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UPCOMING EVENTS

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Welcome to BCFPA's **BC Meating News**, providing information towards increasing livestock harvest and sales of high-quality, safe, BC-produced-and-processed meat products. This is a monthly publication of the Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy (MIES).

Global Influenza A (H1N1) update

Based on comprehensive analysis of the new H1N1 virus that caused the global influenza outbreak, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, assisted by nearly 60 scientists from around the world, suggest the virus most likely originated in pigs. Researchers are still unable to say whether humans contracted the virus directly from pigs, or whether an intermediary host was involved. BC has 151 confirmed cases and no deaths.

Listeriosis update

The Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency each recently released their "Lessons Learned" Report on the 2008 Listeriosis outbreak. The government-appointed independent investigator will be reporting in July. Preliminary recommendations relate to federally registered meat establishments producing "ready-to-eat" meat products. They include mandatory food contact surfaces and product testing programs and the requirement for establishments to immediately report any positive test results to the CFIA.

MIES waste solutions proposal

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Lands Larry Pedersen committed in April to work with the BCFPA on needed solutions for slaughter waste, and asked us for a proposal. This was developed by MIES and the BCFPA Meat Processors Advisory Committee and submitted in the week of June 8. It recommended:

1. a short-term support program for licensed processors affected by recent waste handling cost increases
2. a long-term solutions program to review slaughter waste management for the whole province, identify outstanding technical and regulatory problems, and solve them
3. oversight of (2) from the Premier's office, possibly via the new Ranching Task Force
4. an interagency group of senior managers to approve waste disposal plans and help make them work.

We also recommended linking with the BC Agriculture Council and its group working on gasifier waste solutions for the Lower Mainland. In the long run there will likely be one set of slaughter waste solutions in the Lower Mainland and another for the rest of BC.

New BC Cabinet

BC's new Cabinet was announced on June 10. Changes affecting the meat industry include a new Minister of Healthy Living and Sport, Ida Chong, and a new Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Steve Thomson. Deputies Grant Main and Larry Pedersen remain in MOHLS and MAL respectively.

Ranching Task Force

At the BC Cattlemen's Association AGM on May 22, Premier Gordon Campbell announced the creation of a Ranching Task Force to address the challenges facing BC's ranchers. The BC cattle herd has shrunk by 30% over the last five years in the wake of the discovery of BSE; this is compounded by rising fuel and feed costs and low beef prices.

Remote Sites Consultation Project

The Remote Sites Consultation Project announced by the Minister of Healthy Living and Sports in April is now under way. A team consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Health Authorities and the MIES will be visiting Bella Coola and the Queen Charlotte Islands in June to meet area livestock producers and learn first hand about the specific challenges and opportunities associated with meat production in remote and isolated communities.

Join BCFPA, increase our reach!

All meat processors are welcome to join the BCFPA. Our broad membership allows us to gain a good understanding of the range of issues and needs and provide a strong, balanced industry voice to government.

For further information

Visit our Web site at www.bcfpa.ca/mies.html

Acknowledgement



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