

Second CBIC a successful event

It is September again and the summer is behind us for the most part – unfortunately! It has been a great summer across Manitoba and I certainly hope that you have all had a great season.

I am just back from the second annual Canadian Beef Industry Conference (CBIC) in Calgary. I can say that in Manitoba we seemed to have found that sweet spot weather-wise and have had a much better summer than many other producers across the country. For once, Manitoba had a decent spring without the severe flooding that we have seen in past years, and a nice warm dry summer, with some timely rains. At



BRIAN LEMON
General Manager's
Column

the Calgary conference, as I listened to industry leaders from across Canada, it was clear that producers to the west are very dry, conditions in Ontario continue to be very wet, and our hearts go out to producers in BC who are fighting an unimaginable fire season. Here is hoping we have a

great fall season and prices continue to be positive.

The summer has been busy in the office with a number of significant files and happenings. As mentioned above, MBP representatives attended the CBIC. By all accounts it was another successful conference with over 700 registrants from across Canada and from across all parts of our industry. This year's CBIC had another interesting slate of speakers and topics, with many thought-provoking presentations.

A favourite of mine was a presentation by Dr. Sangita Sharma from the University of Alberta. Dr. Sharma told us something I think we all already knew,

that beef is really a "wonder-food," and is one of the most nutrient-rich products consumers can choose. Her presentation focused on all the incredible health benefits of beef in our diets and how important nutrients like iron, zinc and vitamin B12 are to our health and wellbeing. I couldn't help but think about Health Canada's recent consultation on a proposed new Canadian Food Guide, and I hoped that besides hearing from cattle producers, they are also listening to people like Dr. Sharma to make sure that they highlight the benefits of eating beef as part of a healthy diet.

At the conference there were also a number of other

meeting and ceremonies. Manitoba was very well represented by Shane and Sacha, Arron and Amber Nerbas and their families. Nerbas Bros. Angus from Shellmouth was Manitoba's candidate for The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA). As is always the case, the representatives from all the provinces were all extremely strong and we were very proud to have the Nerbas family representing Manitoba.

As well as the CBIC agenda, both the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency and the Canadian Cattle-men's Association (CCA) also met and held meetings. These meetings are always very full and busy,

and Manitoba was well represented by Tom Teichroeb, Heinz Reimer and Ramona Blyth who all hold seats at various committees of the CCA. Heinz Reimer was also confirmed for another year as the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency Vice-Chair.

Back at home we have been busy getting our views and our wishes known to the provincial government on a number of issues.

First, we have provided our input into the design of programs under the next policy framework. The Ministers of Agriculture just met in Newfoundland and have signed the multi-lateral funding agreement,

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Representing producers remains a challenging task



BEN FOX
MBP President

"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing."
Theodore Roosevelt

At a recent event I attended, I was visiting with a fellow cattle producer and he quite pointedly asked, "What are five things that you can tell me about that you are working on, on behalf of Manitoba's cattle producers?" I have known this gentleman for close to 15 years and whether he was jesting or not, I thought that it was an interesting and honest question. It perplexed me on a couple fronts; if someone I know fairly well has questions about the value that is provided by MBP's activities to his operation, then I'm sure there are other folks that have similar queries. Secondly, I was concerned that maybe our messaging is getting lost, as we project the sometimes endless reams of information back out to the producers of Manitoba.

I started into answering the question but then was asked to provide a

written response so my September *Cattle Country* topic was set. Each issue of this paper goes into deep details of the many activities that MBP undertakes on behalf of Manitoba cattle's industry. There are countless meetings that occur throughout each month that require either a director or staff person to attend to be certain that cattle producers' views are known and fought for. It may be meetings with different levels of government, or with a national organization or stakeholder group. In any event, our staff does an absolutely stellar job of preparing briefing notes and position papers to address/inform policy makers of the position of this organization, and to direct policy in a way that is positive to our industry. There seems to be a never-ending array of issues that require and garner a response from our organization.

One portrayal of MBP's role in our industry was expressed to me by Dane Guignon, former district 14 director, when he said that MBP is really the producers' deflector shield for all the BS that gets thrown at the cattle industry! In many ways he's correct; the amount of things that come at the office is sometimes mind blowing and no matter how insignificant it may seem, it needs given the proper attention to be sure that it's handled

in the best interests of the Manitoba beef industry. I know that the staff and directors take pride in being able to perform and deliver in our industry's best interest.

I like to keep things simple and look at the big picture so I thought that I would state a few things that would directly answer the question at hand. Have previously been on the MBP's Executive and now in the President's role, I have been part of many great things within this organization, but I will focus on some specific items that I feel a deep sense of responsibility for.

1. Making Manitoba the best beef province in the country:

This may be a vast statement but I strongly believe that in order to achieve true, sustained cattle herd growth we need to be the province best suited to the production of beef. In recognizing this we need to have decreased regulations, proper business risk management tools, increased research and extension activities to producers, an overall positive lending/borrowing environment and, an available and trained work force. As a province, we have a land base that enables producers to "get in the game" at a more reasonable investment than our neighbors which is highly advantageous.

2. Crown Lands:

Through several meetings with the Agriculture Minister and his staff members, Crown Lands continues to be near and dear to me. We have asked for informed access, increased AUM allowances per operation and a clear and concise approval process for land sales and transfers.

3. Transport Regulations:

As I stated in last month's article I strongly believe that we need logical, science-based regulations regarding animal transport rules. MBP continues to promote this thinking to all level of government and parties involved.

4. Movement Reporting:

It is my hope you are informed about what is required of you THIS FALL and if you don't know, ask for help. In short, the use of manifests to report group movements is going to be critical going forward and we all need to be filling out the forms. This is a very important business risk management strategy that we as producers need to be successful at implementing for the benefit of our entire industry and its trade options.

5. Working to keep MBP focused on

producer needs and being the voice of Manitoba's cattle industry:

It has always been my thought that we need this organization to fully represent and articulate to the "powers that be" on behalf of producers having 10 or 1,000 head of cattle. We don't necessarily have to always give the politically correct answer, but we always have to do what's right for the industry that we cherish.

6. Continue to Support Industry-Led Initiatives:

Whether it be the Association of Manitoba Community Pastures (AMCP) or Manitoba Beef & Forage Initiatives, I strongly believe in the value of industry-led ideas and plans being put into action for the betterment of our industry. MBP is focused on industry-led, practical solutions that continue to offer advantages for beef production in Manitoba.

7. Identifying possible synergies with sponsors, stakeholders and the general public in growing the MBP brand.

8. Developing a young producer strategy to give networking opportunities to young cattlemen and women.

9. Continued strength of MBP's board of directors, including helping to recruit possible directors.

10. Predation: Fewer problem predators—more cattle!

11. Ongoing efforts and initiatives to eradicate bovine TB, including incentives for producers participating in on-farm risk assessments and for making the linkage between their Premises Identification location(s) in the Riding Mountain Eradication Area to their Canadian Cattle Identification Agency accounts.

This list isn't necessarily in any specific order as they are all important topics and truth be told there are a lot more items that are on the list of issues on which we advocate on your behalf! Fortunately, there are 13 other committed directors and a great staff to share the load. I hope this article answers the fellow's question. I know it was maybe more than what he wanted but it was a good exercise in being accountable to the hard working people that our group is representing. As Henry Ford said, "coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

In closing I hope that your harvest is plentiful, that your calves are sale toppers and that you and yours stay healthy and safe this busy fall season.

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