



# Action News

## Canadian Cattlemen's Association



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### CCA barbeque on East Block of Parliament Hill a perennial favourite of MPs

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) annual fall picnic takes place Tuesday in the Centre Courtyard East Block on Parliament Hill.

More than 300 MPs, senators and their staff, as well as VIPs from other government sectors, are slated to attend the noon-hour reception where they will enjoy tender, juicy, slow-cooked Canadian beef on a bun.

Cattle producers from across Canada will also be in attendance at the invitation-only event, which iPolitics.ca plugged recently as "another Hill classic."

Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz will be among those in attendance. The annual event gives CCA valuable time with MPs and other key influencers in Ottawa.

### Instrument augmented grading

Nearly a year after receiving approval for use as a grading aid within the Canadian beef grading system, the e+v Technology GmbH Beef Instrument Technology is now being used for that purpose at XL Beef Lakeside. The e+v was approved for use at the Brooks, AB facility earlier this month, following intensive testing to ensure the equipment functioned properly and that the procedures in place are sound. With that piece squared away, and having met the criteria of the Canadian Beef Grading Agency (CBGA), the utilization of e+v to facilitate the assessment of quality (marbling) and yield at the facility began on September 19.

The benefit of the technology in the grading process is in terms of driving efficiencies. The e+v technology will provide greater consistency in grade assessment by changing subjective to objective, and provide computer data capture

#### CANFAX MARKET BRIEFS

Week ending Sept 23, 2011

(in Can\$)		This wk	Change
↑	Fed steers	104.29	+1.51
↑	Fed heifers	102.57	+0.48
↑	Feeder steers	---	+0.93
↑	Feeder heifers	---	+0.50
↑	Cdn Feeder Index	132.25	+2.00
↑	D1/D2 cows	68.56	+0.65
↓	Slaughter bulls	78.53	-0.43
↔	Oct barley (\$/tonne)	208.00	n/c
(in US\$)			
↓	Cdn spot dollar	97.33	-4.30
↓	Oct live cattle	116.25	-2.65
↓	Sep feeder cattle	132.05	-3.55

of elements used to assess the final grade, said CBGA General Manager Cindy Delaloye. “e+v technology is a fantastic tool that can help improve the consistency of grade application in Canada,” she said.

Computer vision grading technology enables multiple measurements of yield and quality grade parameters to be made more quickly than would be possible using manual approaches. Further, the digital format of the carcass data enables the information to be stored in industry databases such as BIXS, said Mark Klassen, the CCA Director of Technical Services. “When the industry fully incorporates this data into their production decision making there will be important opportunities to enhance both the quality of our beef as well as the achievement of greater production efficiencies,” he said.

As reported in the October 12, 2010 edition of Action News, the e+v grading instrument is a stationary machine that photographs and analyses the rib eye area between the 12th and 13th ribs of each carcass as they pass by on a moving rail. At present, three packers in Canada have a moving rail – XL Beef in Brooks, Cargill High River and Cargill Guelph have installed the instrument but XL is the first to use it to augment beef carcass grading. In addition, two other packers are in earlier stages of the adoption of computer vision grading systems at their facilities.

The computer grading camera measures grade fat, rib eye width, and rib eye length, calculating an estimated lean yield percentage, lean yield grade and a marbling score. In some situations, where it is difficult for the camera to get an accurate reading, or when other factors influence the final grade, a grader will overrule the camera's grading.

## **CCA Auction Mart System National Pilot goes live!**

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It's all systems go with the CCA Auction Market System (AMS) National Pilot, which went live in select auction market sites earlier this month. The launch of the AMS in B.C., Manitoba and the Atlantic provinces marks the successful completion of an effort started by the CCA more than a year ago to bring relevant industry, market and association news to producers at the local auction market.

The AMS product launch started in Alberta with two sites. The Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) recognized the value of the system as a communications tool and secured funding from the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) to expand the AMS project to two-dozen auction markets in Alberta. With that system for the most part running smoothly and technology upgrades underway where necessary, the CCA set its sights on taking the AMS across the country.

The CCA AMS National Pilot uses the improved technology at its host auction market sites. Information from the CCA, Canfax and the provincial cattle association is updated weekly, while a scrolling ticker on the bottom delivers daily market news, market recaps and other important news.

The AMS project was conceived and developed by the CCA and Alberta Beef Producers as a way to deliver important news, industry developments and market news to producers on their own turf -- at the local auction mart. The intent is to help producers make informed business decisions and be aware of important activities from their provincial cattle associations.

The CCA thanks the participating auction markets and the provincial cattle associations involved in the National Pilot for helping to deliver the AMS technology.

## **CYL candidates create consumer-friendly beef production videos**

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Producers know the level of care, attention and effort that they put into raising healthy cattle to produce delicious beef. Sound production practices ensure the well-being of cattle by protecting them from disease risks, for instance. The relationship between a production practice and high-quality beef is often not so clear cut for consumers, however.

As advocates for Canadian agriculture, in particular beef, the 2011-2012 Cattlemen's Young Leaders (CYL) candidates were asked to create a video that tells the beef cattle producer's story to the consumer so they understand and appreciate the due diligence producers and industry take to ensure a high-quality product and sustainable industry. The video challenge was part of a competition that would see CYL candidates vie for a spot at upcoming international conferences. Topics for the video assignment included: water use in beef production; environmental stewardship and sustainability; the use of growth promotants in beef production; and animal care.

CYL coordinator Fawn Jackson said the videos attested to the youths' insight and education surrounding some of the important questions that, as an industry, we are often asked to defend.

"They clearly understand the 'how and the why' and are able to defend, but more importantly advocate, for the practices that are commonly used," she said.

Two of the six successful candidates will be attending each of the upcoming industry events: the Five Nations Beef Alliance in Mexico October 16-21, 2011; the International Livestock Congress in Denver, Colorado, January 9-10, 2012; and the Young Producers Advisory Council in Nashville Tennessee, February 2, 2012.

The selected videos will be featured on the CYL website at <http://www.cattlemensyoungleaders.com>.

## **The fall run: culling cows and trading calves**

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Canfax Research Services presents the second fact sheet in the series sponsored by Merck Animal Health.

A lot happens during the fall run and the decisions made now determine if a cow-calf operation is profitable for the year or not. September through December are the largest placement months of the year and decisions made in this time period also have a significant impact on the breakeven for a feedlot in the coming year.

This special issue is focused on the decisions producers make during the fall run: whether culling or feeding cows, or selling or retaining calves, what are the market signals one needs to consider? How does a feedlot decide what they are willing to pay for calves and if they are filling their feedlot with yearlings or calves? This is what determines if the price offered a cow-calf producer is good or not based on market fundamentals. The full document is available at <http://canfax.ca/FactSheets.aspx>

## Do Distillers' Grains Affect Beef Quality?

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Unsaturated dietary fat is commonly believed to be healthier than saturated fat in the human diet. Increasing the amount of unsaturated fat in beef can be a challenge, however, because rumen microbes convert unsaturated fatty acids from cattle feed to saturated fatty acids even before cattle have a chance to absorb them. This means that their marbling usually ends up containing mostly saturated fat, despite the level of unsaturated fat in the finishing diet. Feeding dried distillers' grains with solubles (DDGS) could help overcome this challenge, because the heating process used to dry DDGS may protect some of the dietary fat from microbial digestion. As a result, more unsaturated fatty acids may enter the animal's intestine, be absorbed, and increase the unsaturated fat content of the beef. The downside is that higher unsaturated fat levels in beef can shorten its shelf life. In a recently-completed Beef Science Cluster project, researchers at the University of Saskatchewan and AAFC's Lacombe Research Station examined whether feeding 40 per cent DDGS in the finishing ration would affect animal performance, carcass quality, beef shelf life and consumer acceptability. To read more please visit [http://www.cattle.ca/media/file/original/1036\\_Do\\_Distillers\\_Grains\\_Affect\\_Beef\\_Quality.pdf](http://www.cattle.ca/media/file/original/1036_Do_Distillers_Grains_Affect_Beef_Quality.pdf)

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