

# Great Turn-Out for 2019 Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting



## Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia - Board of Directors

Back Row (left to right): David Bekkers, Hans Vermeulen, Greg Archibald, Brian Cameron, Dustin Swinkels Front Row (left to right): Byron Lamb, Andrew McCurdy, Liz Crouse, Gerrit Damsteegt, Tony Versteeg.

By Linda Harrington

The Board of Director's report, presented by Gerrit Damsteegt, reflected on the industry's challenges over the past year. "The renegotiation of NAFTA took center stage with our industry incurring further injury through a combination of increased market, capping protein exports, and our government forfeiting sovereignty to the US over our domestic dairy policy."

"He expressed gratitude for the support of dairy farmers and said the Board hopes this will carry over to consumers seeking out and choosing Canadian milk and dairy prod-

ucts. "The combined impact of CETA, CPTPP and now CUSMA will displace 18% of our domestic dairy market when these trade deals are fully implemented in 2024."

Jennifer Haynes, Commissionaire with Canadian Dairy Commission says they are very aware of the problems producers are facing with these trade deals. "It is imperative everyone works together to keep the industry united. That is what has kept us strong over the last 50 years."

Pierre Lampron, President Dairy Farmers of Canada emphasized the importance of the dairy brand and encourag-

ing the use of the "blue cow" on packaging. He explained the recent changes within DFC, including the hiring of new CEO Jacques Lefebvre, realignment of staffing and objectives. Looking ahead, he says strategic objectives will include marketing to millennials, engaging Canadians and driving effective partnerships.

Jacques Lefebvre, DFC CEO, discussed challenges within the government's Healthy Eating Strategy which has recommended changes to Canada's Food Guide and new front of pack labelling. "Any dairy product with front of pack labelling would be deemed unhealthy," he said, noting the DFC had been advocating hard against this and continuing to stress, "we can not concede dairy is unhealthy."

Several farmers from across Canada stepped to the mic to bring greetings. Nick Duivenvoorden, Dairy Farmers New Brunswick, says "we seem to have many more things in common then we have different." He felt food should not be part of any trade agreement.

Jan Bassa, Dairy Farmers of Manitoba says there are currently 275 producers in Manitoba, down from over 1,300 in 1991.

Henry Wydeven, Dairy Farmers of Ontario says it is important to get a feel for what is important in other

provinces and bring it back to his own Board. He said it has been a difficult year for producers in Ontario with many finding it hard to pay the bills.

Processing capacity is an issue in Alberta says Conrad Van Hierden after a record production in 2018. He says the carbon tax is taking its toll on farmers.

Derick Canning reported the coalition of Atlantic Boards (known as the A4) is focusing on harmonizing board governance and operations to improve efficiency.

Brooke McNeil, a fourth year Animal Science student at Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture, presented interesting research findings from her honour's project that focused on parity effects on Holstein colostrum and the impact on calf health and growth.

Phil Vanderpol, Vitalus Nutrition Inc., gave an informative presentation on Accelerating Innovation and Competitiveness in the Canadian Dairy Industry. He told producers, "If we redefine our current mindset and embrace innovation, we can create a vibrant industry, where milk components will be used in ways and means that we haven't thought of or imagined yet." He discussed some of the new and innovative products found globally, including A2 milk, which has been shown to reduce milk sensitivity due to the lack of A1 beta casein protein.

Phil touched on the challenges of consumers choosing non-dairy diets and the need for dairy processors to tell their story better, innovate faster and have transparency from farm to product. He said the dairy industry needs to send a very strong message to government to ensure indus-

try and government alignment and it is important to "get together as an industry and get behind innovation."

DFNS was pleased to welcome new entrants Norman and Dora Penner. There are currently 202 active producers in Nova Scotia. There has been a loss of 15 producers over the last year and a total of 150 over the last 20 years.

The lower number of total producers has not affected milk volume. DFNS General

Manager, Brian Cameron reported the highest ever volume of milk was produced in March, 2018 with a total of 18 million liters, for a record 754,008 kg of butter fat.

Nova Scotia will be hosting Dairy Focus Atlantic in March, 2020 followed by Dairy Farmers of Canada AGM in July, 2020. Milk & Cookie Day will be held on Feb. 8th in as many as 10 locations throughout Nova Scotia.

## Supporting Canadian Farmers

By Linda Harrington

Listening to the plight of dairy farmers with trade deals set to take away approximately 18% of their market share by 2024, one must wonder what we as consumers can do to help.

Canadian farmers put food on our tables 365 days a year. If borders were to ever completely shut down, these are the very people, we would turn to for our daily needs. From apples to eggs, poultry to beef, dairy to berries... every food we consume has first been touched by the hands of a farmer. Hard working hands, putting in long hours for not much return.

Government has allowed more and more imported foods to arrive on our grocery shelves and yes, some will be cheaper than locally produced. But there are hidden costs to these foods. One by one, Canadian farmers are packing it in because they can no longer afford to be in business. What will our grocery shelves look like when all we can get is imported foods?

The solution is simple. The trade deals have permitted more imported foods into Canada but this doesn't mean

we have to buy them. The 18% market loss to dairy farmers has no impact if consumers use their power, show their support and buy local.

This will mean a bit of creative shopping. Instead of fresh blueberries from Chili, head to the frozen section for wild NS blueberries. Read the labels, chose potatoes from Atlantic Canada and cheese with the little blue cow logo.

Shop for seasonal produce at farmer's markets. It will make you feel good and when you drive down our rural roads and see a farmer out working in the field, give a wave...you are a stake holder in his future success.



Gerrit Damsteegt, DFNS Board Chair, presents Nathalie Roy with a Recognition Award on her retirement from Dairy Farmers of Canada.




## Community Health Boards (CHBs) Are Making a Difference! YOU CAN TOO!

The Along the Shore Community Health Board is looking for new volunteers. This is a great opportunity to get involved in your community!

Along the Shore CHB members meet the first Monday of each month at the West Colchester Consolidated School in Bass River. We start each meeting with a light meal and all expenses associated with volunteering on the board are reimbursed. Come help us improve the health in our communities.

You can learn more about CHBs in Nova Scotia at <https://www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca>

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