

FOUR PAGE PULL-OUT

13TH Annual General Meeting of Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia

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(Photos by Linda Harrington)

172-Million Litres of Milk from 235 Registered Dairy Farmers

By Linda Harrington

Go into any store selling basic necessities and there will no doubt always be a cooler with ice cold milk. Dairy foods are a dietary staple, enjoyed by many.

There are 235 registered dairy farms in Nova Scotia and they produce 172 million litres of quality milk each year.

Being a dairy farmer is a way of life, not a 9 to 5 job. They spend every day with their animals, making sure that they have what they need to be healthy, safe, and well taken care of.

The 13th Annual General Meeting of Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia was held in Truro on January 15th & 16th, with approximately 160 people attending each day and close to 100 farms were represented.

Havey Whidden, DFNS Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and encouraged producers to take part and give direction to the Board.

Wally Smith, President of Dairy Farmers of Canada opened the DFNS Meeting with the national report from DFC. He noted 2013 had been an eventful year, especially the last three months with the announcement of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Smith said he was "shocked" by the amount of milk CETA would allow into Canada from Europe. The 17,700 tonnes of additional cheese, amounts to 2.25% of farm production. He strongly encouraged NS producers to go to their MP's and MLA's and ask them to carry their message to higher officials. "No one can take a hit here and a cut there, and maintain viability," he stressed.

The "little blue" cow has become a symbol for 100% Canadian milk and Smith told farmers to use all sorts of means, including farm signs and social media, to tell their story to consumers. "The little blue cow signifies values we are trying to develop in the dairy industry. These are values society is looking for and we need to link our signage to say your values are our values."

Bill Emmott, Chair of Dairy Farmers of Ontario and a Director on the DFC Board, noted the importance of promotion and marketing. "There is a \$110 million budget for promotion and marketing of milk. This is the second largest deduction off your milk statement, after transportation," he said. The Marketing Committee is looking at new ways to promote the benefits of milk and milk products, especially doing more brand marketing in the future.

Ian MacDonald, Director of Marketing and Promotion for Dairy Farmers of Canada, drew attention to a number of DFC marketing strategies. He mentioned a valuable website www.100 Good Reasons.ca,

with information of value to producers, as well as the consumer.

Brian Cameron, DFNS General Manager, presented the Canadian Dairy Commission Report on behalf of Jacques Laforge. He noted dairy stocks seem to be within the normal range, except for butter, which is high. Price adjustments for fluid milk (farm gate) include +0.0892% in Feb., 2013 and +1.347% in Feb., 2014. The 2012 Cost of Productions was up approximately 1% to \$78/hl. CDC stocks of skim milk powder are at 85,300 tonnes.

A lack of funding will see the CDC's Scholarship Program end in 2015. From 2006 - 2013 the program financed 70 members, 25 PH.D's, at 8 establishments.

A Trade Panel made up of Prof. Bruce Muirhead, from the University of Waterloo, Yves Leduc, Director of International Trade, Dairy Farmers of Canada, and Mark Davies, Chair of Turkey Farmers of Canada gave extensive information about CETA and what could be in store if the Transpacific Trade Partnership (TPP) goes ahead.

Prof Muirhead talked about the effects of neoliberalism, making sure producers did not become complaisant with CETA and Transpacific Trade Partnership (TPP). He said the fine cheese import quota of 17,000 tonnes may only be the "thin edge of the wedge" and warned the government may be like the "Titanic", carrying Canada into the iceberg.

Gloria Beyeler presented an update on the Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) program. Participation from NS dairy farmers has dropped from

99% to 95% this year. The goal is to get this back up to 100%.

Dennis Boudreau, President of the NS Federation of Agriculture reported that the Federation has been moving forward while securing a better future for NS agriculture. There have been talks with the new provincial government, building relationships to ensure long-term viability. The Federation continues to implement the Environmental Farm Plan, with 1,718 plans completed to date. Open Farm Day being is planned for Sept. 21, 2014.

Terry Prescott, Chair of the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers, presented information to farmers on the Levy. He noted the \$3/head is used to help market beef nationally and locally, as well as maintaining public health & safety.

Perennia's Dan Mosley gave an update on the program for Dairy Focus. The event will be held March 25th to 27th at the Waterfront Marriott, Halifax. Claire Norman, of Morneau Shepell, presented an update on the producers' health plan. She felt dairy producers were receiving better coverage for reduced rates after joining forces with the NSFA and PEIFA to broaden the volume of the program.

The 2013-14 DFNS Budget was passed unanimously, as were the By-Law Amendments.

Jacques Laforge, CEO of Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC), says the strategy of the CDC is to increase the consumption of solid milk before it gets into skim milk

powder. He says it is important to stimulate processors to make products other than skim milk powder.

Brian Cameron, General Manager for DFNS, discussed the changes to bacteria testing with the implementation of Bactoscan. He said the new testing offers uniformity and high performance in repeatability,

reproducibility, and accuracy with more realistic measurement of hygienic quality. He discussed the new proAction Initiative, which will be implemented over 10 years. The program will develop standards for milk quality, food safety, biosecurity, animal welfare, traceability, and the environment.



Yves Leduc, Director of International Trade, Dairy Farmers of Canada.



Bill Emmott, Chair of Dairy Farmers of Ontario, spoke on Marketing and Nutrition Long-Term Planning.

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