



# union farmer newsletter



## Seed Canada vote signals farmers can't be taken for granted

For six weeks this summer, Canadian Seed Growers Association (CSGA) members had the opportunity to vote on whether to approve a proposal to dissolve their own 3500-member organization in order to merge with the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA), Canadian Seed Institute (CSI), Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada (CSAAC), and the Canadian Plant Technology Agency (CPTA) to form Seeds Canada. On August 27 the votes were counted: 55% said no to the plan.

Not only did seed growers vote to retain their independent voice, they also surprised their own Executive Director, former high level CFIA bureaucrat Glyn Chancey. In an interview with RealAg Radio, he said, "It was a bit of a shocker. None of us expected that outcome. We knew it could be tight. It wasn't close. We needed a two-thirds majority but we got 45%. Clearly there is a lot of analysis and soul searching to be done to understand why such a large proportion of our membership was not supportive." Based on their engagement process during the voting period, Chancey believes those who voted no to Seeds Canada either disagreed with specific aspects of the proposal or had a fundamental disagreement to joining with the corporate seed sector. It is possible for CSGA to hold a second vote on the question before December 15, 2020. The remaining four groups can go ahead and merge, or the five may consider re-negotiating and taking a new deal to a vote later.

The creation of a single national organization was a top priority for the Seed Synergy collaboration (the five groups plus the biotech and agro-chemical lobby group CropLife Canada). Seeds Canada would have been a platform for the powerful corporations to influence the federal government's upcoming seed regulatory framework modernization. Without CSGA in their tent, the remaining four have less legitimacy as "the" voice of the seed sector. The CSTA is dominated by the large multinational seed corporations, including Bayer, Corteva Agriscience, ChemChina, and Limagrain which together control over 66% of worldwide seed trade. Many of the members of the smaller Seed Synergy organizations - CSI, CSAAC and CPTA - are these companies'

employees, clients, service providers and enforcement agents. In contrast, the CSGA is a 116-year old organization that includes all Canadian farmers who grow pedigreed seed, and whose customers are fellow farmers.

Since 1937, the CSGA has been delegated the legal responsibility for administering the *Canadian Regulations and Procedures for Pedigreed Seed Crop Production*, also known as *Circular 6*, which enforces quality control through a certification process. Gaining control over this seed crop certification is a key goal for the Seed Synergy collaborators; creating an amalgamated organization was its preferred the mechanism to achieve it.

As articulated in the Seed Synergy group's 2018 White Paper, Seeds Canada would have first obtained the authority to enforce Circular 6, and then lobbied for its elimination.

*Specifically, the Seed Synergy vision proposes that government formally delegate to industry the authority for seed certification in Canada. In this model, industry would be responsible for delivering everything from determination of eligibility for seed varietal certification, to seed crop certification, to seed standards and testing. Government could also delegate other authorities required to facilitate the operation of a unified industry delivery model. Government would continue to oversee the system. All seed certification requirements should be removed from the Seeds Regulations and managed via incorporation by reference. – Seed Synergy White Paper, 2018, page 11 <https://seedsynergy.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WhitePaper4.0-1.pdf>*

Notably, the White Paper was endorsed by the Boards of Directors of the Seed Synergy Collaboration organizations, with the exception of the CSGA's which has endorsed it only for consultation with its members.

The corporate seed sector has not given up on their quest for regulatory control over Canada's seed system, however the CSGA members' vote against Seeds Canada is a significant victory, and part of the decades-long farmers' resistance against corporate control of the food system through controlling seed. ▪

# Hairy canola— a big deal!

**Public plant breeders have developed non-toxic flea beetle resistance genetics for canola but corporate control of seed has kept it off the market.**

—by Cathy Holtlander, NFU Director of Research and Policy

The intriguing story of “hairy canola” is a case study that highlights both the value of public plant breeding and the need to prevent corporations from blocking farmers from using the results of public interest research.

The image of vast fields of brilliant yellow canola fields under clear blue skies has become a typical prairie calendar picture. Canola is now second-largest crop in Canada by area, grown on 21 million acres in 2019 (wheat occupied 25 million acres). Its existence is due to focused plant breeding work following World War II, undertaken to reduce Canada’s dependence on imported vegetable oil and reduce prairie farmers’ dependence on wheat. Rapeseed, an ancient brassica crop related to mustard and cabbage, grew well across Canada but did not have the oil qualities needed for human consumption and animal feed. Public plant breeding on three types of rapeseed over four decades brought the new crop into existence. The first canola variety, Tower, was registered in 1974 by the University of Manitoba.

In the late 1970s, Agriculture Canada entomologist Bob Lamb was studying plant-insect interactions of crop pests at the Cereal Research Centre in Winnipeg as part of a larger initiative to develop crop resistance to pests. He looked into why flea beetles didn't eat wild mustard, but were a severe pest on oilseed rape, a closely related species. In 1980, he published research that showed that tiny hairs on the wild mustard pods deterred the beetles. Flea beetle-canola interactions were a focus of his team’s work until their program was cut in 1995.

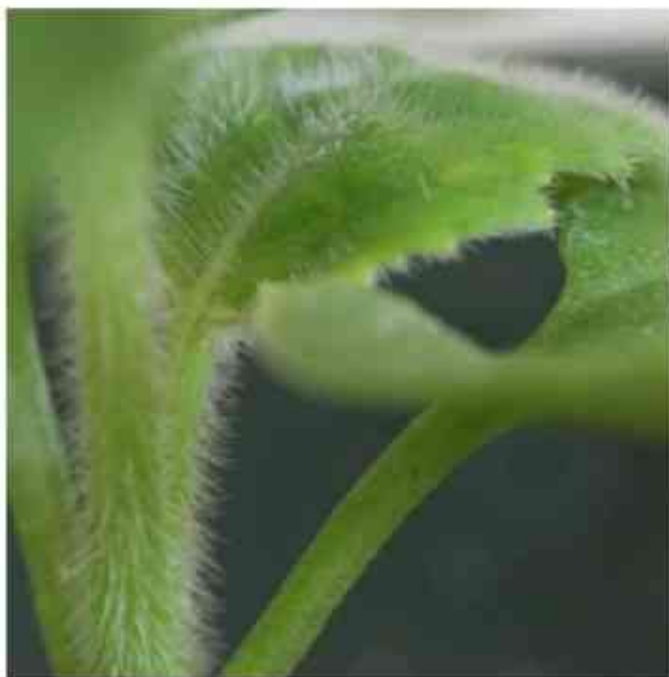
Flea beetles are still a serious problem in canola. They overwinter as adults and are ready to feed voraciously in early spring. Vast fields of emerging canola seedlings are a perfect food for them. To prevent severe losses, farmers have had to use pesticides. Lindane, a probable carcinogen, was used as a canola seed treatment until it was banned in 2004. Today, all canola seed is sold already treated with a neonicotinoid insecticide, which Health Canada has proposed to phase out due to unacceptable impacts on aquatic ecosystems and bird life. In May 2020 Bayer launched a flupyradifurone-based insecticidal canola seed treatment, which early research suggests may be even more toxic to aquatic insects than neonicotinoids.

The economic, health and environmental benefits of developing canola varieties that resist flea beetles were clear when public researchers took up the task in the 1990s.

Building on Lamb's research, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) lead researcher Margaret Gruber started working on the problem and was funded by AAFC, the Western Grains Research Foundation, and the provincial farmer-funded canola growers’ commissions. Using transgenic techniques, her team introduced a gene for the hairiness characteristic from a wild relative into the canola cultivar Westar. Field trials showed that the resulting hairy canola seedlings were resistant to flea beetles, with some even more resistant than plants grown from neonic-treated seed.

Gruber published the results in scientific journals and gave interviews to the farm press to share her discoveries. In 2005 she told the *Western Producer* that the hair-

(continued on page 3...)



*B. villosa*, a naturally hairy relative of canola.

(*Hairy canola*, from page 2)

covered leaves seem to confuse the newly emerged and hungry flea beetles. “They can’t undergo their normal behaviour to touch the plant surface and taste it the way they need to,” she said. They just run around on it and never start feeding.”

The early results were encouraging. In 2009 Gruber believed they were getting close to a hairy canola line with the right agronomic characteristics for crop production. She noted that the hairiness is a robust resistance strategy, as it will be more difficult for the insects to adapt to the physical hairiness characteristic than to a biological system. At that time she predicted genetic material would be ready for plant breeding companies by 2012, and once final developments of hairy canola are complete, “farmers shouldn’t have to use any chemical flea beetle control at all.”

In addition to the benefits of non-toxic flea beetle protection, Gruber believed hairy canola also may have climate adaptation advantages due to the insulating effect of the hair fibres in windy and cold conditions, creating a microenvironment which also helps to hold in water, making the plant less vulnerable to drought.

By 2013 Gruber's team had developed a transgenic hairy canola with desired seed quality and oil profiles that yielded as well as other varieties. AAFC offered the germ plasm to any company that wished to commercialize it -- but had no takers.

Because the cost of getting approval for a transgenic version may have been a barrier, Gruber’s team shifted their focus to traditional breeding techniques. Her team assessed nearly a thousand of the brassicas held by Canada’s national seed bank to find natural variants that had the hairy characteristic. This provides plant breeders with information needed to selectively breed hairy cultivars of canola and other brassicas for flea beetle resistance. By 2017 AAFC researchers had developed germ plasm that is available to the plant breeding community for further work towards a non-transgenic hairy canola.

The AAFC 2017 final report on Gruber's work (she retired in 2014) stated that “seed and genetic tools are available from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for the plant breeding community to transfer the trichome (hairiness) trait into their own elite *B. napus* (canola) germplasm.”

The development of agronomically viable and economically desirable hairy canola through both genetic engineering and traditional breeding techniques is a huge accomplishment of our public research institutions, made possible by both government and farmer-directed funding

bodies. However, the remarkable story has not yet had a happy ending. Canola farmers are spending an estimated \$200 million per year on insecticides and still losing millions of dollars’ worth of crop to flea beetle damage while the biodiversity impacts of neonicotinoids continue to mount. The genetics to solve these problems is sitting on the shelf. Why are they not being used?

For an explanation, we have to look back to the early 1990s. Around the same time Dr. Lamb’s research on canola pests was cut, multinational seed companies entered the canola breeding picture. In 1995, Monsanto and Bayer patented and registered Canada’s first genetically modified canola varieties – designed to resist the companies’ own herbicide products, Roundup and Liberty respectively. Since then, public institutions have continued to do canola research, but the last steps -- variety finishing and taking new varieties to market -- have been taken over by private companies. Once on the market, gene patents allow seed companies to collect annual royalties from farmers and force them to purchase seed every year instead of saving and using some of their previous crop for seed.

New canola seed varieties must be registered under the *Seeds Act* before they can be marketed. Since 1995, BASF, Bayer/Monsanto and Pioneer Hi-Bred/Corteva have registered a total of 349 canola varieties. Only a handful of canola varieties have been registered by public institutions during the same period. In 2018 when Bayer purchased Monsanto, the two companies’ varieties accounted for 95% of the canola grown in Canada. A Competition Bureau condition of the deal was Bayer’s Liberty Link system – canola resistant to glufosinate herbicide – had to be sold to another multinational seed/agro-chemical corporation, BASF.

The link between patented herbicide tolerant canola and herbicide sales is more obvious than their connection with seed treatments. Bayer and Syngenta, another multinational seed company, are the world's largest manufacturers of neonicotinoids. In the final AAFC report on Gruber's hairy canola project, her colleague, Dr. Duane Hegedus noted “Most of the major canola breeding companies are also chemical companies, some of whom manufacture chemicals currently used for flea beetle control. [Gruber] was informed that they would not likely be interested in developing technology if it compromised another aspect of their business.”

Whose interests will prevail?

There is overwhelming rationale for using hairy canola varieties in Canadian agriculture. Widespread adoption

(continued on page 4...)

*(Hairy canola, from page 3)*

would reduce both crop losses and the pesticide burden on ecosystems. It would save farmers the expense and risk of using insecticidal seed treatments or sprays. A shift away from insecticides for pest control would keep flea beetles from evolving pesticide resistance, interrupting the pesticide treadmill requiring new formulations of expensive chemical solutions. The climate adaptation effects of the tiny hairs could mean more successful crops and higher incomes for canola farmers in years with difficult growing conditions. Beekeepers are also keen to see an end to insecticide usage on the canola crops their bees visit. By removing much of the flea beetle's food source, its population would drop, which would also benefit vegetable producers and home gardeners who grow brassicas. The money saved would be farmers' pockets to invest in their farms and spend in their communities.

The hairy canola story shows how corporate control of seed affects the land, livelihoods, economy, community, biodiversity and future prospects of farmers. This is also why the seed regulatory system concerns all of us: whether we farm or not, and whether or not we grow crops that use registered seed.

The federal government has just started its Seed Regulatory Modernization process, and plans to bring in new seed regulations in 2022. The corporate seed and agro-chemical lobby will seek to intensify their grip on the

seed system by lobbying for regulatory changes that give them more power and weaken the role of government. During the public consultation process the NFU will be raising awareness about the need to ensure the public interest and common good are the true foundation of our seed system. ▪

#### **For more information:**

- For a history of the development of canola and its eventual capture by multinational corporations, see ***The Rape of Canola*** by Brewster Kneen (book available in public libraries).
- ***Five Decades of Entomology Come to an end: Winnipeg Research Station – Cereal Research Centre, 1957-2013*** - <https://tinyurl.com/y6645vvl>
- Report to funders on **Final Phase Research to Improve "Hairy Canola" trait in *Brassica napus*** <https://tinyurl.com/y4t7xzlp>
- **NFU submission to the PRMA for Special Reviews of Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam** <https://tinyurl.com/y3seutxx>
- **Seed Regulatory Modernization** presentation to CSTA by the CFIA, December 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y5nz56b4>



# Solving climate crisis key to saving family farms: *NFU has lead role in both struggles*

—by Darrin Qualman, NFU Director of Climate Crisis Policy & Action

The greatest threat to Canadian agriculture is climate change. In 2019, global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions probably set another record. Canadian emissions have remained near record highs. On our current course (and the pandemic may cause only a small deviation) Canadian farmers can expect temperature increases of 3.2 to 6.4 degrees Celsius this century. In some regions, farmers may see increases of nearly one degree per decade. If we allow this to occur, farms and ecosystems will be devastated.

Farms are not only threatened by climate change, our farms *contribute* to it. In Canada, about 12 percent of all emissions come from farms and from the production of farm inputs such as nitrogen fertilizer. This percentage omits many emissions, including carbon dioxide released by the destruction of wetlands and removal of trees; methane leaks from the natural gas used to make nitrogen fertilizer; and emissions from transporting farm inputs and products.

It is critical for Canada to slash emissions from *all* sectors, including energy production, transportation, manufacturing, housing, *and agriculture*. There is a consensus that to preserve climate stability, global emissions must fall to near zero within a generation, and that rapid, sustained emission reduction must start *now*. In Canada and globally, agriculture—like every other sector—must be redirected and restructured to become climate- and planet-compatible.

Despite the threats and challenges, there is also much good news. First, catastrophic climate change *can* be averted—by swift, effective action. Second, we have the technologies we need to slash emissions. Third, the actions we need to take are affordable, they will create significant savings for homeowners and other citizens, and they will create millions of well-paying jobs. Fourth, many farmers are already taking action—changing cropping and grazing systems to cut emissions and build soils. Fifth, and most important, the changes that climate change forces farmers to make pave the way for the changes that we want and need. As we restructure and redirect Canadian

agriculture to make it climate-compatible, we also get an opportunity to make it more financially supportive of farm families and less reliant on margin-crimping (and emission-causing) purchased inputs. The acute need to deal with climate change gives us a *lever*—a tool to shift Canadian agricultural and food policies and to make them much more supportive of family farms, adequate farm incomes, and more diverse and sustainable production methods. The pressing need to reduce emissions means we must use fewer inputs. This can loosen the grip of agribusiness corporations and restore farm margins to levels normal before the mid-1980s—margins several times higher than those today. (Between 1937 and 1984, on average, Canadian farmers got to keep 35 cents out of every dollar they earned. Since 1985 the average has been 3 cents.)

In its work to help reduce agricultural emissions, help stabilize the climate, advance needed government policies, and increase farmers' adaptation and sustainability, the NFU is active on many fronts:

## The NFU's work with Farmers for Climate Solutions

The NFU is a founding member of Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS), a coalition of 15 farm and farmer-supporting organizations. With very significant participation by the NFU, in August and September FCS:

- Produced a COVID-recovery report: *A Better Future Starts on the Farm*: <https://farmersforclimatesolutions.ca/s/FCS-Recommendations-for-recovery-from-COVID-19-in-Canadian-agriculture-EN-web.pdf>. FCS staff launched that report, successfully garnering significant media attention.
- Met with both the Federal Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to advance the message that farmers support action on emissions reduction and climate adaptation and that these actions can help Canada in its COVID-recovery efforts.
- Convened a task force to begin quantifying, refining, and prioritizing emission-reducing on-farm measures and supportive government policies. NFU member Ian McCreary is co-chairing that task force.

*(continued on page 6...)*

*(Solving climate crisis key to saving family farms, from page 5)*

## The NFU's own work

In addition to its work within FCS, the NFU's own work in recent months has included:

- Making a dozen presentations on agriculture, emissions, and emission-reduction measures and policies to NFU meetings and also to diverse groups across Canada;
- Hiring a new Climate Change Coordinator to work in British Columbia for the next 18 weeks to disseminate the NFU's climate work throughout BC and to also build engagement and membership in the Lower Mainland region.
- Developing 3 two-page fact sheets:
  1. *Government policies we need in order to support on-farm emissions reduction;*
  2. *Ways NFU members and associate members can help advance our policy work; and*
  3. *Ways that farmers can reduce GHG emissions on their own farms.*

These documents concisely outline the *what* and the *how* of the NFU's work on climate. These can be found on the Climate Campaign page of the NFU's website:

<https://www.nfu.ca/campaigns/climate-change/>

- Writing to Prime Minister Trudeau requesting that he include in the September 23<sup>rd</sup> Speech from the Throne language committing to support farmers to reduce emissions and increase climate adaptation and resilience. Inclusion of this priority in the Speech from the Throne would pave the way for inclusion in Ministers' mandate letters and departmental priority lists.

In coming months the NFU will be developing major reports on climate change and emissions reduction, with topics including: agroecology as a climate solution; a critical look at emission-reducing agricultural technologies; imagining a low-emission food system; climate-compatible cattle systems; and nitrogen fertilizer as an agricultural emissions problem. The NFU will continue its outreach in the forms of webinars and public presentations and social media and work to broaden and accelerate work within our organization. We will be expanding our work to reach farmers, the general public, and policymakers.

## Want to get involved with the NFU's climate work?

NFU members and associate members are encouraged to get involved and help advance our work on climate, emissions, and farm resilience.

The NFU has a new two-page pamphlet outlining how you can join with others in this work. Find that pamphlet at <https://www.nfu.ca/campaigns/climate-change/> Briefly, here are some ways you can become part of this critical work:

- **Learn all you can on these issues.** Read the NFU's report *Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis*. Keep up to date at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca).
- **Join the NFU Climate Committee (email [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca));** work with NFU Board members in your Region; and organize meetings on climate change in your Local or Region—National Office can provide speakers.
- **Use NFU material and other sources to create public content:** social media posts, letters to the editor, op-eds, or presentations.
- **Help educate and activate your MP or MLA/MPP.** Make an appointment to meet, make regular contact, share credible content, and become a trusted source of information.
- **Intervene at the municipal level.** Support local policy initiatives around food procurement, food production, and local food systems.
- **Talk to friends, family, and neighbours.** Share NFU analysis and publications. Organize small-group or town-hall meetings. Ask others to become involved and sign them up as members.
- **Build the movement.** We need to use the classic formula: organize, educate, agitate. We must create a broad-based movement that works to refocus agricultural policies, transform energy and food systems, and move our society toward long-term sustainability. This requires a strong, effective grassroots movement and widespread democratic participation.
- **Be an example.** Make changes in your household or on your farm. See the NFU's pamphlet, *Long-Term Planning for Emissions Reduction on Your Farm: Eight Things You Can Consider* at: <https://www.nfu.ca/campaigns/climate-change/>

## 10 insights into agricultural emissions

1. Globally, the three main greenhouse gases (GHGs) are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O).
2. Canadian farms and the farm-input-manufacturing sector emit about 77 million tonnes of GHGs each year (expressed in terms of carbon-dioxide equivalent).
3. Agricultural emissions are rising—up 22 percent since 1990.
4. In Canadian agriculture, the main emission sources are:
  - a. nitrogen fertilizer production and use (24 million tonnes, mainly N<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub>),
  - b. enteric emissions from cattle (24 million, CH<sub>4</sub>);
  - c. manure, from all species (8 million, CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O);
  - d. combustion of fuels in tractors, other machinery, and electrical powerplants (5 million, CO<sub>2</sub>);
5. Enteric emissions are the methane gas that comes out of the mouths of cattle (and other grazing livestock) as they digest grass.
6. Emissions from nitrogen are rising (up 44 percent between 2006 and 2018) and enteric emissions from livestock are falling (down 20 percent in the same period), largely because the herd is shrinking.
7. Although people think about diesel fuel and tractors when they think about on-farm emissions, fuel use is not a major part. Indeed, manure management produces larger emissions than fuel use.
8. CO<sub>2</sub> is responsible for 70 percent of total global warming, but only about a quarter of Canadian agricultural emissions are CO<sub>2</sub>—the majority is N<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>4</sub>.
9. Soil carbon sequestration is a vitally important soil-health measure, but its capacity to make a significant contribution to the emissions problem may be more limited than often implied.
10. A single measure—maximizing fertilizer-use efficiency—could cut total agricultural emissions by 5-10 percent with no loss of yield. This is just one measure among many.

## More local, regional abattoir capacity needed

In early September, the NFU wrote to the AAFC COVID-19 Roundtable, calling for additional support to address critical capacity issues affecting farmers who rely on seriously backlogged local and regional abattoirs. The \$77 million Emergency Processing Fund announced in the spring was designed for larger meat packing plants to quickly and safely maximize existing capacity and temporarily increase capacity to handle backlogs. With the exception of investment in cold storage, the types of long-term investment it supports will not help increase the numbers of, and/or expand the capacity of regional and local abattoirs.

This year, more Canadians have decided to raise a few animals (mostly hogs) for home consumption and will need to have them butchered; some farms changed from the commodity stream to direct to consumer sales – switching their slaughter plans from federal to provincially inspected facilities; fall culling for herd improvement may be more aggressive than usual in areas with feed shortages; and long-time local

producers have higher demand as a result of consumption shifts due to COVID. For cattle producers, abattoir backlogs can result in higher costs for removal, handling and disposal of Specified Risk Materials if animals pass the 30 month age threshold before slaughter. Without effective intervention to support and expand local and regional kill capacity, particularly for poultry, hogs and cattle, farmers who rely on these establishments will be faced with not only income losses this year, but their ability to serve their customers in the future could be reduced.

The increase in demand for locally produced food, particularly meat, in response to COVID has been widely reported all across Canada. This has the makings of an economic success story – a silver lining in the pandemic's very dark cloud – but serious, targeted investment to create and expand its infrastructure is needed to allow this emerging source of local prosperity to become well established. ▪

For the complete letter, see <https://tinyurl.com/y3ogcu8b>

# Alberta changes legislation to allow more on-farm slaughtering

–by Iain Aitken and Hilary Moore, NFU Livestock Committee members

In July the Government of Alberta introduced changes to their meat inspection regulations to allow more on-farm slaughter. The changes afford an opportunity for more Albertans to buy directly from local farmers at a time when consumers are increasingly worried about food security after COVID-19 exposed the fragility of our national food supply chain. For farmers it offers increased opportunities for them to retain a higher proportion of the retail price of the product they produce.

The amendments allow for the purchase of an animal, with the resulting meat products going for consumption by the purchaser's household. The on-farm slaughter can be performed either by a mobile butcher, the farmer, or by the consumer if they have the necessary skills. The meat is strictly for the purchaser's consumption and cannot be sold, gifted, traded or bartered to others. All meat slaughtered on-farm under the new regulations must be marked *un-inspected - not for sale*.

Farmers wishing to participate need to apply for an Un-inspected Slaughter Operation Licence. This license costs \$100 and is valid for 5 years. There are no limits on how many animals a farmer can sell in this way, however each consumer family is subject to yearly purchasing limits. Initially these are set at 6 cattle, 6 pigs, 6 goats/sheep, and 150 poultry.

There are also plans to introduce a video ante-mortem inspection prior to on-farm slaughter followed by an abattoir post-mortem with an inspector present. It appears this option is intended for use when an animal needs to be immediately euthanized on-farm for welfare reasons, for example of an animal with a broken leg rendering it unfit for transport. Having both the ante- and post-mortem inspection would allow this meat to retain "inspected" status and thus be eligible for sale to commercial food establishments (grocery stores, restaurants, farmers markets etc.) already regulated by Alberta Health Services.

While these regulatory changes have been largely welcomed by farmers and consumers, there are drawbacks. The biggest impediment to wider adoption is the fact you can only sell whole animals. This may work for chickens, but it does not work so well for beef as many families cannot buy, store and use a whole beef animal. In

addition, if the purchaser wishes to hang (dry age) the carcass or have some of it further processed, into sausages for example, it is unclear where these operations would be performed. The regulations allow a meat purchaser to take the carcass to a provincially inspected plant for further processing, but some plant operators do not allow un-inspected meat in their plants as there is a cost to maintaining the required segregation of inspected and un-inspected meat. With already lengthy waiting lists at most provincially inspected plants, it does not appear to be capacity to take in additional un-inspected meat for further processing.



Farmers that currently direct-market meat to consumers in the form of cuts or portions of a carcass are not able to use on-farm slaughter. To retain the inspected meat status necessary to legally sell cuts to consumers, these animals must be slaughtered and inspected at one of the provincially licensed facilities.

As an interesting comparison, the state of Wyoming also recently adjusted their on-farm slaughter rules. Regulatory changes introduced in July under the Wyoming Food Freedom Act allow farmers to sell on-farm slaughtered meat in smaller quantities - right down to individual cuts. This is achieved through an animal share agreement whereby a farmer is able to sell an ownership interest in his animal to a consumer along with a boarding provision which entitles the consumer to a share of the meat once an animal is harvested.