

Food Safety Sentinel

SPECIAL EDITION Newsletter for Alberta Agriculture's Provincially Licensed Meat Operators

Industry Day 2015 Highlights Modernization of Meat Inspection

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's (ARD's) Food Safety and Animal Welfare Division hosted their annual Industry Day event at the Sheraton Red Deer hotel on April 11. Industry Day is an opportunity for ARD and its government partners to meet face-to-face with the provincial slaughter industry to discuss the activities, programs, and initiatives of government and our partners. It is a day for us to gather together, continue to build relationships, and learn from each other.

72 participants attended Industry Day 2015, including 14 ARD staff members, to learn more about the modernization of meat inspection and the various opportunities available to Alberta's provincially licensed meat facilities.

The event began with a warm welcome from both Jamie Curran, Assistant Deputy Minister of ARD's Food Safety and Technology Sector and, Dr. Jeff Stewart, Executive Director of the Food Safety and Animal Welfare Division. Both speakers thanked industry for a job well done and discussed the importance of our partnership and how much ARD values the industry's skill and professionalism.

The keynote speaker this year was Scott Dundas, ARD Processing Labour Recruitment Manager. He spoke about the [Agri-Industry Workforce Development Initiative](#) and the services ARD provides around employment retention and recruitment. Dundas emphasized that retaining employees is easier than recruiting them, and that sharing knowledge with employees will support growth within the workplace. Dundas also participated in the lunchtime opportunity fair and was available to answer industry member's questions.

After the morning break, Ken Fahner, ARD Research Project Coordinator, presented on a new project the Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc is working on: the Healthy and Enhanced Meat Research Program. As our population ages and health awareness and perceptions change, so do the types of products Canadians are purchasing. Fahner spoke about some potential opportunities available for the provincial meat industry through the Centre, including:

- Reduced-sodium products
- Additive/preservative-free ("clean label") products
- Gluten- and allergen-free products
- Enhancement of meat with omega-3 fatty acids
- Enhanced safety of ready-to-eat meat products

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Mike Hofer (left) from Plain Lake Colony and Scott Dundas (right), ARD Processing Labour Recruitment Manager.

May 2015

**Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Food Safety & Animal Welfare Division**

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Next, Darlene Dittrich, Director of ARD's Meat Inspection Branch, spoke about modernization of meat inspection and future Alberta Agriculture projects.



Darlene Dittrich, Director of ARD's Meat Inspection Branch, introduces the modernization principles and projects.

The presentation included discussion about how sampling and testing will work, who sees the results, how privacy is protected, and what happens if something is found. Also, an update on the provincial baseline survey (carcass swabbing for red meat) was provided, announced to begin September 2015.

During the lunch hour, opportunity booths were available to industry at the Industry Day opportunity fair. The Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA), Alberta Livestock Meat Agency (ALMA), and Alberta Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) were just a few of the participants.

After lunch and the opportunity fair, Thressa Bens from the Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge spoke about Project Protein. This program is designed to encourage food bank donations directly from the livestock industry. Producers transport animals to a participating abattoir, where the Interfaith Food Bank is responsible for all processing costs, and producers receive a charitable tax receipt. For more information about this project, please refer to September 2014 Issue—[Project Protein: Providing protein to food bank families across Southern Alberta.](#)

Next, Kimberly Comeau, ARD Food Safety Specialist, came to the podium to talk about the communication tools and projects happening in the Food Safety and

Animal Welfare Division, such as the [Food Safety Sentinel](#) newsletter, the [Food Safety Alberta website](#) and the [interactive online map](#) of provincially licensed meat facilities in Alberta.

Finally, Darlene Dittrich spoke about the specifics of modernization in poultry and what it will look like for industry. She explained that inspection processes will change to adapt to our evolving understanding of the risks of foodborne pathogens. Current inspection techniques focus on visual detection, and pathogens are invisible to the naked eye. Modernized inspection will focus on swabbing and testing to detect those pathogens.

Jeff Stewart wrapped up the day with closing remarks and thanks to industry and everyone who participated in the event.

To view the [Industry Day 2015 presentations](#), please visit: agriculture.alberta.ca/foodsafety then go to the Meat Facilities page.



Omar Abed, Mohamed Al-Sharif, and Baudin Ametov (left to right) from Redwater Livestock and Meat.

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