Province of B.C., launched an immediate epidemiological investigation at the farm of origin and issued movement control restrictions on the impacted animals. The investigation is ongoing. No trade impact is anticipated as a result of this finding, which marks the first case in Canada since Alberta detected a case in 2016, spawning a two year investigation that closed in April 2018.

bTB is a federally reportable disease in Canada and has been subject to a mandatory eradication program since 1923. Although Canada enjoys bTB-free status, isolated cases do occur. Their detection shows Canada's surveillance system is working. For context, all cattle in Canadian federally inspected plants (>95% of all cattle slaughtered) are examined for bTB as a major form of surveillance.

The CFIA recognizes the serious impact of bTB on producers and the cattle industry and is working with the producers and provinces to take immediate action to control the disease and maintain Canada's bTB-free status. The CCA is communicating with CFIA on a regular basis and will update members of any developments impacting Canada’s trade status.

Meantime, producers are encouraged to visit the CFIA website for updates and comprehensive information on bTB and related fact sheets:
http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/ter...

Strong biosecurity is essential to prevent and limit the spread of disease. Producers can consult the Canadian Beef Cattle On-Farm Biosecurity Standard available in English and French and producer implementation manual available for download on the CCA website.

Wetlands roundtable launches website

The Canadian Wetlands Roundtable (CWR), a multi-stakeholder partnership dedicated to wetlands conservation in Canada, has a new website. The website houses information on wetland conservation, science, management and stewardship along with information about the CWR, its functions and programs, and materials of interest related to wetland conservation; including standout examples of wetland enhancements.

The launch of the website is timely. The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, recently reported that globally wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests and called for urgent action. The report cites its 2018 Global Wetland Outlook analysis, which states almost 35 per cent of the world's wetlands were lost between 1970 and 2015 with annual loss rates accelerating from 2000 onwards.

The CWR works to motivate governments and the public to conserve wetlands; bolster the adoption of beneficial management practices to conserve wetlands; and inform the creation of regulation and policy supporting wetland conservation among other key areas. The CCA is a CWR member and maintains a seat on the roundtable's steering committee.

To learn more about the CWR and wetland conservation visit https://wetlandsroundtable.ca/
Five producers share ideas that have made their farms and ranches more efficient

Fine-tuned management decisions with quick results and bigger management changes that may take a few years for benefits to materialize — these are ideas that Canadian beef producers are applying to their farming and ranching operations.

Good ideas can range from improving pasture watering systems and regularly testing winter feeds, to reducing costs during the fall/winter grazing period, to simple ideas that reduce the stress of calving out heifers, to more sweeping approaches on how to manage an intensive grazing system — all have a common objective to improve beef herd performance in sustainable farming systems.

Read about ideas that Canadian beef producers have shared that help them produce more pounds of beef, reduce workload, improve overall efficiency and benefit cattle and the environment at http://www.beefresearch.ca/blog/five-producers-share-ideas-that-have-made-their-farms-and-ranches-more-efficient/

BCRC: Webinars for beef producers
