



BC's AGRI-FOOD

Update



Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Featuring News From the Agriculture Sector of B.C.'s Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

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FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

Those who work in the B.C. agriculture and agri-food sector have lots to look forward to in 2006.

The ranching and meat processing industry have reason to believe that 2006 will be a good year. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will reopen the U.S. border for our cattle industry in mid-2006, an important development that includes both the beef component and the dairy industry.

A significant number of our animals sent across the border are replacement heifers for the U.S. dairy industry. This export trade is a big part of the dairy sector, improving profitability for producers. Losing the U.S. market was a real economic blow.

This is also good news for Canadian ranchers and breeders, who played a significant role in supplying stock for the U.S. rodeo circuit, another market closed due to BSE.

The decision to completely

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Beefing up livestock waste tissue management

When people pick up some steaks for the barbecue from their local supermarket, most don't even give a passing thought to what happens to the waste parts of the beef carcass the meat was cut from.

For Rick Van Kleeck, it's a topic that is constantly on his mind.

While most people in the industry view the 80,000 cattle that are slaughtered and processed in British Columbia each year as profit modules, Van Kleeck sees the unwanted components as challenges that need to be dealt with.

Van Kleeck was a waste management engineer with the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries (now the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands) when BSE was discovered in a Washington State cow that originated on an Alberta farm. His job was to deal with all the environmental issues

around waste and waste management. When the U.S. border was closed to Canadian cattle, Van Kleeck and his co-workers were tasked with figuring out what the challenges meant to the B.C. cattle industry.

Van Kleeck found himself seconded to the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF), co-ordinating the committee charged with the task of finding the most efficient way to put to use or dispose of what is referred to as specified risk materials (SRM) and other slaughter plant waste tissue in an efficient, cost-effective manner.



Rick Van Kleeck, co-ordinator of the Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative committee, in front of an incinerator during a field day at Rodear Meats in Big Lake B.C. The incinerator is being tested by Thompson River University.

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reopen the border, and keep it open following the discovery of BSE in an Alberta cow in late January, indicates the USDA considers cattle from B.C. and Canada to be safe. As well, in mid-December Japan's Agriculture Ministry approved the easing of Japan's ban on Canadian beef, with exports initially limited to meat from cattle younger than 21 months.

I'm hopeful the lessons learned about over-reliance on the U.S. market will spur increased slaughter and processing capacity in B.C. New health regulations on meat inspection and a new strategy for livestock waste tissue management will help assure the world that B.C. beef is healthy and safe

Another upcoming event is the 2006 Census, which will include a Census of Agriculture. The census is scheduled for May 16, 2006 and the questionnaire can be completed manually or online at www.census2006.ca.

I want our agriculture and agri-food sectors to be really successful and I feel confident that 2006 will be a profitable and fulfilling time for everyone.

Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

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Ministry of
Agriculture and Lands

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"The primary mandate of this committee is to help the slaughterhouse industry overcome its waste management problem," says Van Kleeck. "We need to get the industry into legal compliance with the present rules and the proposed future rules and we have to do it in a timely fashion. Because of the time crunch, that's our number one priority."

In the long term, the committee's mandate is to find alternative commercial uses for livestock waste tissue (LWT).

The LWT program's mandate includes the preparation of plans for the efficient and safe disposal of livestock carcasses resulting from an emergency in B.C., whether in response to disease or natural disaster.



Dick Klein Geltink, BCAC Chair, presents certificates to (starting at the far left and going clockwise) John van Dongen, Rory McAlpine and Blake Lyall.

BCAC Hosts Government Leadership Tribute Dinner

The B.C. Agriculture Council (BCAC) hosted a tribute dinner in honour of the great work done by the Honourable John van Dongen when he was Minister of Agriculture, along with Rory McAlpine as Deputy Minister and Blake Lyall as the Minister's assistant.

The night was intended to be an intimate dinner for 50, but mushroomed to close to 200 industry people who had requested tickets. The evening featured industry presentations as well as roasts by Jack Vaandrager of the B.C. Egg Producers and Robin Smith of the B.C. Dairy Foundation.

While Minister of Agriculture, John van Dongen worked extremely hard to advance the agriculture industry in B.C. He provided important support for programs such as the tree fruit replant program and for provincial agricultural fairs. Under his guidance, the ministry was able to respond when B.C. was hit with crises such as the Avian Influenza outbreak and BSE.

We are pleased to see this important work so warmly and sincerely recognized by the industry and echo their thanks and praise to former minister van Dongen and his great team for their hard work.