

NFU, OFA on the deadstock dilemma

National Farmers Union

A brain dead decision

There are things some in power don't like people to say out loud or to hear, but it seems like it is time for a little blunt and straight forward talk about deadstock in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

There was a time when the brainiacs in government, business and academia advised farmers quite strongly that they feed ground-up cattle back to cattle in the form of a pellet. They told farmers it was perfectly safe, efficient and a very good idea.

Farmers and others who questioned the wisdom of turning a grass eating animal into a cannibal were ridiculed, called old fashioned and no doubt called anti-prosperity too. Then of course the entirely predictable happened, mistakes were made, and nature showed it is always way smarter than people as Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) entered the Canadian herd. It entered the American herd as well, despite their pretence, but that's another story.

Let's be clear – government played a fundamental and culpable role in the increased costs associated with the removal of specified risk materials (SRM) associated with BSE. By not examining this practice more carefully, and in fact encouraging it, government shares a significant portion of the blame for what happened. And one thing that happened was significant pressure

ON THE FARM



By Grant Robertson
NFU board member

Even if you have never owned farm livestock, if you have owned a pet you know this. For farm animals one of the most vulnerable times is when giving birth. On our farm this year we lost two cows, an unusual occurrence for us, due to complications from caving. It is a fact of farming.

Where is this all leading you might ask? Well the Ontario government recently removed a subsidy that was helping the deadstock industry keep its cost down to farmers. That subsidy has

been removed with anticipated large increases in the cost of deadstock removal for farmers. Cow-calf farmers in a struggling beef industry will be particularly hard hit.

It is anticipated that costs may rise as much as 300 per cent. Farmers have no way to pass this cost on to end users of their products like other businesses, so they will end up bearing the entire cost of the loss of the deadstock industry subsidy. This will be on top of the costs already associated with BSE that farmers are still

people in the industry need to adapt to that new environment."

Those regulations being talked about will do little, if anything, to actually bring the costs down for farmers or the deadstock industry. Yet government is knowingly abandoning its moral responsibility for a situation they helped to create; a situation that faces all livestock farmers whether they ever had a lick of commercial feed on their property or not. The chance is high that someone facing unmanageable costs might make a bad decision in dealing with a dead animal. Something that would cost government much more, just in enforcement alone you would have to expect.

Where I come from, what the government is doing around deadstock removal costs is called cutting their nose off to spite their face and just dumping down costs on those who can't do anything to stop them.

Conservative Agriculture critic Ernie Hardeman is once again showing leadership by taking on this issue. Those of us who care about food, the environment and health need to give him our support.

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Bruce Power gives back

By PATRICK BALES

The fourth annual Bruce Power Spirit of Giving dinner saw \$200,000 donated to two incredibly worthy causes.

The dinner is the company's yearly fundraiser for the Easter Seals Society. Featuring a silent auction and live entertainment, the dinner this year, twice the size of previous years, showed those in attendance how a group of incredible disabled young people remove the "dis" from the equation.

Bruce Power president and chief executive officer (CEO) Duncan Hawthorne served as emcee for the evening. Early in the evening he said during his career he has met a great deal of important and influential people, the sort who expect to be respected. But the CEO said he does not necessarily buy into such logic.

"You come across people in your life who you respect and have a general regard for," he said, before specifically pointing out Port Elgin's Jeff Preston, Hanover's Natalie McDonald and international recording artist Justin Hines, who were all on hand for the dinner.

Nearly \$500,000 has been raised at this event alone since its 2006 inception, said Carol Lloyd, president and chief executive officer of Easter Seals Ontario. Combined with the event Bruce Power co-ordinates in Toronto, \$1.2 million has been raised so far.

Preston spoke of his love of the Port Elgin community, and how it was an inclusive, supportive area.

"Growing up, I never felt I was disabled," he said.

McDonald talked about her experiences at summer camp, something she could not have done without the financial support from Easter Seals.

While at camp this year, she and other participants took part in the contest to design Hawthorne's official Christmas card. Hawthorne insisted there was no favoritism or pre-selection, but he in fact randomly selected the card McDonald submitted, and presented her with the plaque commemorating her accomplishment at the dinner.

Hines was the featured performer of the night, following a remarkable performance by tenor Peter McCutcheon earlier in the evening. Hines is known by many for his appearance in a recent Ontario tourism advertisement. The audience was in awe of the powerful voice coming out of Hines, who performed five songs mainly from his current album *Chasing Silver*, including a solid cover of Peter Gabriel's "Solsbury Hill."

Hawthorne was so taken by Hines, and was certain everyone in attendance would be as well, he provided for everyone to receive a Hines cd of their choice as they left the dinner.

SEE "ACCESSIBLE" PAGE 17

Smiths' Apples Celebrates 10 Years of Success

The farm market has baskets varieties oney crisp and Farm st of Port 7. Visit sts more



Above, Steve Smith picks a Zestart apple from his tree Tuesday. The new variety will make its debut Sept. 4 when Smiths Apples and Farm Market opens for business.

fun solving the puzzle. The scratch bakery, added years ago, allows you to work delicious fresh-baked goods and Smiths' also carry preserves, maple syrup and fresh produce, no orchard can be without apples, and these are the best you can find anywhere! Pick your own Ginger Gold, McIntosh, Royal Gala, Jonagold and Northern

This fall, start an annual tradition by touring Smiths' Apples and Farm Market in Port Elgin. Pick some apples, choose a fresh-made pie and explore the Corn Maze. The whole family will have a ball in this country home setting!

Celebrating 10 years, owners Steve and Micki Smiths' farm has a friendly atmosphere and devotion to award-winning products, which is newly rewarded with Ontario's Outstanding Farm Marketers 2008 honour. Boasting over 6,000 apple trees in the beautifully kept orchards, as well as an artisan bakery, market, straw fort, games, pumpkins and sprawling acres of fields, Smiths' Apples is a local gem normally found only near larger centres.

A memorable experience is the Corn Maze, first created last year. Labyrinth passages are artfully hewn by hand to create kilometres of trail. This year's theme, "Blast Off from Cape Cornaver", will have you discovering the Corn Rocket, International Space Station and Canadarm while having