Another year of district meetings are in the books for Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP).

The last of the 14 meetings went Nov. 15 at the Arden Community Hall with just over 40 members in attendance.

General Manager Brian Lemon said he was happy with how this year’s meetings went, noting that there were great discussions about the provincial beef industry at many of them.

“They were very productive with great discussions,” Lemon said. “Prices are obviously better than they were at this time last year and producers were generally feeling more positive about our sector. We had a busy and productive year and were able to demonstrate the value that MBP is bringing to the sector – the value delivered to producers for their investment of their checkoff. As always we appreciate the trust producers place in us as staff and in their board of directors. The chance to meet and hear from individual producers and to stand in front of them to talk about what we do on their behalf is always a highlight for me.”

Lemon said there were a number of important topics on the minds of MBP members this year. Of note, predation issues were raised in many districts as problems with wolves, bears and coyotes persist for beef producers.

“Predation and problem predators continues to be a concern,” said Lemon who added that MBP distributed a cattle and other loss survey to members at each meeting to get a better overall sense of how big the problem is.

“When we speak with the provincial government we are asked how big of a problem is it? We have a lot of anecdotal stories to tell them but are lacking the hard data that can help drive policy change. I haven’t gone through the responses yet but it is clearly an issue as producers continue to raise it.

“One producer in Eriksdale spoke to the issue suggesting among his neighbours he was the relatively lucky one as he had only lost about five per cent of his herd. We are going to compile the data collected from the surveys and take it back to government and continue to work towards improving this situation for our members.”

Lemon said Crown land was also a topic raised by a number of members.

“Producers understand the importance of Crown lands to many of their operations. Effective and efficient use of these lands is critical and clear, transparent and predictable allocation is essential,” he said. “Wildlife management on Crown lands was an issue raised, including the need for flooding and beaver control on Crown lands to ensure producer access and land utilization.”

Lemon said the provincial carbon tax program and its impact was also a story in many districts. He said although MBP was pleased with the decision to exempt on-farm emissions, the association will continue to seek recognition “for our grasslands and proper treatment of our emissions and our past investments.”

“Producers are seeking consistent policy development and application – recognition for all our sequestration - not just incremental pasture/grass,” Lemon said. “Overall, our environmental footprint and the benefits of cattle towards environmental and conservation objectives were also mentioned in several districts – and promoting our benefits as a means to building public trust”

Livestock inspection was a discussion at several district meetings and will also be a discussion at the AGM. Movement reporting, trade and tax changes were also raised.

The 14 meetings also provided members with the opportunity to bring forward resolutions for debate at the MBP annual general meeting Feb. 8–9 in Brandon. Much like the discussions at the various meetings, Lemon said the resolutions ran the gamut from livestock inspection to water management to predation.

A complete list of the resolutions brought forward at the district meetings can be found on page 11 of Cattle Country.
The province says it will look at ways to develop a carbon offset program involving agriculture, forests and wetlands. This may include additional carbon offset projects such as land use conservation measures like restoring forests, soil management practices like no or low till farming, and wetland restoration and conservation.

To enhance diversion of non-organic waste from landfills, the province may consider expanding the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program to include products such as veterinary products.

With respect to the threat climate change poses to engineered infrastructure such as roads, bridges and water control structures, the plan states that flood control infrastructure should be a key priority. Re: natural infrastructure and their utility with respect to water storage and nutrient management, the plan states that flood control infrastructure should be a key priority. Re: natural infrastructure and their utility with respect to water storage and nutrient management, the plan states that flood control infrastructure should be a key priority.

The province continues to examine approaches related to water retention and has a goal of no net loss of water retention capacity in watersheds. This will be evaluated by looking at both floods and droughts. The province says it will consider undertaking distributed storage studies to assist the agricultural sector, community decision makers, government and others in determining where and how to construct water retention structures for maximum benefit relative to cost. The plan also touches on topics such as the value of hunting and outfitting, wildlife management, species at risk, controlling invasive species, shelterbelts, forestry, wildfire prevention and preparation and carbon sequestration.

MBP is participating in government consultations related to the plan and will be providing a detailed submission to the province on aspects of the plan relevant to the beef industry. To view the plan go to: http://www.gov.mb.ca/climateandgreenplan/index.html.
It's a nightmare for producers and a problem as old as cattle farming itself: wild animals killing livestock on the range. There are things producers can do, both legal and non-legal, to deal with predator attacks on their animals. Those include electric fences, guard dogs, scarecrows, decoys and repellents, hunting and trapping.

But no matter what they try, producers usually lose some livestock to natural predators every year. It's distressing for a beef producer to come across the carcass of an animal killed by a predator. It's also frustrating for a beef producer to come across a carcass even after it is tarped. Wild animals are clever and can serve the kill site as much as the producer wants to. Van Deynze also encourages producers to take as many photos as they can to serve as evidence. Throwing a tarp over a kill site is useless, he says. Van Deynze encourages producers to keep photographs and videos the producer has taken to the best of their ability. Van Deynze also encourages producers to keep photographs and videos the producer has taken to the best of their ability.

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Interesting resolutions come forward at district meetings

It is hard to imagine that we are already at the end of 2017. We have just finished off a very good set of district meetings, there was lots of producer involvement and engagement at the districts I attended and I do have to say that even with as many miles as there are between all the districts, a lot of the same discussions were prevalent. I want to thank those of you who were able to attend and participate in your area’s meetings, I hope that you are planning to attend our AGM in early February in Brandon.

The resolutions that have come forward out of the districts are an interesting mix and will certainly bring about great discussions on several topics. In going through the list of them I believe you will find topics that mean something to your operation. I look forward to the debate. I liken this process to doing preventative maintenance on our operations, if producers see a possible problem that needs to be addressed, that is why we have these resolution debates. It is a necessary task to keep our industry evolving and enabling the proper policies are in place for success for producers and the organization.

MBP is keeping an eye on the NAFTA and TPP11 trade negotiations. It was encouraging that there were some preliminary agreements done on TPP a couple of weeks ago. If successful the TPP deal will put Canada on a more even level with Australia in the Japanese marketplace which would be a huge boon for Canadian beef. As far as NAFTA is concerned there is a lot of questions and speculation and not a whole lot of details. It is evident that the US farm organizations, including the meat packing industry, want to keep it close to the prior agreement, like we do, but it’s not all up to just agriculture industries unfortunately.

MBP staff and directors were also very involved on the Crown lands portfolio over the past month. With Manitoba entering into the New West Partnership there are some changes that have to occur to the crown land regulations and policies. We look at this as an opportunity to fully engage on behalf of producers and less on where we were/are. Growing our industry shows we are positive about our future and proud of our sector.”

Lemon noted there has been a great deal of discussion about growing the provincial beef herd since Agriculture Minister Ralph Eichler expressed his goal of returning to pre-BSE numbers. While MBP is continuing to work towards that over-reaching goal, Lemon said the broader focus has become creating an environment in which producers can flourish and be sustainable, which, ideally will give them the confidence to expand their operations. “Our panel discussions are still being finalized but will certainly speak to production issues, how to get more out of our operations and how to grow our profits and grow our industry,” Lemon said.”The panels will also speak to how we push past the challenges facing our industry and focus on our goals.”

After a successful first attempt at the 38th AGM, Lemon said MBP will again have a youth forum focused on the opportunities for younger and new producers and will challenge participants to look at the world differently than past generations. A speaker for the youth forum is expected to be announced in December.

Along with the panel discussions and industry knowledge sessions, the AGM will also include the business portion of the meeting, voting on resolutions and reports from our national partners. Lemon said he encourages all members to attend the meeting and have a say in the future of their association.

“The AGM is where policy gets made and our direction gets set,” he said. “It is a chance to shape the priorities of MBP and for our sector. It is also an opportunity to get together and share time with fellow producers. This year we are also retiring four directors who have given six years to the organization and who have volunteered their time and contributed to our sector.”

For more information and to register please go page 16 or mbbeef.ca/annual-meeting/

Building our Future theme of 39th MBP AGM

All eyes will be pointing to the future at the 39th Manitoba Beef Producers Annual General Meeting Feb 8-9 at the Victoria Inn in Brandon.

With the theme of Building Our Future, the AGM will centre on helping producers push their operations forward.

“Standing still is not an option – it means we are losing ground,” said MBP General Manager Brian Lemon. “We have a great story to tell and a bright future – it is time to focus on where we want to go and less on where we were/are. Growing our industry shows we are positive about our future and proud of our sector.”

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Producers asked to complete second Western Canadian Cow-Calf Survey

BY THE BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL

Do you wonder how your cow-calf operation compares with others in your region, province or herd size range on matters like conception rate and weaning weight? A joint effort representing the cow-calf industry from BC to Manitoba is helping Western Canadian cattle producers do just that.

By participating in the second Western Canadian Cow-Calf Survey, producers can choose to receive a complementary report that allows them to compare their own operation with benchmarks (average numbers from a region).

The survey takes about 45-60 minutes to complete and asks questions related to the 2016 breeding season all the way through to weaning of the 2017 calf crop, as well as many typical management practices. Many of the questions are the quick check-box style. Any question a producer is unable to answer can be left blank.

So if you wonder about burning fossil fuels! as part of a conversation. It frustrates me to think that burning and farting from cattle is even mentioned as part of a conversation about burning fossil fuels! Now let's address the province's Climate and Green Plan. It is certainly appropriate and appreciated that the province has seen fit to exempt on farm emissions from the burning of fossil fuels. Diesel and natural gas are the two biggest issues for the cattle sector in terms of our contribution to the whole carbon challenge. Our sector isn't a big user of synthetic fertilizers, largely relying instead on the more natural and cyclic fertilizer... having our cattle deposit the nutrients right back on the pastures where the grasses and bales took them. I certainly recognize the practices of our farming cousins that have come a very long way to minimize their carbon footprint, but within the mix, we certainly are less reliant on fertilizers than they are.

As the Minister of Agriculture continues to look...
Q: Why should I feed test? I got one done last year.

A: Measuring forage quality is particularly important at this time of year, to assess the nutritional value of the feed for your animals. Feed represents the largest production expense for cattle operations. It is particularly important to test feed when supplies are tight and demand is driving the price higher. While producers rely heavily on forages for their feeding program, forages must often be supplemented with energy or protein to meet cattle's nutritional needs. Feed testing is the most accurate assessment available to producers today and it can help ensure that the forage included in the feed for your animals meets cattle's nutritional needs.

Feed testing probes are available at any local Manitoba Agriculture Office and a ration can be easily completed once the results are established.

On the analysis report, there are usually two columns, one on a dry matter basis and one on an as-received basis. All values under the as received column show the content of the nutrients with the moisture in the forage included. Forages should not be compared on an as received basis, unless they have the same percentage of dry matter. Values under the dry matter column give the nutrient information with the water removed. This allows comparisons to be made between forages. It is the best indication of nutrient value, because producers can make comparisons between their own forages, and their neighbors’ forages.

The quality of a forage can be characterized in many ways, including colour, leaf content and chemical composition. Describing forage quality by chemical analysis is most closely related to animal performance, giving a better indication of the relative differences between forages. Chemical analysis also provides the least subjective and most uniform system for describing forage quality. The chemical analyses most commonly used as measures of forage quality are:

- Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF)
- Acid Detergent Fiber (ADF)
- Crude protein (CP)
- Total digestible nutrients (TDN) – a measure of energy content
- Relative feed value (RFV)
- Mineral and vitamin concentrations

Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) represents the total fiber portion of a feed. Fiber is necessary to allow for normal rumen function in ruminant animals, but excessive amounts reduce the ration’s energy density and total feed intake. Forage should supply about 75 per cent of the NDF requirement. Keeping NDF concentrations low in forages increases the amount of forage that can be included in the ration. Alfalfa has a lower NDF concentration than grass forages.

The NDF concentration of alfalfa can be kept low by harvesting at early stages of maturity and reducing leaf loss during harvesting.

Acid Detergent Fiber (ADF) is the portion of the total fiber that is relatively indigestible. Acid detergent fiber is a key component of energy prediction. Lower values indicate that a forage will be more digestible and higher in energy than one with high ADF values. ADF concentration of alfalfa can be reduced by harvesting at an early stage of maturity and by reducing the loss of leaves during harvesting.

Relative Feed Value (RFV) is an index used to compare the quality of forages relative to the feed value of full bloom alfalfa. The RFV of forage is an index that combines the importance of intake and digestibility. The relative feed value has no units, but it is a way to compare the potential of two forages. RFV is also used as a marketing tool. Forages with values of greater than 150 are usually of higher quality.

Crude Protein (CP) is determined by measuring the nitrogen concentration of a forage and multiplying it by a factor of 6.25. Alfalfa forage is an excellent source of crude protein, especially if harvested at an early stage of maturity, and if care is taken to reduce leaf loss during harvesting.

Forage requirements vary with body weight, frame size, predicted gain and stage of production. Feeds must be at this level or better for your herd.

Table 1: Energy and Protein Requirements of the Breeding Herd

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<tr>
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<th>CP%</th>
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<td>Mature cows</td>
<td>50-53</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late gestation</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>55-60</td>
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Most forages also show very low levels of phosphorus and other minerals, and forages contain almost no Vitamin A in the winter. If you have mineral deficiencies, those should be tested for as well.

We want to hear from you!

For the next issue of Cattle Country, a Manitoba Agriculture forage or livestock specialist will answer a selected question. Send your questions to Ray@Btinnery.gov.mb.ca by January 2, 2018.

The StockTalk Q&A Feature is brought to you by Manitoba Agriculture. We encourage you to email your questions to Manitoba Agriculture’s forage and livestock team, who have a combined 230 years of agronomy experience. We are here to help make your cattle operation successful. Contact us today.

We have a great story to tell

M&J Farms

Bull & Female Sale

On the Ranch, Russell, Manitoba

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

70 Getting Two Year Old Bulls

Black and Red Simmentals

Angus and Simm-Angus Bulls

M&J Farms

mjsimmentalangus@gmail.com

www.mjbbeef.ca

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CATTLE COUNTRY

December 2017

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Miles, Bonnie & Jared Glasman

Livestock Specialist

Manitoba Agriculture

Pam Iwanchysko

pam.iwanchysko@gov.mb.ca

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

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BY RON FRIESEN

Two new marketing options for cattle in Manitoba this fall will give producers additional opportunities for sales and price discovery.

Pipestone Livestock Sales (PLS), which closed seven years ago, re-opened in September, giving producers in southwestern Manitoba another option for selling cattle at an auction market.

“We’re very excited to be back in the southwest corner of the province and look forward to serving cattle producers for a long time to come,” said PLS owner Rhett Parks.

It is a welcome turn-around for the cattle industry, which has seen auction markets across Canada close steadily in recent years.

Also, the Ste. Rose Auction Mart recently launched an electronic marketing system called Cattle Connect, which provides online price discovery for beef cattle outside the auction ring.

Manitoba Beef Producers President Ben Fox says these developments are serving the province’s beef producers.

“It’s always good to have extra marketing opportunities,” said Fox, who ranches southeast of Dauphin and is also a cattle buyer. “It’s a good, sound avenue for producers to be able to market their cattle.”

Parks, together with his father Gene, operates Pipestone Livestock Sales in partnership with Brock and Kelly Taylor of Taylor’s Auctions, Assembly and Exports in Melita.

Sale day for PLS is Friday. Pre-sorting sales began in October.

The first sale was held Sept. 15. Parks said it went well, the stands were full and around 400 cattle passed through the ring.

That’s a far cry from daily volumes of 3,500 cattle which PLS used to see roughly 10 years ago. But Parks expects sale numbers to increase as producers get used to another marketing outlet in the region.

“We had an overwhelming show of interest and excitement, not only from the community of Pipestone but from the RM and cattle producers all over southwestern Manitoba and southeastern Saskatchewan,” said Parks.

PLS is seeing mainly feeder calves right now. Parks expects sales to consist half of steers and half of heifers as time goes on.

The Parks family also operates Whitewood Livestock Sales in southeastern Saskatchewan.

Parks said PLS was forced to close in the summer of 2010 because it couldn’t compete for staff against a booming oil industry.

But the oil boom has cooled considerably since then and PLS now has less trouble finding the 20 or more people it needs to run the operation, he said.

Meanwhile, Myles Masson, who owns Ste Rose Auction Mart, is offering a new service for producers called Cattle Connect, which he describes as an electronic marketing platform for producers with large numbers of cattle to sell direct.

Masson’s new venture, launched in early September, has the support of the Manitoba Livestock Marketing Association. It works independently with the auction marts, approved agents and their representatives, and order buyers.

The bidding platform operates on an online real-time system. A set of cattle comes on the platform, bidding starts at a certain number and goes down a cent at a time until there’s a bid. Then it goes up a quarter cent per bid, with 15 seconds intervals.

A sale is successful if the last bid meets or exceeds the amount the seller wants. Producers have to be in Manitoba to sell cattle on Cattle Connect. They may sell to buyers in other jurisdictions but have to go through the MLA reg.

Masson describes Cattle Connect as a homegrown price discovery system designed for Manitoba cattle producers.

“We’re not as big as Alberta or Saskatchewan,” he said. “So if we all stick together and use this online cattle sale, it’s a second option for cattle producers and backgrounders to use. It’s also a second option for auction marts and order buyers to use for larger customers.”

More information is available from members of the Manitoba Livestock Marketing Association or at www.cattleconnect.ca. The website lists affiliated auction market calendars with market reports and sale events. It also provides cattle classifieds, which is a digital way of selling dollar valued cattle (replacement or breeding).

New options available for marketing cattle in Manitoba

Real-time Online Cattle Sales

Job Opening

Beef Production Specialist

Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) is seeking a knowledgeable, experienced and energetic person to become our Beef Production Specialist. The Beef Production Specialist will work in our Winnipeg office and be responsible for ongoing technical support and strategic direction to MBP in all areas of beef production, providing project support, and guiding extension and tech-transfer activities. The successful candidate will work with MBP staff and directors, as well as cattle producers, external organizations, research agencies, and government officials, to identify issues, compile and analyze information, and provide advice on appropriate policy positions and strategies for MBP.

Candidates for the position must have a university degree in animal science or veterinary medicine, and a minimum of 3 to 5 years of experience working in the beef industry. Alternatively, an acceptable combination of education and experience may be considered. Applicants must have a detailed knowledge of cattle production practices. The successful candidate must have excellent written and verbal communication skills and the ability to apply knowledge, research and analysis and collaborate with other professionals towards understanding and solving complex technical issues. Applicants should have a basic knowledge of government regulations and policy processes, as well as some experience dealing with government officials. Applicants must be comfortable public speaking and leading extension discussions. Applicants must be willing to work flexible hours and travel within the province, and occasionally across Canada. MBP offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

More information about the Beef Production Specialist position and MBP may be found at www.mbbeef.ca. MBP will be accepting applications until January 26, 2018. Interested applicants should forward a cover letter and resume to Manitoba Beef Producers Attention: Brian Lemon, General Manager 220 - 530 Century Street Winnipeg, MB R3H 0Y4 Email: blemo@mbbeef.ca Fax: 204-774-3264

National Check-off Town Hall December 7, 2017 4 - 9 p.m.

Heartland Multiplex, MacGregor

Complimentary Drinks & Snacks 5:45 Program 6:30

Learn more about where your National Check-off dollars are spent and about the National Beef Checkoff Strategy from officials with the National Check-off Agency, Canadian Beef, Canadian Cattlemen’s Association and the Beef Cattle Research Council.

Please RSVP by Nov. 30 to RSVP call 1-800-772-0458 or email info@mbbeef.ca

For more information: HAROLD UNRAU
(204) 671-0250 www.hulivestock.com

www.mbbeef.ca
Government Activities Update: A Look at GROW

MAUREEN COUSINS
MBP Policy Coordinator

This is a follow-up to my November column where I discussed the input Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) has provided into the development of Manitoba’s new watershed-based policy framework and the three consultation documents put forward by Sustainable Development and Manitoba Agriculture in this area.

It is MBP’s position that the beef industry has a key role to play in helping the province achieve some of its environmental goals. The industry provides many valuable ecosystem services through its management of privately-owned and agricultural Crown lands.

The consultation document Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW), MBP strongly supports the use of incentives for land use practices that enhance the provision of ecological services from the landscape. Through successive iterations of Canada’s agricultural policy frameworks, Manitoba’s beef producers have been involved in the Environmen- tal Farm Plan Program and implemented many management practices (BMPs), complementing the work they undertake in managing the landscape.

MBP is seeking continued support for environmental BMP programs through the new Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), as well as other financial resources to support proposed initiatives under GROW.

MBP has long sought the creation of an ecosystem services program that provides financial recogni- tion for the ecological goods and services (EGSs) pro- vided by the beef industry, such as maintaining perennial landscapes and wetlands. MBP believes the most effective stewardship programs are those developed in cooperation with producers. MBP supports the initiation of EGS Programs in Manitoba under key conditions, including:

1. A full participation in the determination of targets and/or assets for EGS Programs;
2. Any program must ensure equitable access to funding across the province;
3. EGS Programs should include support for initiatives including, but not limited to: natural water filtration and nutrient cycling, carbon sinks that mitigate climate change, essential wetland and grassland habitat for plant and animal biodiversity, bioregionalism and soil conservation.

MBP is open to discussing other policy instruments that could be used to deliver similar benefits and provide financial recognition of EGS services producers provide, such as tax credits or the use of offset systems.

MBP is generally supportive of the proposed GROW principles supportable; locally-delivered, farmer-focused, measurable and evidence-based evaluation. MBP strongly believes producer participation in EGS Programs must be voluntary and based on incentives instead of regulations.

MBP recommends that the principles of ‘re sponsiveness’ or ‘flexibilit y’ be considered. The science, technology and tools used to address how best to manage the environment are continuously evolving. This should be taken into account to ensure initiatives being delivered through GROW reflect this Ongoing profit input into the development and operation of such programs will be key to their successful implementation.

Re the proposed principles relating to the targeted, watershed-based approach and local delivery, MBP cautions that if GROW is delivered by Conservation Districts (CDs) (or in the future Water- teshed Authorities), not all areas of agro-Manitoba are covered by CDs. To ensure all beef producers can particip- ate in GROW this gap must be addressed.

As well, MBP believes producers should be able to independently access funding through GROW to implement BMPs without having to participate in ini- tiatives being undertaken by entities such as CDs.

In terms of the expected GROW outcomes, MBP is supportive of these, particularly those aimed at reducing flooding and improving resiliency to the impacts of climate change. MBP also sees opportunities for enhanced carbon storage if more land is converted to perennial cover.

MBP suggested another potential GROW outcome that could be considered is improved soil health.

MBP supports the priority BMPs identified in GROW. For example, efforts to reduce the risk of flooding, to enhance drought resiliency, and those aimed at grassland restoration, enhancement and reclamation are very important to the beef in- dustry. MBP believes there should be a continued con- tinue to ensure initiatives related to nutrient and BMPs related to health could be valuable. Innovative species and noxious weeds can be damaging to agriculture from an economic, animal health and environmental perspective.

MBP has questions about eligibility for GROW. For example, MBP re- quested consideration that GROW payments should include producers leasing agricultural Crown lands to reflect the ongoing value of their stewardship of those lands and the investments they make in doing so.

MBP sought clarification about whether those rent- ing private lands would be eligible to participate in GROW and how pro- gram monies would flow to them.

Re the funding and governance of GROW, MBP strongly recommend that a separate stream of funding be found for these initiatives as opposed to using agri-environment and assurance dollars flowing through CAP. If CAP monies are to be directed at GROW initiatives, MBP strongly recommends that dollars be dedicated to direct programming on the landscape and that money for administrative purposes be sourced elsewhere.

MBP encouraged the province to consider partnering with other initiatives and programs; in a CD. MBP recognizes the province to consider providing some type of EGS payment to compensate for the value of ecosystem services they are providing, not just financial recogni- tion for future income and improvements to their operations.

MBP recommended that GROW initiatives be administered swiftly and efficiently with a minimum administrative burden on producers, that administrato- rs are cognizant of both livestock and crop production cycles, and that there are clear explanations as to why producer funding applications are rejected so producers are better prepared when they file future program applications.

Re the governance of GROW, MBP recognizes there will be many groups interested in managing delivering GROW initia- tives. MBP believes there should be a standardized set of core principles to which each is expected to deliver the program, as well as a standardized system for assessing and reporting outcomes. A person or en- tity seeking GROW funding through the MBP should expect the same type of application and approvals process as other GROW initiatives delivered through a non-government organization. This will help ensure transparency and accountability.

Re the consultation document Modernizing Manitoba’s Conservation Districts Program MBP recognizes the important role CDs have played in managing water, as well as in working producers to implement an array of BMPs. Beef producers have certainly benefited from these relationships.

MBP is generally support- of the implementation of watershed-based planning for drainage and water re- sources management and resource management, around how to best manage the landscape. MBP cautions that joint efforts does not recognize designated boundaries like those assigned to cities or rural municipalities.

Under the changes being proposed it is believed CDs will be expected to take on considerably more responsibility with respect to watershed-based plan- ning and resource management. MBP would like to see funding through GROW initiatives included in a watershed-based strategy. MBP believes its role is to ensure these types of resources are in place to allow for the successful delivery of the stated goals and desired outcomes.

MBP asked what strate- gies will be used to ensure watershed-based planning proceeds in areas of Mani- toba where local govern- ment is not involved. MBP recognizes the implementation of the EGS program un- der Growing Forward 2 – Growing Assurance, but notes that producers were only able to manage the funding through a partnership with their lo- cal CD. MBP remains MBP’s position is that the rural municipalities be able to access it directly.

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Beef Producers lobby the provincial government to provide manifest books to cattle producers free of charge.

Whereas there continues to be concerns related to ongoing flooding on the upper Assiniboine River downstream of the Shellmouth Dam, as well as the associated compensation processes.

Be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the provincial government to develop a compensation program equivalent to the compensation program available for predator losses under the province’s current Wildlife Damage Compensation Program.

Whereas this practice is negatively impacting the environment.

Be it resolved that recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency to develop an ear tag that will remain in place.

There were no resolutions arising.

Be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the provincial government to undertake an assessment of agricultural land that has cavets, easements or conservation agreements attached to it for the purpose of developing a policy on this issue.

Be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the federal government to find alternatives to the use of DEF in farm truck and tractor diesel engines and suspend its required use, maintaining manufacturer warranties until such time as the alternative can be found.

Be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the government to provide compensation to beef producers for losses due to illegal hunting practices such as night-hunting.

There were no resolutions arising.

District 8 – Nov. 15
8.1 Whereas environmental responsibility is an integral part of promoting a positive public image, for the beef industry.

Be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the manufacturers of plastic net wrap and twine and silage wrap as well as the provincial government to establish a valid, recycling program for beef industry.

Be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to ensure improved enforcement of the Feed Administration Act that: 1) declares the circumstances to ongoing flooding on the Assiniboine River so as to help reduce the risk of future flooding.

Whereas non-government organizations are purchasing farmland and applying restrictions to its use in perpetuity.

Whereas this practice is negatively impacting the long-term economic sustainability of agriculture in rural Manitoba.

Whereas this practice is negatively impacting the local tax assessment.

Be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers lobby the provincial government to provide compensation to beef producers for losses due to illegal hunting practices such as night-hunting.

Whereas this practice is negatively impacting the local tax assessment.
Plenty of beef options for your Christmas table

BY ELISABETH HARMS

As the holidays come closer, menus and plans are being made to allow us to make the most of our time together with families and loved ones. Holidays are usually built around traditions that we are excited to replicate year after year. Sometimes we are even inspired to include new and different traditions.

In North America, a traditional holiday meal includes a roast turkey or chicken, mashed potatoes, roasted vegetables and stuffing. Families enjoy this meal, although each puts their own variation on this theme. While the main protein for these holiday dinners is often poultry, I would like to suggest an often overlooked protein (especially for the holidays) to the table. Literally. This protein is beef. I do realize that for many beef is not traditionally served, but even if you and your family are a dab hand at roast bird-dashed potatoes-

• Mix it up and dare to present more than one protein dish, or even change your star protein and give beef a chance to shine.

• Here are a few options for those creative folks out there who would like a change, or perhaps even a challenge. Now is the time to be brave, and to ignore all the comments and looks you may get from your relatives when you announce that you’ll be roasting a prime rib this holiday, instead of a rather large bird.

• Let’s start with an easy option: meatballs – they are a versatile classic that can be served in many different ways. Normally, meatballs are made and served Italian style with a tomato sauce and pasta. For the holidays, make the meatballs more savoury by adding mushrooms and bacon to the gravy. Meatballs can also be made to reflect whatever flavour profile you prefer – you can make them spicy or simply by changing the spices you add to the mixture. Meatballs also provide you with the added benefit of being able to make them ahead of time. If you have them pre-made and frozen, it makes cooking for the holidays super easy. Pull them out of the freezer the night before and put them in the oven about one hour before you want to serve dinner. Another advantage is that you aren’t outright replacing the traditional choice of turkey or chicken, you’re providing an added bonus.

• Another great option: cabbage rolls. While they can be slightly controversial in their preparation of them, they are a great option that incorporates beef, but won’t disappoint the traditionalists who need to have their turkey. Cabbage rolls can be made in different ways, and depending on your dinner guests, I would prepare for some serious debate about whether or not the filling is meaty or not. Searing the meat at a high heat in the oven first will lock in all the juices that make it so appealing, and give the outer edges a lovely crust. As you do when cooking a steak, you will want to rest your roast before slicing. Making gravy for this dish is an absolute must, especially for pouring over mashed potatoes. Finally, if you really want to go all out, I might recommend a lovely Beef Wellington. Challenging in its own right, this piece of beef tenderloin wrapped in golden puff pastry is a true centrepiece that cannot help but impress. While it is definitely not for the faint of heart, the juicy beef tenderloin that is traditionally wrapped in mushrooms and pants will definitely not disappoint. Serve with mashed or scrambled potatoes – nothing goes better with beef than potatoes.

• If you are up for an absolute challenge and feeling like a new cut of meat would be a breath of fresh air for the holidays, here are a couple of options for you to really sink your teeth into. First, a prime rib roast is a fabulous option as a holiday showstopper. It is a stunning dish that not only has great visual appeal, but is also juicy and succulent. Searing the meat at a high heat in the oven first will lock in all the juices that make it so appealing, and give the outer edges a lovely crust. As you do when cooking a steak, you will want to rest your roast before slicing. Making gravy for this dish is an absolute must, especially for pouring over mashed potatoes. Finally, if you really want to go all out, I might recommend a lovely Beef Wellington. Challenging in its own right, this piece of beef tenderloin wrapped in golden puff pastry is a true centrepiece that cannot help but impress. While it is definitely not for the faint of heart, the juicy beef tenderloin that is traditionally wrapped in mushrooms and pants will definitely not disappoint. Serve with mashed or scrambled potatoes – nothing goes better with beef than potatoes.

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A delicious prime rib roast is an excellent option for anyone looking for something different for their Christmas meal. Photo courtesy of Canada Beef.

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Beef and birds bring producers and conservationists together

BY ANGELA LOVELL

This summer, beef producers in southwest Manitoba began to implement the first projects funded under the Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL) initiative. SARPAL provides financial incentives for producers to develop beneficial management practices that protect important bird habitat.

The program is popular with producers, says Manitoba Beef Producers’ General Manager, Brian Lemon. “Our members are very supportive of the program and what it’s doing,” he says. “Beef producers are good stewards of the environment and take that seriously. They enjoy being a cattle producer means to them in terms of being out in the environment and in the wild, so when they heard about SARPAL it made sense to them. They wish it was a broader program that was available in other areas too.”

Nine projects in the works

As of the end of October, SARPAL has agreements in place to fund nine projects involving 7,250 acres of grazing land.

“Most of the projects are focused on fencing and livestock watering systems to allow producers to more effectively use their native pastures,” says Tim Sopuck, CEO of Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC) which is delivering the program. “We’ve also had some interest from people who wish to establish new pastures to support their overall operation.”

Virden area cattle producer, Thomas Hagen, received support through SARPAL to purchase some additional permanent and temporary cross fencing and add more dugouts for watering. The program is a perfect fit for his farm. Hagan custom grazes 200 cows together with his 240 cow/calf pairs in a rotational system, moving the cattle daily.

“We already know the benefits of rotational grazing and biodiversity, and the importance of maintaining the microbiology in the soil,” says Hagen. “SARPAL is right in tune with what we believe and what we do. My wife and I are young farmers who are heavily invested into this, it’s what we do for a living, and something like this that can help us drive profit but is a win also for conservation, is incredible.”

“Prairie grassland is an ecosystem that is under a lot of pressure and is fast disappearing, and all the things that go with that are disappearing as well,” says Lemon. “What’s exciting about SARPAL is the conservation world is recognizing that the best way to maintain and protect that ecosystem is to put cattle on it. Birds need the grass and grass needs cattle. So, if you want to save the birds the way you’re going to do it is by having cattle on land.”

Environment and Climate Change Canada provided $750,000 in funding for SARPAL to the Manitoba Beef Producers, which has contracted Manitoba Heritage Habitat Corporation (MHHC) to deliver the program. SARPAL’s aim is to help maintain or expand grazing lands for cattle which at the same time provide habitat for species at risk, including a number of grassland birds such as the Burrowing Owl and Sprague’s pipit.

A rewarding partnership

Lemon says it’s rewarding for the beef industry to see how the conservation world is recognizing the stewardship of cattle producers and the value of having cattle grazing on grassland.

“They’ve been doing the right things for the right reasons for a long time and now conservationists and others are starting to recognize it,” says Lemon. “When these other third parties are standing up and saying cattle producers are part of the solution, that’s a credible, strong message and it’s rewarding to our producers to see that they’re finally getting that recognition.”

Projects eligible for SARPAL have to meet two basic criteria: they need to improve a producer’s bottom line and they need to have benefits for the species at risk in the project area.

“Anything we can do to help producers be more viable is important to conservation of those grassland birds,” says Sopuck. “If these lands cannot be a good business proposition for cattle producers, then we know that those grasslands could be at risk just to a change in land use. If any of these native ranges go to annual crop production, well never get those prairies back. Doing things that help producers to be more viable is of keen interest to us.”

Bird Studies Canada and conservation districts are also conducting a sister SARPAL project. Trained ornithologists are assessing project sites and historical data to try and determine which species are present.

Even though we might not find a species present this year, it doesn’t mean a given area isn’t important over the long term,” says Sopuck. “We know, for example, that some of these grassland birds will shift where they breed in a given year depending on how wet a landscape is. So, if you’ve got a few wet years, an area that used to have Sprague’s Pipit might not have this year. It’s not because the habitat is bad or something fundamentally has changed, it’s just now it’s wet and the birds for this particular wet period are somewhere else so we have to take a longer-term view than just whether or not a bird happens to be there or not be there in a given year.”

By collecting this kind of data, conservationists will be able to assess the value of the program to species at risk and grasslands over the long term. “The other thing we’re doing on these projects is an evaluation of grassland health so that if we establish a baseline now, as producers make changes to management practices, down the road we can evaluate how the grasslands themselves improve,” says Sopuck. Beef production part of the solution to maintaining grasslands.

From a wider perspective, says Sopuck, he’s hopeful that SARPAL can change the conversation about cattle production and grassland conservation everywhere.

“We can talk about beef AND birds, and have everyone understand that beef production is part of the solution to conservation of species including endangered species,” he says. “We can’t have grasslands and grassland bird species if we don’t have a vigorous cattle industry on the Canadian Prairies.”

“I would also say kudos to producers in Manitoba,” adds Sopuck. “I have to congratulate the industry for being so far-sighted here seeing that there’s not only advantage to the industry but it’s also an opportunity to provide benefits to wildlife. Producers want to see both things, they want to see their industry viable and they like having wildlife around. And in that spirit, they seem to be welcoming this program so it’s very heartening.”
When I first started in the livestock marketing business 37 years ago, one of the first things that I was warned about was the “Remembrance Day Wreck.” I thought it was some- thing out of the history books, but Clift Penno, who was manager at the Brandon Stockyards at the time, explained that we were probably set for the re- mainder of the year. Rule of thumb was that if the market was going to show any price pressure, that was when it was going to hit. Over the 37 years the market was right about four out of five years. The calf market went on in the second to third week in November. In October, Manitoba calf prices were at a premium over the rest of the week, with strong interest from Ontario and Quebec feeders. There was a steady stream of trucks going east for feedlots. We were filling quickly for de- livered delivery of calves. Up until now, 10, life was good in the calf mar- ket. Prices for Manitoba feeder calves were con- siderably higher than last year again, 57 to 77 cents higher on the 300-500 lb steers, and 58-65 cents higher on the heifers. The 600-800 lb steers were close to 48 cents higher, with the heifers at 43-50 cents higher. The heifer/ steer price spread started to widen at the beginning of the month, after a price surge on the heifers during late October. The drop in the calf market after Nov. 11 was not a wreck, just an adjustment that we all knew had to be, and was go- ing to happen. For week after week the market in Manitoba was dollars and dollars higher than Saskatchewan and Alberta. Now with the freight rates considered, Manitoba is more in line with the rest of the industry. The major- ity of the cattle are sold on a delivered price, so it was just a matter of time before the calf price had to fall in line when the large vol- umes came to market. One week later, the market started to show some cracks, and as ex- pected, some of the classes of feeders dropped, while the top quality cattle strug- gled to maintain a steady market. The main reason for the drop was supply over power demand. In the week of Nov. 6-11, there were over 173,000 feeder cattle sold in Western Canada, with just un- der 20 thousand sold in Manitoba. This was the third consecutive week of large calf sales. Produc- ers traditionally market large numbers during the last two weeks of October and the first week of No- vember because taxes are due, farm payments are expected, and in most cases, harvest is wrapped up and pastures are in need of a good fall grazing season. With the US import- er buying American beef and cattle the price for meat, a host of other cash crops, farmers grow canola, and area every fall. Now grain farmers grow canola, and a host of other cash crops, and the local demand for the calves has all but dis- appeared. Over the last 37 years, I have seen many changes in the cattle market, some good and some not so good. The one thing for sure is that marketing these large volumes of cattle in the fall run has become more of a challenge for the market operators, order buyers, feedlots and truckers.”
The majority of cows entering slaughtering facilities come from auction markets, creating enormous variation in the composition and quality of cows flowing into the beef market. Grading cows is not a common practice in most processing plants. Instead, they are sorted by company personnel based on a few carcass characteristics (i.e. carcass weight, subcutaneous fat color and muscling). Although the benefit to grading cow carcasses may not be immediately obvious, researchers at the University of Manitoba have shown that there are yield and quality differences between different D grades. They believe that segregating cow carcasses among the D grades will result in better utilization of their carcasses to meet market needs (value-added products, food service or retail).

**Carcass traits of D grades**

Culled cows can be separated into four quality grades: D1, D2, D3 and D4. To qualify for the D1 grade, mature carcasses must have excellent muscling and be well finished with white to amber fat (<15 mm backfat). Mature carcasses with medium to excellent muscling or with yellow fat fall into the D2 grade. Mature carcasses which are deficient in muscling to the point of emaciation receive a D3 grade, whereas, over-fat mature carcasses with deficient to excellent muscling (≥ 15 mm backfat) receive a D4 grade.

A benchmarking study of Canadian grading standards for culled cows (D1, D2, D3, D4) demonstrated that D1 and D2 carcasses have similar carcass yield attributes (i.e. similar carcass weight, ribeye area and lean yield) compared to A/AA quality grades. Also, of the mature carcasses grades, D1 and D4 cow carcasses have the most marbling (“Modest”) and a lower proportion of carcasses with yellow fat; thus, meat from these carcasses may be used in value-added cuts (e.g. flat iron) with the use of strategies to improve tenderness, including wet aging or blade tenderizing.

**Improving the sorting of cow carcasses based on cutability**

Lean meat prediction in processing plants is estimated using a grade ruler. However, this ruler was not designed to estimate lean meat in mature carcasses, only youthful carcasses in Canada Prime and A quality grades. However, Argenis Rodas-González from the University of Manitoba, along with scientists from AACF Lacombe have developed a lean yield equation that can predict lean yield in mature carcasses which will allow packers to segregate cow carcasses based on lean meat cutability and more precisely define their price. This equation is in the early stages of development and will continue at a larger scale in a commercial set-up.

Using quality attributes to improve value.

Cuts from Canada D-grade carcasses are generally darker than youthful beef with D1 and D4 carcass grades having higher fat content and higher marbling scores. Colour and appearance of the meat can be improved using packaging strategies such as high oxygen modified atmosphere packaging to produce bright red colour cuts or steaks. These researchers found that new value-added cuts in the chuck primal such as the flat iron cut (Figure 1), D-grade carcasses did not have any colour deficiencies in any of the cow grades. Therefore, there may be further opportunities for packers to add value to D carcasses using this novel cut.

Specific cuts from D grade carcasses can be as much tender, juicier and flavaful as youthful carcass grades. Some cuts such as the flat iron, rib-eye, striploin, tendon, inside round, eye round, knuckle, top sirloin, and clod of D1 and D4 carcasses retain similar eating quality to youthful beef. Flavour intensity can also be higher in several cuts from D1, D2 and D4 carcasses. In other quality attributes, such as cut weight, moisture loss, and D1, D2 and D3 grades do not differ from youthful grades in most of the cuts. Conversely, D3 carcasses appear to have as many quality deficiencies in colour and palatability attributes as other mature grades, indicating meat from these carcasses likely requires more intensive post-slaughter processing (e.g. Maceration and tumbling) before the sale, thus their use as ground beef is justified.

Grading culled cows will allow packers to maximize the value of their carcasses and meats to reach consumer acceptability.

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**Get Up and Running with a Manitoba Livestock Associations Loan Guarantee**

Manitoba livestock producers are independent, but they’re also open to co-operating with their neighbours so all may benefit. It was this spirit of collaboration that gave rise to Manitoba’s livestock associations.

“We started in 1999” said Sherry Rozecki, President of the Association of Manitoba Feeder Co-operators, an umbrella organization that represents the mutual interests of feeder and breeder associations in Manitoba.

With six feeder and two breeder associations now operating, Rozecki is optimistic about the growth of these associations in Manitoba.

“People who use the program continue using it over and over,” she said. The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) proudly supports the efforts of livestock association members through the Manitoba Livestock Associations Loan Guarantee Program (MLALG). The program provides the participating lender with a guarantee that the funds will be repaid.

Associations borrow money from a participating lender, and then lend funds directly to their members to purchase livestock. The MLALG gives members the benefit of lower costs associated with more favorable financing terms than they would be able to access individually. Members also benefit from reduced handling costs because of the association’s higher sales volume. Clayton Unruh, a member of the A-1 Cattle Co-op since January 2017, understands the benefits of association membership.

“The feeder association fits in well, because it doesn’t tie up all your collateral,” said Unruh.

Unruh prefers financing directly through his association. As a beginning farmer with limited capital, he receives financing through the association that is more favourable than what he’d receive elsewhere.

“The association isn’t focused on making a profit, it’s more about supporting my success” – Clayton Unruh

“[Association members] deal directly with the association, not the lender, and they can borrow up to $500,000 from their association, using the livestock they purchase as collateral,” said Rozecki. The maximum lending limit for an individual association is $8 million.

Members can finance 100 per cent of their purchases, with feeder associations requiring members to deposit five per cent in the association’s assurance fund. Breeder associations require a 10 per cent deposit. New members like Unruh soon find that livestock associations, by their nature, promote camaraderie and mentorship.

“They’re a friendly fraternity. There’s trust involved,” said Rozecki. “You’re dealing with people on common ground. Shared ownership means that members want each other to succeed.”

“The association adds experience and safeguards into the process,” said Unruh.

Unruh noted that he could rely on the mentorship of existing members, who have a vested interest in his success.

“I had help with buying cattle – a check (by more experienced members) to see if they were worth what I was paying,” he said.

Unruh calls it an ‘appréciating’ loan.

“The animals gain value faster than costs occur, and as long as the market is good, you should make money.”

When a member’s feeder livestock mature, they can be sold for profit (minus what’s owing on the association loan), but feeder association members can also roll heifers over to a breeder association. In this situation, the breeder association lends money to the producer to pay off the feeder association contract.

Livestock associations in Manitoba are small, but growing in size and number.

“If you get more awareness about this program, membership will only go up,” said Rozecki.

For more information about Manitoba’s feeder and breeder associations, visit the website for the Association of Manitoba Feeder Co-operatives at www.amfc.biz.

For more information about the Manitoba Livestock Associations Loan Guarantee Program, visit the MASC website at www.masc.mbc.ca or contact MASC’s Guarantee Program Specialist at 204-239-3244.
Important changes coming to the farm

DR. TANYA ANDERSON, DVM
The Vet Corner

There has been much talk about the new regulations for the purchase of Medically Important Antimicrobials (MIAs). While this has been an international concern, the Antibiotic Era began in the early 1900s when Paul Ehrlich postulated that chemicals could be synthesized that would selectively kill foreign organisms in the body. This led to a large scale and systematic search in 1940 for a drug against syphilis, a disease very common and almost incurable at that time. The biggest break-through was the discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1928. Since then, many types of these drugs, including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitics have been discovered and developed to cure “any and all” disease. Antibiotics are now a cornerstone of modern health care.

Unfortunately, over time, the effectiveness of antibiotics has been declining due to the development of resistance, particularly by bacteria. Designing more effective or selective medications is sold. You will require a veterinary-client-patient-relationship and prescription to obtain antimicrobials, whether used as injectables or in water-soluble or feed-grade formats. Also, as a part of Canadian commitment to boost public and food safety measures around antimicrobial use in veterinary medicine and align policies with that of other developed countries, growth promotant claims will be discontinued and the use of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) and Own Use Importation (OUI) will be banned.

Before you cry foul and slam veterinarians as I have read in articles in various lay press, please note that it is not your veterinarian that made these rules changes. We as a society have created this dilemma for ourselves. Overseas and indiscriminate use of antibiotics has exacerbated the naturally evolutionary tendency of all living organisms, bacteria included, to survive and thrive. Unfortunately, many producers feel it is easier to pop a pill or give a shot than it is to ensure that we promote health in our herds with sound vaccination, management and nutrition programs. The same can be said if we evaluate how we look after our own health and that of our loved ones.

What can you as a producer do? Develop a relationship with your veterinarian. I am still amazed when I hear people brag how they never need a vet. Yes, there may be no vet fees but what about those hidden costs - lost production, subpar health, lost reputations with order buyers. If you have no herd health program (and >50% of herds don’t according to surveys), you need to get one up and running. Your veterinarian and a nutritionist can help you optimize your herd health with the benefits far outweighing the costs. Healthy herds have lower drug bills and fewer emergency/crisis veterinary visits. As for drug costs and access, it is my understanding that costs are expected to remain unchanged - several pharmaceutical companies that I have spoken with do not anticipate price changes though some products may be discontinued due to decreased demand and the scales of economy.

We must recognize the importance of responsible antimicrobial use to help ensure these vitally important health tools remain effective. In 2008, the CVMA (Canadian Veterinary Medical Association) developed guidelines for the prudent use of antimicrobials. Review the guidelines with your veterinarian to develop a responsible drug use policy using an antibiotic from a class known to be effective against the disease being treated at the correct dose, routes of administration and with the least effect on public health. We are now, in effect, entering the post-antibiotic era. And, as said before, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.