

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER



Message from the Chair

Cattle market prices started off strong this year, flattening due to COVID-19 uncertainties of processing. Locally, demand was strong which helped hold prices steady in Nova Scotia. The upcoming winter months have NSCP busy planning events such as the Zone and Annual meetings, as well as working towards the completion of ongoing projects.

Earlier this year, the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers worked with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to facilitate workshops, delivering the amendments to the livestock transportation regulations in February 2020. These workshops occurred in late February 2020 across the province, with nearly 100 attendees throughout the four locations.

In the spring, the Maritime Beef Council released a new local dairy-beef resource: *Beef on Dairy: A Maritime Dairy-Beef Production Guide*. This first volume manual, *From Breeder to 500lb Feeder*, was a joint collaboration from various Maritime industry organizations, such as provincial livestock specialists, Atlantic Veterinary College, all Maritime Dairy Farmers associations, all Maritime Beef Producers associations, provincial veterinarians and Milk 2020, among others. This resource can be found on our website (nscattle.ca/) under "For Members" and "Industry Fact Sheets".

Also in spring, NSCP started tracking cattle market pricing within the Eastern Canada region. This information is gathered each week, with the weekly cattle price from the week prior added to our website each Monday morning. This includes pricing from feeders (500-900 lbs), fed steers, cull cows and bob calves (good and average). This can be found on the "Market Price Reports" webpage under "For Members".

This past summer, NSCP and Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia jointly wrote and submitted a letter of interest for the Climate Adaptation Leadership Program through the Nova Scotia Environment - Climate Change Unit and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture project. The *Cattle (Beef and Dairy)* sector was selected as one of the three industry topics, being the only livestock group involved in the project. Throughout the next two years, there will be focus groups routinely meeting between beef and dairy who will represent both industries, as well as selected value chain stakeholders, with the end result being a completed adaptation strategy. Updates will be provided to membership along the way.

Throughout the year, NSCP worked with the Agri-Commodity Management Association on the *Nova Scotia Animal Transport Resource and Training Program* through funding obtained by CAP. This funding allowed for the Livestock Transportation Manifest to be developed. Manifest books are available at the NSCP office for a fee of \$10 each. Additionally, this funded livestock commercial truckers in the province to undergo online Canadian Livestock Transport (CLT) Training, to receive certification in animal transport in Canada under the current regulations.

With the COVID-19 Public Health regulations in place this fall, NSCP moved to virtual workshops, rather than in-person. This Virtual Farm Tour series allows producers the opportunity to see how other farms are operating, from the comfort of their home! These began in November, with one video released each month until spring 2021. Each month, a different beef operation will be highlighted. Additionally, we recorded a virtual presentation discussing the importance of cattle vaccinations. This video includes content from Dr. Alexander Burrows (Fundy Vets Ltd.), Jonathan Wort (Perennia), Brad McCallum (NSCP) & Ellen Crane (BCRC). Vaccination technique/handling, premiums & economics were all discussed. Please visit our website, social media accounts and monthly updates for these video releases.

A reminder of the Cattle Industry Enhancement Program, a Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (NSDA) CAP Program, which has an application deadline of December 31, 2020. This program aims to improve industry competitiveness and resilience through disease prevention and control, improving animal health and welfare, as well as enhancing genetic potential. Please visit novascotia.ca/programs/ for a complete listing of all government programs and eligibility.

On the **yellow inserted form**, you will find the 2021 license application and verification of levies paid for 2020. It is important that this form is completed and sent back to the office to ensure that you remain in good standing with NSCP, receive industry updates, have access to industry events and are eligible to cattle specific programs. These forms are due back to the office by January 15th, 2021. Also included within this newsletter is a complimentary 2021 Beef Lover calendar, courtesy of Canada Beef.

In closing, I would like to wish all producers and their families, as well as all other stakeholders, a happy and safe holiday season. If you have questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact Brad at the office, office@nscattle.ca or 902-893-7455.



Larry Weatherby, Chair

NSCP Seeking Nominations for Producer of the Year Award

The NSCP is now accepting nominations for the Kings Mutual Producer of the Year Award. The objective of the award is to annually recognize a Nova Scotia beef producer or dealer for the outstanding contributions they make to the provincial cattle industry. Nomination forms are available by visiting nscattle.ca/awards or by contacting the office at 902-893-7455. Completed nomination forms are due to the NSCP office by January 31, 2021 and the winner will be announced at the Annual General Meeting on March 6, 2021. The winner will be presented with a plaque, as well as a NSCP jacket and hat.

NSCP Virtual Zone Meeting Notice

Due to current COVID-19 restrictions, the **2021 Zone Meetings will occur virtually. Pre-registration is required in advance of these meetings and must be done 24 hours before the meeting time.** To register, please visit nscattle.ca/; links will be available on the homepage.

This is an election year in Zone 1 (Danford Murphy), Zone 4 (Larry Weatherby) and Zone 6 (Vacant). A Dealer Director will be elected to the Board at the Dealer Meeting. Members are reminded that they can attend any of the Zone Meetings but will only be able to vote (where applicable) in their Zone. Annual Zone Meetings have been booked as described below:

Zone	Date	Time
1	January 11	7:00 pm
2, 3, 5	January 13	7:00 pm
4	January 11	1:00 pm
6	January 12	7:00 pm
Dealer	January 15	12:00 pm

The Zone Meetings will again feature a presentation by Dr. Claire Windeyer from the University of Calgary. These pre-recorded presentations will focus Claire continuing on her annual presentation topic of early calf care. Jonathan Wort, Manager of Livestock and Field Crops, Perennia, will handle the questions in her absence.

About Dr. Claire Windeyer

Dr. Claire Windeyer attended UofG, where she completed her BSc, followed by her DVM degree. After graduation, she went into rural mixed practice in southern Alberta. Claire then returned to OVC to do her DVSc in Ruminant Health Management. Her thesis examined bovine respiratory disease in dairy heifer calves. She won the D.F. Forster medal, a convocation award for academic achievement, motivation, leadership, and citizenship. Claire then volunteered in Nepal with the Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation, Veterinarians Without Borders, and the Lalitpur District Milk Producers Cooperative Union. Claire lives on a small acreage near Dogpound, AB with her partner Bruce and their 4 horses.

NSCP Zoom Training Sessions

We have teamed up with the New Brunswick Cattle Producers and the Maritime Beef Council to deliver training sessions on Zoom, prior to the upcoming 2021 Zone Meetings. These sessions will consist of Kaylee Sheets (Zoom training professional) explaining the main functions of Zoom, so you are prepared to use the online service before your Zone Meeting.

Training sessions links can be found at <http://nscattle.ca/> and will be available the following times:

Date	Time
December 15	8:00 pm
December 17	12:00 pm
December 22	8:00 pm
January 5	8:00 pm
January 7	12:00 pm

One recorded training session will also be available to view prior to the upcoming Zone Meetings, and will also be posted to the website once ready.

NSCP Annual Meeting Notice

The NSCP Annual General Meeting will be held Saturday, March 6th, 2021 at 10:00 am – location to be determined.

Commit to Local for the Holidays

The holidays are upon us and this year in particular we are issuing our annual challenge - give a gift that gives back to our whole province by committing to spending some of your holiday shopping budget locally. Many local businesses are still recovering from the financial impacts of COVID-19 and could use your help now more than ever. You will benefit from a unique shopping experience as you help support local businesses, local jobs and the local economy by spending locally!

Local gifts have a richer story and are often one-of-a-kind and made by talented and creative Nova Scotians who love what they do. When you shop at local businesses or buy from local craftspeople, or food and beverage producers, you can't beat the customer service. They know their products like nobody else and are more than happy to spend the time making sure you find the ideal gift.

This holiday season, commit to local in your community. Start with one gift or one business at a time! Don't forget that it's not just about gifting; you can also shift your holiday spending to local meats, produce, preserves, baked goods, even local Christmas trees and other holiday décor. You'll be surprised by how many local choices you can make once you start looking.

You can catch Ruth Mathewson, Woolies of Upperbrook Farm, and Susan Hamilton, Wild Pasture Farm, discussing how they rely on local sales on Maritime AgCast: Episode #7 – Buying Local. Listen at anchor.fm/maritime-agcast or on your favourite podcast platform.

Happy local holidays!

November Feeder Sale Results

November 10th, 2020 Sale Summary:

741 head 575 lb average 162 cents per lb average Gross Return \$931.50/hd
375 steers (\$176 @ 585lbs), 331 heifers (\$151 @ 548lbs), 35 bulls and stags (\$140 @ 626lbs)
162 unvaccinated cattle sold for 155 cents per lb at 558lbs for a gross return of \$865/hd
579 vaccinated cattle sold for 165 cents per lb at 576lbs for a gross return of \$950 (\$85 premium)

November 24th, 2020 Sale Summary:

388 head 577 lb average 172 cents per lb average Gross Return \$992.44/hd
179 steers (\$188 @ 594lbs), 164 heifers (\$151 @ 569lbs), 45 bulls and stags (\$158 @ 592lbs)
201 unvaccinated cattle sold for 154 cents per lb at 580 lbs for a gross return of \$893
187 vaccinated cattle sold for 181 cents per lb at 586 lbs for a gross return of \$1061 (\$168 premium)

Upcoming Important Dates

- Virtual Zone Meetings:
 - Zone 1: January 11th, 2021
 - Zones 2, 3 & 5: January 13th, 2021
 - Zones 4: January 11th, 2021
 - Zone 6: January 12th, 2021
- Virtual Dealer Meeting: January 15th, 2021
- Next Module of the Atlantic Beef School: (Virtual) Farm Business Management – January 2021
More information can be found at: maritimebeef.ca/
- Atlantic Stockyards Winter & Spring 2021 Feeder Sales: January 21st, February 18th, March 18th, April 13th, April 27th
- NSCP Annual General Meeting: March 6th, 2021 (*location to be determined*)
- Balamore Farm "Thickness Sells" Bull & Female Sale: March 20th, 2021
- Nappan Spring Breeding Stock Sale: April 3rd, 2021
- Next NSCP Newsletter: April 2021

Winter and Spring Feeder Sale Dates

Thursday, January 21st: 10 am
Thursday, February 18th: 10 am
Thursday, March 18th: 10 am
Tuesday, April 13th: 10 am
Tuesday, April 27th: 10 am

Producers are encouraged to pre-book all feeder cattle as early as possible.
The Atlantic Stockyards Ltd. will be listing pre-registered cattle on their website.
Vaccinated cattle must be accompanied by a vaccination declaration and a receipt for the vaccine used. Additionally, vaccinated cattle will be uniquely identified.
All cattle will be sold by order of arrival.

There will also be a Spring Equipment Sale on Saturday, April 17th, 2021, beginning at 10 am.

Healthy Soils, Healthy Herd

Pastures are often taken for granted. Every spring it seems without much effort, the grass turns green, we open the gates to the pasture and the cattle feast. But poor soil health is quickly evident after the spring flush is over.

The goal of every beef farmer is to pasture cattle as long as possible and achieve as much gain as possible without supplemental feed. Pasture is the cheapest source of feed there is. Unfortunately, the majority of pastures in the Maritimes have poor soil health – low pH, low nutrient levels, poor grass species and plenty of weeds.

Beef can gain 2-3 lbs/day on properly managed pastures. The key to high gains is animal intake. The amount of grass cattle can consume is directly related to plant growth and regrowth after grazing. Cattle need 70 kg of fresh grass per day and will only graze 8-10 hrs per day regardless of intake, so every bite counts. If plant height is less than 3 inches cattle can only eat 15-20 kg during grazing time. Poor pastures have spotty areas of grass species, which cattle will selectively over graze allowing weeds to take over. Cattle will seldom graze more than 2.5 kms from the water source. It is easy to see how cattle can have low rates of gain on poor pastures.

Improving pH will improve the resilience of grass species. Grasses grow best at a neutral pH, where nutrients are more available in the soil for uptake. The goal should be to have pH near 6.5. Most locations in the Maritimes require a calcitic liming source. Increasing the pH will increase calcium. Calcium is the plant engine, responsible for uptake of nutrients, resilience to stress and cell strength. It helps loosen soils allowing better root growth and water infiltration, reducing compaction and drought stress. Lime, wood ash and N-Rich are all options to improve pH and add calcium.

The grass consumed contains nutrients that need to be replaced in the soil. Yes, cattle deposit manure, but it only contains 75% of the nutrients they remove, and it is usually deposited in concentrated areas. If no additional nutrients are applied, soil nutrients will be depleted. To improve soil nutrient levels, more than what is removed (30 kg/ha P₂O₅ and 70 kg/ha of K₂O) needs to be applied. Meeting nutrient removal rates will only maintain current levels. Chemical fertilizers are not the only solution. At the correct application rates, manure, wood ash and N-Rich can also apply the required nutrients to improve soils.

Nitrogen is essential for volume however the trick is to have it when it's needed throughout the season. Products such as N-Rich and ESN can provide slow release nitrogen for the season in one application. Applying fall manure, then nitrogen after each grazing rotation to promote regrowth is another solution.

There are management practices such as rotational grazing that can improve pasture longevity, but soil health is fundamental. Do not reseed pastures without plans to first address low pH and fertility. Improving soil health may even eliminate the need to reseed.

Most farmers will ask me what will this cost? Instead, ask what investing in your pastures will save you? Poor soil health pastures usually last 89 grazing days (June 1st to Aug 28th) with a stocking rate of 1 cow/calf pair per acre. Moderate soil fertility can last 106 days (June 1st to mid September). Good soil fertility can last 184 days (May 1st to October 31st) with a higher stocking rate!

If a round bale of haylage is \$60, weighs 900 kg and a cow eats one every 12 days, the good pasture will save \$390 per head over the moderate pasture. It will save \$475 per head over poor pasture! A herd of 20 head of cattle could save \$9,500 in round bales.

If you need help on how to build healthy soils for a healthy herd, contact me at: mistycroney@eastlink.ca or 902-256-2636.

Keep an eye out for more about soil health from LP Consulting in upcoming newsletters.

Misty Croney



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