

# 2015

## Annual Report

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association



The Voice of Cattle Feeders Since 1973





Photo by Nolan Stuart



You'll recall my commitment to you last year to engage stakeholders in transparent communications in the same room at the same time. We've continued these outcome-based conversations with key provincial agricultural stakeholders, the provincial and federal governments, and most importantly, with our members. Our goals are firmly focused on generating value for ACFA members while optimizing the position of our industry provincially.

It is our intent to actively engage with the concerns of our members so we can advocate on your behalf. In 2015, ACFA took your concerns to government on labour shortages, farm safety and Bill 6, traceability, rural infrastructure, and municipal taxation of intensive livestock operations.

Specific initiatives you will read about in this year's annual report include the development of a Feedlot Emergency Preparedness Plan (FEPP), a metric-based upstream-vetted feedlot animal care assessment tool (FLAT), and the development of a feedlot employee Recruitment & Retention Campaign. The launch of the Business Risk Management program at Lethbridge College successfully rolled out in October with ongoing development of course curriculum. This has been a tremendously exciting partnership, providing our next generation of cattle feeders with tools to effectively manage the volatility that is increasingly the norm in our industry.

ACFA continues to strengthen communications with key industry partners. As an example, ACFA and Alberta Beef Producers remain at the table and are committed to increasing our convergence on issues and better leverage respective resources.

Throughout 2015, the ACFA Board of Directors and Staff have worked diligently to strengthen the long term viability of Alberta's cattle feeding sector by building upon our four pillars of social license: following industry standards of animal care; employing best practices in animal health and production; practicing good environmental stewardship; and investing in our people and their communities. Using these pillars as a foundation, ACFA developed policy statements on key industry issues, activating our social license, improving on our advocacy efforts, and underscoring our sector's commitment to sustainability—providing safe, healthy, high quality food in an economically viable, environmentally sound, and ethically responsible way.

Our known commitment to production excellence has been recognized through contributions to the development of a pre-competitive sustainable beef brand in Canada, and we continue those discussions with the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) and its stakeholders. Discussions of sustainability must remain balanced with economic viability, as quality beef production requires the support of strong markets. Our industry has experienced the realities of disrupted slaughter capacity, and ACFA was pleased to support and see Harmony Beef's successful bid to harvest an additional 800 head daily in our marketplace at full capacity.



**“It is our intent to actively engage with the concerns of our members so we can advocate on your behalf.”**

Our accountability to you is reflected in core principles identified and executed through a living strategic plan. We continue to work with industry partners to access and develop markets that maximize value for our members, enhance competitiveness by reducing regulatory burdens, identify and advocate for research priorities that support our vision and mission, work to improve industry relations, governance, and funding, and build our membership by delivering value.

I would like to recognize our board members who generously volunteer their time and vision to our organization, as well as ACFA staff for their professional approach to doing business. It has been my distinct privilege and honour to serve our association as Chair.

I can think of no other time when the voice of the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA) has been more timely, more relevant, and more needed. More than ever, ACFA is needed to promote understanding of our business and its importance to Alberta's rural communities and the broader provincial economy. More than ever, cattle feeders need a strong and experienced advocate in their corner to bring forward your concerns and ensure our sector is respected and protected.

In 2016, rebuilding and refreshing ACFA's government and public relations program will be a key priority. It is vital that decision-makers know our business and that public policies and programs reflect the realities of beef production. We must continue building champions for our sector and partnering with others to grow our industry. Fundamentally, good public policy equals informed public policy and ACFA will work to ensure this equation stays intact.

A top priority for our advocacy efforts will be to foster provincial support for the new Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement and final implementation of the Canada-EU CETA, including side agreements accepting Canadian food safety practices in our processing facilities. On the labour front, ACFA will continue to call for adoption of the Labour Task Force Action Plan. We must keep the foot on the pedal for a dedicated agriculture and agri-food workforce program and a smoother pathway to permanent residency for those who come here seeking work and new opportunities.

Bill 6 presents a particular challenge. ACFA's position is clear, and was expressed on multiple occasions to the Premier and her Ministers. We support more robust incident investigation and reporting, and also mandatory insurance coverage for all farm workers. However, employers and employees should be given a choice between WCB and private insurance, and mutually agreeable safety practices should be used instead of the industry-style OH&S rules. The province has committed to consult with industry on the regulations flowing out of Bill 6. ACFA will hold the government to that commitment.

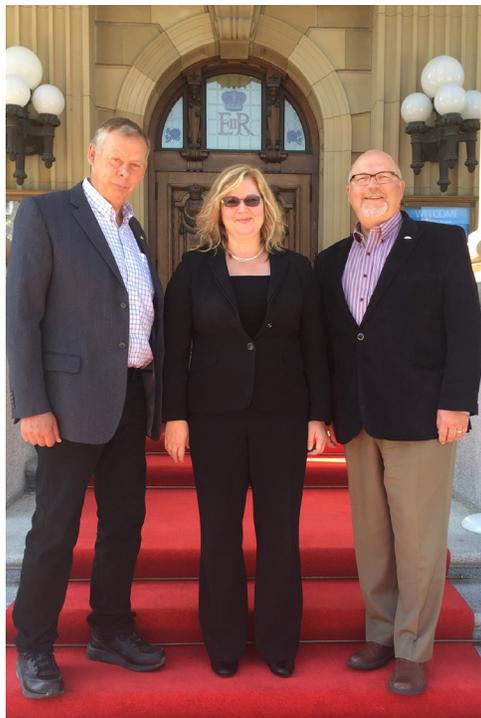
A number of important ACFA projects have wrapped up, including our Feedlot Emergency Preparedness Plan. The Feedlot Assessment Tool will also be completed next year. The Board has restocked the hopper by approving several new projects. We intend to take the Emergency Plan to feedlots across the province and also drive a new Awareness Campaign and digital communications strategy to promote our sector and communicate our social license. The Board has also approved the development of a new Farm Safety Training Program that ACFA will take to our members. We will also begin work on a new governance policy manual for ACFA.

**“More than ever, cattle feeders need a strong and experienced advocate in their corner to bring forward your concerns and ensure our sector's interests are respected and protected.”**

The future governance and funding of the beef industry in Alberta will continue to be discussed. Throughout 2015, ACFA and ABP met to discuss the development of a single industry plan that would fairly and effectively represent the beef industry in the province. These meetings were fruitful, with consensus achieved on several important industry issues and “Our Pledge for the Future.”

Without doubt, 2016 will be an active year for your association. The challenges are many. But with our dedicated board and our small but talented and committed staff, ACFA is up to the challenge. I thank you for your continued membership in ACFA. It is our dedicated members that keep Alberta's cattle feeding sector innovative and dynamic—a true leader in Canada's beef industry.



ACFA Vice-Chair Martin Zuidhof, Chair Page Stuart, and CEO Bryan Walton at the Alberta Legislature after meeting with Alberta's new Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

## Strategy 1

### Access and develop markets that maximize value for members

ACFA's engagement with a network of industry and government partners is helping secure new export opportunities and an improved trading environment.

**Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP):** ACFA advocacy on trade supported Canada's inclusion in the new 2015 TPP trade agreement. Capturing 40% of the global economy, it will create the largest international free trade zone and provide market access for Alberta's beef industry to the world's fastest growing economies. ACFA will continue to advocate for final approval of the TPP with both provincial and federal decision-makers.

**Canada-EU CETA:** Final implementation of the new CETA agreement with the European Union is still pending as technical details continue to be worked out. ACFA has urged the federal government to ensure the deal's system of import licenses does not impede real access and to secure signed side letters recognizing EU approval of Canadian food safety practices in our processing facilities.

**COOL:** In 2015, the World Trade Organization (WTO) issued its fourth and final ruling on mandatory "country-of-origin" labelling (COOL) in the U.S., deciding again in favour of Canada. ACFA has urged the new federal government to remain firm on retaliation to force a full repeal of COOL, and to reject any proposal requiring segregation of Canadian cattle in U.S. plants.

**Policy Statement:** ACFA's new *Trade Policy Statement* details how ACFA will work with industry and government partners to successfully conclude our top trade priorities. This includes the long-term goal of restoring full access for all Canadian beef products from cattle of all ages to our most important international markets.

## Strategy 2

### Enhance competitiveness through improved public policy and reduced regulatory burden

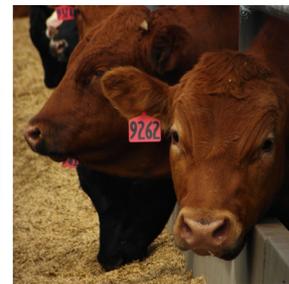
Government policy impacts all aspects of beef production, and ACFA works to ensure it reflects the business realities of cattle feeding.

**Building Relationships:** In 2015, ACFA reached out to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) by including them in our project activities, particularly the table top exercise testing the new Feedlot Emergency Preparedness Plan. In September, ACFA organized another successful feedlot tour with CFIA officials, building on an earlier event in 2013.

**Regulatory Reform Initiative:** ACFA contributed \$100,000 to a new National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) project measuring the industry costs of various regulations identified through Canada-wide focus groups. With the costs in hand, we are better positioned to make the case for reform.

**Policy and Regulatory Submissions:** ACFA made several important submissions in 2015, setting out our perspective on farm safety and Bill 6, and through NCFA, the latest federal proposals on traceability.

**Policy Statement:** ACFA's new *Regulatory Policy Statement* states that regulations should be outcome-based, use the best available science, and be developed with industry input. ACFA will continue to support the work of the Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC).



Top left: ACFA Director Keith Ypma and Wesley Batista, President of JBS. Bottom right: ACFA Chair Page Stuart greets friends at the 2015 Alberta Beef Industry Conference.

### Strategy 3

Identify and advocate for research priorities and programs that support our vision and mission

*ACFA research and projects generate value for members and cement our commitment to the four pillars of our social license.*

**Animal Care:** In 2016, the new Feedlot Animal Care Assessment Tool (FLAT)—a fully auditable PAACO certified program serving as a single protocol for feedlots, processors, and retailers—will be completed. ACFA also led the development of Alberta Farm Animal Care’s new Compromised Cattle Benchmarking study, and continues to partner with the National Farm Animal Care Council and the Alberta Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Steering Committee. ACFA’s new *Animal Care Policy Statement* commits members to following recognized industry standards of care.

**Animal Health and Production:** Cattle feeders are devoted to employing best practices in animal health and production. As such, ACFA has invested in a new Histophilosis vaccine, forage and feed grains research, and the new Barley Straw Project. We also partner with the Canadian Animal Health Coalition, the Canadian Animal Health Institute, and the Animal Nutrition Association of Canada. ACFA’s new *Innovation and Production Technologies Policy Statement* outlines our commitment to healthy and productive animals.

**Environmental Stewardship:** In 2015, ACFA completed the Feedlot Emergency Preparedness Plan (FEPP) to protect animals, the environment, and human health in case of a disease outbreak or natural disaster. Cattle feeders are also participating in the Livestock Impact on Groundwater Quality Study and the Alberta Phosphorus Watershed Project. ACFA interacts regularly with the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) and its Policy Advisory Group (PAG), and currently chairs the Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG). In 2015, we also passed a new *Environmental Stewardship Policy Statement*.

**Investing in People and Communities:** ACFA engages with our communities through charitable fundraising, outreach, and online activities. In 2015, ACFA raised \$6,700 for Kids Cancer Care. Another \$12,000 was raised for the War Amps at the Alberta Beef Industry Conference by the Cattlewomen for the Cure. In March, staff at ACFA and Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) prepared a tasty beef dinner for families at Calgary’s Ronald McDonald House. ACFA continues to partner with Olds College to administer the Dargis Family Scholarship, which makes an annual grant of \$1,000 to a first-year student.



*At an ACFA Board meeting at the JBS facility in Brooks, Yonathan Negussie talks labour with CEO Bryan Walton and Directors Lyle Miller and John Schooten.*

### Strategy 4

Improve industry relations, governance, and funding

*ACFA is committed to working with other cattle organizations to strengthen the beef value chain through improved governance and funding.*

**One Provincial Plan:** In 2015, ACFA and ABP held a series of meetings to develop one industry strategy that fairly represents the different beef sectors. Progress was made toward a single plan, which is still the ACFA goal. ACFA values cooperation, but is also exploring alternatives.

**Choice and Accountability:** ACFA supports the principles of choice and accountability in Bill 43 and the non-refundable check-off. This has been communicated to the new provincial government. ACFA will continue to represent the interests of our members through our *“Pledge for the Future”* and work for options that make sense for all sectors.

**National Beef Strategy:** A \$1.50 increase in the national check-off has been proposed. While industry would benefit from additional funds, issues such as provincial clawbacks must be addressed. The Board passed a motion calling for a budget and a governance plan before any check-off increase.



*In March, ACFA staff prepared a dinner for residents at Ronald McDonald House. (Top left: Joe Novecosky. Top right: Kimberli Nummi, Joe Novecosky, and Jennifer Brunnette. Bottom: ACFA’s brick on the donor wall).*



ACFA Director Lyle Miller at the 2015 Annual General Meeting in Lethbridge, AB.

## Strategy 5

### Build our membership by delivering value

*As a voluntary membership-driven organization, the most important component of ACFA's strategic plan is to ensure members benefit from our advocacy efforts.*

**Government Relations:** Following the election of the new provincial government, ACFA was one of the first agricultural industry associations to meet with Minister Carlier (Agriculture and Forestry) and Minister Sigurdson (Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour). These meetings were an opportunity to introduce ACFA and brief the ministers on industry issues from the perspective of Alberta's cattle feeders.

**Labour:** A chronic shortage of labour is one of the biggest issues facing agriculture and agri-food. ACFA has urged governments to adopt the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Action Plan. ACFA's new *Labour Policy Statement* also calls for the creation of a new workforce program dedicated for agriculture.

**Recruitment:** ACFA is conducting a Recruitment & Retention Campaign that includes workshops tailored for producers and is also participating at job fairs, conferences, tradeshow, and other career events to improve recruitment. Our new website features industry information, job boards, and a resume bank. ACFA's partnership with AgCall and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council in the campaign is providing real benefits to our members.

**Farm Safety and Bill 6:** ACFA has long advocated for a "Made in Alberta" solution that meets the needs of farmers. Our position is clear—implement the recommendations of the Farm Safety Advisory Council, provide a choice between WCB or private insurance, and use safety standards developed by government and industry instead of the OH&S technical code. Because Bill 6 falls short, ACFA urged the Premier to hit the pause button. ACFA will continue its advocacy on this issue using the principles in our new *Farm Safety Policy Statement*, which also commits ACFA to developing a new Farm Safety Training Program for our members.

**Age Verification:** In 2015, the ACFA Board heard cattle feeders were being discounted at the plant due to improperly tagged cattle. While the cattle being shipped are UTM, some tags are reading OTM resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of dollars. This impacts cattle feeders directly. The board is actively engaged with the CCIA and our industry partners for a resolution.

**Infrastructure:** The smooth movement of feed grains and cattle are essential to efficient production and competitiveness. This requires the renewal of rural Alberta's roadways and wooden bridges. To address this issue, ACFA has effected action through the Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) and is collaborating with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C) and Lethbridge County.

**Environment:** A review of the Agricultural Operations Practices Act (AOPA) is widely expected in 2017. ACFA is laying the groundwork now through the Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) and participation in the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) at NRCB. ACFA's new *Environmental Stewardship Policy Statement* will guide our activities on this issue.

**Communications:** ACFA is targeting its outreach to the public, media, and government through a new digital Communications Strategy. Active research, promotion, and education will help promote the feedlot sector and proactively shape and manage its reputation.

**Next Generation:** ACFA continues to prepare for the future through our "Next Generation" initiative, where the next generation of cattle feeders are invited to ACFA Board meetings and events. ACFA's new Communications Strategy, our Recruitment & Retention Campaign, and the Business Risk Management curriculum at Lethbridge College are working together to support ACFA's focus on younger cattle feeders.



**Annual General Meeting:** In January of each year ACFA kicks off its activities with the Annual General Meeting. The 2015 AGM not only attracted ACFA members, but also several MPs and MLAs. The guest speaker was Mr. Wesley Batista (Filho), President of JBS Foods Canada, who traced the evolution of JBS into one of the world’s largest meat processing companies. Batista confided that when JBS decided to purchase the Brooks facility from XL Foods they were making a commitment to Canada—a commitment that JBS fully intends to keep. Batista also thanked ACFA for its support in addressing the labour shortages facing the industry.

**Alberta Beef Industry Conference:** Each year ACFA organizes the Alberta Beef Industry Conference—Canada’s largest beef industry event. The conference is hosted by five partner organizations including ACFA, Alberta Beef Producers, the Western Stock Growers Association, the Alberta Auction Markets Association, and the Alberta Livestock Dealers and Order Buyers Association. The conference pulls together internationally-recognized speakers in a dynamic agenda that draws delegates from across the country. The 2015 conference—attended by 520 registered delegates and 60 trade show exhibitors—was themed “Plan It Beef.” The next Alberta Beef Industry Conference will be held at the Sheraton Red Deer Hotel on February 17-19, 2016. Among the speakers will be Dr. Brian Evans, Deputy Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

**Big on Beef Producer Days:** In 2015, Alberta cattle feeders and other industry stakeholders came together to promote “Alberta’s other natural resource” at the “Big on Beef Producer Days” event held at Save-On stores across Alberta. This event connects consumers with producers, and allows the men and women who raise Alberta beef to express their commitment to producing a world-class product.



*The banquet and auction evening at the Alberta Beef Industry Conference has always been an incredibly popular and fun-filled event, especially when Danny Hooper is calling out the bids.*



*The Alberta Beef Industry Conference is Canada’s single largest industry gathering, providing delegates with a diverse program, a trade show, and access to internationally recognized speakers.*



**ACFA Annual Golf Tournament:** ACFA’s 2015 Annual Golf Tournament at Paradise Canyon in Lethbridge was another sold-out success, demonstrating its status as one of the most popular events in the beef industry. This year’s tournament featured ACFA’s first ever “million dollar shoot-out.” Although no one enjoyed the thrill of winning the big prize, everyone enjoyed the evening’s steak dinner after the tournament.

**Alberta Livestock Power Services:** Alberta Livestock Power Services (ALPS) is a business venture owned and operated by ACFA. Membership in the ALPS energy program is open to all intensive agri-business operators in Alberta, and provides price stability and cost savings on electricity beyond the RRO Farm rate. In 2016, AltaGas Ltd. and ALPS will be launching a new secure web-based portal that will enable customers to access past invoices, historical and current spot prices, and electrical cost and consumption data. The new portal will allow consumers to access their entire account and compare electricity usage and cost data for individual sites. This portal is unique to the ALPS program, and will provide a timely and convenient method for customers to secure information on their power usage and distributor wire charges.

### Board of Directors

**Chair:** Page Stuart (*1141516 Alberta Ltd*)

**Vice-Chair:** Martin Zuidhof (*Zuidhof Feeders*)

**Past Chair:** Brent Chaffee (*Strangmuir Farms*)

**Directors:** Jason Hagel (*Hagel Feeders*)

Ryan Kasko (*Kasko Cattle Company*)

Leighton Kolk (*Kolk Farms*)

John Lawton (*AJL Farms*)

Lyle Miller (*Highway 21 Feeders*)

Craig Paskal (*Paskal Cattle Company*)

John Schooten (*Schooten & Sons Custom Feedyard*)

Curtis Vander Heyden (*Grandview Cattle Feeders*)

Jeff Warrack (*Bruce Farms*)

Keith Ypma (*Sunset Feeders*)

### Staff

**Chief Executive Officer:**

Bryan Walton

**Manager, Policy & Research:**

Casey Vander Ploeg

**Manager, Events & Member Services:**

Jennifer Brunette

**Administration & ALPS Coordinator:**

Kimberli Nummi

### Contracted Staff and Consultants

**Financial Manager:**

Joe Novecosky

**Communications Manager:**

Shannon Lyons

**Government Relations (Ottawa):**

Cathy Jo Noble

**Government Relations (Ottawa):**

Peter Brackenridge

**Trade Consultant (Ottawa):**

John Weekes



**Back row from the left:** Bryan Walton, Jason Hagel, John Schooten, Leighton Kolk, John Lawton, Martin Zuidhof, and Keith Ypma. **Front row from the left:** Curtis Vander Heyden, Ryan Kasko, Page Stuart, Brent Chaffee, and Lyle Miller. **Missing:** Craig Paskal and Jeff Warrack.

### Who We Are

Since 1973, the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA) has represented the interests of Alberta cattle feeders on a broad range of policy and economic issues that affect their competitiveness. ACFA continues to develop strategies to achieve long-term success for Alberta's cattle feeding sector, and is a leader in guiding the beef industry to become more sustainable, profitable, and competitive in a challenging global marketplace.

### Our Vision

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association—creating opportunity for the world to enjoy high-quality Canadian beef.

### Our Mission

To aggressively pursue innovative and collaborative solutions for a thriving Alberta beef industry on behalf of Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association members.

### Contact Us

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