

Advancing Dairy's Traceability

Dairy rallies first to national challenge to meet traceability targets

Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of Agriculture staged their annual Meeting in July. Here, issues affecting ongoing support for farmers and the agricultural and agri-food industry were addressed.

A highlight from the meeting was the ministers' commitment to move forward with a comprehensive, phased-in **National Agriculture and Food Traceability System (NAFTS)** beginning with livestock and poultry. They feel this is critical to manage animal health and food safety issues, as well as expand market access and drive efficiencies.

This influential group unanimously agreed that a program must be in place for the most progressive sector—livestock—by 2011. Moreover, traceability efforts would be supported by national funding and new legislation, which will comprise standards and an audit system.

While coincidental, but uncannily timely, Holstein Canada had already issued invitations for an exploratory meeting. In the absence of a national-unified approach, Secretary-Manager Keith Flaman stated, "It was time to take action on behalf of dairy producers."

With the government announcement adding additional impetus and



DFC's Réjean Bouchard serves as Chairman of the National Dairy Traceability Committee.

confidence to nationalize and move forward quickly, the group decided that a **National Dairy Traceability Committee** would develop a 1) national traceability **vision** for the dairy industry and producers, and 2) industry **strategic plan** to implement a national traceability system. This would include steps required, financial components, identification of industry participants, and corresponding roles and responsibilities.

Headed by Dairy Farmers of Canada, the Committee would consist of reps from DFC, breed organizations, and milk recording agencies. In developing its plan, the Committee would consult with traceability leaders CCIA, AAFC, CFIA, ATQ, and other provincial agencies, as required.

Dairy farmers are well on

their way to meeting traceability requirements, in 2011, if they:

- 1) utilize NLID/ATQ RFID tags [and replacements],
- 2) record all daily, herd events,
- 3) note animal acquisitions, and
- 4) document sales and disposals.

Much of the required traceability data already exists in electronic format within dairy's extensive network.

While international standards and principles should be followed, each country in the world is responsible for designing and implementing its own individual ID and full-food, traceability program.

Beyond that, each **sector** e.g. dairy, beef, poultry, sheep is responsible for its own strategy to achieve traceability.

Dairy will progress under the newly-named **National Dairy Traceability Committee** to meet its 2011 target date.

Other species will be expected to implement traceability in keeping with federal and provincial legislation.

- NAFTS—National Agriculture and Food Traceability System
- DFC—Dairy Farmers of Canada
- DHI—Dairy Herd Improvement
- CFIA—Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- AAFC—Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- CCIA—Canadian Cattle Identification Agency
- ATQ—Agri-Traçabilité Québec inc.



Among the invited people to the traceability exploratory meeting were (l-r) André Dagenais (AAFC), Jamie Miller (AAFC), Neil Petreny (CanWest DHI), Brian Sterling (OnTrace), and Keith Flaman (dairy breeds).