

## **Maritime Beef Strategy Focuses on Industry Growth and Productivity**

May 3, 2017 (Fredericton, N.B.) - Over the past 12 months, the New Brunswick Cattle Producers (NBCP), Nova Scotia Cattle Producers (NSCP) and Prince Edward Island Cattle Producers (PEICP) have worked closely with regional partners at the Maritime Beef Council (MBC) to develop a beef sector growth and development strategy that will see an additional 20,000-head of beef cattle in the Maritimes by 2027.

MBC Chairman Nathan Phinney says the strategy was constructed to take advantage of new regional opportunities.

"We know that Atlantic Beef Products is predicating strong growth over the next several years, and will require an additional 10,000-head per year," Phinney says. "Similarly, the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program continues to expand, creating market demand for Maritime cattle. The strategy was designed to give the Maritimes the best possible chance of filling this market demand."

The Maritimes enjoys a strategic competitive advantage over many other regions of Canada for cow-calf producers, says Cedric MacLeod, Strategic Opportunities Coordinator at NBCP.

"When you combine relatively inexpensive cropland and significant unused land in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia capable of producing large quantities of high quality grass with the abundant rainfall we enjoy in the region, the result is an advantage we want to maximize," MacLeod says.

The strategy addresses a number of key issues the beef industry will face over the next 10 years, including price insurance, cost of production control, value added market access and business continuance planning between farm generations.

"The Canadian beef industry faced significant market volatility over the past 10+ years, and the evolving marketplace requires our producers to invest in new production models to control costs and new brand assurance programs to maintain market share," MacLeod states.

The Maritime beef growth strategy was designed to address current and emerging issues, while keeping the bottom line top of mind. Maritime Beef Council General Manager Ellen Crane says profitability underpins the entire strategy.

"We know that when cattle operations are profitable, producers are investing in farm growth opportunities and environmental sustainability," Crane states. "Achieving a healthy triple bottom line is the ultimate goal. Healthy rural communities, environmentally sustainable production and profitable farms will support the next generation of beef farm operators in the Maritimes and set them up for success to move farming assets to future generations of farmers."

The MBC recognizes the opportunity the region has to make the most of strong support within the federal government, and backing from the Atlantic region in the last federal election is not

lost on Ottawa, says Phinney. A delegation from the MBC presented the Maritime Beef Growth Strategy to MPs in Ottawa in early March, to great acclaim.

"We worked hard to ensure that the strategy supported the goals outlined in the Atlantic Growth Strategy developed by the Atlantic Liberal Caucus," Larry Weatherby, Chair of the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers says. "Our MPs recognized this effort and expressed excitement in the growth opportunity for the region."

Discussions with provincial and federal leaders and departments of agriculture will continue throughout the spring and fall of 2017 in preparation for the launch of the Next Policy Framework in April 2018.

"This is an exciting time for the Maritime Beef Sector," Brian Morrison, Chair of the Prince Edward Island Cattle Producers says. "We look forward to supporting all members of the regional beef value chain to seek growth and development opportunities."

The Maritime Beef Council is an industry partnership of the Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Cattle Producers as well as provincial, regional and national stakeholders who collaborate on industry challenges and opportunities related to programming, regulations and research.

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