



ANNUAL REPORT

2017



Message from the Chair

Martin Zuidhof



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Zuidhof". The signature is fluid and cursive.

“Anticipating, confronting, and then taking action was key to managing the numerous challenges to our industry in 2017.”

Over the years, the Alberta Cattle Feeders’ Association (ACFA) has earned a solid reputation for effective advocacy on behalf of its members. This reputation was put to the test throughout 2017 with all levels of government.

Anticipating, confronting, and then taking action was key to managing the numerous challenges to our industry in 2017. Legislative and regulatory changes, court rulings on the head tax, industry governance and funding deliberations, and ongoing international trade negotiations were just some of the issues we dealt with over the past year, and will continue to manage going forward.

By keeping the lines of communication open and putting forth thoughtful solutions to industry challenges, ACFA’s requests for meetings with key Ministers and their staff were always accepted. This has allowed us to find common ground and champion our industry.

The last year saw cattle feeders facing unsettling times on many different fronts. This has made strategic planning more critical than ever. In March of 2017, the ACFA board, our staff, and industry partners came together to devise a new strategic plan, strengthen ACFA governance, and develop a clear path forward. The aim of this strategic plan is to keep us focused and effective while remaining lean and nimble.

Our managerial structure, resources, and practices with respect to leadership, communication, planning, organizing resources, and fiscal control were all put under the microscope. Various activities and projects under this new strategic plan are already underway, and agreed-upon recommendations are being put into action.

As part of our 2016 governance review, a board self-assessment was conducted that included indicators such as leadership, relationships, and role clarity. The results identified strengths and weaknesses and highlighted areas for improvement in 2018.

As the Chair of ACFA, I take pride in acknowledging the contributions of our board and staff, all of whom demonstrate a willingness to tackle the next challenge and not just occupy space. The future of Alberta’s cattle feeding sector is in capable hands with these fine folks who work hard to ensure ACFA reaches its greater potential.

A special word of thanks also goes out to Directors Keith Ypma and former ACFA Past Chair Page Stuart, both of whom are retiring from the ACFA Board. Your contributions over the years are both appreciated and valued.



Message from the President and CEO

Bryan Walton

In last year's annual report I noted that the world we used to know is rapidly changing and how ACFA must capitalize on these changes to ensure the growth and sustainability of our industry and the ongoing relevance of our industry association.

There are at least three major "game changers" that will demand our attention going forward.

First, the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association and Alberta Beef Producers have come to an agreement in principle on the future governance and funding of the beef industry in Alberta. This agreement—the result of dialogue and debate held over a number of years—promises to usher in a new era of industry collaboration. A key part of the agreement will be the establishment of the new Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund (ABIDF). This idea has received general acceptance by both ranchers and cattle feeders, who will have opportunity to ratify the creation of the fund and the larger agreement in a plebiscite that will likely be held in 2018.

Second, all of Alberta's commodity organizations have come together through the AgCoalition to create the new AgSafe Alberta Society. This is a positive response of industry to the province's policy of removing the agriculture exemption from provincial Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). ACFA has been at the forefront of this initiative by not only taking a leadership role in the AgCoalition but creating our own Alberta Feedlot Safety Program.

Third, it is very clear that cattle feeders continue to face a number of challenges in maintaining their competitiveness. As part of our strategic plan, ACFA will be looking to partner with other provincial beef industry organizations and stakeholders to commission a detailed assessment of our industry's competitiveness and the policy alternatives that should be pursued to ensure the industry's future growth and sustainability.

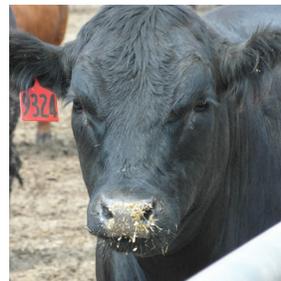
I am positive that 2018 will be yet another busy year for your association. To ensure our effectiveness, we will be working to improve on several aspects of our governance, including orientation and "on-boarding" of new Directors, board training, and media relations training.

I thank all of our loyal members for your ongoing support of ACFA. Your association is healthy and it is strong. That is a testament to your commitment.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Walton".

"There are at least three major 'game changers' that will demand our attention going forward."



New Strategic Plan

A new strategic plan sets the direction for ACFA for the next five years



Engaging with the provincial government to strengthen the cattle feeding sector in Alberta is a key part of ACFA's new strategic plan. Here, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Minister Hon. Oneil Carlier speaks at ACFA's annual MLA Dinner.



In 2017, a new five-year strategic plan was developed complete with initiatives, project plans, and tangible deliverables. This plan sets the future direction for ACFA and rests on four priorities.

Vision: Championing a sustainable cattle feeding sector in Alberta.

Mission: Pursuing innovative and collaborative solutions for a thriving Alberta beef industry.

Priority #1: We will build ACFA membership by delivering value to our members. Initiatives include providing leadership on industry issues, exploring and developing new services that will benefit ACFA members, and executing high quality events that provide industry-wide benefits, generate value to our members, and build the ACFA brand.

Priority #2: We will engage with the provincial government to strengthen the health of the cattle feeding sector in Alberta. Initiatives include working to increase understanding of the cattle feeding industry, proactively assessing and resolving industry issues, and advocating vigorously to minimize regulatory burden.

Priority #3: We will collaborate with partners to advance the industry. Initiatives include resolving industry governance and funding issues, leading efforts to establish the Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund (ABIDF), and engaging with other industry stakeholders on specific projects to advance the industry. Key to our success under this priority is to continue support for the National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) and its efforts on behalf of cattle feeders in Ottawa.

Priority #4: We will strengthen ACFA governance. Initiatives include enhanced training for Board Directors, the development of succession plans, and an ongoing review of board effectiveness and decision-making.

ACTION and ACCOMPLISHMENT

At the ACFA Annual General Meeting held in January 2017, members passed a resolution calling on ACFA and other provincial beef associations to come to agreement on a new governance and funding model for the industry within one year's time. The spirit of this resolution was incorporated into the strategic plan, and work began immediately. This effort has resulted in an agreement in principle where producer check-off funds will be invested in a new Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund, and industry dollars will be used to support both the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association and Alberta Beef Producers. While significant work still lies ahead in sorting through the details, ACFA is committed to the task.

ACFA appreciates the support of all our members, including our associate members:



Advocacy

ACFA's strength is advocating for our members

Lethbridge County Head Tax: ACFA commissioned an analysis of the Head Tax by the School of Public Policy, which concluded that the tax would result in feedlot closures. ACFA is also financially supporting an appeal of the tax at the Alberta Court of Appeal. If the assessment and taxation of farmland were modernized, there would be no need for special levies.

Carbon Levy: The cost of the new carbon levy could reach as high as \$6 and even \$7 per head. ACFA has made the case that carbon tax revenue generated by agriculture must be returned to agriculture to support transition to a low carbon economy. ACFA was also involved in the creation of Biological Carbon Canada, and is serving on the Advisory Committee of that new body.

Federal Income Tax: ACFA partnered with NCFCA to respond to proposed changes to the Income Tax Act that would affect family-owned corporations. Our submission to Finance Minister Morneau, combined with others from across Canada, led the government to reconsider the more problematic proposals.

Infrastructure: Municipal tax issues are being driven by a lack of provincial and federal funding for local infrastructure. ACFA is calling for increased investment. In November, ACFA prepared a submission to the province and also presented it before the Legislative Committee on Alberta's Economic Future.

Labour: Labour shortages continue to hit on the province's cattle feeders and processors, and proposed changes to the Alberta Immigration Nominee Program (AINP) will not help. As a pathway to permanent residency, any changes to the AINP should improve the labour situation rather than worsen it.

Farm Safety, Employment Standards, Labour Code: ACFA took the lead in creating the AgCoalition and the new AgSafe Alberta Society. ACFA's position on these issues has been clearly communicated and we remain firmly committed that they be adopted. New provincial legislation and regulations must be workable for cattle feeders.

Trade: Expanding access to new markets is a long-standing concern for cattle feeders, and ACFA continues to support efforts at NCFCA and our national industry partners to make the case for increased trade liberalization.

ACTION and ACCOMPLISHMENT

In June 2017, the US and China signed a new agreement that widely expanded access for US beef into the Chinese market. ACFA partnered with NCFCA to raise this issue with the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of International Trade. Recently, the Canadian and Chinese governments announced expanded access for Canadian beef into China under a new pilot program. Work will continue to ensure that Canada gets the same access as the US.



ACFA Directors and local cattle feeders met with a number of Alberta MPs in Picture Butte in August 2017. Here, MP for Foothills John Barlow speaks about a recent trip to China working to expand access of Canadian beef into that market.



Outreach

Effective communications is key to strengthening our social license



ACFA Director Greg Schmidt welcomes the teacher at the start of a school tour at his cattle feeding operation. School field trips allow children to explore all aspects of a modern beef feedlot.

Government Relations: In 2017, ACFA continued efforts to refresh our government relations program by reaching out to Alberta’s new provincial government decision-makers. In May, ACFA partnered with ABP to host an MLA Reception. In November, we also held another successful MLA Dinner with members of the government caucus. Throughout the year, ACFA met with key Ministers, including the Hon. Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, the Hon. Shaye Anderson, Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the Hon. Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks and the Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office. At the November ACFA Board meeting, members of the Agriculture and Forestry executive team, including the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Ministers, met with the Board to discuss issues facing the cattle feeding sector.

Communications: Across 2017 ACFA continued reaching out to our members, the broader industry, government decision-makers, and the media. The ACFA website and our weekly blog articles are continuing to see increased traffic, and are seen as credible sources of information on issues impacting the beef industry, the cattle feeding sector, and agriculture in general. To ensure the ongoing success of our efforts, ACFA is partnering with Communicatto and its team of digital marketing and social media experts.

Tours: An important element of reaching out involves ACFA tours of cattle feeding operations throughout the province. In 2017, a tour was held at Chinook Feeders in Nanton with Ag in the Classroom staff from right across Canada. A tour was also held for school children at Schmidt Livestock in Barrhead. The ACFA Board also made a tour of the new Harmony Beef facility, building on previous tours at Cargill’s High River facility in 2014 and the JBS plant in Brooks in 2015.

ACTION and ACCOMPLISHMENT

In May of 2017, Board and Staff of the Alberta Cattle Feeders’ Association and the Alberta Beef Producers attended a joint reception for all Members of the Alberta Legislative Assembly. This was the second such reception hosted by the two beef industry associations, and built upon the first joint event held in 2016. Partnering in practical and tangible ways has led to further collaboration on important issues. For example, both ACFA and ABP funded a School of Public Policy study on the Lethbridge County Head Tax. Plans are currently in development for the two associations to commission a comprehensive study of the competitiveness of Alberta’s beef industry. Furthering a constructive and collaborative approach also underlies the agreement in principle for a new governing and funding model for the beef industry in Alberta.



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Royal Bank



Member Benefits

Striving each day to maximize value for our members

Industry Relations: ACFA members can be confident that the views of cattle feeders are being included in broader industry decisions that have potential to impact their business. ACFA has a seat at the table on important provincial and national industry bodies such as the AgCoalition, the Agriculture Industry Labour Council of Alberta, the NRCB Policy Advisory Group, the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta, Livestock Identification Services, Alberta Farm Animal Care, and the AgSafe Alberta Society. Representation on national bodies includes the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency, the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, and Canada Beef Inc.

Industry Research: ACFA members ensure that funding is provided to research that will benefit cattle feeding operations. In 2017, ACFA provided \$25,000 in support for the development of a new vaccine for histophilosis. This was the last installment of a \$60,000 commitment to the project, which totaled \$410,000 and also received \$335,000 in ALMA funding. ACFA has also invested \$20,000 to trial a new feed additive to reduce emissions of methane, \$10,000 for the enhanced camera grading project at the Canadian Beef Grading Agency, and \$4,000 for a cattle transportation project at Alberta Farm Animal Care. ACFA has also committed \$150,000 in funding over the next five years for Beef Science Cluster III projects at the Beef Cattle Research Council.

Industry Development: ACFA members can participate in initiatives designed to strengthen the cattle feeding sector. Important programming includes the new Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment Program, the Feedlot Emergency Preparedness Plan, and the Alberta Feedlot Safety Program.

Member Services: ACFA members are kept informed on the latest industry developments through *The Feed*, our monthly newsletter. Through *The Ringside*, ACFA members are alerted to important and time-sensitive industry issues. Alberta Livestock Power Services (ALPS) provides participating members with price stability and savings compared to the RRO Farm Rate, and also helps fund ACFA operations.

Events: The 2017 Alberta Beef Industry Conference—*Steaking Out the Customer*—was attended by over 540 delegates and 60 tradeshow exhibitors. Delegates and suppliers were provided with a dynamic and thought-provoking lineup of speakers that included an impressive keynote message by Terry O'Reilly, host of CBC's *Under the Influence*. *The Taste of Alberta* banquet and auction also raised \$8,600 for *Inside Education*. The 2018 conference, entitled *Beef Talks: Ideas Worth Sharing*, will be held at the Sheraton Red Deer Hotel on February 21-23, 2018 with former Canadian Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper serving as the keynote speaker. Once again, the ACFA Annual Golf Tournament was another huge success in 2017, cementing its status as one of the most popular social and networking events in Alberta's beef industry.



Delegates to the annual Alberta Beef Industry Conference not only hear from an impressive lineup of speakers, there is ample opportunity to network with industry partners.



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Avail CPA



TEAM
The Electronic
Markets Association

Dr. Joyce Van Donkersgoed
Veterinary Services

The ACFA Team

Board of Directors and Staff

Board of Directors

Chair: Martin Zuidhof (*Zuidhof Feeders*)
Vice-Chair: Ryan Kasko (*Kasko Cattle Company*)
Past Chair: Page Stuart (*1141516 Alberta Ltd*)

Directors: James Bekkering (*TFS Expanse Feedlot*)
Jacob Bueckert (*Dri-Land Feeders*)
Jason Hagel (*Hagel Feeders*)
Colleen Mackey (*Van Raay Paskal Farms*)
Craig Paskal (*Van Raay Paskal Farms*)
John Schooten (*Schooten & Sons Custom Feedyard*)
Jeff Smith (*Gateway Livestock Marketing*)
Greg Schmidt (*Schmidt Livestock Ltd*)
Keith Ypma (*Sunset Feeders*)

Staff

President and CEO: Bryan Walton
Vice President: Casey Vander Ploeg
Manager, Events & Member Services: Jennifer Brunette
Administration & ALPS Coordinator: Kimberli Nummi

Contracted Consultants

Financial Manager: Joe Novecosky
Communications Manager: Shannon Lyons
Government Relations (NCFA, Ottawa): Cathy Jo Noble
Government Relations (NCFA, Ottawa): Peter Brackenridge



Back row from left: Keith Ypma, James Bekkering, Jacob Bueckert, Bryan Walton, John Schooten, and Greg Schmidt.

Front row from left: Colleen Mackey, Jason Hagel, Ryan Kasko, Martin Zuidhof, Craig Paskal, and Jeff Smith. (Missing is Page Stuart.)

Since 1973, the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association (ACFA) has represented the interests of Alberta cattle feeders on a broad range of policy 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.

Contact Us

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