

Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association

A mostly locked down year of cancellations and postponements. COVID-19's impact on the Saskatchewan cattle industry was worst felt by yearling sellers in the March/April timeframe when uncertainty and volatility were carrying the day. Some yearling sellers. Those that had Price Insurance coverage on their cattle were happy they had that coverage. That was true of fat cattle as well. Risk management paid off for those that used the tools at hand.

Agriculture and all its parts being deemed essential was and remains so important. There are major effects on how sales unfold and some bull and production sales have been cancelled. But many went ahead with changes and adaptations. Spring's sales were mostly good reflecting long-term commitment to the business and genetic improvement. The adaptations made for COVID-19 will result in some things being retained for the future. Necessity breeds invention.

Saskatchewan's Minister of Agriculture David Marit has been very good through this challenging time. Regular contact (weekly for a stretch) has been kept with all production groups. Not only the contact but also in response. COVID-19's impact on uncertainty made the volatility portion of price insurance premiums skyrocket.



The Honourable David Marit, Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister visiting with SCA Chair Arnold Balicki at an SCA Board Meeting 2020.



Brian Cole at the "Farm to Forks" event in Saskatoon. It is an event that engages with students showing them where food comes from. This event is co-sponsored by SCA.

The Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association (SCA) asked for help in managing this, one idea being to offer a frozen premium that reflected "peace time" premium and coverage.

The SCA board committed \$1 million to help with improving premiums to help ensure producers were accessing an important program in a challenging time. The Province worked to bring the federal government to partner in offsetting premium increases but were unsuccessful.

This left the Province and SCA to partner in offsetting the share of premiums that was attributed to COVID-19 increases.

On top of this, the Province also funded their share of the fed cattle set-aside program. That program is still running and needed as of this writing. SCA appreciates the communication and responsiveness of our Ministry of Agriculture and our Minister.

At the time of this writing the federal government offer to remove the reference margin limit and increase the payout ratio in AgriStability is under consideration. Hopefully when this report is being read that has come to pass. It would cap off a good year of advocacy and response in Saskatchewan.





Paula Larson, former SCA Board Member at the 2020 Saskatchewan Beef Industry Conference (SBIC) dinner.

On the activity front many things have been postponed or cancelled. Some of the funds that would have gone to those things have been reallocated to customer facing communications. Several examples of these tactics with the Bearded Prairie Chef Josh Miller and ex Roughrider Belton Johnson can be found at www.saskbeef.com.

We are also working to develop content for an immersive experience post COVID-19. Stay tuned for more information in the future.

Aside from flooding in the Meadow Lake area, it was another mostly moisture constrained year. There will be more matching herd sizes to feed supply this winter instead of retaining numbers to match higher feed supplies. Especially since snow came in plentiful and early meant feeding started earlier than normal. There have been a lot of dry summers in a row in Saskatchewan. We are due for a reversal.

Looking ahead we are working to see announcements on irrigation and rural internet upgrades come to fruition. The re-election of the Saskatchewan Party that committed to these things is promising. The financial situation due to COVID-19 is not. Building infrastructure is positive for the economy and there is no better way to grow agriculture than irrigation.

Ryder Lee
CEO, Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association



SCFA Feedlot management school



As part of our consumer outreach, there was a series of TV episodes created, including this one featuring Josh Miller, the Bearded Prairie Chef, demonstrating how to make stuffed tenderloin.

