

85 of 200 Dairy Farms Represented at DFNS AGM



19th Annual General Meeting JANUARY 15-16, 2020

By Linda Harrington

The 19th Annual Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia AGM was held at Best Western Glengarry, Truro on January 15th & 16th with a registration of close to 180 people and 85 farms represented.

Brian Cameron, DFNS General Manager reports there are 200 dairy farms in Nova Scotia, with a milk production value of \$150 million. There has been one new entrant this past year along with ongoing intergenerational transfers.

On the national front, the renegotiation of NAFTA, called CUSMA has dairy farmers very concerned. "This comprehensive trilateral deal included several negatives for the Dairy Industry, including 3.9% new market access, removal of class 7, and yielding dairy policy sovereignty to the US," says DFNS Board Chair, Gerrit Damsteegt, "But as if that wasn't enough, the Americans imposed tight export caps on Canadian skim milk powder, milk protein concen-

trates and infant formula to ALL other countries."

Gerrit says as a follow-up to their commitment of "full and fair compensation" from the CETA and CPTPP trade deals a national working group recommended, and the Liberals implemented, a compensation package for dairy farmers. This \$1.75 billion / 8 year package follows the \$250 million CETA Dairy Farm Investment Program.

The Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC) has been mandated to make the compensation payments and Chantal Paul, Director of Finance and Administration for CDC says 90% of the cheques have been issued to NS producers, with 23 producers not yet registered. Deadline for registration is March 1st, 2020.

Ms. Paul reported an increase farm gate price of 1.93% for class 1 to 4 milk products beginning on Feb. 1st, 2020. The Canadian dairy sector includes 10,951 farms where 945,000 cows produce close to 8.5 billion litres of milk per year

The CDC has launched the

Workforce Development Initiative (WDI) in 2018, a three-year, \$5-million investment to develop and support a qualified workforce in the Canadian dairy industry. The WDI is composed of four key funding programs: Scholarship Program- scholarships for graduate students in fields related to the dairy industry; Career Promotion Program- promotion of careers in the dairy industry; Education Program- creation of government-certified, full-time educational programs in order to train qualified staff to work in dairy plants; and Continuing Education Program- opportunities for continuing education for current dairy plant and farm staff.

Ron Smith, Business Development Manager for Masstown Market Ltd., gave an interesting presentation on the new Masstown Creamery. Since January 2019 the business has been producing milk on a weekly basis along with cheese and butter. Masstown Creamery plans to increase their line of value-added products at the popular destination.

Dairy Producers from across Canada brought greetings from their Provincial Boards. Gordon MacBeath, DFPEI noted his province is putting a proposal forward for Agri-Recovery after the poor harvest in 2019. He mentioned the milk pricing is not keeping up with the food basket pricing and says farmers can not exist to just pay bills, they must make a profit to stay in business.

Pascal Lemire, said even

though there are just under 5,000 dairy producers in Quebec they still have the same issues as smaller provinces and they all need to put their voices together.

Gerrit Damsteegt, DFNS Chair, reports 2019 has been a challenging year in part due to the weather and also in milk transportation with the Salmon River powder plant down for repairs for 20 days this fall. Last winter there were several road closures and weather disruptions at the farm and getting milk out of province. He says, "We need to find ways to go on and make things work!" He also mentioned the need to earn public trust in order to grow or maintain markets. "We must promote dairy products as an essential part of the consumer's healthy diet. Only 2% of the Canadian population works in agriculture, so we need to speak up and defend not only dairy but all agriculture."

Al MacMillan, Charles Hill and Son Ltd farm in Central Onslow, echoed comments on the challenging year. The late spring planting and late fall harvest has meant poor crop quality, requiring increased feed purchases

All Dairy Farms in NS Undergo proAction Validation

By Linda Harrington

Atlantic proAction Coordinators Nancy Douglas and Lindy Brown gave an update on the program. Through the proAction initiative, Canadian dairy farmers provide measurable proof of the quality and safety of milk and meat and work to continually improve animal health and welfare, as well as environmental stewardship.

Nancy Douglas was pleased to report all producers in Nova Scotia have now under-

gone a proAction validation involving Food Safety, Animal Care and Livestock Traceability modules. On September 1, 2019, the Biosecurity module was added to the validation process and has been well received by producers and encouraged collaboration with herd veterinarians to complete the requirements.

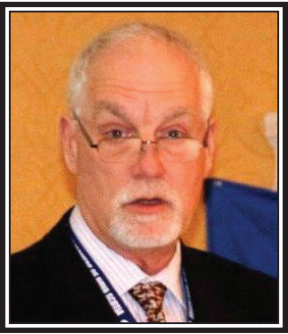
Behind the scenes, proAction Coordinators underwent an internal audit on behalf of DFNS. One of the principals of *continued on page 17*

which cuts into the bottom line. "It is cheaper to grow your own feed than to buy it," says Al. Tara Hill-MacMillan says they have noticed the change in feeding has impacted overall milk production and reproduction, too.

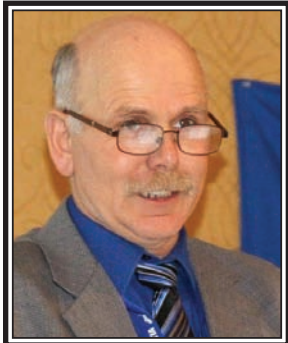
DFNS Executive Member Dustin Swinkels updated the AGM participants on several policy changes that have recently been announced. These include: changing the SNF:BF payment threshold from 2.35 to 2.30 effective this month; the issuance of Additional Production Days in the fall of 2020 (1 day August, 2 each for September and October

and 1 for November); and narrowing the production sleeve from -30 days to -20 days in August 2021 and then -15 days 12 months later. He also introduced a new producer price calculation methodology to recognize the SNF market requirements. The use of a market threshold (2.0) and a deterrent threshold (2.30) for pricing means producers will no longer benefit from selling milk at or just under the 2.30.

Dairy Producers should register soon for Dairy Focus Atlantic, which takes place March 15th- 17th in Moncton, NB and Dairy Farmers of Canada's AGM will be held July 13- 15th, 2020 at the Westin, Halifax.



Brian Cameron, General Manager of DFNS, gave his annual year in numbers report which started with a figure of 206, 511, 249 for January, which represented the volume in liters of milk produced in the last twelve months.



Gerrit Damsteegt, Chair of DFNS Board welcomed everyone to the 2020 AGM and thanked the sponsors of the two day meeting.



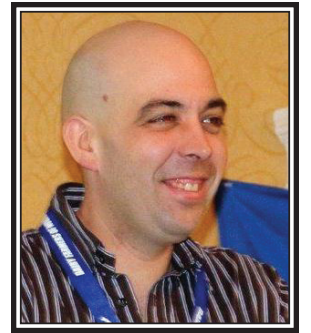
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Chantal Paul, Director of Finance and Administration for CDC presented information on the Dairy Direct Payment Program, Milk Pricing and Work Place Development Initiative.



Gordon MacBeath, brought greetings from the Dairy Farmers in PEI.



Dustin Swinkels, represents NS on the PR Committee.



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