

New Brunswick Cattle Producers

COVID-19 has impacted New Brunswick relatively mildly compared to other provinces. We have been very fortunate in being able to keep the curve mostly flattened. Many of our members have reported a significant increase in local demand for beef products, Atlantic Beef Products continues to report record processing rates at their facility on Prince Edward Island and both calf and cull cow prices have, thankfully, stayed reasonably strong throughout the pandemic. The New Brunswick Cattle Producers (NBCP) have worked closely with government to raise potential market and production issues that may have impacted NBCP members throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Market impacts, thankfully, have largely been positive but production issues, specifically drought, become a much greater challenge during the growing season.

Few areas of the province escaped the impact of drought conditions. Growers are reporting a shortage of winter feed and stalled pasture growth brought cattle to town a bit earlier than we would typically expect in the region. Forage market prices have increase 50 to 100 per cent year-over-year depending on the supply-demand dynamics regionally across the province.

The NBCP continues to work with regional partners through the Maritime Beef Council to implement the Maritime Beef Sector Growth Strategy. The Strategy is focused on generating new opportunities for growth and development in the regional cattle industry. The five core goals of the Maritime Beef Growth Strategy are:

1. Increase the regional cow herd by 20,000 by 2027
2. Increase beef production profitability through training and education
3. Develop an industry-leading regional feed efficient beef herd
4. Maximize pasture and forage stand productivity
5. Advance the profitability of the industry through value chain co-ordination

Enhanced communication with the membership continues to be a top priority for the NBCP. As a cost reduction measure and a general modernization of the NBCP communications strategy, the NBCP encourages producers to be proactive in sourcing information by visiting the NBCP website, Facebook page and new YouTube page for workshop presentations.



Piloted in 2017, the integration of training workshops into the NBCP Fall Regional Meetings has continued through to 2020. With COVID-19 meeting restrictions, NBCP like many other associations have moved our face-to-face meetings to a virtual platform. The learning curve has been steep and technical challenges such as limited rural broadband internet has sometimes represented a barrier to success of the virtual model, but we are working through the challenges with resolve.

Member feedback suggest that the delivery of professional development opportunities along with updates from the Board of Directors on association activities increased the value proposition for attending regional meetings around the province. Presentations for 2020 included a series of management workshops on Risk Management Strategies, Verified Beef Production Plus, Value-Added Calf-Club Development, Livestock Transportation Regulation Changes and Humane Animal Handling.

We continue to look to the future and the potential for market volatility to challenge NBCP members.

Work continues to establish an Eastern Settlement Index and develop a Beef Price Insurance Program for the Maritime region. The Beef Cattle Research Council has supported this effort with a significant funding investment, which is greatly appreciated. We also continue to assess the effectiveness of the AgriStability program for New Brunswick conditions and appreciate the opportunity to work closely with CCA and Beef Farmers of Ontario to complete this national-regional-provincial benchmarking work.

Looking ahead to continued program delivery, NBCP leadership will work with staff to develop a clear direction for program delivery over the next two years of the Canadian Agriculture Partnership by reviewing the NBCP Strategic Plan, aligning with the Maritime Beef sector Growth Strategy and the National Beef Strategy.