

Animal Health and Care Committee

The Canadian beef industry provides world-class health and standards of care for our animals. This is achieved through recommended production practices and adherence to provincial and federal regulations. These efforts have resulted in improved market access and consumer trust in our products world-wide.

Animal health and care are fundamental to our industry. Disease outbreaks, climate, regulatory reform, and innovations in health and welfare systems add to the complexity and challenges experienced by our producers on an ongoing basis. 2020 has been an unprecedented year due to the global pandemic and it has also brought many challenges specific to animal health and care. A selection of activity highlights is provided below.



Animal Health Canada

Building on the foundation of livestock traceability, the importance of effective animal disease prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) is essential to ensuring the health and welfare of Canada's farmed animals. CCA is co-chairing a multi-species initiative called Animal Health Canada (AHC), which intends to develop a system wide collaborative mechanism to galvanize partners with a shared vision and objectives for an integrated approach to safeguarding animal health in Canada. AHC will deliver on the areas of action identified in Canada's Plant and Animal Health Strategy including 1) Coordination through Partnerships 2) A System Founded on Prevention and Defended through Effective Response and Recovery and 3) Collection, Analysis, and Sharing of Information.

Through a public private collaboration, and building upon and co-ordinating efforts, Animal Health Canada will achieve cohesion, maximize synergies, and minimize duplication and gaps in Canada's animal health system. Animal Health Canada will identify animal health priorities, including concrete actions for the near term, and work collaboratively with all partners to deliver on these shared priorities and actions.

OIE for Negligible BSE Risk Status Application

CCA co-chaired an industry/government working group for Canada's OIE BSE negligible risk application. Stakeholders from each sector of the industry, including service providers such as feed mills and renderers, worked in partnership to provide the necessary data for CFIA to complete the OIE application which was submitted to OIE in advance of the July 31, 2020 deadline. Three rounds of questioning by OIE have been completed and no issues or response delays occurred. The submission is now sitting with the OIE Review Panel who will forward a recommendation to the OIE Council by March 2021 where a final decision will be provided in May 2021. The effort was a resounding success in industry government collaboration.

Specified Risk Material (SRM) Review

CCA and CFIA have initiated a working group to review Canada's SRM removal. One of the review's objectives is to align Canada's SRM protocols to those in the United States. The working group will be focusing on key areas such as US-Canada Protocol Comparison, Public & Animal Health Considerations & Risk Modeling, and International Market Opportunity.

FMD Vaccine Bank

CFIA modelling has shown that a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in highly populated livestock regions would represent one of the worst-case scenarios for Canada and would require between 1.9 million and 2.7 million doses of FMD vaccine. We currently have a significant shortfall in available emergency vaccine, and the 14-week timeframe to produce a vaccine represents a significant risk to the livestock industry and to the Canadian economy.

Given the establishment of the US FMD Vaccine Bank and the known catastrophic devastation risk of an FMD outbreak in Canada, CCA has lobbied the Government of Canada to establish a Canadian FMD Bank. Formal discussions between CCA, CFIA and AAFC were launched in the fall of 2020 and work will continue into 2021. CCA is recommending the FMD Bank have 30 million doses, consisting of 2.5 million doses each of 12 different FMD vaccine concentrates. The projected annual cost for this a fully functioning FMD Vaccine Bank is \$3 million CAD.

Animal Health Emergency Management (AHEM) Response Plan

CCA is working closely with the AHEM-II project to develop and test protocols to address gaps in several areas critical to the effective management of a serious animal disease outbreak. Activities also include doubling the number of provincial associations equipped with association-level animal health emergency plans and producer-level handbooks, and also supporting the development of



plans for national associations, all of which incorporate already developed national biosecurity standards. These efforts include the development of tools for industry partners to create awareness and understanding for their AHM plans and handbooks and begin the implementation process within their respective sectors, and finally, to develop a Continuing Education program for Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) recognition and response for practising veterinarians, working in collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and engaging groups such as national, provincial and species-specific veterinary groups.

Traceability

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further delayed the gazetting of the proposed traceability regulations. CFIA now anticipates late summer or fall 2021 would be the earliest these regulations will be published in CG1.

CCA has pledge, along with our affiliate organizations, to implement livestock traceability in a cost effective and efficient manner without inhibiting commerce. CCA is a member of the Regulatory Implementation Committee led by CFIA and had been actively working with CFIA to ensure regulations adhere to the industry supported Cattle Implementation Plan (CIP) and to ensure definitions within the regulations accurately reflect industry expectations.

Livestock Transportation

The proposed changes to Transportation of Animals regulations came into force on February 20, 2020 but a two-year transition period, specific to the feed, water and rest intervals was announced by Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie Claude Bibeau and CFIA in December 2019.

As the industry transitions and adapts transport times from the old regulations to the new regulations, the CFIA has stated it will focus its activities for feed water and rest times on compliance promotion through education and awareness measures for the first two years. This education approach will allow the CFIA and industry to continue to work together on effective solutions to identified concerns and for livestock sectors to implement any adjustments along with allowing time for transportation research that is currently underway to be completed.

The proposed changes have reduced the maximum time mature and fed cattle will be allowed to be in transit without feed and water from 52 hour to 36 hours and from 18 to 12 hours for ruminants too young to

be fed hay or grain. Changes to some definitions, rest stop duration and transfer of care requirements have also been proposed.

Proper animal care and welfare is paramount in the beef industry and producers are continually improving their practices and updating standards to ensure the best life possible for their livestock. Outcomes for transported cattle are very positive. Research conducted by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has found that 99.95 per cent of cattle on long hauls over four hours and 99.98 per cent of cattle on short hauls less than four hours reach their destination in good condition. Cattle producers want to ensure that any amended regulations do not inadvertently move this number farther away from 100 per cent.

The Transportation Beef Cattle Working group between industry and CFIA is ongoing. Key tasks include simplifying the record keeping components and consideration of standardized best management practice forms for regular transport, such as feedlot to processing. Rest stop infrastructure capacity continues to advance with a new privately-owned rest stop that has been built near Kapuskasing ON.

Cross Border Livestock Health

CCA is an active participant of the Pacific North-West Economic Region (PNWER) cross border livestock health committee. A number of key priorities were once again established by the committee and provide guidance for industry and government engagement throughout the year. Key priorities for 2020 include:

- CFIA/USDA develop, in cooperation and consultation with livestock organizations, 'disease zoning and/or regionalization' agreements in writing that minimize trade disruptions between US and CAN, as well as with other major trading partners
- CFIA/USDA and all industry sectors to prioritize national EM preparedness planning
- Host regular meetings/exercises between industry leaders and CVOs at CFIA/USDA or trilateral meetings
- CFIA/USDA/Industry to discuss depopulation and disposal strategies and determine the delegation of responsibility between industry and government

One positive outcome is that E-certification has now been deployed to expand functionality of feeder cattle export certificates from Canada to emulate the 24-hour travel time available by multiple trucks on U.S. feeder cattle export certificates. The 2020 PNWER conference has been postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis. The conference has been rescheduled for August 15-19, 2021 in Big Sky, Montana.

Committee Members: Pat Hayes, **Co-chair**, Reg Schellenberg, **Co-chair**, Grant Huffman, Ryan Scorgie, Miles Wowk, Jodi Flaig, Gord Adams, Mike Duguid, Matt Bowman, Craig McLaughlin, John MacDonald, Victor Oulton, Kirk Jackson, Rick Wright, **LMAC**, S. Hamilton, **YCC ex-officio**, K. Weston, **YCC ex-officio**.

CCA Staff: Brady Stadnick and Dave Moss