



September 29, 2023

Dave Wolgemuth
President, Algoma District Cattlemen's Association

Dear Dave,

WHEREAS, Ontario Beef farmers have faced declining veterinarian services over the last several years, especially in more rural underserved areas, and

WHEREAS, newly purchased pandemic pets have caused a North American shortage of qualified veterinarians, and

WHEREAS, OMAFRA in conjunction with Ridgetown College in 2001 introduced a Livestock Medicines Education Program that was intended to compliment Quality Assurance Programs by teaching livestock producers the technical and practical skills required to ensure adherence to modern standards of animal husbandry consistent with industry Best Practices that was subsequently discontinued,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT BFO work with the bovine veterinarian community and government to reinstitute and encourage industry wide practical training of producers through Quality Assurance and other programs to ensure competent delivery of the full range of industry Best Practices.

BFO strongly supports producers furthering their knowledge on various industry practices to better their operations, and supporting producers with opportunities and resources to do this is an important priority for us. We continue to explore ways to get producers the information they may need through BFO led initiatives or collaborating with and promoting other industry, veterinary or government opportunities.

In particular, advancing the Ontario beef sector through Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef quality assurance programs, such as Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) and Ontario Corn Fed Beef (OCFB), and supporting producers to meet and exceed the beef Code of Practice responsibilities for animal health and welfare are identified as key actions in BFO's updated strategic plan.

To promote further participation in quality assurance training and certification, BFO continues to offer the Ontario Beef Quality Assurance Rebate Incentive Program. The program provides BFO check-off paying members with a 100 per cent rebate on first time VBP+ audit fees paid by members who become certified through the completion of training, and an on-farm audit. For producers renewing their VBP+ audit in 2023, BFO will provide a rebate of 75 per cent on audit fees.

BFO staff provide VBP+ training as live webinars for producers at various times throughout the year and we encourage producers to notify BFO staff if they are interested in taking the training. Producers also have the option of taking the VBP+ training course online at any time for \$50. The training course can be found on the VBP+ at <https://www.canadiancattlelearningcenter.com/#/public-dashboard>.

To support producers seeking information on animal health and to compliment quality assurance programming, a number of educational resources and manuals have been developed. For example, VBP+ producer manuals are available to all producers regardless if the producer is certified under VBP+. The various sections of the manuals provide detailed information on animal health, including use of livestock medicines and antimicrobials, animal nutrition, animal care, biosecurity, etc. These manuals can be found at <http://www.verifiedbeef.ca/producer-resources/producer-reference-manual.cfm>. In addition, producers can find an online portal for the Compendium of Veterinary Products developed by Canadian Cattle Association and Merck Animal Health (<http://www.verifiedbeef.ca/producer-resources/important-resources-links.cfm>).

Feedlot producers in Ontario can also utilize the OCFB Quality Assurance manual developed by the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association. The OCFB manual includes a focus on animal care and animal health topics, such as use of veterinary medicines, antimicrobials, purchase and storage, etc. This manual can be found at <https://ontariocornfedbeef.com/ocfb-qa-manual/>.

In regards to the Livestock Medicines Education Program, it was offered by the Ontario government to help promote the responsible use and safe handling of antimicrobials on farms. The voluntary course focused on the role of veterinarians, understanding medicines and associated regulations, withdrawal times, proper injections, and other related topics. After the course was discontinued, it later became available at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus for a fee, however, as of January 1, 2023, the course is no longer available due to low demand.

In response to Health Canada regulations that came into effect in 2018 and increased veterinary oversight of antimicrobial use in food-producing animals, the Farmed Animal Antimicrobial Stewardship Initiative (FAAST) project and resources were developed. FAAST was created to provide livestock farmers and their veterinarians with free tools and resources to help prevent antimicrobial resistance. The initiative was a collaborative effort between the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, government, academic, and industry partners.

FAAST includes a number of 'do it yourself' courses for farmers and veterinarians including: Introduction to Livestock Medicines; Regulations on Antimicrobial Use and Access; Antimicrobial Stewardship; On-farm Biosecurity Management; and commodity specific courses like Antimicrobial Stewardship in the Ontario Beef Industry. In regards to the Livestock Medicines course, the FAAST website states the former course provided by the Ontario government has been digitized, re-designed and updated to provide an accessible resource for all livestock producers in Ontario. These resources can be found at <https://www.amstewardship.ca/>.

Other valuable producer resources have been created by the Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) that explore animal health and antimicrobial resistance, record keeping, reproduction and calving, etc. BCRC also provide webinars to do with animal health and welfare topics and provide courses, albeit not related to livestock medicines, on cow-calf record keeping.

With an abundance of information available to producers online, BFO, in an effort to make finding information related to animal health easier for our members, has consolidated these various resources on our website, which can be found here (<https://www.ontariobeef.com/farmer-hub/industry/animal-health/>). BFO will make members aware of these resources by promoting it through our various communications channels.

Thank you to the Algoma District Cattlemen's Association for bringing this resolution forward.

Sincerely,



Jack Chaffe
President

cc: Ryan MacLeod (Mover and Advisory Councillor)
Dennis Kirby (Seconder)
Mikala Parr (Secretary)