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LOCAL FEEDLOT BECOMES A SCHOOL FOR ONE DAY

Three Hills School Junior High Students Participate in an Interactive Ag Education Opportunity with Calhoun Cattle Company

Calhoun Cattle Company welcomed almost 100 junior high students from Three Hills School onto their feedlot for an interactive and engaging look into the Canadian beef industry. As a result of various social media campaigns promoting misconceptions about beef production, feedlot manager Jason Calhoun was inspired to connect with Three Hills School Principal, Lloyd Boody.

"I wanted the students to see firsthand how cattle are actually treated and answer any questions they have about beef production. If we can talk to students and give them a positive experience maybe they will be encouraged to pursue a future career in Agriculture," said Jason

Students had an introductory session at the school in the morning where Jason Calhoun spoke to students about what to expect at the feedlot. He also gave them an overview of the Agriculture industry in Alberta and identified some of the opportunities available in agriculture. His talk highlighted that students today will be industry leaders tomorrow and that the Agriculture industry is facing an exciting future.

In the afternoon, students went out to [Calhoun Cattle Company](#) where they participated in a series of interactive, highly engaging sessions throughout the feedlot. Jason Calhoun toured students through the feedmill and micromill where they learned about the role of nutrition in animal health. Students were awed by the role technology plays in providing precision feeding programs for animals in the feedlot. One particularly impressed student exclaimed, "These cattle have a better diet than I do!"

Next, students met Hal Nixdorff from GrowSafe Systems who spoke further about the roles that Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics have in supporting research, development, and implementation of sustainable management practices. GrowSafe employs mechanical, electrical, chemical, and computer engineers as well as computer software developers, and IT specialists.

Following [GrowSafe](#), Rod Calhoun of Calhoun Cattle Company along with Sarah Richardson, an instructional coach with [Golden Hills School Division](#), took students on a bus tour around the feedyard. This provided students with an opportunity to see the various tagging systems to support traceability. They also highlighted the space and comfortable living conditions of the cattle.

“Our number one priority is the comfort and wellbeing of our animals. A healthy animal is a relaxed animal so we do everything we can to make sure our animals experience minimal stress while under our care,” Rod told students.

Students also met with Paul Hardes, a veterinarian from Veterinary Agri-Health Services out of Airdrie. Students learned about animal health and what happens when an animal is sick. They also learned about the use of antibiotics, hormone growth promotants, and different practices to ensure animals are handled with the utmost care.

After that, Kaley Segboer, Chance Segboer, and Heather Hanlon from [Agriculture for Life](#) walked students through a risk management session focusing on how to identify and control hazards in various situations specific to a feedlot operation.

To finish up the day, Elanco and Calhoun Cattle Company sponsored a Beef on a Bun for all of the staff, presenters, and students. Friends Catering from Three Hills prepared and delivered the meal and it was a delicious capstone to a great afternoon. Students were then given Ag More Than Ever bags full of information and goodies from the [Alberta Beef Producers](#) and [Alberta Cattle Feeders’ Association](#), including Big Chief Beef Jerky.

Agriculture is one of the fastest growing, in-demand areas of the economy. Through opportunities for value-added strategic planning of Ag products, to the growing need of professional services in this industry, Agriculture, offers many opportunities to explore a wide range of occupations and develop many competencies in an authentic, hands-on way.

With all junior high students of Three Hills School participating in the Calhoun Cattle Company Tour, it is clear that agriculture education isn’t just for farm kids anymore! The skills and competencies that can be developed in Agriculture experiences are highly sought after and are believed to be transferable across many sectors of the economy. Experience in agriculture through classroom learning and engagement offers students a competitive advantage in a growing and globalized labour force.

Lloyd Body summarized the benefits of community-based partnerships saying,

“Partnering with Jason Calhoun and the Calhoun Cattle Co. has been an excellent 21st century learning experience for the junior high students of Three Hills School. Experiencing the real world applications of food production science, nutritional and health sciences, technology, and economic considerations has deepened our understanding and appreciation of the Ag production business. We bring away the ability to be critical thinkers about real world issues, messages in our culture, and the key role our corner of Alberta plays in the global food production picture.”

The Calhoun Cattle Company Tour, inspired through a win-win partnership between Calhoun Cattle Company and Three Hills School is one such program providing students in Golden Hills School Division with that competitive advantage through community-based learning.

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Cathy Price, Project Coordinator Golden Hills School Division at 403-546-3863 or email at Cathy.Price@ghsd75.ca.