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**THE PROGRAM:**

- 9:00 a.m.           **Exhibits Open**  
*Registration and Coffee*
- 10:15 a.m.           **Welcome**
- 10:20 a.m.           **fairlife -- The Journey to Canada**  
*Carolyn Novick, Director of fairlife, Coca Cola Ltd.*
- 10:50 a.m.           **Keynote Speaker:**  
**If You Don't Have a Story, You Don't Have a Business**  
*Terry O'Reilly, Host of "Under the Influence" on CBC Radio/Sirius/  
WBEZ Chicago*
- 12:10 p.m.           **Hot Lunch featuring "Food from Our Farms"**
- 1:30 p.m.             **Organic as a Business**  
*John Brunsveld  
Justin Bell*
- 2:15 p.m.             **Managing Protein Content in Milk**  
*Tom Wright, OMAFRA*
- 2:30 p.m.             **Managing your Dairy with Narrower Profit Margins**  
*Jack Rodenburg, DairyLogix*
- 3:15 p.m.             **Gay Lea Speak your Mind!**  
*Open microphone session with DFO Chair Murray Sherk;  
audience response system sponsored by Gay Lea Foods*
- 3:30 p.m.             **Adjournment**
- 4:00 p.m.             **Exhibits Close**



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# THE 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

The South Western Ontario Dairy Symposium is organized by Dairy Farmers of Ontario through its Dairy Producer Committees in Essex-Kent, Lambton, Middlesex, Elgin, Huron, Perth, Oxford, Waterloo, Wellington, Brant, Norfolk, Wentworth, Haldimand, and Niagara counties, in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Our committee is made up of the following people on behalf of their DPC Committees:

<b>Brant County:</b>	Chris Vandenberg	
<b>Elgin County:</b>	Reinoud Verhoef	
<b>Haldimand County:</b>	Alex Buist	Lammert Dykstra
<b>Huron County:</b>	Lorenz Guntensperger	Tyler Hendricks
<b>Lambton County:</b>	Darryl DeGroot	
<b>Norfolk County:</b>	Marcel Black	
<b>Oxford County:</b>	Jack Danen Anita Heeg Eric Veldhuizen Mardine Pelders	Mark Fraser Marcel Steen Steven Veldman Catherine Agar
<b>Waterloo County:</b>	Dave Wagler	
<b>Wellington County:</b>	Simon Falkena	
<b>Wentworth County:</b>	Gordon Alblas	
<b>DFO:</b>	Murray Sherk	
<b>Technical Coordinator:</b>	Brian Lang	
<b>Past Program Coordinator:</b>	Jack Rodenburg	
<b>Past Secretary Treasurer:</b>	Flora Rodenburg	

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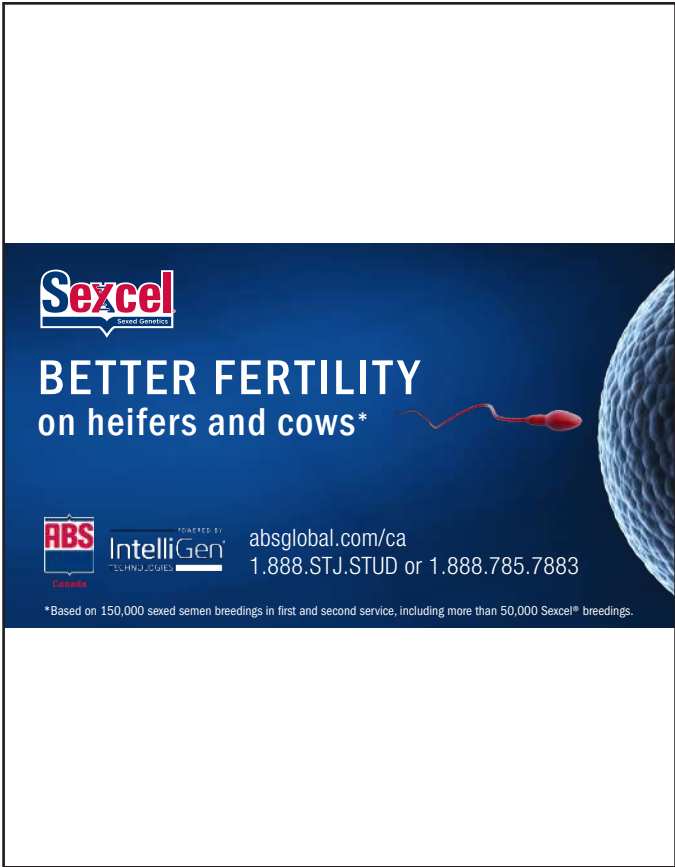


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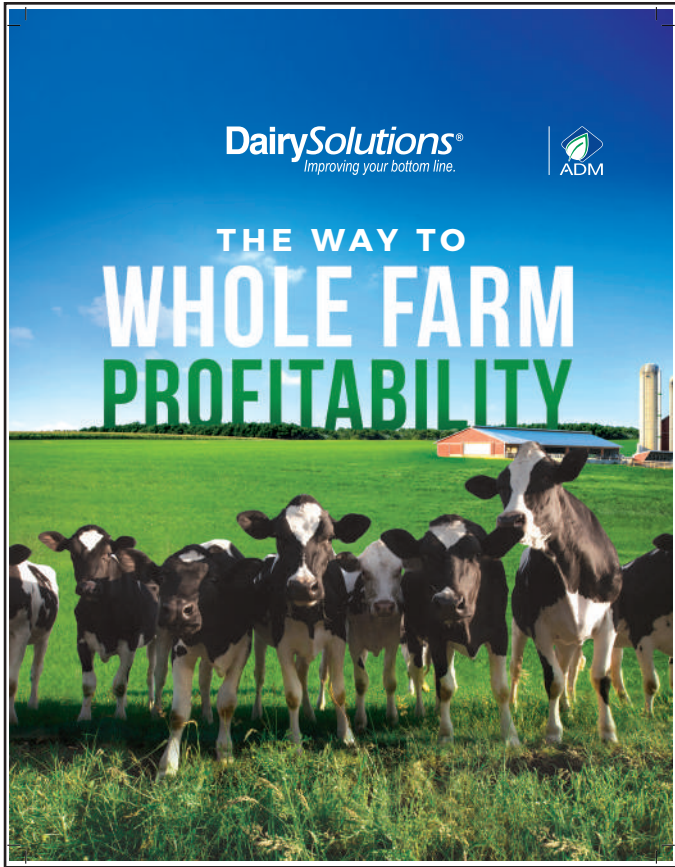



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<b>Farm Name:</b>	Lizton Acres Farm
<b>Owners :</b>	John and Mary Brunsveld
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:brunsveld@xplornet.com">brunsveld@xplornet.com</a>

**Operation History: (Important dates)**

We started farming in 1987 with my wife and partner Mary. Family farm started with 40 cows in a conventional operation. We built a compost pack barn in 2006 and used the old barn as flat parlour. We started transitioning to organic in 2007 and built swing parlour in 2011. In 2013, the pack barn was converted to sand freestall in 2013. Two sons joined operation in following years.

**General Information:**

<b>Number of milking cows</b>	125 Holstein and Holstein-Jerseys
<b>Average production (L/cow)</b>	30
<b>Fat %</b>	4.3
<b>Protein %</b>	3.3
<b>Number of Employees</b>	3 full time (family) 3 part employees
<b>Total acreage of the farm</b>	600 acres
<b>Type of crops and acreage</b>	Pasture 90 acres, crop and cash crop 500 more acres

**Operation Description**

Farm full time with 2 sons and hoping to work them into the company over the next few years. We also have three more part-time employees to help with chores and fieldwork. My wife does all the financial accounting and I do the certification paperwork for organics.

**What are the three main goals of your operation?**

Our goal is to produce organic milk as officially as possible

**In your opinion, what makes a successful organic dairy?**

Keep all goals, financial goals, production goals whether they are in the barn, in the field, keep them modest.

**What is the single most important advice you have received and/or learned?**

Number One: Keep all goals, financial goals, production goals whether they are in the barn, in the field, keep them modest.  
 Number Two: Every farmer I meet can teach me something.  
 Number Three: Don't get greedy or you will get needy.  
 Number Four: I asked the Lord for advice and guidance in all that we do.

**What are you future goals/plans for your operation?**

We are trying to decrease cost of production to the average cost production of conventional dairy farms, dabble a little bit more into crossbreeding dairy cows, and interested in increasing-yields and quality of organic crops.

## Justin Bell – New Entrant

<b>Owners :</b>	Justin Bell
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Justinbell94@gmail.com">Justinbell94@gmail.com</a>
<b>Twitter Handle:</b>	@justkybell

### Operation History:

Family has farmed in Raleigh Township since the 1800's.  
 In 2015, exactly 50 years after my grandfather I graduated from Ridgetown College.  
 Bought a 100 acres farm in 2015 as well.  
 August 2018 accepted in to DFO's Organic New Producer Program, start-up planned for August 2019.

### Business Structure (i.e. partnership, incorporated, owners, etc.)

Farm is held personally, dairy will be operated through a corporation.

### General Information:

<b>Number of Employees</b>	1
<b>Total acreage of the farm</b>	100
<b>Type of crops and acreage</b>	Corn, Alfalfa, Mixed Pasture

### Briefly described your operation (e.g. milking system, barn type, grazing management)

Used single 10 GEA parlour, built to be doubled down the road. Free stall sand barn scheduled for build spring 2019. 50 sand stalls for lactating cows, 13 stalls for dry cows. 20 acres pasture, remainder of land is in transition to organic. Feed is to be purchased in until land is fully transitioned.

### What are the three main goals of your operation?

- 1) Keep a low cost of production
- 2) Grow the quota holdings
- 3) Reduce debt load

### In your opinion, what makes a successful organic dairy?

Reduce environmental stress wherever possible to decrease the likelihood of illness in the herd.

### What is the single most important advice you have received and/or learned?

Networking is the best investment you can make. There is opportunity to learn something from everyone you meet.

### What are your future goals/plans for your operation?

Expand to 100 milking cows and have enough land to support the Dairy.



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\*Remick, E. M., et. al. 2016. A novel bm3 corn silage hybrid with flouy kernel genetics improves lactational performance and feed efficiency in Holstein cows. <https://asas.confex.com/asas/jam2016/webprogram/Paper16530.html>

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## **Milk Protein: The Crude and True Story**

Tom Wright, PhD, Dairy Specialist, OMAFRA email: tom.wright@ontario.ca

Twitter: @feedlandOntario

In September 2018, the basis for payment for milk protein changed from using crude protein to the new system based on true protein content in milk. It's timely, therefore, to review the difference between crude protein and true protein in milk, what factors can affect their values that managers can control and what are some normal milk composition changes that happen each year in Ontario herds.

Crude protein is the term for the measurement of milk proteins like casein and whey, but it also includes other nitrogen containing compounds in milk like urea and ammonia (non-protein nitrogen, NPN molecules) that are not proteins and have no value to dairy processing, like cheese making. True protein, by definition, only includes proteins like casein and whey; it does not include NPN. The effect of this change from crude protein to true protein is that percent protein reported for milk shipped is lower than what we are used to seeing. Milk protein results from CanWest DHI continue to report crude protein values.

The NPN fraction is made up of numerous compounds, the best known and most abundant being milk urea nitrogen (MUN). The typical content of NPN in North American milk is between 5 and 5.5%. The recommended adjustment to use to compare true protein values with historical crude protein data is to add 0.19 to true protein. In 2019, laboratories in Canada will be collecting data from Canadian milk to determine if 5.5% NPN content is an accurate reflection of current milk. Producers who track their MUN values will be familiar with various factors that can positively and negatively affect those values, including environment (season and temperature), mastitis, stage of lactation, parity, genetics and nutrition. True protein can also be influenced by these factors. Seasonal fluctuations and trends for Ontario will be presented.

From a long-term perspective, progress on milk protein content can be made using genetic improvement strategies. Nutritional management for milk protein should include a balanced nutritional approach to achieve your objectives. While the focus is often on feed protein fractions and sometimes individual amino acids, ruminal efficiency, microbial protein yield and dietary energy are also important considerations to cost effectively achieve milk protein goals.

The presentation will also include data from a recent study at the University of Guelph that measured both crude protein and true protein values and MUN from a group of 28 dairy cows over multiple weeks to demonstrate typical values and differences that can occur over time. All animals were fed the same diet and were managed the same way.



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## **Managing Your Dairy with Narrower Margins**

Jack Rodenburg, DairyLogix, February 2019

### **Introduction**

The Canadian dairy industry has enjoyed many years of stability and prosperity. As we enter into 2019, there is no doubt that trade agreements signed by our Canadian government in the last few years are going to have a major impact on the future market for milk produced in Canada. Combined with other market forces, such as shifting consumer perceptions and preferences, there are several reasons to approach the future with caution and with an expectation that opportunities for growth and for profit will be more limited than during the last twenty years. No doubt this is an appropriate time for dairy farmers to both individually and collectively consider what adjustments should be made to ensure a secure future for your farm and for the industry.

While I am honoured to be asked to speak on this very difficult topic, I need to point out that I have no expertise in dairy marketing or economics and can only give you my amateur interpretation of what I see in the future. I would be more comfortable speaking on “how to respond” if our industry leaders gave us clear and forthright projections of future markets. Unfortunately, the need for political posturing often gets in the way of providing sound data for strategic planning. But since all the deals are pretty much done, this would be a good time for solid projections of future market demand and honest conversations about who will supply the market.

### **Impact of Trade Deals**

In terms of WHEN you will be affected by the trade deals, CETA is provisionally in effect now and it has a 5-year phase in. Based on what I have read, the fall months did see some increase in cheese imports but most of the impact is yet to come. CPTPP came into force December 30, 2018 but its' 11 to 19 year phase in means its' big impact is further down the road. USMCA implementation is expected to begin in the fall of 2019. It will result in some changes right away and imports increasing quickly over 6 years and then more slowly from 2025 to 2032. It is important to note that, to date, these deals have not affected you at all and the recent down turn in market growth is based on adjustments due to Canadian demand. With first impact of CETA starting now and USMCA coming into force later this year, I expect things will get tougher every year from 2020 through 2025. Imports will continue to grow at a slower pace after that, but the unpredictability of domestic market growth makes the market beyond 2025 less clear.

In terms of HOW you will be affected, DFC has said that “close to 20% of Canadian dairy consumption will be imported” but prior to these deals imports already supplied 10 to 12% of the Canadian market. A recent projection from DFO predicts imports will rise from 12% now to 18%. Exports will also be restricted. My estimate is that CETA will take 2%, CPTPP 4% and USMCA another 4%, mostly over 6 years. To know how this will impact your overall market for raw milk, growth in consumer demand should be factored in. If market growth continues at 2 to 3% per year with population growth, this could come close to balancing imports. In terms of raw milk prices, trade deals increase non-tariff access but don't really impact how we price milk domestically. But USMCA does restrict how we sell surplus solids not fat (SNF), so milk prices may go down 5 to 10% to reflect lower value for this piece of the market. Overall my expectation is that we will see no quota increases and very few incentive days for the next five years or more. This will be a big change after seeing about 5% growth per year for the last decade. I also expect slightly lower raw milk prices and a bigger decline in margins as prices of inputs will keep going up.

## **Adjusting Your Financial Approach**

In looking at these numbers the only reasonable conclusion is that you will need to “do more with less”, especially since there is almost no potential for growth. That means cutting costs where you can, doing what you do better and discontinuing unprofitable activities. For many it may also mean seeking new revenue outside of the dairy business.

## **Do You need that New Tractor or Combine?**

In my experience dairy farmers often buy depreciable capital items like tractors and equipment to reduce taxes. In this market, this is false economy, especially when future income might make you less taxable anyway. This does not mean you should not invest in equipment, but if you do, the decision should be based on clear cash flow projections. For machinery investment “economies of scale” suggest that doing a lot of field work with small tractors and equipment costs too much labour. But big equipment that sits in the shed and goes over limited acres is also poor economics because it under utilizes the capital invested. Purchasing custom services instead of owning equipment is a good choice if you have limited labor. Sharing expensive machines with neighbours can be a good option as well, and if you have surplus labor, putting more hours on good equipment by doing custom work is also a way to improve your bottom line.

## **Choose the Expenses you Cut Carefully**

Undoubtedly every farm incurs costs that are unnecessary. Identifying and eliminating them by re-examining and testing what you spend on non-essential services, and products can often identify small savings that, added together can make a difference. But these things need to be scrutinized carefully. In herds with good “in house” record systems I often hear “I can save \$3000 by going off DHI . . .and I barely ever look at the records anyway because I have all the information I need from my robots”. While this might be a valid decision in some cases, my caution here is that you maintain the capacity to compare your herd to others. Whether we talk production related numbers or finances, comparing your performance to others or “benchmarking” is an incredibly important way to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

Milk recording is a well established way to compare important management outcomes among herds that can identify areas that need improvement. If you plan to quit make absolutely sure that you have other ways to monitor and compare your data.

## **Do What You Do Better**

Good production records and good financial records and ways to compare them to other dairies, can help identify areas to focus on for improvement. The easiest changes are probably in areas where you are below average. Fixing “the weakest link” is also highly likely to offer the greatest benefit, so “picking the low hanging fruit” makes a lot of sense.

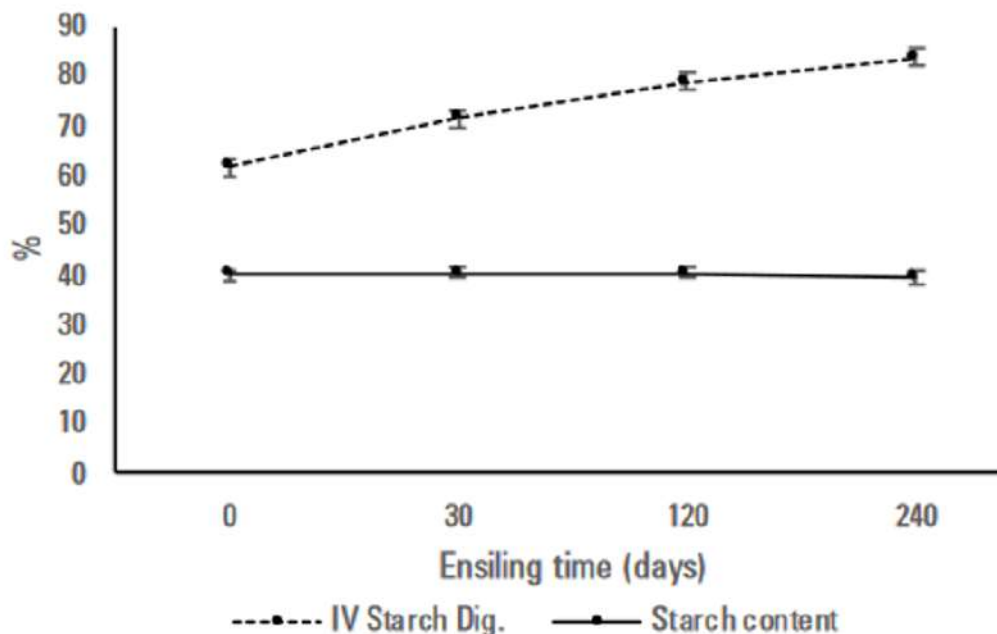
Agstar Financial and Zoetis do an annual study in herds in the US Northeast in which they measure and analyse 90 different production variables. They have identified 6 factors that account for 85% of the variation in profit. These factors include:

1. lower somatic cell counts (196,000 vs 239,000)
2. Higher energy corrected milk per cow
3. Lower death losses
4. Lower net herd replacement costs
5. Higher pregnancy rates
6. Higher heifer survival (95% vs 93%)

Net herd replacement costs (variable 2) will be lowest in herds that are managed so that older cows stay in the herd longer. They stay around longer if they get pregnant (variable 5), don't get mastitis (variable 1) and they don't die (variable 3) When old cows stick around longer, production of milk per cow is higher because mature cows give more milk. It is pretty clear in this study that higher profitability is associated with milking a higher percentage older cows. In nearly all herds there is money to be made by identifying the main reasons cows are culled and working with your advisors to improve on it.

## Feed is a big expense

Focus on forage quality, harvest on time, harvest quick, avoid weather damage, pack cover and keep a clean face. In my experience the most profitable herds feed more than 50% corn silage in part because these rations are more stable and uniform. Brown midrib varieties offer high digestibility. One aspect of feeding consistently high quality corn silage that is often overlooked is the need to let it ferment for at least 2 months before feeding. Green chopped corn contains close to 10% sugar, which is completely converted to lactic acid during the first six weeks of fermentation. Because of the sugar, a ration change to fresh silage stored less than 6 weeks puts the cow at risk of rumen acidosis. About 45% of the energy in corn silage is in the form of starch. As illustrated in the graph below, starch digestibility improves by close to 10% in the first month of storage and a further 2 to 3 % per month after that. Even without the acidosis risk the improved feed value alone makes it important that corn silage be in storage for at least 2 months before it is fed. For farms with a single storage structure, adding an Agbag or well packed and covered pile to be fed in the fall of the following year should pay big dividends.



The other big feeding error I see on far too many farms is the practice of letting milking cows clean up the manger. Achieving the highest forage dry matter intake you can is critical to achieving high milk production and maintaining rumen health. Cows that stay healthy in early lactation are also more likely to get in calf. Forage energy is cheaper than grain energy, so from every possible perspective, maximizing forage intake has a positive impact on your bottom line.

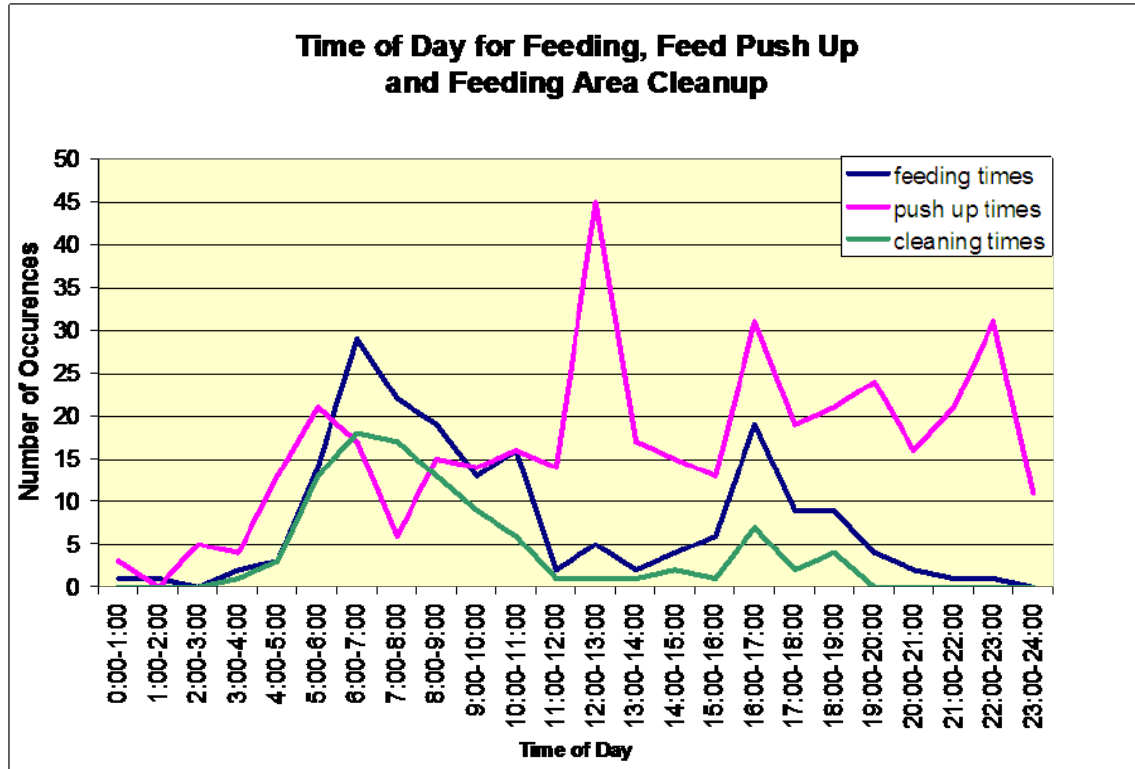
In my work as a CowSignals trainer I conduct ten to twenty workshops across North America each year. I like to visit these barns at 3 or 4 a.m. to see cows that are undisturbed and at rest. In about a third of these barns I find little or no feed in the manger at that time of night. I try to convince these dairies to increase the feed offered so there is always 2 to 4% left over at the next feeding. The herds that do this consistently get 3 to 5 liters more milk as a result. In most cases the leftover feed can go right into the mixer, before the batch is mixed or for feeding to a group of lower producers or heifers.

Pushing up feed more consistently and more often, even when the cows can still reach it, improves palatability, reduces sorting and stimulates higher intake. This is another big plus for higher production and rumen health. When it comes to robotics, a feed pusher is probably the first automation every herd should consider investing in. In a study done by Progressive Dairy Operators (PDO), members who did not have feed pushers reported pushing up feed an average of 4.3 times per day. As illustrated in the graph, most of these herds fed once per day at around 7 a.m. About half of the herds offered a second feeding in the afternoon. Feed was pushed up regularly throughout the day. The longest interval with no push up was from night check at 11 p.m. till morning milking at 5 or 6 a.m. With once a day feeding in the morning, this is also the period when there is the least feed in the manger. No doubt the greatest benefit of robotic feed pushers is their ability to push feed at 3 a.m. while you sleep.

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One change in feeding management you should consider is once a day feeding in the afternoon. I am sure empty mangers would be less likely to go unnoticed at 2 p.m. than at 2 a.m. and on days when the bunk empties early, getting new feed out early ensures that intake does not suffer. Afternoon feeding also means feed gets pushed up in the critical six hours before the next feeding when the bunk has the least feed in it. In periods of heat stress, cows prefer to eat the bulk of their TMR at night when it is cooler in the barn. Big piles of feed heat and deteriorate in quality faster than small amounts, so in summer, afternoon feeding offers fresher feed when the cow wants it. Herds that switch to afternoon feeding have often experienced increased intake and production, especially in summer months.

### Stop Doing Unprofitable Things

What are you doing that is not profitable? The answer will be different for every farm and it might take some focussed analysis of income and expenses for specific activities to find unprofitable enterprises. One place all dairies should examine current practices is the number of replacement heifers they raise. The tables below are calculated from data provided by the Ontario Dairy Farm Accounting Project (ODFAP) which includes a typical cross section of Ontario dairy herds. ODFAP does not routinely offer separate income and expense statements for heifers, so the latest data I have is from 2010. Cash expenses per milking cow rose 42% from \$2575 in 2010 to \$3652 in 2017. Assuming the same ratio applies to the cost of raising a heifer the 2010 cash cost adjusted to 2017 becomes \$2091 or \$2.86 per day to 24 months of age.

With indirect expenses added in this makes the “break even” value for a heifer raised on an average dairy in 2017 just over \$3000.

Purchased feed	\$275	Taxes & Ins.	\$85
Supplies	127	Utilities	23
Art & breeding	109	Hired labour	73
Other livestock exp.	133	Other direct	49
Repairs	183	Interest	<u>167</u>
Fuel and lube	78		
Custom work	81	<b>Total Cash Cost</b>	<b>\$1483</b>

<b>Total Cash Cost</b>	<b>\$2091</b>
Building depreciation	121
Machinery / equip dep.	131
Unpaid labour 30.4 hrs @ \$17	<u>517</u>
<b>Total raising cost</b>	<b>\$2860</b>
Value at birth	<b>150</b>

Expansion opportunities in Canada will be near zero for the next 6 to 10 years. USA over production means it will be a while before there is a heifer market there as well. Furthermore, with the advent of sexed semen a dairy looking for more heifers can double their output within their own herd. In the table below I have left indirect cost at the 2010 level. Not raising surplus heifers and not selling them at a loss of \$500 to \$1000 per animal is a simple way to improve your bottom line.

Calculating how many heifers you need and breeding that number (sexed semen) or double that number of cows with top dairy bulls will provide the replacements needed for your herd. Breeding the rest to beef sires will double or triple the value of calves sold at two weeks of age.

Bonus benefits will include higher pregnancy rates with beef sires, stronger healthier cross bred calves and depending on the beef breed selected, easier calving as well.

When I suggest this I often get the response that “if everybody does this the heifer market will rebound”, but farmers who adopt this strategy will always raise a few more heifers than they need and with genomics and sexed semen, the future supply and demand for dairy heifers is permanently altered to this new reality.

Not raising surplus heifers frees up building space, feed storage space, crop acres and labour, so the best strategies will include plans for utilizing these new resources. Will you rent out or cash crop those acres, or use the space and labour to raise some of those crossbred calves for beef yourself? Those choices will depend on circumstances. But be prepared to research and do cash flow projections for these new options. There are good beef budgeting spreadsheets at <http://www.ontariobeef.com/programs/dairy-beef.aspx>.

## If Time is Money??

Improving your bottom line is going to take disciplined examination of what resources you invest to make a litre of milk and where the opportunities to reduce these costs are. The table below taken from ODFAP 2017, summarizes the average cost of producing a liter of milk on

What is the biggest input cost in producing milk?		
\$ per HI Milk		
(Ontario Dairy Farm Accounting Project 2017) all 70 farms		
Purchased Feed	\$ 14.13	
Home Grown Crops	\$ 13.58	
<b>Total feed</b>	<b>\$ 27.71</b>	
Veterinary and Breeding	\$ 3.72	
Other Direct	\$ 9.00	
<b>Total Labour</b>	<b>74 minutes</b>	
<b>Labor Cost at \$45.25/hr.</b>	<b>\$55.81</b>	
<b>Labor Cost at \$24.50/hr.</b>	<b>\$30.22</b>	

these typical Ontario dairy farms. As illustrated feed costs including home grown crops are the biggest direct expense. But the labour required to care for cows and heifers, do the record keeping and grow the crops, averages 74 minutes per hectolitre of milk produced. In its cost of production formula Dairy Farmers of Canada posts the suggested wage for a dairy farmer as manager of his

business at \$45.25 per hour. At that rate this 74 minutes is worth \$55.81, or almost double the feed cost. Even at a more reasonable \$24.50 per hour (the average industrial wage in Ontario) labour is the biggest input cost in producing milk on our farms.

What input costs are most variable?		
\$ per HI Milk		
	bottom 15 farms	top 15 farms
Purchased Feed	\$ 13.97	\$ 13.71
Home Grown Crops	\$ 16.53	\$ 11.04
<b>Total feed</b>	<b>\$30.50</b>	<b>\$ 24.75</b>
Vet. and Breeding	\$ 4.59	\$ 3.77
Other Direct	\$ 9.29	\$ 7.47
<b>Total Labour</b>	<b>133 minutes</b>	<b>42 minutes</b>
<b>Labor Cost at \$45.25/hr.</b>	<b>\$100.30</b>	<b>\$31.67</b>
<b>Labor Cost at \$24.50/hr.</b>	<b>\$54.30</b>	<b>\$17.15</b>

The ODFAP data is also broken down into low, medium and high profit farms. As illustrated, low profit farms spend 33% more per hectoliter on home grown feed and it would be worthwhile to explore that further. I can only speculate, but I assume poorer yielding land and inefficient tillage and harvest practices are to blame for this substantial difference. But labour per hectoliter is 3 times greater on poor profit farms than on high profit farms. If

this labour can actually be counted at some fair market value and if it is the biggest and also the most variable input costs on our farms then it follows that improving labour efficiency is our best opportunity to improve profitability.

By special request, DFO has provided me with 2017 ODFAP data broken down by herd size and housing type. As illustrated in the table on the next page, minutes per hectoliter is very high in

	Tie Stall			Free Stall		
	<45	45-70	>70	<80	80 - 160	>160
Herd size range						
No. cows	37	57	89	58	113	184
Milk per cow (l)	7037	9395	9032	9116	9667	11085
Minutes per HI	141	76	61	64	46	35

small tie stall herds. These herds also have lower production per cow and on closer examination all of their costs are

high. Their small herd size probably reflects long term poor management and poor returns that have prevented any expansion. In the medium and larger tie stall farms there are some “economies” of scale as herds get larger. In this data a 56% increase in herd size resulted in a 24

**Labor per cow and Per HI by herd s**  
PDO data (excludes cropping 2016)

No. Milking Cows	Minutes/Cow /Day	Estimated Minutes/Hi mi
< 90	15.8	44
90-180	12.3	34
180-250	10.0	28
>250	8.5	24

% decrease in labour per hectoliter. But labour efficiency in all sizes of freestall herds is still better. At 58 cows the difference is only 12 minutes or 16% but as herd size increases substantial economies of scale in the freestall system dramatically improve their labour efficiency. The group of herds with more than 150 cows has an added bias of higher production per cow. These herds produce nearly twice as much milk with an hour of labour as smaller freestalls and more than twice the amount as

mid sized tie stall dairies. Labour data on a per cow basis taken from a PDO survey, illustrates that labour efficiency continues to improve with further increase in herd size.

In the USA, where herd growth is unrestricted, the modern model of efficient production is probably the 3000 cow dairy with an 80 stall rotary parlor, that has become common in the Midwest and California. From a marketing perspective, taking things that far in today's market in Ontario, may not be the best strategy since consumers have a negative perception of these very large farms. But with a current average herd size of 90 cows there are still big opportunities to improve labour efficiency through increasing herd size on many dairies.

But if market growth stagnates and is traded away, how can we grow and how can we profit from these economies of scale? As I travel rural Ontario I see many modern and potentially

efficient barns, but many are under-utilized and were built on the assumption that markets would continue to grow. I also see numerous inefficient older tie stall barns that require double the labour per cow. If rules didn't get in the way, the logical solutions would be to fully utilize our best barns at capacity, and shut down the old and tired tie barns, perhaps through sharing facilities and partnerships but also through rationalization of farm numbers by making it easier to buy and amalgamate herds. It seems that the current rules that stand in the way of doing this have sacrificed efficiency in the interest of maintaining larger numbers of dairies. This was done on the presumption that having more farm provides greater political clout. But after giving up market share in 3 bad trade deals is it fair to assume this strategy has failed? While no producer can change this on their own, it is time to change the rules, allow amalgamation of herds, allow 2 licences in one barn and allow any and all other creative solutions farmers come up with to improve their earning power.

### **What About Automation and Robotics?**

Rapid adoption of robotic milking and robotic calf feeding as well as increased interest in automatic feeding suggest that this trend should also be assessed in terms of it's potential to improve farm income. Attempting to cover this in a few paragraphs in this paper would be futile. There is some data for some specific technologies. For example, in a study of calf feeding, calf care at Allenwaite Farms took 7.68 minutes per calf per day in hutches versus 3.79 minutes in group housing with automated feeders. If everything else is equal, at \$18 per hour for labour this difference provides a 25% return on investment in the equipment. With regard to robotic milking, a \$200,000 robot financed over 15 years costs \$1400/month in repayment and at @ 180 milkings/day, this is 26 ¢/milking. Service, hydro, and chemicals will cost roughly 18 ¢/milking and labour to fetch, clean the robot room, groom and clean stalls, water troughs and crossovers is estimated at 0.7 hrs per robot per day. At \$18 per hour that's 7 ¢/milking for a total of 56 cents to milk a cow. If "time is money", most small herds are spending more than this on labour alone and when the parlor is worn out, this may also be a wise choice for bigger freestall dairies. But partial budgets for these things will vary widely from farm to farm and need to be carefully examined on a case by case basis.

Some highly automated dairies are making great gains in labour efficiency. One "early adopter" with a 180 cow dairy, 4 robotic milkers, automatic calf feeding, automatic feed mixing and delivery, and an automatic bedding system, reports that total labour in the barn for cows, heifers and calves works out to 130 hours per week or 16.7 minutes of labour per hectoliter. This dairy accomplishes 3.6 times as much with an hour of labour as the Ontario average (61 minutes per hectoliter). I believe that when labour is properly valued this farm has an excellent bottom line.

## But what do we do with the Labour saved??

Whether the labour savings come from shared facilities, adoption of automation or reducing

	<u>Robots</u>	<u>Free Stall/Parlor</u>
No. of Herds	11	26
No. cows	115	113
Milk per cow (l)	10365	9667
Minutes per Hl	43	48

the number of heifers raised, the unfortunate reality is that labour savings only improve profitability if non-family paid labour can be eliminated or if the time is used productively elsewhere. As an example, many herds adopting robotic milking in Ontario seem to be motivated more by lifestyle than by efficiency. The ODFAP data for Ontario robot herds

compared to parlors is illustrated in the table at left. Despite 7% higher production per cow, the labour reported by robot herds was only 5 minutes per hectoliter or 10% less than comparably sized parlor dairies. Having worked in both and having observed what is possible, I know that robotics can deliver much greater efficiency than this. These numbers can only reflect the fact that the same number of people remain dependent on employment at these dairies and they are finding make work projects. Within the culture of family farming, “failing to capitalize on labour saving opportunities” can often be the great weakness of improving the bottom line with better labour efficiency. That weakness is the reality that labour savings only improve profits if the labour saved is applied to other profitable pursuits. If the farm employs non-family labour the obvious solution is to fire the hired help. But firing your son, your brother or your dad can be much more problematic.

Regardless the most practical, lowest risk option will be for a family member to find part time or full time work off the farm until the time is right for a generational transfer or expansion. Other options include utilizing your equipment better by doing custom work or filling the freed up time with raising dairy beef or custom raising heifers. Lastly if you are looking for high risk “employment” start a new business or develop a niche market.

## Niche Markets

On a recent tour to Australia we found several dairies and marketing groups that had improved their margins through marketing higher priced A2 milk. The milk protein, casein comes in three forms, A1, A2, A3 which have different BCM7 peptides. A1 is the most common, and some studies suggest some people have difficulty digesting it. Controlled by a single recessive gene the cow has to be “A2A2” to produce A2 milk. 35% of Holsteins are A2A2. Guernsey are nearly all A2, a fact that Eby Manor capitalizes on in their sales of farm fresh milk in glass bottles in the

Kitchener area. A simple genetic test for A2 (\$15 genomic test from Holstein Canada) and segregation of milk from A2A2 cows could instantly establish an A2 raw milk supply. Despite limited and somewhat questionable “science” good marketing to health conscious consumers has made this a trusted brand in Australia that has a 10% market share domestically. It is also gaining greater export market access in Indonesia and China.

In Ontario, the simplest niche market one could participate in would be organic milk. Although production costs will be higher, greater margins may be possible because of more market opportunities and access to more quota and more extra days than conventional milk.

Other farms both here and on our Australian tour, are capitalizing on opportunities in on farm processing and retail. While most of these farms focus on cheese, yoghurt and ice cream, the massive growth in tourism, and especially a high interest in farm related experiences means that for a few innovative entrepreneurs, the sky is the limit. In Australia we had lunch on a dairy that incorporated a 16 acre raspberry patch with a steady stream of business for jams, frozen berry’s, restaurant meals and dairy and raspberry desserts. We were also on a Tasmanian robot dairy that partnered with a local wildlife park for paid tours of both facilities with or without lunch.

One of the great spin offs of these tourist focussed ventures is that they provide a much needed opportunity for promotion and consumer education. With the rise of vegetarianism, the loss of our status in the Canada food guide and the general decline in the nutritional image of milk, we badly need to connect with consumers. Perhaps ventures like this, undertaken by passionate people in locations near larger centers should be supported with some of the compensation funding the industry is about to receive.



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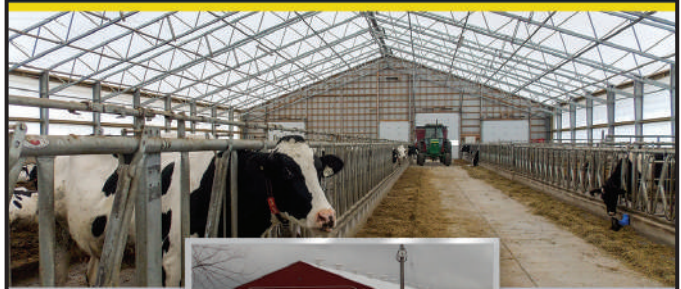
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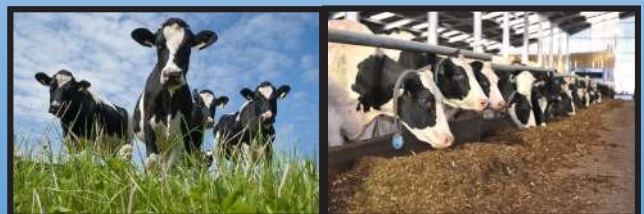
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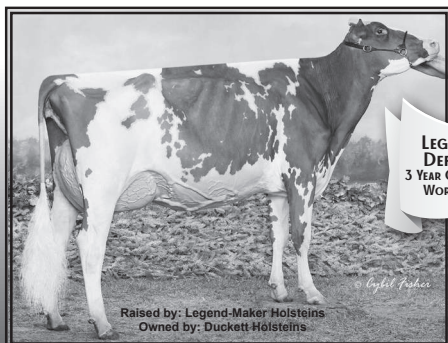
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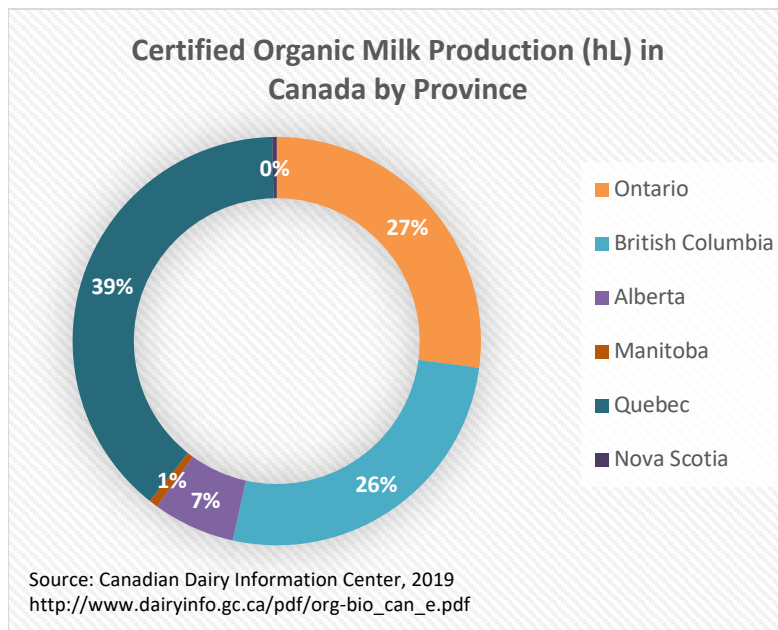
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## FOOD FROM OUR FARM

This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the annual “Food from our Farms” portion of the South Western Ontario Dairy Symposium. Every year, our committee seeks out new, local or innovative dairy products which complement our program. This year in light of our “Organic as a Business” speakers we are featuring **Harmony Organic** milk, cream and buttermilk in addition to our lineup of products from **Chapman’s Ice Cream**, **Gay Lea Food Co-operative**, and **Mountain Oak**. Below you will find the descriptions of the company and the products were provided. Thank you to companies that donated product and the companies that sponsored food products this year.



This year’s keynote speaker Terry O’Reilly is speaking on the importance of having a story to connect with consumers. In the descriptions below we have featured the stories that these companies provide on their website to connect with consumer. Consider your own farm and your story about producing milk in Canada. How would you explain to a consumer your day to day operation and connect with them?



In Canada, organic milk production was 1.214 Million hL in 2016/2017 dairy year (dairyinfo.gc.ca). Certified organic milk has had an increase in production over the last 10 years. In Canada, organic production has grown from 174 farms producing 629,000 hL in 2007/2008 to 232 farms producing 1,214,000 hL of certified organic milk in 2016/2017.

This year's milk and coffee cream was donated by *Harmony Organic™* and feature both white and chocolate 250 mL milk as well as 10% coffee cream, whole milk and buttermilk.

**The Harmony Organic™ Story:** started as two farm families with a dream to provide delicious organic milk to the public without compromising their beliefs or principles. Lawrence and Mathilde Andres,

co-founders and now sole

owners of Harmony Organic Dairy Products, moved to Canada from Switzerland in 1979 and became Canada's first organic dairy farmers. Then in 1992 Lawrence initiated the first organic dairy producers' group in Ontario. In 1994 the segregation of organic milk became a reality and on September 24, 2001, **Harmony Organic™** was officially launched. The Andres farm, located in the picturesque, rural community of Kincardine, has been exclusively organic from the start. Everything is grown naturally without the use of chemicals on organically certified land.

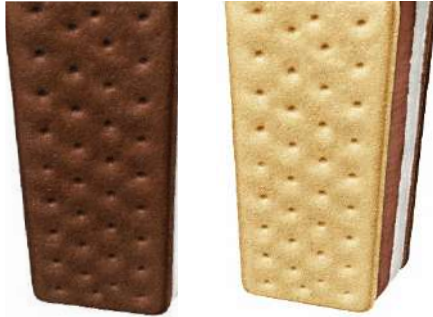


**Harmony Organic™** describes the companies philosophies and management styles as each of the 14 family farm producers are committed to working in harmony with nature. All Harmony Organic farms are certified organic and exceed the required organic standards set forth by the Canadian Government. For a farm to obtain organic certification no synthetic fertilizers or chemicals are to be used on the farm for at least three years prior to certification. After this time the cows must only be fed organic feed for another twelve months before their milk can be marketed as organic. You may notice that the taste of our products change slightly throughout the year. This is caused by changes to the “menu” offered to the cows. The most noticeable change is likely to occur in spring when the cows are first out on fresh grass.

Sourced from Harmony Organics website: <https://harmonyorganic.ca>.



## **Chapman's Ice Cream**



This year's Ice Cream feature was donated by **Chapman's Ice Cream**. Who has kindly donated their new **Double Decker Ice Cream Sandwich Bars** to this year's program. *Made with 100% Canadian Milk, the all new peanut-nut free Double Decker ice cream sandwich from Chapman's features layers of vanilla & chocolate ice cream between vanilla & chocolate wafers. A delicious treat everyone in the family will enjoy!*

**The Chapman's Ice Cream Story:** It all started when David and Penny Chapman bought a small creamery in Markdale Ontario, a village just south of Georgian Bay, back in 1973. At the time, three big corporations dominated the ice cream market. But Penny and David had a dream to start a different sort of ice cream manufacturing company - one that would deliver a quality product at an affordable price, with the personal touch that only a small company could provide.

The Chapman family began with four plant/production employees and two trucks and moved into the cramped and primitive rooms above an old creamery in town. From there, they added a little of this and a dash of that and wrote the recipes that made Chapman's famous.



Business was great and ever expanding until the early fall of 2009. At 10am on September 4th, the unthinkable happened. While preparing for an expansion of a state-of-the-art freezing tunnel, a welder's spark fell between insulated panels. By the time the tradesmen welding a crossbeam noticed there was smoke coming from the building, it was too late. Slowly the fire progressed along the wall, until it hit the old Frozen Warehouse which was made out of wood. Several fire departments in the area tried to control the blaze. By mid-afternoon, the fire was almost under control when the Municipality of Grey Highlands under-sized water tower ran dry.

At 5pm the Chapman family withdrew to their family home outside of Markdale, after witnessing 36 years of hard work go up in smoke. Within an hour of getting home, the Chapman family made the quick decision to rebuild their business. Worried about the local economy, and their 350 employees who make up the extended Chapman family, the Chapman's refused to go down without a fight! Shortly after this, the entire management team gathered around David and Penny's dining room table and started planning the rebuild.

Within 7 weeks from the fire, we produced our first 2 Litre brick of ice cream! In the ensuing months, the community and Chapman's worked tirelessly to build our new manufacturing facility, appropriately named Phoenix. Within a year and a half from the fire, we had rebuilt bigger and better than ever!

Today, Chapman's is Canada's largest independent ice cream company, with the Chapman family at the head ensuring the same commitment to high quality and great value ice cream. It's the magic blend of all this that makes Chapman's, and the people who make it, perfect - for the kid in all of us. No one else does it quite our way. This is Chapman's.

Sourced from Chapman's website at <https://www.chapmans.ca>

## **GayLea Food Co-operative**



Introducing our NEW Nordica Smooth Dips, available in savoury Roasted Red Pepper and delicious Dill Ranch. These creamy, smooth cottage cheese dips pack the flavour you crave, and the protein you need. And with 88% less fat and half the calories of the leading sour cream dip, there's no guilt in these.

**The Gay Lea Foods Story:** Our story began in 1958 when a group of farmers came together with a common vision to build a better future for themselves and their communities; today, Gay Lea Foods is a leader in the Canadian dairy industry and the second largest dairy co-operative in Canada. Here's how we stay true to our Born on the Farm heritage.

With our roots on the farm, Gay Lea Foods has grown to become a leader in the Canadian dairy industry and the largest dairy co-operative in Ontario, with members on more than 1,400 dairy farms in Ontario and Manitoba, and more than 4,320 producer and investor shareholders. Our dedication to innovation and the development of highquality products has allowed us to respond to consumers' evolving tastes and grow the market for Canadian cow and, more recently, goat milk. We are a Canadian success story – and that story is far from over. Moving forward, Gay Lea Foods is poised to seize and create even more opportunities for sustainable, long-term growth in the Canadian dairy industry as we expand beyond our provincial borders, grow our foods and ingredients business, and continue to invest in innovative and industry-leading products.

**Gay Lea**  
BORN ON THE FARM

As much as we evolve, however, we remain a dairy co-operative, owned by dairy farmers. From our farms and production facilities, to our distribution networks and employee ideologies, we embrace and act with co-operative-inspired values, understanding there is no shortcut to quality or success. It takes commitment, passion and collaboration.

Those are the things we're made of and we're proud to share our story.

Just like the milk that comes from our farms, so too are Gay Lea Foods' products and values born on the farm.

Sourced from Gay Lea Foods Website: [www.gaylea.com](http://www.gaylea.com)

To learn more about Gay Lea Foods history visit:  
<https://www.gaylea.com/about-us/about-gay-lea/history>



Quark Cake – just one of the many delicious ways to enjoy Quark!

## ***Mountainoak Cheese***

Quark Yogurt was sponsored



### **What is Quark?**

- Similar in texture to a Greek yogurt, this smooth product can be easily used in baking, topped with fresh fruit or jam, or enjoyed by itself.
- No preservatives, no added sugar, no carrageenan, no food dyes; just pasteurized whole milk, bacterial culture and rennet.
- Quark is a great source of protein, calcium, and a variety of vitamins and minerals.
- We offer flavoured quark as well, mixing in locally produced maple syrup and fruit. We use just enough to give you that sweet flavour you crave, while still using less than half the sugar that you find in flavoured Greek yogurt from the grocery store.



Adam van Bergeijk and his wife Hannie took over the family dairy farm in Holland from Adam's parents in 1976. From the beginning, they had an interest in making artisan cheese on the farm. In 1981, they both attended the renowned cheesemaker's school in Gouda, a centre of cheesemaking expertise for over three hundred years. Now a teacher of cheesemaking himself, Adam has trained students from countries throughout Europe in the art of cheesemaking.

In Holland, the Van Bergeijks' prize-winning cheeses were very popular with local consumers, but there was little opportunity to grow as dairy farmers. Seeking a brighter future for their children, the family emigrated to Canada in 1996, where they purchased their present farm in Wilmot Township. Although the plan for Canada was to focus on dairy farming only, some of their original cheesemaking equipment found its way into the container destined for their new homeland. It wasn't long before they were making cheese for their own consumption.

Now that married sons Arjo, with his wife Baukje, on the home farm, and John, with his wife Angela, on a second nearby dairy, have taken over primary responsibility for the dairy herd, Adam and Hannie's passion to make cheese is blooming once more. With the encouragement of family, friends and neighbours, they have embarked on a new cheesemaking venture. Mountainoak Cheese is a modern, state-of-the-art processing plant that allows the van Bergeijks to continue the tradition of great-tasting, high-quality, Gouda-style cheeses made with high-quality, fresh milk from their own dairy cows.

Oh, and why "Mountainoak" you ask? There is no particular abundance of oaks on the farm, and certainly there are no mountains in Wilmot Township. A literal, English translation of the Dutch family name, "Van Bergeijk", would be "from the mountain oak". Coming to a new land where English is spoken, they chose "Mountainoak Farms" as the name of their dairy. When their dream to make cheese in Canada became a reality, it just made sense that fresh Mountainoak milk should be made into high quality, all natural, Mountainoak cheese!

Sourced from Mountainoak's website: <http://mountainoakcheese.com/>





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## Mental Health for Farmers – First Aid Kit

For an electronic copy of this factsheet please visit:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/mental-health.htm>

Owning a farm business can be very stressful. If you are struggling with the impact of these stresses, you are not alone.

The government of Ontario cares about the well-being of farmers and farm families and recognizes they face unique challenges that can lead to mental health issues.

There is help out there if you're struggling. Reach out to a friend or other emotional support. Together we can end the stigma that surrounds mental health. You matter, and you're important. We're all in this together.

**[Public Service Announcement Video: Encouraging farmers to help address the stigma that still surrounds mental health and to use available resources.](#)**

### Consider the following options:

**If you need immediate help:**

#### **Mental Health Helpline**

- Call: 1-866-531-2600
- [Chat online](#)
- [Email](#)

**The Ontario 211 (Province-wide Crisis Line) will connect callers to mental health supports in their communities**

- Call: 2-1-1
- [Website](#)

#### **Distress Centres in Ontario**

Centres are available to offer confidential, private support for anyone who is feeling emotionally impacted, or in distress or crisis due to the challenges in the agricultural industry.

Whether you are directly impacted, or someone you care about - family, friends or work-associates - you can connect with Distress Centres 24/7 every day of the year.

- Cambridge: 519-658-5455
- Durham Region: 1-800-452-0688 or 905-430-2522
- Kingston: 613-544-1771
- Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Counties: 800-465-4442
- Niagara Falls, St. Catharines: 905-688-3711
- North Halton: 905-877-1211

- Northern Ontario: 1-855-554-4325
- Oakville: 905-849-4541
- Ottawa and Region: 613-238-3311
- Peel Region: 905-459-7777
- Ontario (French Speaking): 1-800-567-9699
- Toronto: 416-408-4357
- Wellington and Dufferin Counties: 1-888-821-3760
- Windsor and Essex Counties: 519-256-5000

For more information about the resources available please go to: [Distress and Crisis Ontario](#)

If you prefer to have an email conversation contact: [info@dcontario.org](mailto:info@dcontario.org)

## Stress Mitigation Resources for Farmers

Resources available to farmers and their families to help reduce stress and improve their well-being

### Stress

Stress is the body's response to a real or perceived threat. That response is meant to get people ready for some kind of action or get them out of danger.

Some stress can be a good thing. It can motivate us to focus on a task or take action and solve a problem. In this situation, stress is manageable and even helpful.

When stress is unhelpful, people may feel overwhelmed or feel like they can't possibly fix the problem. It can be very hard to concentrate, make decisions, and feel confident when a person experiences a lot of stress.

Working in the agricultural industry can be both rewarding and stressful for farmers. Farmers have a unique bond to their work which can make it difficult to identify and manage stress and accommodate the necessary self-care for managing stress.

This infosheet outlines resources that are available to farmers that may help them manage stress. If you would like more information on the signs of stress and strategies to deal with stress please visit:

- [Identifying and Managing Stress: A Business Owner's Guide](#)
- [Difficult Times: Stress on the Farm](#)

## Financial Stress

Financial stress can affect any business in any sector.

The agriculture sector is unique in that there are many factors outside the farmer's control such as crop losses, animal disease, or declining market prices. Despite best efforts to mitigate these risks, they can cause significant financial stress for farmers and their families.

## Farm Business Advisors

Having a trusted farm business advisor/consultant is a useful resource for any farmer. A farm business advisor/consultant can provide factual results about the financial health of your farm and provide suggestions on how you can improve your financial situation or what options are available to you.

OMAFRA has created a factsheet called "[Choosing a Business Consultant](#)" which outlines what questions you should ask any potential consultants as well as any agreements that should be signed.

## Special Provision - Financial Difficulties

Under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, Ontario producers who are experiencing financial difficulty may qualify to access advisory services to complete a Farm Financial Assessment at no cost.

The Farm Financial Assessment provides a review of the farm business' past financial performance, provides an analysis of the current business climate, develops objectives and identifies options to meet profitability and sustainability goals.

For more information, contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300 or [ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca).

## Farm Debt Mediation

The Farm Debt Mediation Service offers financial counselling and mediation services to farmers who are having difficulties meeting their financial obligations. It is a free and voluntary service for both producers and for creditor(s).

The service helps bring producers and their creditor(s) together with a mediator in a neutral forum to reach a mutually acceptable solution.

For more information about the program please call 1-866-452-5556 or visit [Farm Debt Mediation Service](#).

## Animal Welfare

Caring for animals is a 24/7 job. When you are under stress, sometimes it can be difficult to manage all of the day-to-day farm activities, including providing adequate care for your livestock.

### Farm and Food Care Ontario

The Helpline is a confidential "farmer helping farmer" approach of advice and referral on animal care.

The Helpline service is provided by Farm and Food Care Ontario to assist people in providing good care for their farm animals. Calls received by the service are given to the appropriate commodity group(s) for follow-up.

- Farm Animal Care Helpline: 519-837-1326
- [Farm Animal Care](#)

## Mental Health

Mental health is more than the absence of a mental health condition or illness: it is a positive sense of well-being, or the capacity to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face.

Over the course of any person's life it is highly likely that they will develop a mental health issue themselves or have close contact with someone who does. In Canada, one person in five will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime.

A mental health disorder causes major changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and disrupts the person's ability to work and carry out their usual personal relationships. A mental health issue is a broader term that includes both mental disorders and symptoms of mental disorders which may not be severe enough to warrant the diagnosis of a mental disorder.

Life events, losses and stressors (negative or positive), such as job loss, death of a loved one, loss of health, divorce or a new relationship, may cause distress for a person. A person will often have reactions that are considered normal or realistic for the situation.

These can become a disorder when the length, intensity or effect they have on the person's life are considerable and prolonged. The two most common mental health problems are depression and anxiety.

## Do More Ag

Do More Ag is a not-for-profit organization focusing on mental health in agriculture across Canada.

By championing the mental wellbeing of all Canadian producers, Do More Ag is changing the culture of agriculture to one where all producers are encouraged, supported and empowered to take care of their mental wellbeing.

For more information about Do More Ag, and the resources they have on mental health, please visit: [Resources - The Do More Agriculture Foundation](#).

## Canadian Agricultural Safety Association

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) is working towards making agriculture a safe and healthy environment to work and live in by helping producers and community partners to see and manage risk. The specific stress related resources that CASA has created include:

- [Difficult Times: Stress on the Farm](#)
- [Women in Agriculture: Understanding Stress](#)
- [Farm Stress Management](#)

## Canadian Mental Health Association

The vision of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is to make mental health possible for all.

Visit [CMHA Ontario's website](#) for information and resources about mental health and addictions

## eMentalHealth.ca

[eMentalHealth.ca](#) is a website dedicated to improving mental health in youth and families.

Through this online portal, you can find mental health help in your area and access infosheets on a wide range of topics including stress, understanding mental health disorders, and strategies for caregivers.

## Mental Health Helpline

The Mental Health Helpline provides information about mental health services in Ontario. The helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and it is free and confidential.

The Mental Health Helpline can:

- provide information about counselling services and supports in your community

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## Canadian Food Trends in 2018

**43%**

of Canadians are trying to get more plant based proteins into their diet

U.S. plant based food sales grew by almost 15% between July 2016 and June 2017



63% of vegans are under the age of 38

2% of the population consider themselves vegan and 6% vegetarian

Sources:

M. Von Massow, A. Weerink, B. McAdams, Food Focus 2018, University of Guelph, 2018

S. Charlebois, S. Somogyi, J Music. Plant-based dieting and meat attachment: Protein wars and the changing Canadian Consumer (Preliminary Results), Dalhousie University, 2018 n=1027

**30% OF OUR DOLLAR IS SPENT IN RESTAURANTS WHO THEN DECIDE THE FOOD TREND FOR THE CONSUMER**

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**Allied Associates LLP, Chartered  
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**Alltech**  
519-763-3331

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**Canada's Outdoor Farm Show**  
1-800-563-5441

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**Maximus**  
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**Nature Feed Centre**  
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**Norwell Dairy**  
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