



# Western Stock Growers' Association

*December 2017 Newsletter*



## President's Message

Another year has come and gone – 2017 seems to have been a year that is setting up some possible big changes for the beef industry. The beef industry collaborated and we hammered out a proposal to modernize the long out-of-date rental rate and assignment fee structure for Crown grazing leases. All leaseholders should have received a letter outlining the proposal and we are open to field questions and concerns. The proposal includes a legislation change so we could be waiting a bit yet before we see anything change for leaseholders.

On top of that, some industry groups are talking about changes to the refundable check-off. WSGA was part of the discussion with ABP and the ACFA during earlier meetings regarding the proposed changes for the refundable check-off but we weren't invited to the party when the agreement was signed. When questioned at a recent WSGA board meeting, then ABP Chairman Bob Lowe could not answer why.

The whole idea behind having a refundable check-off is to be able to show approval or disapproval with the way our money is spent. In this new non-refundable scenario, there is no accountability. You can take the 25 cents that goes to the cattle feeders and move it into the proposed Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund, but that's just a small part of the levy. And, in my mind, now that the cattle feeders receive some of the check-off they lose their self-reliance. And still ABP doesn't have to provide adequate accountability for the bulk of the \$2.00 that goes into their revenue.

Alberta's beef producers will still get another say at this since the government has declared that it will take a plebiscite to finalize the non-refundable issue. It's a wild card and I'm not sure if enough producers will get out to vote either way. And there is

the big question on how to determine votes – is it every producer and does herd size also become a factor? Do we look at needing a double majority where the majority of beef producers and the majority of the number of cows will determine the outcome? After that it could be a change to the legislation, which will take time.

The bovine TB investigation was a big part of 2017 and affected many of our producers. It was a time for a big learning curve for CFIA, which was applied to the trace-in part of the investigation and resulted in a very smooth fall of on-farm testing. Overall, it was handled well. There were a few hiccups but all the producers I have spoken to were treated fairly. Here in the southwest part of the province it was a difficult summer and fall with severe drought conditions and by the end of December things don't look much better. We don't have much snow at all, the grass is dry and the winds just keep blowing. After harvesting 8 bushel barley and 6 bushel canola, we are preparing to weather hard time ahead as hay is scarce and the prices are high.

The WSGA was shaken by the sudden loss of our vice president and friend James Hargrave in October. James was a great man and a tremendous advocate for the beef industry. We are working on a tribute to James and there will be more information coming out in the New Year with opportunity for all of us to contribute to a legacy.

Upcoming we have the WSGA AGM and the Alberta Beef Industry Conference in February. We have a proposed change to the board structure increasing the number of directors at large that will have to be ratified by the membership by vote at the AGM.

Respectfully submitted,

## **Add your voice—OHS for agriculture consultation**

As per the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act (otherwise known as Bill 6), paid, non-family farm and ranch workers are protected under OHS basic safety standards as of January 1, 2016. While basic safety standards came into effect January 1, consultations to develop and finalize the detailed technical rules for farms and ranches were undertaken by working groups through most of 2017. The government states that the unique aspects of the industry will be considered as these regulations are developed.

All of the working groups have submitted their recommendations and some public consultations have been completed. The technical working groups studying occupational health and safety have submitted their recommendations outlining how provincial legislation could apply to farms and ranches.

**The deadline for feedback is January 15, 2018. You can review the recommendations by accessing them on the government website:**

**<https://www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch-consultations.aspx>**

The information for submitting your feedback is also on the above webpage.

Farms and ranches with at least one waged, non-family worker will be covered by the basic safety standards set out in the OHS Act, and the appropriate technical rules once they are developed. OHS standards will only apply to an operation if a paid worker is present on the farm or ranch, and then only to those waged individuals.

Family members of the owner of a farm or ranch operation are explicitly excluded from the application of OHS. Family and friends can continue contributing to farming operations as they always have, and neighbours can still volunteer to help each other out.

OHS law does not apply to the private residence, which includes areas around the home, like the lawn area, backyard or garden, or when people are doing non-work related activities on their land, such as recreational activities like horseback riding or hunting.

## **Refund forms due January 31**

**Just a reminder that the check-off refund request forms are due January 31, 2018.**

**Check-off refund requests for cattle marketed from July 1 to December 31 are due to the ABP office by January 31, 2018. You can find the refund request form on the home page of our website [www.wsga.ca](http://www.wsga.ca).**

**For now in Alberta, a portion of levy dollars is refundable to the producer, if they request it. This builds accountability into the system to try to ensure the producers needs come first and foremost. It allows producers to vote with their dollars.**

**If you request a refund, please consider forwarding a portion of your refund to the WSGA so we can continue to best represent you and have a say in beef industry issues.**



## **Bovine TB Investigation Update**

All on-farm testing visits have been completed. There will be a small number of expected double reactors to the caudal fold and Bovigam tests which need to undergo enhanced post-mortem. Those are expected to be wrapped up early in the new year. There have been no surprises and quarantines continue to be lifted as lab tests and post-mortem results are received. There are 71 trace-in herds total with 52 herds already having been tested and released from quarantine.

Compensation will flow from the slaughter of reactors and we are told the process seems to be running smoothly given the amount of paperwork involved.

Farmers receiving compensation will be able to take advantage of the tax deferral schedule as outlined by the government over the next few years. The objective of the deferral is to allow farmers who would otherwise realize a large income inclusion in the year they receive compensation to have the option to defer the income inclusion to following years, when that income inclusion may be partially, or fully, offset by the cost of acquiring new livestock. The Government intends to extend the existing tax deferral to better correspond to the re-population plans and replacement purchases schedule, as industry has indicated it will take several years to rebuild herds..

Farmers will effectively have the option of including those amounts in income for tax purposes, as follows:

2016 and 2017 tax year: no amount of compensation received will be included in income

2018 tax year: 83 per cent of compensation received will be included in income

2019 tax year: 11 per cent of compensation received will be included in income; and

2020 tax year: six per cent of compensation received will be included in income

## **WSGA Annual General Meeting**

**2:00—4:00pm**

**February 21, 2017**

**Sheraton Hotel Red Deer**

## **CALL FOR RESOLUTIONS**

**If you have a resolution to bring forward at the AGM, please send it in to Lindsye at the office. Email: [office@wsga.ca](mailto:office@wsga.ca) or Phone: 403-250-9121**

## **WSGA Proposed Constitution Change to be Ratified at AGM**

A constitution change was presented and accepted the board through a motion at the last board meeting. The proposal details a new structure to the Western Stock Growers' Association board to increase the number of directors-at-large to 11, which will match the number of zone representatives.

The board change will be up for ratification at the WSGA AGM on February 21, 2018 at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Centre in Red Deer. Ratification will be through a vote of the membership that is present. Please join us at the AGM and the Alberta Beef Industry Conference to vote!

## Employment Standards Changes Affect Farms and Ranches in 2018

Enacted in December 2015, Alberta's Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act was the first step in this process. The Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, passed in June 2017, included specific changes to the Employment Standards Code to apply it to farms and ranches.

Effective January 1, 2018, these rules apply to farms and ranches with waged, non-family workers, including year-round or seasonal employees. Effective May 1, 2018, the rules specific to youth workers on farms and ranches will apply. For detailed information, visit [alberta.ca/ESchanges](http://alberta.ca/ESchanges)

## Upcoming Events

Extending the Grazing Season with Annuals Workshop • 10:00am to 12:00 February 21, 2018 • Red Deer Sheraton Hotel

WSGA Annual General Meeting • 2:00—4:00 February 21, 2018 • Red Deer Sheraton Hotel

Alberta Beef Industry Conference • February 21-23, 2018 • Red Deer Sheraton Hotel • [www.abiconference.ca](http://www.abiconference.ca) to register • **Early bird pricing until January 15!!**

AFAC Livestock Care Conference • March 14 & 15, 2018 • Pomeroy Inn • Olds, AB • Keynote speaker Temple Grandin • Get your tickets early! Register at [AFAC.ab.ca/2018](http://AFAC.ab.ca/2018)

ALI Land Use Conference • Land, Water and Society • May 30 & 31, 2018 • Westin Edmonton

9th Annual Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association Conference • November 14-15, 2018 • Sheraton Cavalier Calgary Hotel • Theme: Keep on Learning • Increased sustainability, forage • Grasslands, Carbon, Ecological Goods and Services • [CanadianFGA.ca](http://CanadianFGA.ca) to register

# BEEF

## Talks

Ideas Worth Sharing

### Alberta Beef Industry Conference

February 21-23, 2018 at the Sheraton Red Deer Hotel

Details & Registration: [www.abiconference.ca](http://www.abiconference.ca)

**REGISTER TODAY!**

*Early bird pricing until January 15*



Keynote presentation by  
The Right Honourable:  
Stephen Harper, PC



@ABBeefConf



*Season's Greetings from your  
Western Stock Growers Association*

