

Canadian Beef Breeds Council

It was a historic year for the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) on a number of fronts. On July 1, 2020 CBBC became a division of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. The alignment of the seedstock and commercial cow/calf sectors under one roof will create opportunities that will have long-term benefits for the entire beef industry.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives. Bull sales were underway when restrictions on gathering size and travel were first implemented across Canada. While we were not able to hold sales in our traditional format, which are also a social and networking opportunity for cattle producers. We were able to carry on with the business aspect where a significant number of transactions occur. Producers were faced with daily changes, market fluctuations, packing plant closures all at a critical time for those selling and purchasing bulls. Our industry adapted overnight, utilizing online sales, following COVID-19 guidelines and ensuring everyone remained safe and healthy. This carried on into the fall run of feeder-calf and seedstock production sales as the second wave was taking hold. In both instances, cattle sales were able to continue and reported prices were on par with the previous year in terms of price and volume. This speaks to the resiliency and strength of our cattle producers who are all too familiar with adversity.

In 2021, the CBBC will focus on the implementation of Canadian Beef Improvement Network (CBIN) and continued work in promoting our Canadian genetics internationally. These activities will be key components of repositioning CBBC and breed associations as a global-leaders in data-based genetic selection technology. This will have positive impacts for both the commercial and seedstock sectors as we adopt technology to identify the genetics that work for our operations and deliver a product that is in demand around the world.

Canadian Beef Improvement Network

The CBIN initiative continues to develop as a key component outlined the National Beef Strategy. It will be the platform for data driven genetic decisions for the Canadian beef industry. CBIN is a cross-sector network of leaders focused on creating an ecosystem for collaboration and advancement of genetic based innovation to progress environmental based selection and increase farm profitability.

A business plan was created and adopted by the CBIN Advisory Working Group which outlines the path to implementation. CBBC will serve as the incubator until such time as CBIN can branch out as its own viable legal entity. A new governance structure was approved which will serve to advance the development of CBIN. CBIN will continue to collaborate with partners from every aspect the production chain.



The advocacy work to further develop the initiative will continue into 2021 as partnerships are developed and long-term funding is secured. As we develop CBIN it is more evident than ever that the benefits are important for the continued viability of our industry as we address political and environmental pressures through genetic selection and technology utilization.

International Market Development

As the world changed seemingly overnight the international market development initiatives of CBBC and its membership were impacted immediately. With borders closed to travellers, restrictions on gatherings, event cancellations both in Canada and internationally, a new approach was needed. The CBBC AgriMarketing project that was approved by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) in March required a complete amendment before the ink was dry.

We were successful in transitioning activities and continuing our efforts in new and innovative ways. A number of domestic and international events were transitioned to a virtual format and our members were able to participate. The future is still uncertain even as vaccine programs are being implemented. It will be some time before our efforts return to normal, but as previously demonstrated stakeholders in the cattle industry are resilient, persistent and if there is an auction sale they will be there.

The impact of agriculture being declared an essential service early in the pandemic was important to maintaining stability and confidence in the market. For seedstock producers the ability to transport live cattle and genetics across the U.S.-Canada border was critical to their business continuity. Maintaining access to American cattle genetics and the ability to market our genetics into our largest market are critical for the profitability of our farms and ranches. The exchange of genetics between Canada and the U.S. is important for our seedstock producers who often source genetics in the U.S. for use in their breeding programs.