

CANADIAN

September/October 2015

Meat Business

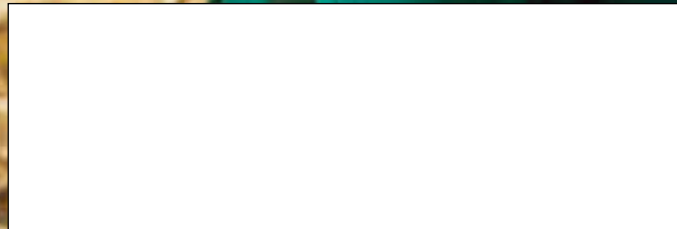
The Beef, Pork & Poultry Industry Magazine

**KEITH YOUNG:
STILL WORKING AFTER
ALL THESE YEARS**

**ANIMAL RIGHTS
ACTIVISTS LOSE
CONTROL**

**CCA: COOL
ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSION**

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THE BIG BANG CANADIAN MEAT THEORY

By Cam Patterson

In many ways and for many reasons, it feels like our Canadian meat industry is on the verge of a big explosion. This statement might not be too far from the truth when we look at what's going on around us as we may be in for a pretty good ride in the coming year.

Two of our industry's major issues, Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) are upon the nexus of a conclusion - and we might add, with long awaited conclusions in both cases. If the COOL decision handed down from the WTO's recent arbitration in Geneva discloses this coming November that we can seek retaliatory tariffs for or over the \$1.3 billion mark, and the TPP actually gives Canada's pork and beef industries the tariff reprieve they're hoping for, we could be faced with the biggest export boom we've experienced in years.

Yes, that alone is enough to make us all smile but there's more that is shaping this 'so bright we might have to wear shades' future. Prices have been driven up to all-time highs and let's not forget good ol' Mother Nature who gave us record setting droughts that wreaked havoc in Alberta but did much more damage to the cattle belts of the Southwest United States. No one likes liquidating their herds but the reality is the diminished livestock numbers perfectly timed with our plummeting dollar against the U.S currency, and lo and behold, we're up price per pound more than anyone would've dared forecast. That managed to turn a lot of frowns upside down.

It is amazing that even though we're always an industry on the defensive, there is all this optimism and projections of success in the coming year. Besides COOL and the uncertainty of the TPP deal being signed, look at all the other issues we're up against like the industrialized meat protests, unpredictable weather patterns, anti-meat documentaries (Cowconspiracy, which portrays the beef industry like a rogue CIA asset), PEDv and BSE outbreaks and now possibly Bluetongue.

Add to the fact that as consumers we're aligned into two groups - meat eaters and non-meat eaters - and the 'non' certainly seem to be the most vocal of the two as they actively promote their cause to generate more support. It seems like us meat eating people are just doing our best to feed the world with the best possible product we can and are getting our share of knocks along the way.

For all the interviews I've done this year and all the producers and processors I've talked to, no one seems the worse for wear. They, as an industry on the whole, remain hopelessly optimistic.

Maybe it is because we can see the light now, we're nearly through the tunnel, and we know we have the best product with the best food safety and bio security in the world.

And once the TPP is signed and COOL repealed, and the dust settles, the best is about to be.

That's known as the Big Bang Meat Theory.

Cam Patterson is the Digital Media Editor of Canadian Meat Business and can be reached at cam@meatbusiness.ca



From left to right, Dennis Laycraft, Dave Solverson, John Masswohl

CCA: COOL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

By Cam Patterson

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) held their Semi-Annual Meeting in Winnipeg this past August and the event was attended by representatives from a multitude of industry organizations as well as producers, processors, media and other stakeholders from across the country and the U.S. Many made the trip to hear and/or participate in meetings and committee presentations where they could find a platform to share information and to voice their opinions ranging from foreign trade, sustainability, animal health and domestic agriculture policy.

This is an invaluable event for many members, and the industry as a whole, because the CCA is the representative body that works tirelessly with Ottawa on matters of trade, marketing, policy, and of course Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). It was the CCA that drew up the original legal opinion that kicked Ottawa into gear back in 2007.

There was much to say and to do for all those in attendance in the short three day window during this meeting and time was limited for CCA's executives. However, Gina Teel, CCA's Communications Manager, was able to arrange a meeting with Dave Solverson, CCA President, Dennis Laycraft, CCA Executive Vice President and John

Masswohl, CCA's Director of Government and International Relations, to participate in a lively roundtable discussion with Canadian Meat Business (CMB) about COOL prior to the WTO's arbitration hearings in Geneva.

The WTO's final decision will be made public this November and if Canada has pleaded their case during the arbitration hearing effectively, the WTO may rule that we can levy retaliatory tariffs of just over \$3 billion USD against the U.S. across a very carefully chosen list of industries. This could spell the most significant trade disruption since NAFTA was signed.

Here is a portion of the engaging roundtable conversation regarding COOL and the CCA's ongoing efforts to represent the industry.

CMB: Dave, you bring real cattleman's experience to the title of President for CCA.

Dave: Yes, I grew up in it. My family had a small dairy operation for years then a turn of fate with our barn burning down moved us into beef after that, raising seed stock and purebred Hereford cattle in the 1970s and 1980s. By the time I was ready to venture out on my own, the downturn in the Alberta economy lowered land values and my brother and I bought up parcels of land and expanded the operation into a commercial business. We're still going strong today.

CMB: Did being a producer drive your decision to run for president of the CCA?

Dave: To be honest, I really didn't have any aspirations to be president. But I was "involved" prior by chairing the Animal Care and the Domestic Ag Policy committees. I served as Alberta's representative to CAFTA - the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, so through those positions I really got to see how influential and respected CCA was in the industry. So I was honored when they asked me to run four years ago.

CMB: John, how did you get involved with the CCA?

John: Ironically enough, I don't have a background in agriculture. I used to be with the federal government working on international trade and foreign affairs for a time. But mostly I've always worked in trade policy negotiations and was posted in the Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC serving as the Agriculture and Trade Counselor for a number of years. And now I'm in our Ottawa office as international relations liaison for CCA.

CMB: Dennis, what is your background?

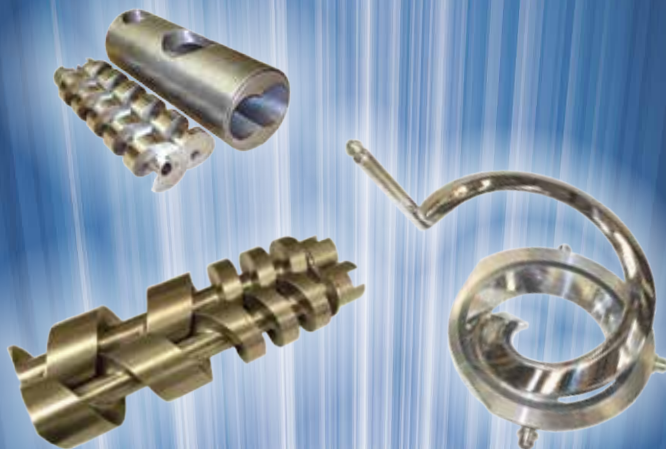
Dennis: I grew up on a cattle ranch and worked in the cattle industry and was a nutritionist for several years. Prior to joining CCA in 1990, I was the general manager of the Alberta Cattle Commission, which is now the Alberta Beef Producers. I was working actively on the Alberta files. I was also instrumental in creating the Canada Beef Export Federation, and at that time was serving as the federation's first Executive Director. I was hired on as general manager of CCA in 1990 and the title was changed to Executive Vice President in 1992.

CMB: Now here is the big question for all three of you regarding Geneva and the WTO arbitration hearing. I know you all have been involved with COOL since the beginning, so in your opinion what is the outcome you



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are expecting out of the hearing?

Dennis: Our estimates of the annual trade impairment and market suppression costs for cattle and hogs is around \$3 billion USD. The U.S. has come up with an estimate of \$90 million for both Canada and Mexico that purely looks at labeling costs within their country. They didn't look at the additional costs of livestock segregation or market suppression, so by that calculation, their estimate is only a fraction of the overall impact. We know from all the past WTO hearings that the panel in Geneva have already accepted the methodology that Canada has put forward. So, on that basis we fully expect that there will be a significant number come out of arbitration, and then Canada can move forward, if necessary, and levy retaliatory tariffs against the U.S.

Dave: We should say as well that it's been a tremendous leverage in having our government support us the way they have at the WTO and initiating this retaliatory strategy. They really drove the message out there that COOL has to be repealed.

John: It definitely got a lot of attention in Washington as to what is going on. And I am optimistic about the arbitration in Geneva, but we should keep in mind that regardless if we get the number we want from the WTO, Canada won't be in a position to put any policies through with respect to the tariffs until after the election period now anyway.

CMB: So what the U.S. is essentially facing is the possibility of dealing with retaliatory tariffs on two fronts.

John: That's right because Mexico could start immediately as they don't have an election constraint issue.

CMB: What was your reaction when the bill unilaterally passed through the House of Representatives so fast with 300 votes for and 131 opposed.

Dennis: Well, there's that strong message to the Senate we're talking about.

Dave: I agree, we always knew the House Ag Committee was strong for repeal, and that the real work to be done was going to be in the Senate.

Dennis: That's right, we're lucky that the elections swayed and the Republicans took over control of the Senate because what's important about that is the house leaders of the Senate Ag committee are the majority. Now we've got two chairmen in Roberts and Conway who are well associated with the risks of COOL and are very motivated to get this dealt with before it does become a serious trade dispute.

John: And the debate in the Senate isn't about "should" they change COOL anymore. It's about "how."

CMB: So this WTO arbitration in Geneva really is the final word and it will really say the argument is over.

Dennis: That's right. It is final and there is not another step after that. So, either they fix it, offer compensation, or retaliation goes into effect on the date of our choosing.

John: Dennis is right. Then the U.S. has to fix this issue to the satisfaction of having Canada and Mexico "voluntarily" decide to not pursue the recourse of retaliatory tariffs.

CMB: What do you see happening after the number is handed down from the WTO?

John: In all likelihood I'd think the tariffs would be on for a very short time. Because all those industries will be in Washington screaming to have it dealt with, and it will be. The only reason we'd go as far as initiating tariffs, and it's sad to say, is if the Senate takes the position we're bluffing.

Dennis: Ultimately our objective has always been to not reach retaliation. Our goal is to still work with the U.S. industry and fix this properly.

CMB: What about the volunteer labeling bill? It seemed to feel like a half way measure to still impose some kind of country of origin tag.

Dave: This proposal that is before the Senate now still has the same parameters to identify born, raised and slaughtered. So, our whole issue has been to eliminate the need for segregation because that's where the costs and discounts to our industry lie. I mean even last year with our reduced numbers, we still exported just over a million head of live cattle to the U.S. That's where this \$3 billion adds up because we incur discounts as a result of COOL on every one of those head of cattle. Yet, as Dennis said, retaliation is not the outcome we want. We favor getting back to that integrated commerce that has been going on for years. And that's why we have so much support in the U.S. because a lot of those American processors and packers feel those costs and discounts as we do.

John: The voluntary bill is problematic the way they have it. It's not so much that it's voluntary, it's how they've constructed it. And by segregation, it's meant to discriminate against imported livestock. So the voluntary bill is contrived to maintain that segregation and where we are in the process now is we don't have to accept that half measure.

Dennis: It's something I like to call 'mandatory' voluntary labeling which is really an oxymoron. Normally when you have a voluntary program it's not under legislation, it's usually under a series of guidelines that allow for appropriate flexibility because trade evolves and changes over time. In essence we established a licensing program where it has to meet certain criteria and it's really a branded program we're creating and adding value. So, like Dave said, what they're proposing would be a pretty constraining type of approach that would still result in that same level of segregation that this whole dispute is about. So while it sounds good on the surface, when you start to look at the way they want

to prescribe it, then it really is a mandatory voluntary label.

CMB: If we do kick into the retaliatory phase, and the duties come into effect, can we forecast how that could impede our market?

Dave: Well, anytime there is uncertainty like there is now, it affects markets. Buyers are leery of buying, so the sooner this is resolved, the better.

John: And it's all markets under our trade agreement. For example, the wine industry in California is extremely nervous over the possibility of a 100% tariff levied on their wine coming into Canada right around that pre-Christmas period. So, do they ship and run the risk of penalty tariffs or do they wait - both has implications that dramatically affect their product and their margins?

CMB: We can imagine how much power the wine industry has and how that will impact Senators in those states who favor COOL.

John: That's exactly what happened in California. There were a lot of pro COOL Senators in California with the wine industry saying, "Why did you do this to us?" They want it reversed and they want it reversed now.

Dennis: It is difficult to forecast the direct implication on the cattle market, but one thing that I think tips the scale for a favorable resolution - and Dave already said this too - is Ottawa has made it very clear they're going to defend our beef industry. There is no bluffing when it comes to COOL.

CMB: How many times have you guys been to Washington during the debate surrounding COOL?

Dave: I've been down about five or six times, but Dennis and John far more.

Dennis: And our work just isn't in Washington. John has done the majority of the travel. But we have gone state by state because each state cattle association has taken a position for or against COOL. Over the last four years we've seen the shift where a number of states that originally supported COOL, over time saw there was no price benefit but just increased costs. And now with this risk of penalty tariffs that could impact other industries within those states, they now oppose COOL.

John: Those industries like corn processors and ethanol refiners, were strategically picked based on where they are, in terms of where their Congressmen and Senators are, and what that State Representative's position was on COOL. And here is another point sometimes overlooked, if you're an American company and you're already on that list, even though we have not even started retaliation, you could already be impacted because of the uncertainty of the market in the interim.

Dennis: That's right. So, as a result, we were working state by state to get that grassroots support. So I do feel the

lobbying has paid off because the majority feeling is this is not good for our trade relationships overall and certainly not good for their beef industry as well.

Dave: Just to give you an example, I remember John and I were in Iowa and one of their directors had said he learned more in the meeting we had with them than they had in the last five years from their own representatives. So that grass roots initiative we took on ourselves is so important, just like Dennis says, to get down there, get that support, because the value of having allies when it comes to something like COOL is what brings about the favorable change we've been after.

Dennis: I think between the State meetings and going to the NCBA (National Cattlemen's Beef Association) we've probably done over a hundred trips.

CMB: All of these meetings had to do with issues regarding COOL?

Dennis: Well, largely yes, but we were also working on trade relations while dealing with the dispute because we want to get us back to being a very efficient North American market place.

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STILL WORKING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

By Scott Taylor

Keith Young was rightfully proud of the fact that he and wife Helen just celebrated 60 years of marriage. Of course, he celebrated by going to work.



Keith Young

One of the giants of the meat industry in Canada, Young still goes into the Yes Group in suburban Toronto three times a week. He doesn't own the company anymore. The Yes Group now belongs to his son Steven and his wife Silvia, but it's a business and an industry that's in his blood.

At the end of this year, Young will be 80, but going to work is still a big part of every week.

"I still get up and head into work three times a week at 6 a.m.," he said with a smile. "I guess that's just the habit I got into in my old meat packer days."

Keith Young has just about done everything one could possibly do in the meat processing industry. He's worked in plants, run plants, built plants and then, in the 1980s, decided to operate his own company, servicing the industry.

However, he didn't start in the industry. In fact, this small town boy with big dreams from Prescott, Ont., kind of stumbled out of engineering and into the meat processing game.

After studying mechanical engineering at the University of New York, Young worked as an industrial engineer in Brockville, Ont., and Granby, Que., for nearly 10 years. Then he was offered a post at Hygrade Foods Inc., in

Montreal and his life changed.

"It did," he acknowledged. "After a few years as an industrial engineer in metal fabrication, I joined Hygrade Foods in Montreal. It was a growing industry at the time with a lot of small and medium companies. That's one of the biggest changes today. The big guys just keep buying up all the small to medium processors, but back in the 60s, there were plenty of different companies doing well in the industry."

Young looks back on his career at Hygrade with fondness.

"While I was packaging supervisor, we installed the first vacuum packaging machines for franks and luncheon meats," he said. "Then, in 1966, as assistant plant superintendent, we completed the installation of the largest continuous and automatic frankfurter processing unit in the world. Rated at 72,000 frankfurters per hour. We also developed and patented the loading system for the line."

Frankfurters played an important role in Young's meat packing education. After all, there was a new sports team in Montreal and the people who bought tickets to their games, loved their ballpark franks.

"The Expos arrived in Montreal and that little Jarry Park was just down the street from where Helen and I lived," he

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recalled. "I could walk to that ballpark.

"When they first arrived, we could barely keep up. Of course, I remember when Expo '67 came to Montreal. No one had any idea how big that was going to be. It was before we built the frankfurter unit, so with Expo '67 coming, we decided to start making up the frankfurters weeks in advance and we couldn't keep up with the demand. In fact, on opening day in 1967, we ran out of franks.

"I don't think people eat frankfurters as much as they used to. I can tell you, at Expo '67, it was the meal of choice for just about everyone who attended."

After Hygrade was purchased by Unilever, Young took over the daily operations as plant superintendent. Then, in 1970, he joined Griffith Laboratories in Scarborough, Ont., and his contribution to Griffith was almost immeasurable.

"I actually helped grow the equipment division from a single emulsifier (Mincemaster) to a multi-equipment division," he recalled. "We brought Austrian-made Inject-Star injectors and massagers for Value-added products to Canada. Later in the 70s, we introduced Zesti-Smoke applicators allowing us to atomize liquid smoke directly into smokehouses.

"In 1981, I was named a vice-president at Griffith. During my 17 years at Griffith, along with many major Canadian projects, I designed and equipped meat plants in Barbados, Trinidad, and Guyana."

Like many successful leaders, his success was not limited to his career. He was also a leader in his church and community. He was President of the St. Francis Men's Club and was a member of the executive committee of the Mississauga Boy Scouts of Canada. In fact, he was a founder of scouting in his area in Mississauga.

He and Helen are proud of their family. Their children Cathy, Susan and Steven all attended university and are all successful in their own careers. Like all grandparents, they are thrilled with their grandchildren Robyn, Kristen and Davis who are on their way to impacting the world much the same as their parents and grandparents.

"In 1987, I founded the Yes Group Inc., which services the food industry for Canada and the Caribbean," he said. "In a small unit in Markham, Ont., we hit the ground running with

such names as Pitco Mastermatic, Maurer (now Maurer-Atmos), Inject-Star, Karl Schnell, Swibo and others."

Right away, Yes Group had the name brands and service required to be successful in the supply industry. From day 1, the Yes Group stocked a full line of meat processing supplies, including aprons, gloves, knives, hooks, netting thermometers, safety wear and HACCP approved products. Young had a plan and from Day 1, that plan worked.

"Between 1988 and 1995 we got into that critical period, but unlike many companies we started to thrive, rather than shrink," he said. "We moved into larger facilities with new people, new products and most importantly, my partner in life, Helen, became my partner in business. Helen left banking and set the financial foundation for the Yes Group, managing cash flow and receivables, along with great customer relations.

"In 1989, Bettcher Industries awarded the Yes Group the distribution rights for their product line in Canada and our son Steven joined the Yes Group as a Bettcher Yield Product Specialist. He eventually took over the sales division and today he's President and along with his wife Silvia, continue the tradition of a Canadian family rum enterprise.

"I can't even begin to tell you how much this industry has changed from the time I started more than 50 years ago," Young said. "It's incredible, really. You want to talk about

Continued on page 12

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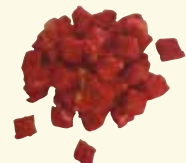


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change? When I started working with Hygrade in the 1960s, we were wrapping luncheon meat with cellophane. We’ve come a long, long way from cellophane.

“Even banking has changed dramatically over the past decade alone. We used to rush to get to the bank to cash cheques and make payroll on Fridays. Now you can take pictures of cheques on your phone or just transfer money through the Internet. It’s a different world today than it was when I started in the industry.”

As Young points out, the business model is quite different, too.

“So many of the companies have either closed or been bought up by the others,” he said. “To be honest, the Yes Group will continue to service the full meat industry from the small exciting family start-ups to the large successful enterprises in Canada.”

For Young, who is still excited about going into his office a few days a week, it’s been quite a career. One of the men who was influential in the creation of this magazine, Canadian Meat Business, Young has been a major player in one of Canada’s most important industries for more than five decades.

“It’s been a pretty great life,” said Young with a chuckle. “If you really stop and think about it, I was just a young kid who came from small-town Ontario and made the big time in Montreal. I started in Brockville and moved to Montreal and the first thing I realized was that I really didn’t know much about anything. But I learned. I worked hard and I listened and got great advice. I became very good at what I did. I love the industry and our dedicated staff and that’s why I keep going into my office as often as I can.”

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ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS LOSE CONTROL

By Chuck Jolley

As opposed to the more rational animal welfare people, that is. On July 28, Paul Bali was in Guelph attending a talk about what goes on at the University of Guelph's animal labs. He was in town, not as a friend but as a rabid animal rights activist seeking to do harm to the school's internationally recognized good works in animal welfare. He had heard the Ontario Agricultural College is a leader in research on animal agriculture experiments. He was troubled by what he heard were experiments performed on animals at the facility.

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While he was in town, Bali heard that Dr. Grandin was scheduled to speak at the University. In his own words, he 'lost it.' In a childish fit of rage, he rushed out to buy a can of red spray paint, wrote the word "abattoir" on a stone sign at the intersection of College and Gordon Street and added an arrow pointing to the university. Think of his action as akin to the gangland graffiti artist in the mean streets of Brooklyn, NY or the simple-minded vandalism in the central business district of Vancouver, BC.

Of course, we in the U.S. wouldn't notice such a small-time, non-violent act of (un)civil disobedience. In this country, animal activists are more likely to break into fur farms and release 2,000 minks to starve in the woods of Northern Illinois or burn animal transport trucks in rural California. We are the country that introduced the world to PETA's seriously strange Ingrid Newkirk, who thinks 'a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.'

Bali said he knew he would be charged for a crime and turned himself in the following day. It was a wise decision on his part, not that he had a choice. The Guelph Police had issued a caught-in-the-act photo of a suspect and asked for the public's help in identifying him.



Bali was charged with mischief under \$5,000, a crime usually associated with small boys and weekend drunks. Until his court date, he was free to practice his paint can politics and protest Grandin's campus appearance. He can call on a small but noisy contingent of well-meaning, misdirected, people-who-own-lots-of-cats who wish to end animal agriculture, turn horses loose to fend for themselves in the wilds of Western Nebraska and Central Alberta, and name their pet rats Ingrid and Wayne.

Oddly enough, PETA has actually praised Grandin's work. Five years ago, Time magazine called her one of the 100 most influential people in the world. A member of the Meat Industry Hall of Fame, her list of honors is long and impressive, even being presented with an honorary degree from the University of Guelph in 2012. When it comes to her thoughts about animal rights activists, I'll quote Rhett Butler who said to the annoyingly vapid Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

Asked about Bali's personal problems, she politely replied, "I have a difference of opinion. I think you can raise animals for meat in an ethical manner and I eat meat. We're going to have to agree to disagree on that one."

Crystal Mackay, the executive director of Farm and Food Care Canada, the sponsoring organization behind Grandin's appearance, isn't shocked by the protest. She might have even expected it. "Whenever you host somebody with the profile of Temple, protesters may be drawn to it," she said.

I suppose it is one of life's mysteries. The woman who has done more for the cause of animal welfare than anyone else has become the target of militant animal rights groups. It illustrates the growing gap between those who want to better the lives of animals and those who would simply call cats, dogs, guinea pigs, cattle and chickens 'non-human beings' and turn them all loose to run free with no real plan for insuring their 'post-enslavement' safety and welfare.



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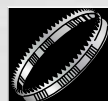
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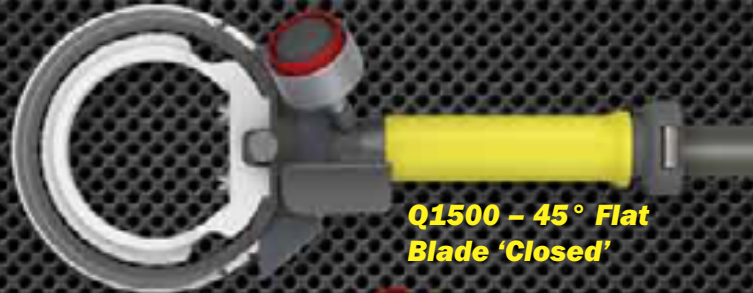
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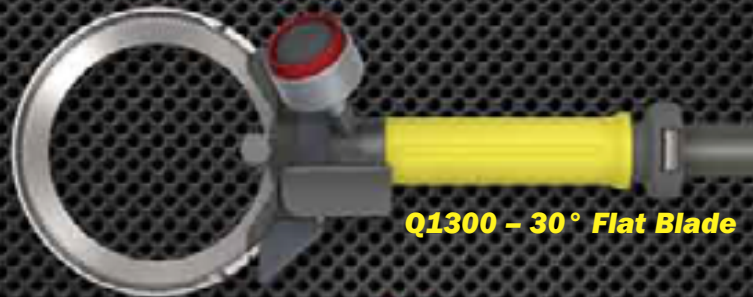
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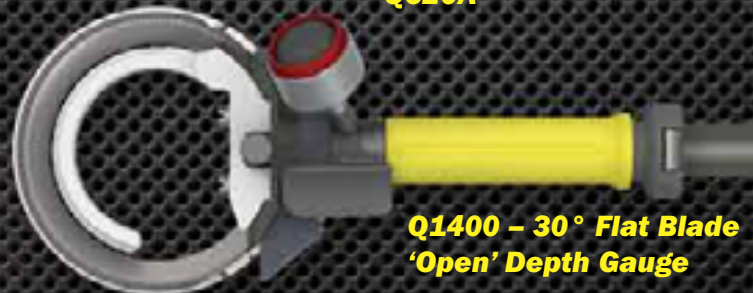
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Holac's new 130,000 sq. ft. facility under construction

HOLAC RELOCATING TO NEW, LARGER PRODUCTION FACILITY

Holac Maschinenbau GmbH has announced they will be relocating to a new site in Nattheim, Germany. This modern facility will form the core of all commercial, production and new product development, taking Holac into the 21st century and beyond.

As part of the Robert Reiser Group based in Canton, MA, Holac has experienced a steady and constant growth over the years and in the last decade has outgrown their existing premises. The newly designed facility will feature a state-of-the-industry Customer Center.

“We wanted to create the ideal location where Customers can come from all over the world and not only test but also further strengthen the already strong relationships we have with our ever growing number of world-wide international Customers”, said Achim Holz, Managing Director at Holac.

With more than 130.000 sq. ft., and as one of the leading

companies in the area of further processing in the food sector, Holac has found the right spot to expand upon the steady and constant growth experienced during the last years and build upon the ever-growing and extensive product portfolio. Holac has more than 50 years experience and know-how in the food industry developing, designing and bringing to market high-quality, robust and reliable equipment for the food manufacturing industry. Holac is a world leader in dicing and slicing technology and offers a complete range of equipment to cube, strip, shred, flake and slice all types of food products.

For more information, visit www.holac.de or www.reiser.com

FALL MARKETING TIPS FOR THE MEAT DEPARTMENT LEVERAGING BACK TO SCHOOL

By Ronnie P. Cons

As the fall season approaches, it is only normal for some managers of grocery meat departments to ask themselves if there are any seasonal marketing tips that can be applied by them in order to drive higher sales of their meat and poultry products.

The short answer is yes - there are actually several innovative ways to leverage the seasonal issues, needs, attitudes and events that characterize the beginning of the fall season in September. The first step is to identify the macro events and the child and parent attitudinal profiles that surface during this season and which create a particular set of needs and thus opportunities that can be addressed by the meat department.

In brief, the fall season represents the transition from vacation mode to back to school. This transition is often tinged with sadness among children as the care free vacation period with limited obligations and no homework are over. By contrast parents often feel a sort of relief that the kids will be back in a structured environment and not running havoc all over the house. In addition, parents with school age children enter into a more serious frame of mind where they try to set up a functional family dynamic that will maximize the success of their children in school. This involves enforcing bed times as well as making sure they are eating the right kinds of foods so that they will have the physical and mental strength to concentrate in class, do their homework and do well on tests.

From the above description we can propose that the meat department communicate the below messages to their parental clientele which clearly communicates to them the message that they have the products to satisfy the parents above needs of wanting to give their children foods that will enhance their children's success at school as well as cheer them up after the end of their vacation:

Meat and Poultry are good ways to enhance one's children's physical and mental abilities helping them to excel at school. To do so, the meat department manager and employees that communicate with the public should become aware of the health benefits of meat and poultry for young and older children. A couple of posters

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summarizing the below health benefits should be put up.

In brief the meat department should know and communicate that:

A) Canada's food guide recommends portions of meat and alternatives each day for their children ranging from 1 to 3 portions depending on the age of the child.

B) Meat and poultry is a good source of protein which is very important for the child's health as it is needed for proper growth, for the skin, for muscle repair and regeneration and many other vital functions. Protein intake helps keep off hunger as it makes you feel full, so a chicken sandwich for school lunch can help him avoid those end of day hunger pains that can lead to a lack of concentration in class. How much protein does a child need? Children need from about 15 grams to 50 grams daily of protein depending on their age- older children needing more. A 3 ounce portion of chicken or lean beef has about 20 grams of protein.

C) Meat and poultry are low in sugar which will help maintain the blood sugar level on an even level which is ideal. This may even benefit the child's concentration in class.

D) Meat supplies Vitamin B12 which is essential for production of red blood cells and for brain function.

E) Meat is a great source of Iron which is essential for red blood cell formation, a functioning immune system and cell

growth. Low iron levels can lead to anemia which can lead to serious learning problems.

F) Meat is a good source of Zinc which is important for the immune system and growth. A deficiency can lead to serious cognitive issues. A three ounce portion of darker chicken will give a younger child the amount of Zinc he requires.

The meat department should also promote meat and poultry as comfort foods that help facilitate the transition back to school. Posters of parents with their children eating yummy, sizzling hamburgers with fries or steaks with a caption like "Summer may be over but meats still a treat!" could convey the message that a nice meat meal will gladden their kids.

Finally the meat department posters can position a nice meat meal as a sort of way to get the kids around the table, as often kids get bogged down with homework and parents have a hard time getting them to the table for this important family meal. A nice sizzling meat meal will cause almost any child to close his books for just a few minutes. I'm coming Mom!

In summary, leveraging the back to school fall season with some innovative marketing strategies that tap into the needs and attitudes of both parents and their children can be very useful to help drive meat and poultry sales.

Ronnie P. Cons is the EVP of C&C Packing, a leading Canadian distributor of meat and poultry. He can be contacted at Rcons@CCpacking.com. Visit at www.ccpacking.com

NAMI SIGNS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH CHINA

The North American Meat Institute (NAMI) and The China Society of Inspection and Quarantine (CSIQ) have signed an agreement to cooperate on key food safety programs and to enhance the technical information exchange between the groups.

Under the agreement, CSIQ and NAMI will strengthen technology exchanges and cooperation in inspection and quarantine, collaborate on inspection and quarantine verification and food safety cooperation and communication at the local and national level. The two organizations also will share information concerning regulatory and scientific developments that can impact their members and disseminate the information, as appropriate. Both organizations will convene periodically to explore additional mechanisms that would mutually benefit each organization's members.

CSIQ is approved by the State Council of the People's Republic of China, registered by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and supported by General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ). CSIQ is a national, non-profit, voluntary organization that aims to promote academic

communication and technical cooperation, advocates national high-tech inspection development and seeks to enhance the performance and level of inspection.

"This newly formed partnership is consistent with the Institute's long-standing philosophy that food safety should be a non-competitive issue," said Institute Chairman Dave McDonald, president of OSI Industries. "We both know there is a time to compete against one another – that makes both of us better and stronger. But there is also a time when cooperation should trump competition, and that is when it comes to food safety."

"Our nations individually have some of the best minds in science and technology and food technology in particular," McDonald said. "Separately, we are leaders, but working together, we can become exceptional leaders. In fact, we can help create a new global path."

The Institute's Senior Vice President of International Trade William Westman will serve as the liaison to the newly formed partnership. The Institute is also a founding member of the U.S.-China Agriculture and Food Partnership.



\$25 MILLION CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN SASKATCHEWAN

Plans and funding for a \$25 million “Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence” were recently announced at the University of Saskatchewan.

Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and Saskatchewan Ag Minister Lyle Stewart were in Saskatoon to announce \$10 million in funding for the centre under Growing Forward 2. The U of S has committed \$7 million for construction costs, in addition to providing the land. The Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association is also investing \$1 million in the centre, which will serve as a hub for coordinating livestock and forage research, training and outreach.

“This centre will facilitate research needed to keep improving our industry competitiveness, profitability and resilience,” said SCA chair Bill Jameson. “The valuable knowledge generated here will impact livestock and forage producers throughout the province and across the country.”

The centre will have its physical home in two locations: a new Beef Cattle Research and Teaching Unit on a 1,760 acre property near Clavet, and the Forage and Cow-calf Research and Teaching Unit to be located at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine’s existing 2,360-acre research farm near Floral, east of Saskatoon.

According to the university, components of the centre are expected to be in operation by 2018. The Floral facility will be home to “an experimental station for forage crop production studies” and a breeding herd of up to 500 cows.

The president of the Saskatchewan Stockgrowers Association called it “a very big deal for producers.”

“Our governments have made a far-sighted investment in our industry, one that will pay dividends for many years to come,” said Doug Gillespie, noting the centre will be critical in reaching the Saskatchewan Livestock Strategy target of a 25 percent increase in annual livestock farm receipts.

“This gives us the means to work together as an industry to expand our research capacity and become ever more competitive,” he said.



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CANFAX LOOKS TO FUTURE GROWTH AND EXCITEMENT IN THE BEEF INDUSTRY

By Cam Patterson

For many in the beef industry in Canada, Canfax is a comprehensive, non-profit group collecting and disseminating cattle market information, providing its members with the best possible advantage when it comes to buying and selling their cattle.

As an analysis and advisory division of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA), Canfax maintains a large database of historical prices and base levels, pricing and feed cost comparisons, virtually anything that factors into cattle markets in Canada. In addition they provide regional, national and U.S. snapshots of pricing trends, trade movement matrix reporting and a host of analysis services. The basic premise was to form a co-operative of real time information flow to producers who want the best possible forecasting information to leverage profits for their members. Their services are not only used by ranchers and farmers but also feedlots, processors, packers, and other industry stakeholders.

Canadian Meat Business (CMB) sat down with Brian Perillat, Manager and Senior Analyst for Canfax for a Q & A at the recent CCA Semi-Annual Meeting where he had just delivered a lecture on what the current reports were showing our beef industry. In short, it's an exciting time for the industry.

CMB: Brian, outside of your role at the CCA, you are a farmer right?

Brian: Yes, I actually was a Saskatchewan farm kid who was pretty passionate about cattle and the beef industry. I've been around them all my life and now have my own herd, do a bit of mixed farming, things like that.

CMB: How did a farmer from Saskatchewan end up in agriculture analysis for the cattle industry?

Brian: I went to the University of Saskatchewan and took Ag economics. It didn't hurt that I've always liked math, algebra and calculus so of course from that economics and market analysis was really a no brainer for me. First and foremost I love the job because I still love agriculture. It's always back to that for me.

CMB: I'm sure having a farming background has its advantages because it wouldn't be the same if you were just another analyst who landed a job in this industry.

Brian: Absolutely, and to be honest, coming from the farm with hands-on experience when talking to feedlots gives me a lot of credibility from those people I'm trying to get information from. I know what we're talking about when it comes to feeders, cost of gain and slides, etc. So the reception on the other end of the call is usually pretty open and forthcoming because they know they don't have to



Brian Perillat, Manager and Senior Analyst

Continued on page 23

educate me on the industry.

CMB: Is that a prerequisite to be at Canfax?

Brian: No, not necessarily, but it just so happens that most of our staff are from farms and ranches.

CMB: Let's get down to the more specific topics I think our readers want to know from a market analyst such as yourself. How are we looking from a cattle market perspective?

Brian: Well, let's back up a bit, because that's a big area to zero in on. Back in 2003 when the BSE really hit the industry hard, cattle prices plummeted and the equity loss in the industry was huge right up to about 2010. Around 2005 we started to recover from BSE which coincided with the Canadian dollar creeping up, and as I've said in my lectures, a weaker dollar value always translates to higher cattle prices in Canada. Add to that the fact feed costs practically doubled and the U.S. Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) rose up; basically for our cattle producers it just seemed like we're getting clobbered every year with something. It was a hard time.

CMB: And now COOL is close to being resolved.

Brian: Well, let's hope so, but even though that issue affects trade and bottom lines it didn't stop the fact that in the last 18 months we've really seen the markets do a complete 180 from negative profits to far exceeding projections and industry expectation.

CMB: If we talk about prices then and now, what kind of spread are we really looking at?

Brian: Let me give you an example. When I first started with Canfax, calf prices were at about \$1.60 to \$1.80 a pound and there was a lot of excitement over the possibility we could see \$2.00 a pound. I mean a lot of excitement. And here we are now at \$3.50 a pound; more than doubled. So, bottom line is that it is a really exciting time in the beef industry.

CMB: This is happening despite all the COOL negotiations, export bans, droughts and a dropping Canadian dollar. Not sure

Continued on page 24

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I'm understanding how the price explosion is happening.

Brian: What you have to remember is it is not really a Canadian market as much as it is a North American and global market. The U.S., like Alberta, went through some big droughts but they had over a million head in cow herd liquidation in the last few years. Now that really hurt the market at the time, but what that really did - when we finally worked through all that and the rains came - is spark the price explosion that much stronger because there was literally not enough cattle to meet demand. So, in essence, that's basic economics and it played a major role in driving prices higher.

CMB: What you're saying is simply by the sheer size of the U.S. cattle herds, they really do drive the market in Canada as well?

Brian: Absolutely. The U.S. has 7 to 10 times the stock of Canada, so if their prices go up .50 cents, ours go up proportionately in U.S. dollars. Subsequently when we're sitting with that lower dollar, our prices can drive up really fast. Furthermore, strong global supply and demand dynamics have further added fuel to these strong local prices.

CMB: If we projected ahead and saw COOL resolved, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) signed, trade with Japan becomes a reality, the Russian ban is dropped and the dollar stays low, then as a market analyst, you must be excited about all that?

Brian: That, to be honest, is a bit hard to quantify, but we think it is fair to say that without COOL, we'd probably have seen cattle prices at least \$100 a head higher than they have been, so we do expect a positive impact from getting it repealed.

CMB: How about if the TPP is signed? That looks to be a big jewel for Canadian beef exports.

Brian: It is for sure. The tariffs imposed on Canadian beef exports into Japan are 38.5%, so on the \$103 million of exports to Japan last year, we paid \$40 million in duties to the Japanese government. I mean this is dollars per head we're talking about. When we're talking about an

overheated market, despite the millions we'll be charged in tariffs, it's still worth it to trade with Japan. Still, as much as I hate to downplay it, I really don't foresee another explosion in cattle prices like we've had happening again, regardless of TPP going forward. Besides these deals develop slowly so it's difficult to do an exact analysis with so many variables built in. But what the TPP will do, is enable Canadian beef to get back on an even footing with our Australian competitors who already have an FTA with Japan. So, to say we're going to see another huge spike in the market with TPP; probably not, but it can help us stay even versus taking a hit if we don't have the deal.

CMB: Do you think we'd have the product to supply that additional demand?

Brian: That's always the debate but that's really not the issue. We still export over 40% of our production now. And we're always worried about losing our feeder cattle to the U.S., so the big thing I always talk about is that if we can gain new markets and lower tariffs and put a few more dollars in our packers' pockets, that will hopefully give more ability to increase local cattle prices to keep more cattle in Canada and that's a huge thing. It's not just a price driver, but a big overall industry economic benefit. It can be a very complicated but interesting trading market for sure.

CMB: How about a summary of the market outlook for 2016.

Brian: You know everything has really leaned in our favor with respect to rising U.S. prices and our lower dollar, lower feed costs and corn and grain surpluses; this is all helping cattle prices. Given that we've exported so many feeder cattle to the U.S. to supplement their drought losses, from a market perspective that is all good because you want to maximize your dollar. The downside is we have to pay attention as we need to maintain our critical mass in our own industry. The fact processing plants are not at full capacity is concerning because we want to grow and maintain our own herds as well as reap the export benefit. But that said, prices are good and profitability is high. If prices stay this high, and if the drought goes our way, perhaps we can even start thinking of expansion. Like I said, it's a very exciting time for our industry.

CMC SOUNDS THE WORKER SHORTAGE ALARM AGAIN

By Cam Patterson

This is not the first time the Canadian Meat Council (CMC) has sounded the alarm on the challenges of filling job vacancies in the Canadian meat processing industry.

All of these ongoing international trade negotiation deals and the hard work of Canadian meat associations involved in promoting our food products will all be for not if we don't have the workers required to fill the quotas our industry requires to capitalize on the lucrative future.

Despite the CMC's efforts to draw attention to the problem, our industry continues to deal with the same problems, the same concerns and no affirmative action plan on the horizon.

It was back in January of this year when the CMC stated that the shortage of butchers, meat cutters and labourers in Canada was curtailing the prospects of the livestock and meat sectors, subsequently restricting the meat industry economy. The problem then was zeroing in on the PC government's immigration program failure to include foreign butchers and meat cutters in the "Express Entry" program.

To date, this is unchanged.

With COOL going the final round with the WTO arbitration meeting in Geneva on September 15th, and the TPP getting closer to being signed, potentially giving Canada the trade jewel that is Japan, and PEDv, Avian flu, and BSE seemingly in low ebb thanks to Canada's second to none bio-security practices, market analysts are predicting we may have to wear shades the future could be so bright. The only set back that could stall all this prosperity is the shortage of workers problem.

Ron Davidson, the director of international trade, government and media relations with the Canadian Meat Council, took to the online interview podium with Bruce Cochrane of FarmScape.ca.

"So it has an impact on our jobs, it has an impact on the livestock producers, it has an impact on the grain farmers, it has a major impact on our rural communities, it has a significant impact on our exports, and it certainly has an impact on the ability of Canadians to choose Canadian produced food."

Despite lobbying government to devise immigration

incentives for skill workers, and processors devising promotion campaigns to attract skilled labour, the ugly truth remains that there is a disturbing number of work stations in processing plants vacant, and no new candidates waiting to fill them.

"People just don't realize how much is at stake," Davidson said online. "The meat processing industry is the single largest component of the food processing sector in Canada."

Yet the question remains; what do we do to get that affirmative action plan into action?

To listen to more of Bruce Cochrane's online interviews visit farmscape.ca

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Bill Leva, Chief Operations Officer at J&G Foods, alongside the company's fifth Repak packaging machine from Reiser.

J&G FOODS INSTALLS FIFTH REPAK PACKAGING MACHINE

Reiser has announced that it recently installed a fifth Repak RE20 in-line form/fill/seal vacuum packaging machine at J&G Foods in Sutton, MA. The Repak horizontal form/fill/seal packaging machine produces vacuum and modified-atmosphere packages (MAP) from flexible and semi-rigid materials, as well as Vacuum Skin Packages (VSP).

“Our five Repaks are reliable, versatile, high-performance packaging machines used for our case-ready meat programs,” said Bill Leva, Chief Operations Officer at J&G. “We also rely on Reiser and their capable and responsive staff for prompt support and service whenever we need it. Reiser is an important partner to the growth of J&G Foods.”

Roger Reiser added “J&G Foods has been a valued customer of Reiser since the early 2000s and we congratulate them on their incredible expansion and success.”

J&G Foods is a custom fresh meat provider specializing in organic and grass fed beef, Australian lamb, organic chicken, natural pork and beef, and a variety of marinated meats. J&G achieves superior customer satisfaction by partnering with supermarket brands to provide high quality products that meet today's consumer demands.

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This event is co-located with the Meat Industry Hall of Fame Induction Dinner.



FIGHTING FALSE INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Canadian farmers have endured a long-running and concerted attack on the system that brings Canadians the dairy, poultry and egg products they trust.

As the pressure mounted to conclude the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, Canada's dairy, poultry and egg farmers are hearing an increasing amount of rhetoric and misinformation regarding supply management in the media.

As a result, farmers would like an opportunity to address these myths.

1. Supply Management Does Not Raise Prices for Consumers

Farmers do not set retail prices - retailers and restaurants have always charged what they feel the market will bear. The price paid by the consumer is related to many factors, which can include: retailer competition, brand positioning, cost of competing items and specials to get consumers in the store. None of these factors is related in any way to the share the farmer receives - which typically only represents

a tiny fraction of the final price.

Despite that, chicken is currently the least expensive meat protein. Over the last two years, the price of chicken has risen by only 3%, compared to over 20% for other meats that are freely traded.

The average annual retail price for whole frozen turkeys in Canada over the last 15 years was \$2.92 per kg, vs. \$3.34 per kg in the United States; sometimes a little higher - more often lower, but never wildly out of range with the U.S.

You can buy a dozen eggs, the most complete protein source available, for less than the price of a latte.

The biggest determinant of how much we pay for dairy, poultry and egg products isn't supply management - it's where and when we shop.

2. Supply Management Is Not Blocking the TPP

The Government of Canada has successfully negotiated twelve trade agreements with 43 countries since 1994; all of these have opened up new markets, improved trade rules, and preserved supply management. This is a successful negotiating formula, and we are confident that the government will be able to do it again at the TPP. Canada is already the 6th largest importer of agri-food products - and 1st on a per capita basis; we don't need to take any lessons on market access from other countries.

Every single country involved in the TPP has something that they want to keep. The United States, for example, has a long history of restrictive import protections in the sugar and dairy industries; Japan has a long history of protecting its rice sector; and New Zealand has always vigorously defended its pharmaceutical program.

3. Supply Management is not Subsidized

Unlike other agricultural sectors, Canada's dairy, poultry and egg industries receive no government subsidies. In countries without supply management (and even here in Canada), other sectors are heavily subsidized.

Consumers pay twice for most food, once through their taxes (whether they buy it or not), and again at the grocery counter. With dairy, poultry and egg products, you only pay for it if you buy it.

4. Canada Isn't a Closed Market

Canada is an important market for countries the world over - even for supply managed products. Canada imports more chicken, for example, than six of the TPP countries (including the U.S.) combined.

What's ironic is that New Zealand and Australia, the media darlings of international trade, whom we are encouraged to emulate, import no chicken.

5. Supply Management Makes a Difference to Canada's Economy

- 16,667 farmers
- 332,006 total jobs
- \$11.3 billion in farm cash receipts
- \$27.5 billion to Canada's GDP
- \$6.4 billion in taxes

6. Dismantling Supply Management Will Not Lower Consumer Prices

In countries where supply management has been dismantled, such as Australia and New Zealand, prices have actually gone up for consumers, while revenues for farmers have gone down or stayed the same.

The average domestic price for two litres of milk in New Zealand jumped 11.3% from May 2013 to May 2015,

despite being a major milk exporter, and having one of the lowest costs of production in the world.

Nielsen's global price comparison (52 weeks ending December 2014) shows the average consumer price for milk is about \$1.30/L for Canadian fresh milk, which compares well with the \$1.83/L consumers pay in New Zealand, \$1.81/L in France, \$1.15/L in the United States, and \$1.19/L in Germany; while China's prices are more expensive, at \$2.35 /L.

Even in Canberra, Australia's capital, 30 eggs cost \$6.69 CAD, while, at the same time, they cost \$5.99 in Ottawa.

Promising lower prices prematurely assumes that retailers will pass on lower prices to consumers - when was the last time this happened?

7. Supply Management Helps Food Safety Systems Work

Canadian farmers are known worldwide for their stringent food safety systems. Not all farmers outside of Canada adhere to the same standards.

Dairy, poultry and egg farmers are obligated to follow strict on-farm programs that ensure that the highest on-farm standards are followed, from food safety to biosecurity—and supply management allows these to be enforced.

8. Supply Management is Risk Management

Supply managed farmers are able to avoid bust periods that can happen for reasons like animal disease (both domestic and international), which often force other farm sectors to use government support programs and subsidies in order to ride out the storm.

In a recent interview, Ontario Agriculture Minister, Jeff Leal, credited supply management for saving rural Ontario from «total collapse» during an outbreak of BSE - because stable revenues from one sector allowed all the other businesses that serve farmers to ride out the downturn.

There are more than 1,000 egg farms in Canada in all parts of the country, with an average flock size of about 23,000; compared to about 200 farms in the U.S., concentrated mainly in a few states, with an average flock size of 1.5 million. Thanks to supply management, which has assured the stability of the family farm, when a crisis like high path Avian Influenza hits in Canada, farmers can contain, mitigate and buffer Canadian consumers and protect our animals, without the uncertainty of relying on imports.

Farmers are growing increasingly concerned about having their industries misrepresented in certain media. It's time that people had the facts - or at the very least, the other side of the story.

FEDERAL ELECTION 2015 – A CALL FOR STRONG SMALL BUSINESS POLICIES

The October 2015 Federal Election presents Canadians with a choice that will shape the country's future. Federal policies affect owners of small- and medium enterprises (SMEs) and their employees, often in ways voters don't think about before they cast their vote.

Every election we see party leaders and candidates trying to position themselves as the champions of small business, in their bids to appeal to voters. With the current unsteadiness in the Canadian and world economies, it is more important than ever to support SMEs.

Canadian SMEs are the engine that drives our economy, employing nearly eight million Canadians. If you look specifically at the agriculture and agri-food sector - it provides one-in-eight jobs across Canada. That's a lot of votes!

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) is a strictly non-partisan organization, so we do not endorse any political party. Instead we strive to work with all parties to ensure they are aware of the issues important to small business and that our members are aware of where the main political parties stand on issues important to them.

CFIB believes entrepreneurs' concerns should be front and centre throughout the election. That's why the CFIB produced a Small Business Election Platform, with six key categories: pensions/retirement, taxes, red tape reduction, the Canada Revenue Agency, labour shortages, and government spending.

Our platform outlines the goal of a reduction in the small business tax rate from 11 to nine per cent. CFIB was founded 44 years ago to protect the small business tax rate and we are pleased to report that all four national parties have committed to reducing the rate to nine per cent, in the years ahead.

Other tax measures include reducing the overall burden of payroll taxes by lowering EI rates, keeping the Small Business Job Credit beyond 2016 in the form of a training tax credit and moving toward a 50:50 split in EI premiums between employers and employees. We are also asking that a 100 per cent accelerated Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) be reintroduced for technology and for an increase to the CCA rates for agricultural equipment.

We also want all parties to address Canada's serious labour shortages by replacing the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. We have recommended the implementation of an Introduction to Canada Visa that would give foreign workers in entry-level categories an opportunity to work with an employer for two years as a defined step towards permanent

residency.

CPP/QPP hikes have been on the table federally and provincially, but the majority of working Canadians don't see this as their top choice for boosting retirement savings. CFIB is looking to all parties to reject mandatory CPP/QPP hikes. CFIB also outlines details on enhancing the lifetime capital gains exemption, and controlling public sector spending.

When it comes to running a business in Canada, red tape is everywhere. As a single largest producer of red tape, CFIB is calling on the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to further improve how it deals with SMEs. We are recommending the definitions of employees and contractors be reviewed to reflect the realities of the modern labour market, as well as introducing a simplified method of calculating home-based business expenses.

Our overall election strategy also includes surveying the main federal party leaders on their commitments to address SMEs' top issues.

Be sure to go to cfib.ca to read more about our Small Business Election Platform, and review party leaders' survey responses, as well as key election news updates. We hope this will help you stay informed in the coming weeks.

Have your say by voting on October 19th. The next government's policies will impact whether you decide to grow your business, whether you can find the staff you need, or whether you will cut back staff hours. Their policies will also affect the amount of money you and your employees take home and the amount you have to reinvest in new opportunities.

You can follow the hashtag #SMEelxwatch on Twitter for updates and announcements on small business issues in the federal election.

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Established in 1971, CFIB is Canada's largest association of small- and medium-sized businesses, CFIB is Powered by Entrepreneurs™. CFIB takes direction from more than 109,000 members (including 7,200 agri-business owners) in every sector nationwide, giving independent business a strong and influential voice at all levels of government and helping to grow the economy.



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