

Cross-Border Livestock Health Conference Proceedings

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Co-Chairs:

- Dr. Larry Delver, Alberta Beef Producers & CEO, VM Agri Consulting
- Cort Jensen, Chief Attorney, Montana Dept. of Agriculture

Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) Updates:

Fred Gorrell (Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada) emphasized that the RCC is a Canada-US mechanism that helps facilitate cooperation and enhanced competitiveness of industries and is key to bilateral Canada-US relationship with a goal of improving working cooperation between national regulators including USDA, FDA and CFIA. The goal is also to enhance plant and animal health regulatory alignment.

Dr Harpreet Kochhar (CFIA) emphasized that cooperation and collaboration as well as multiple uses of technology are fundamental to achieving a single export certification process supported by online tools and a centralised administrative function for commodities including live animals and perishables. A single export certificate process would enable export requests to be processed by a centralized office. The 1st release is expected before the end of 2016. It is anticipated that future releases will add more commodity sectors and facilitate seamless transfer of critical information between USDA and CFIA. This will eventually improve existing animal and plant health inspection services.

Dr Mohit Baxi (CFIA) described the importance of evaluation of veterinarian infrastructure and zoning processes in Canada & US. He also emphasized the importance of sharing information in terms of animal disease management and zoning agreements between USDA and CFIA. In the event of animal disease outbreak or foreign animal disease (FAD) Canada and US are committed to coordinate disease management and contain costs as well as minimize trade disruption between the two countries. Mitigating loss demands progressive work and collaboration.

Disease Zoning and Live Animal / Product Movement:

Dr John Clifford (Chief Trade Advisor USDA APHIS) spoke about the advantages of digitally signed electronic export health certification. 1.25 million cattle are imported (annually) from Canada to US and cross the border at 4 ports. FAD zoning arrangements are critical to facilitate trade as well as critical to the economic liability of both countries. He emphasized that “what happens on the east coast should not affect what happens on the west coast”. Emergency Transit Initiatives and practical policies are needed for moving animals and other products in the event of disease outbreaks. Decisions in this regard should be based upon risk and not traditions. US has improved considerably in terms of efficiency and time.

Dr Clifford also spoke regarding the importance of pre-clearance and pre-inspection before loading animals at farm-of-origin. Regulatory revisions to enable certification at farm of origin are being discussed by USDA and CFIA. He emphasized that a “trusted trader program” would provide a fast lane and facilitate pre-clearance and the flow of trade. This would be more efficient given digital and electronic technologies.

Secure food supply plans should invite participation and partnerships by federal, state/provincial, industry and academics.

Improving Emergency Management (EM) Across Our Borders:

Dr Danelle Bichett-Weddle (Iowa State U) spoke about food security and public health and emphasized the importance of a secure milk and beef supply as well as a secure poultry plan. Business continuity is possible for “affected” but not for “infected” premises.

The goals identified by Dr Bichett-Weddle include:

- 1) detect, control and contain animal disease early
- 2) avoid interrupting animal product movement
- 3) minimize negative (and often unintended) effects while making efforts to control, contain and eradicate disease
- 4) use risk-based solutions (national & international)

She underscored that secure food and supply plans should include:

- 1) voluntary pre-outbreak surveillance
- 2) site specific biosecurity
- 3) Line of Separation (LOS) for indoor animals
- 4) Perimeter Buffer Area (PBA) for outdoor animals

Dr John Clifford (USDA) spoke regarding the need to improve Emergency Management (EM) across borders and emphasized that self-certification demands a biosecurity plan. In the case of poultry and turkeys this means depopulating an infected flock within 24 hours (using ventilation shut down and added heat). He added that animal disease does not respect borders.

Dr Clifford emphasized that given global movement of products and animals and fact that there is increased risk of disease primarily from abroad and not next-door FAD zoning Arrangements are increasingly urgent. Domestic feed prices are high and as a consequence producers often buy feed elsewhere (ie. outside of US). Given that most feed supplements are made in China, he emphasized “know your feed & know your source”. The threat to food and animal health originates not in North America, but is from elsewhere.

Fred Gorrell also spoke regarding the need for the Livestock Market Interruption Strategy (LMIS) and specifically cited:

- 1) Our reliance on exports
- 2) Because of the BSE experience we know that enhanced preparedness is essential

- 3) BSE served as a reminder that we were not as prepared as we should have been
- 4) Cost estimates of a FAD scenario happening today exceed \$58 billion
- 5) LMIS demands coordination and cooperation on the part of all stakeholders

LMIS will also help address domestic market interruption issues including what to do with healthy live animals when borders close and during efforts to restore trade.

Dr Harpreet Kochhar emphasized that because of the catastrophic implications of animal disease outbreaks EM frameworks demand an integrated approach. We also need to address the issue of animals in production when the borders close.

He spoke about the need for tactical methodologies (strategies) including:

- 1) Prevention & preparedness
- 2) Mitigation measures
- 3) Emergency response
- 4) Recovery ie. given 2003 BSE experience “how do you get your markets back?”
(especially markets for remaining healthy animals)

Dr Kochhar also reported progress in terms of achieving better biosecurity and reported that the industry is working very well in terms of improving biosecurity and building a trust relationship with producers and export markets.

Dr Kochhar identified the following desired outcomes:

- 1) Enhanced animal disease prevention & mitigation
- 2) Collaborative evidence/science based actions
- 3) Building sector resilience
- 4) Develop a plant and animal health strategy based upon fully integrated risk management

He further cited the 2004-2014 influenza outbreaks as proof that the current strategy is working.

Matt Taylor (Consultant, Livestock Intelligence) emphasized that EM means “emergency preparedness” and that the 2020 livestock industry vision is to achieve sector-wide animal disease management. He added that outbreaks of animal disease do not compare to costs resulting from forest or grass fires or winter-related freezing. EM must recognize elevated or high risk scenarios and address implementation of a suitable response including association plans and producer guidelines. EMs are intended to provide a professional and effective response by industry to recover markets as quickly as possible.

Regarding foot & mouth disease (FMD) zoning he emphasized the importance of ensuring that the disease is contained before drawing the zones. This included “primary control” zones and “surveillance” zones. To prevent spread of a disease zoning agreements should be in place before disease outbreaks. Agreements provide expediency and eliminate delay. Control will likely only be achieved in 1 or 2 weeks...not a matter of days. Trust is built if a country has the

ability to quickly identify and control animal disease. Traceability frameworks serve to manage or control disease and determine an animal's movement.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Readiness

Dr Harpreet Kochhar reminded everyone that it often actually takes an emergency to address the issues giving rise to the emergency. FMD last occurred in Canada in 1952 and in the US in 1923. Given that there are multiple ways for disease to enter a country the CFIA has adopted a "hazard specific emergency response" plan known as Animal Health Function Plan (AHFP). This plan serves as the basis for the establishment of all other agency emergency plans. It is supplemented by the National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease (NCFAD) which together with Canada Animal Health Surveillance Network (CAHSN) must confirm all outbreaks of animal disease in their respective jurisdiction. Dr Kochhar noted that both the quantity (2.5 million doses) and availability (48 hours) of FMD vaccine is inadequate. Accordingly he suggests that there should be enough vaccine to enable proper control in the event of an outbreak as well as the ability to zone.

Dr John Clifford emphasized that animal disease traceability is absolutely critical in the event of the discovery of animal disease. He added that the US currently has poor traceability in beef cattle. The new system is operated by the states and is fragmented. He speculates that animal movement would take weeks or months to determine. In the case of FMD the determination is needed in hours or days.

Dr Clifford added that in the case of FMD outbreak both infected and exposed animals are killed and destroyed as soon as possible. The US has access to 4-5 million doses of vaccine. He further speculates that the US needs access to 25 million doses. The cost of developing and maintaining the vaccine bank is estimated to be in excess of \$150 million. He emphasizes the "3 ds":

- 1) Disinfection
- 2) Disposal
- 3) Develop plans to move healthy cattle slaughter cattle without risk to human health

Given that the likely source of FMD infection is contagious from travellers who have visited farms and return with dirty footwear or soiled clothing and foreign food products reporting upon re-entry is critical. Given the potential magnitude of an unreported FMD contamination should financial or other incentives be offered to the travelling public with a view to encouraging farm travel destination disclosure?

Action Items:

- 1) Finalize the framework regarding recognition of FAD control and eradication zones.
- 2) Negotiate a bilateral agreement to facilitate emergency transit of live animals throughout Canada and US.
- 3) Integrate Canada and US EM methods and frameworks.
- 4) Develop a livestock market interruption strategy to both enhance preparedness and adopt measures including what to do with live animals when borders close and markets are interrupted (Fred Gorrell).
- 5) Quantity & availability of FMD vaccine is probably inadequate for needs of both Canada & US.
- 6) Offer incentives to encourage farm travel destination disclosure?
- 7) Work with proper authorities in both Canada and US with a view to increasing available FMD vaccine stockpiles in the event of an emergency outbreak.
- 8) Support current discussions between USDA and CFIA regarding regulatory revisions to enable pre-clearance and pre-inspection before loading animals at farm or origin.
- 9) Consider whether incentives should be offered to travellers to encourage farm destination disclosure upon return flights.

Cross-Border Livestock Health II (2016)

Building the Livestock Industry's Social License:

Dave Solverson (CCA) spoke regarding Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) regarding Canadian beef exports to US and concluded that the US cattle industry has also come to realize that it is in their best interests to remove the COOL regulation and instead work towards segregating cattle from beef and fully integrating the industry. This was also a product of the government of Canada's WTO application. He also emphasized that the market should determine where cattle will ultimately be slaughtered and processed and that more integration (not less) is the best regulatory model.

Solverson described the "CAN" brand practice as an attempt to identify Canadian cattle upon crossing the US border. He added that the "CAN" brand is a direct outcome of the 2003 BSE discovery and is likely to remain in place until Canada achieves "negligible risk" status without the discovery of a BSE related case in terms of being BSE free. Dr Gerald Hauer (former Alberta Chief Provincial Veterinarian) clarified that "BSE free" will be achieved absent a BSE discovery in an animal "not born before the last" (infected animal) discovery. In terms of time he estimated that this can occur within 8-10 years.

Aaron Canart (Agri. Beef Co.) commented on the "CAN" brand issue and also added that the market (availability of feed and supply-demand economics) should and will determine where cattle should ultimately go or be shipped. An example is the fact that 5 years post-BSE Canada continued to be a net importer of US feeder cattle. He added that in his experience, in most cases the "CAN" brand is applied in Canada before cattle are loaded to be shipped to US.

Canart added that live cattle entering the 2 main "slaughter channels" destined for slaughter in US, in many cases are not branded (or tattooed) with the "CAN" brand. He added that in the case of cattle destined for slaughter only (not feeders) there is no apparent need to apply the "CAN" brand.

Canart also identified the issue of export documents and the fact that separate documents are required for each truck rather than per load (or batch). He also expressed concern that cattle are unloaded at the border (US) for inspection purposes often resulting in unnecessary animal injuries and stress. He proposes instead that the animals should be inspected before leaving the farm of origin or upon arrival at the destination.

Improving Agency Communications Regarding Animal Health Issues:

Michael Latimer (Canadian Beef Breeds Council) commented that given progress made in terms of e-commerce pre-clearing exports and the use of e-certificates will obviate the need for unloading and animal inspection delays at the US border. He further added that this will enable animals to be certified at the farm of origin and the trailer to be sealed until arrival at the destination specified. Breeder stock and genetics should also be allowed to travel unrestricted between Canada and US.

Latimer also added that the “CAN” brand is discriminatory and should be removed immediately. In the meantime Canada should also apply for negligible risk status (OIE criteria).¹ The OIE currently ranks Canada as a controlled risk country and US as negligible risk.

Michael Hall (Canadian Livestock Genetics Association) described the “CAN” brand requirement as outdated for animal welfare and social license reasons. He also added that animal “age verification” is still needed for reasons including disease vulnerability and incubation (ie. cattle 30 + months of age). He also supports electronic certificate technology which has value on both sides of the border in terms of eliminating cattle wait times and other delays. This deserves further investigation because “live cattle” are a very different commodity.

Hall added that poultry are handled very well by both countries and both countries have worked hard to achieve excellent communication. For this reason the poultry industry serves as a model for other commodities.

Hall further added that efficient and effective communication is critical and the speed of commerce must be a priority. The CFIA is committed to streamlining the process of animals crossing the border. The USDA considers that adequate border staff and personnel is a critical issue however improvements could possibly result in increased delays at the border. He identified the need for backup plans on both sides to mitigate resulting costs.

Rick Peters (VP Steve’s Livestock) spoke regarding the need to address animal welfare issues both in terms of transport and delays at the border. There are several options with respect to cleaning and disinfecting trucks/trailers. These include cleaning trailers at US facility followed by further cleaning at certified wash-bay on Canada side of border. Another option involves scraping waste from truck and trailers in US and further measures to wash and disinfect upon return to Canada.

Peters added that the issue of truck/trailer cleaning and disinfecting should be further investigated with a view to harmonization of standards and best practices in both countries. This would also eliminate the added cost to producers in terms of transportation.

The issue regarding truck washing and border crossings deserves further investigation. The CFIA is creating a working group to examine rules regarding biosecurity and related procedures and options.

Dr John Clifford (USDA) advised that given the BSE negligible risk issue in Canada it is highly unlikely that the “CAN” brand requirement will change in the near future.

Dr Gerald Hauer suggested that it might be possible to remove the “CAN” brand requirement in the case of sexually altered cattle (steers and spayed heifers) because neither has a life span that will permit BSE to develop.

¹ See World Organisation for Animal Health, “List of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Risk Status of Member Countries”, online: <www.oie.int/animal-health-in-the-world/official-disease-status/bse/list-of-bse-risk-status>

Fred Gorrell spoke about the volume of Canada-US agri-food trade which is estimated to exceed \$47 billion in 2015. He further reported that Canada is currently the favorite export market for 29 US states and is the top export destination for US agri-food products. The average Canadian consumer consumes \$629 annually in terms of US agri-food products.

Gorrell further reported that NAFTA is highly integrated and has proven to be very valuable for both countries. He also reported that industry engagement is critical to trade between the both countries. The social license and animal welfare issues will continue to be important and demand better consumer education on the part of industry.

Gorrell emphasized that achieving robust traceability (mandatory) is critical in terms of sharing accurate animal product information in the event of a reportable disease.² Essential elements (three pillars) of traceability include 1) animal identification, 2) premise identification, and 3) animal movement (from farm of origin to slaughter). Effective traceability requires that all stakeholders understand the benefits and comply with requirements. Industry must also demonstrate that the impact of traceability on competitiveness is not necessarily negative.

Kirk Robinson (Washington State Agriculture) spoke about the need for robust traceability in both countries and that a quick response to animal disease discovery is critical. He added that Washington only requires the “CAN” brand on Canadian cattle not immediately destined for slaughter.

Dr Kim Kirkham (USDA Kansas) spoke about the benefits of the USDA Veterinarian Export Health Certificate System (VEHCS). The VEHCS is a web-based system designed primarily to facilitate cattle exports to Canada. The intention is to standardize a globally recognized and accepted export health certificate with a digital electronic signature.

Action Items:

- 1) Meaningful communication with Director and other personalities at border crossing sites is urged to address issues of delay and inconvenience.
- 2) Begin dialogue to eliminate need for unloading and inspection of feeder cattle at the US border and encourage system that would enable pre-clearance of all cattle before leaving farm of origin.
- 3) Ongoing USDA and CFIA dialogue is encouraged to address e-certification and e-data issues.
- 4) It is urged that the 8 + states that require (by regulation or policy) the “CAN” brand should be identified and the issue of the brand should be suitably addressed with each of the states identified.
- 5) Is a “CAN” brand exemption possible in the case of sexually altered cattle (steers & spayed heifers) ?

² See *Reportable Diseases Regulations*, SOR/91-2, s 2 online: <www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-91-2/page-2.html#h-3>

- 6) The fact that ¼ of the Canadian cattle herd (1.25 million cattle) are exported annually to US demonstrates that the existing system and staff are doing a good job.
- 7) Explore possibility of inspecting animals before leaving the farm of origin.
- 8) Address issue of animals in production when border closed and during efforts to restore trade.
- 9) Support efforts to achieve and improve e-certificate and e-data technology to eliminate delays.

Cross-Border Livestock Health III (2016)

Disease Does Not Respect Borders:

Rick Peters (VP Steve's Livestock) addressed the issue of biosecurity and efforts to mitigate and eliminate the risk of disease transmission during livestock transport between Canada & US. This includes measures that provide safe and humane transport of animals. The scale of this issue includes 2500 + cattle/week and 150,000 pigs/week.

Managing risk include:

- 1) Trailer design
- 2) Facilities
- 3) Driver and staff training (driver 244 documented hours of training)
- 4) Washing & disinfecting
- 5) Innovation

Trailer design emphasis is on:

- 1) Biosecurity issues
- 2) Animal welfare issues
- 3) Thorough washing ability of truck and trailer

Additional measures include:

- 1) Livestock not allowed at any wash location
- 2) Dirty and clean trailers are kept separate
- 3) Separate parking areas for dirty trailers and clean trailers
- 4) Drivers make pre-trip inspection of clean trailers
- 5) Drivers wear clean clothing and clean boots
- 6) Drivers not permitted to live on same premises as hogs
- 7) No pets are allowed
- 8) Constant monitoring of all animal loads
- 9) During loading drivers are not permitted to go beyond trailer and enter barn and only farm personnel operate the chute during loading

Because transportation presents significant risk cross-contamination can happen:

- 1) At border crossing
- 2) At truck stops
- 3) On trucking routes
- 4) Washing facilities
- 5) Contaminated clothing and boots

Peters further emphasized that new washing protocols have been developed after seeking the advice of veterinarians and reflect “best practices” and disease prevention measures. These are intended to manage known risks as well as potential risks. The added cost of washing and disinfecting is seen as an industry insurance measure.

Mark Beaven spoke regarding the need for a “uniform transport biosecurity standard” reflecting best biosecurity practices and focussed upon animal health issues. Driver training and certification can be done online. He added that there are currently 3000 certified livestock drivers and handlers in Canada.

Dr Mohit Baxi added that the CFIA is currently working to improve livestock transportation (regulatory approach ie. Health of Animals Act) based upon science and intended to address all known hazards. The Health of Animals Regulation framework was adopted to protect the Canadian animal resource and preserve access to export markets especially in the event of discovery of a reportable disease.

Dr John Clifford commented that the inherent danger is that over time and absent reported discoveries of disease, systems tend to become relaxed in terms of compliance with biosecurity practices.

He also underscored the fact that cattle production is a business and that producers are entitled to make a living. He added that because of biosecurity concerns, bigger does not always mean better. Risk is significant for large facilities and biosecurity is critical. For this reason industry expects the federal government to pay for additional costs concerning disease control and biosecurity.

Clifford emphasized that there are no known US government regulations in place governing transport other than policies, guidelines and codes of practice, except possibly individual state transport regulations. He cautioned about waiting for disease outbreak before adopting suitable regulations. The fact is that US lacks the resources to enforce additional regulations. Clifford added that there are many biosecurity plans that reflect “best practices” that should be followed by producers and industry. He concluded that prevention is cheaper in the long run when compared to the cost of responding to disease outbreak.

Action Items:

- 1) Harmonize Canada-US truck washing/cleaning & disinfecting practices and eliminate duplication of costs absorbed by producers.

- 2) National dialogue to review & harmonize transportation regulations to reflect disease risk, economic liability and industry best practices.
- 3) Cross-border biosecurity working group including government and industry to develop regulations and non-regulatory options for all livestock and poultry (before December 2016).
- 4) Develop a “uniform transport biosecurity standard” reflecting best biosecurity practices focused upon animal health issues (Beaven).
- 5) Identify and address issues that delay or present barriers in terms of south-to-north (US to Canada) cattle movement.
- 6) Dr Larry Delver asked what about happens to the effluent and waste water runoff during the truck cleaning and disinfecting process?