

# Milk Testing Changes Accomplished

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alent to 48 football fields piled six feet high!

Over the noon time break many dairy farmers took the opportunity to chat with other producers. Third generation dairy farmer Nick Bokma, says it is an exciting time for the dairy industry and he is very optimistic about the future. "There is lots of demand for butter and milk products," he says. "And we are willing to invest in the future by currently building a new barn to house 420 milking cows." This will be the first time his farm has used a robotic milking parlor.

Neighbour Alex Brown, a first generation dairy farmer, says he has gained more optimism in the last year after seeing growth in the industry. "It takes time to see an increase in revenue but the growth helps with fixed costs," says Alex.

Alex prefers the traditional milking parlor in his farm, say-

ing there is nothing wrong with the robotic method. "It is just a different flavour of management and I prefer hands on." He is hoping to buy some of the traditional milking implements from Nick when he upgrades to the robots.

Nick and Alex were joined in conversation by another dairy farmer Joe Ballam. The three young farmers live in the Shubenacadie area about a kilometer from one another. They say it is important to attend the AGM to get the latest information, to have questions answered and concerns addressed and to most importantly show support for the industry.

Day two, Thursday, January 26th started off with a presentation from Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture President Chris van den Heuvel, who encouraged membership engagement across the agriculture industry. There has been an increasing awareness of the impor-

tance of buying locally produced foods and agri-products. The Federation will lobby government to provide resources for consumers so they can make an informed decision when considering local agricultural product at grocery stores.

Nancy Douglas and Ashley Baskin presented an update on the DFNS proAction Initiative, which is proceeding with a fall start-up on target. A new requirement under Food Safety is a yearly cattle health declaration, which a veterinarian needs to authorize. 84% of producers in NS have participated in the fall Animal Care / Livestock Traceability training programs. All producers must have valid Environmental Farm Plans as per their provincial program. Program Integration is currently in the trial phase, taking all modules and creating one program and eliminating duplication.

After budget approval was finalized on the agenda, there was time for policy discussion. Milk Testing costs were examined by Brian Cameron. Currently farms pay approximately \$30 per month for the required milk testing but going forward changes in the percentage of cost share for BC/FP and inhibitors testing, plus a renegotiated contract for Comp/SCC testing, farmers could see this rise to approximately \$78 per month.

Industrial Milk Allocation policy discussion lead to several passionate questions and comments from the dairy

farmers present. A motion was unanimously passed by the membership to show support for the DFNS Board as they work with processors, government and other provincial dairy boards to find a regional home for their milk.



Lise LeBlanc, of LP Consulting shared her excitement over the success of the Recycled Bedding Program. The program has kept 90,000 tonnes of wallboard out of the landfill to be utilized as bedding.



Alanna McPhee, Director of Programs and Development at Divert NS explains rebranding of the former RRFB to Divert NS and the "Nothing Wasted" mandate.



Joe Ballam, Nick Bokma and Alex Brown, three dairy farmers from the Shubenacadie area were pleased to attend the AGM to have their questions addressed, learn new information and to show support for their industry.



Scott Veno and Thomas Henderson enjoy a glass of delicious cold milk prior to day two of the DFNS AGM.



Esben Arnfast, DFNS's Finance and System Administrator presents the 2016-17 Budget Projections.

## Soldiers of Suicide Honoured at Service

By Danny Martell

Approximately 30 people attended an emotional candlelight ceremony in memory of Soldiers of Suicide (SOS) at the Debert Legion on February 21st. Those in attendance represented the Royal Canadian Legion branches in Debert, Great Village and Truro.

Joy Bretzer, Master of Ceremonies greeting those in attendance and gave a brief history of the Candlelight Ceremony. Debert Legion 1st Vice-President, Skip Dawson gave the "Act of Remembrance" followed by the singing of O'Canada.

The (SOS) Soldiers of Suicide was founded on November 16, 2012. This

was the 5th annual ceremony. A tree has been planted in Ottawa in memory of SOS.

Master of Ceremonies Joy Bretzer read a brief bio of each soldier and a legion member carried a lit candle to the front of the hall in memory of that S.O.S. Skip Dawson gave the "Commitment of Remember".

Rob Collins laid a wreath in Memory of the S.O.S., followed by The Last Post, observing of a minute of silence, Reveille and singing of God Save the Queen. Members in attendance concurred it was a very touching and very sad ceremony, but it was beautiful.



The crowd might not have been large but it was a very emotional service at the Debert Branch, Royal Canadian Legion. (McQueen Photo)



A wreath was laid in remembrance of those who died by suicide following their service. (McQueen Photo)



Candles arranged in shape of an arc were lit during the ceremony at the Debert Legion. (McQueen Photo)



Debert Branch 106 First Vice President Gerald Dawson reads the Act of Remembrance. (McQueen Photo)

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