



Monthly Report

MARCH 2009

In this edition...

- AGM held March 16 - 20
- Canada-Mexico Partnership (CMP)
- Potential Canada-European Union Free Trade Agreement
- BIC responds to red meat study

Written by **Natalie Arnieri**

Edited by **Sharon Jensen**

AGM held March 16 - 20

The CCA held its 2009 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Ottawa, Ontario from March 16 - 20.

Unfortunately, Tony Saretsky stepped down as the CCA Vice President. Tony has done an outstanding job on behalf of cattle producers over many years. Travis Toews from Beaverlodge, Alberta was elected as the new Vice President. CCA President Brad Wildeman welcomed Travis' election saying, "I am excited to work with Travis in my final year as President. I would also like to welcome Bob Lowe as a new CCA director from Alberta."

The top issues...

We all know there are a myriad of issues facing Canada's beef cattle industry and the majority of them were discussed throughout the AGM week. However, there were several top issues which most of the discussion centred upon.

Fixing BRM programs

For well over a year and a half, the CCA has been advocating a number of improvements to Business Risk Management (BRM) programs to make them more responsive for the cattle industry. Nevertheless, the glaring dysfunction of the current programs remains a main issue for both individuals and organizations within the industry. The fact that some provinces have announced separate and differing programs throughout the country provides undeniable evidence of the failure of an adequate national program. The meeting of the CCA's Domestic Ag Policy Committee at the AGM agreed that although we continue to need improvements, circumstances have deteriorated further away from a national approach necessitating a review of our approach. Thus CCA is re-evaluating its recommendations to ensure we are fully taking into account the reality of new regional programs and other changes in circumstances. Once the Domestic Ag Committee has completed its review and developed a revised set of recommendations, we expect to present these to the federal government in order to apply the best of the regional programs nationally and otherwise address shortcomings of the

...continued on page two

Canada-Mexico Partnership (CMP)

Travis Toews and John Masswohl represented the CCA at the CMP meetings in Cuernavaca, Mexico, March 23 - 24.

The CMP is a collaborative forum for industries, businesses and other organizations from Canada and Mexico comprised of a broad range of working groups. In agriculture specifically, there were four sub-groups participating in the meetings: cattle/beef, hog/pork, horticulture and pulses.

In addition to CCA, the cattle/beef subgroup included participants from the Canadian Livestock Genetics Association (CLGA), the Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF) and the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC).

The hot topic - U.S. Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labelling (mCOOL)

Major discussions focused on the development of a joint Canada-Mexico approach to address mCOOL. The cattle/beef and hog/pork sub-groups collaborated on developing and approving a joint statement and work plan on mCOOL that calls for the Canadian and Mexican governments to pursue a World Trade Organization (WTO) challenge against the U.S. and for the cattle and hog industries of the two countries to continue working together in their common opposition to mCOOL.

Since the Canadian industry and government are further advanced than Mexico in documenting

...continued on page two

Canadian Cattlemen's Association
310, 6715 8th Street N.E. - Calgary, Alberta - T2E 7H7
Tel: 403.275.8558 Fax: 403.274.5686

www.cattle.ca

...continued from page one, "AGM held March 16 - 20"

existing programming.

Addressing EG&S

The Manitoba Cattle Producers' Association (MCPA) has been doing a lot of work to address environment goods & services (EG&S). After reviewing their findings, the CCA board passed a resolution to begin development of a national program. EG&S is a "hot topic" with both the urban and rural consumers and we will create a plan that will aid the entire Canadian society, while rewarding producers for their beneficial environmental contributions.

Improving the industry's marketing associations

Last year, an expert steering committee was appointed to look at ways of improving the industry's marketing efforts and gaining efficiencies within Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF) and the Beef Information Centre (BIC). Both organizations have been working very hard to market our products; and the workload for both organizations will continue to increase while the budgets continue to tighten. After several months of thoughtful review, the committee made several recommendations to improve governance and program delivery. The CCA accepted the recommendations and the committee are proceeding to implement many of the changes.

...continued from page one, "Canada-Mexico Partnership (CMP)"

evidence required to mount a WTO challenge, the CMP created a joint working group to share the approach between the two countries. This reflects the importance of ongoing advocacy work by industry, plus political intervention conducted by the respective governments.

To read the joint statement, visit the CCA's webpage on mCOOL at www.cattle.ca.

Potential Canada-European Union Free Trade Agreement

In October 2008, Prime Minister Harper and the President of the European Commission agreed to work towards a stronger economic partnership.

By early March, Canada and the European Union (EU) had produced a joint report recommending areas for the negotiation of an ambitious and comprehensive economic agreement. The CCA was very pleased to see that the recommendation was to aim at full, free

trade without any products being excluded.

This is very important for the Canadian beef industry because the EU is a market that consumes approximately eight million tonnes of beef annually; but Canada faces a prohibitively high tariff barrier (in the neighbourhood of 140 per cent). Consequently, Canada currently ships almost no beef to Europe. With full, tariff-free access, the EU market could rival the United States as our largest market for beef exports.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to attend the next Canada-EU Summit in Prague on May 6. It is CCA's hope that at that meeting, Canada and the EU will formally launch negotiations for an ambitious agreement that will provide unlimited access for Canadian beef.

BIC responds to red meat study

This month, significant media coverage focused on a released study entitled "Meat Intake and Mortality". The Beef Information Centre (BIC) was prepared with messaging, reviewed the study prior to its release and took a lead role in responding to media inquiries.

The study, appearing in the March 23rd issue of "Archives of Internal Medicine", stated that people who eat more red and processed meat appear to have a modestly increased risk of death from all causes, but also from cancer or heart disease. The 10-year study followed 500,000 individuals between the ages of 50 and 71, measuring their intake of white, red and processed meats.

Upon reviewing the study, BIC discovered extremes in meat consumption by the test group. For example, men in the group with the highest meat intake consumed an average of 144 g of red meat and 41 g of processed meat (185 g combined) per day. Women in the group with the highest meat intake consumed an average of 108 g of red meat and 26 g of processed meat (134 g combined) per day. This level of consumption is much greater than the average adult Canadian intake of 78 g per day of red and processed meat combined.

The study used a food frequency questionnaire in which participants reported on what they ate over the past year. This method is known to have limitations. Participants may have difficulty recalling what they ate and how much they ate. Most people find it difficult to remember what they ate last week, let alone over the past year.

According to Ron Glaser, BIC's Executive Director, Communications, BIC's response to the study was quick and balanced in its delivery. BIC conducted six media interviews to date, and developed a letter to the

editor, reinforcing the nutritional benefits of beef, which was sent to 15 daily newspapers across Canada and to several agriculture newspapers/magazines. Also, a response was crafted and distributed to BIC's meat industry trade partners.

"BIC monitors health and nutrition research, not only in Canada, but in the United States and throughout the world," he says. "In this way, we are prepared to deliver our message that Canadian beef continues to be a nutritious part of a healthy, balanced diet."

Indeed, lean beef is nutrient-rich with 14 essential nutrients including zinc for healthy growth, iron for oxygen transport, and protein to build and repair your body.

Many factors play a role in disease and risk of mortality. Smoking, alcohol consumption, lack of physical activity and family history of cancer are but a few. Even though the researchers adjusted the results to account for these other factors, the adjustments are approximations. In addition, there may be other factors that remain unaccounted for, and such incomplete adjustments may skew the results. This is especially important if the measured increases in risk are minimal, as observed in this study. In other words, the minimal risk increase may disappear if one were in the position to completely adjust for all factors.

A proactive approach

BIC research shows consumers want to eat beef more often, and are aware of all the healthy reasons to do so. To that end, BIC's recently-launched multimedia campaign in Ontario is comprised of print ads, radio spots, and mall and health club posters that highlight the health benefits of eating beef. A new BIC booklet, "Canadian Beef, Goodness in Every Bite", is being distributed through Ontario editions of "Canadian Living, Food and Drink, Best Health and Good Food Festival", through select grocery retailers across the country and to health professionals. At Ontario Costco stores, a total of 160,000 booklets were distributed. And, 7,000 health professionals are receiving an education resource on nutrient-rich foods, with beef a key example.

A new contest from BIC is driving more traffic to BIC's website, www.beefinfo.org, and encourages consumers to receive and share information online; ensuring they are receiving accurate information about the nutritional benefits and ease of preparation of Canadian beef. The contest is being promoted through community newspaper inserts across the Greater Toronto Area, and through online promotion via community newspapers and on the social networking site Facebook. In addition, the 'Make It Beef Club' is promoting the contest to its members.

And finally, to support the multimedia campaign, a special edition of BIC's 'Nutrition Perspective' newsletter is being sent to over 7,000 health professionals in April. The newsletter discusses new scientific formulas that evaluate and rate the healthfulness of food.

Although the media components of the multimedia campaign will focus in Ontario, other elements of the brand strategy – health professional communications, an exclusive campaign website and a public relations campaign – are national in scope.