

Education Day Delivers Optimism

There is reason for hope in rural communities and resource industries including B.C.'s beef cattle industry. That was the message Bruce Vincent delivered to a packed house at the BC Cattlemen's Association Education Day in Merritt, B.C. on Saturday, May 23. Over 130 people filled the room to hear keynote speaker Bruce Vincent, made possible by BC Strategic Outreach Initiative, deliver his address "With Vision, There is Hope" and hear from four high profile industry leaders during "The Long Game" Industry Panel. This year's Education Day is part of the Beef Industry Technology Transfer Pilot program, with funding from *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The pilot is combining in-person extension events with innovative technology to deliver event information to a broader audience. Videos of the Education Day event will be made available for future viewing.

If you wondered what wisdom a third generation American logger could offer a room full of cattle ranchers in British Columbia, meet motivational speaker and businessman **Bruce Vincent** from Libby, Montana. In Vincent's engaging opening address, he captivated the audience with his perspective on the challenges the American forest industry faced during the rise of environmental activism and the industry's missteps in reacting to activism. He offered the lessons he learned from those experiences and put forward ideas for how they could be applied more broadly to all forms of activism targeted against industry. In particular, he introduced the importance of addressing public concerns about industry practices through "Truth, Trust, Transparency." The three Ts are essential to maintaining the social license to operate in a world where consumer demands can drive policy development and regulation. One of Vincent's key messages was that people

involved in the industry need to lead, not fight, the discussion about your industry.

Moving from Vincent's insightful and inspiring message, "The Long Game" Industry Panel focussed on some of the key issues facing the future of the cattle industry featuring demographics, research, sustainability and market demand. The messages brought forward set the stage for a discussion of what producers need to be doing today to be successful in the next 10, 20, and 30 years.

Dr. Murray Jelinski, Alberta Chair in Beef Cattle Health and Production Medicine from the University of Saskatchewan, opened the panel with a realistic look at the changing demographic of cattle ranchers across Canada. Since 2006, the number of Canadian cow-calf producers and farms both decreased by 25 per cent. Perhaps more importantly, the age of producers is increasing; over 62 per cent of producers are over the age of 50 and only four per cent are



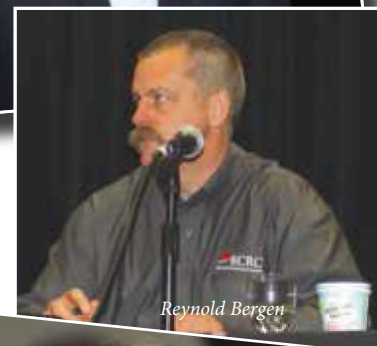
Keynote Speaker Bruce Vincent



Murray Jelinski



Brett Stuart



Reynold Bergen



Cherie Copithorne-Barnes

under 31 years old. Today, there is only one young producer entering the industry for every seven nearing retirement.

While the demographics have undeniably changed in the cattle industry, demand has not. **Dr. Reynold Bergen**, Science Director with the Beef Cattle Research Council, noted that while we have been on a downward trend in cattle numbers across Canada, the population is growing. It is expected that we will need to produce 50 per cent more food globally to feed a growing population worldwide by 2050. Reynold was optimistic that beef will be part of the growing food production if we can meet the production efficiencies required and meet the demands of the consumer.

One of the common challenges raised during the industry panel was, how will the industry meet the expectations of the consuming public? In her presentation, **Cherie Copithorne-Barnes**, Chair of Canadian Round Table for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) introduced the Verified Sustainable Beef concept. CRSB is a collaboration of 40 stakeholders from across the beef value chain including the beef industry, restaurants and retailers in an effort to understand the demands of the consuming public and ensure that the beef industry can meet the needs of the consumer. According to Copithorne-Barnes, Canada is already well positioned to deliver a verified beef system because we already have the tools necessary to verify indicators in the five key areas including natural resources, people and the community, animal health and welfare,

food and efficiency, and innovation.

The Industry Panel concluded with an optimistic look at the strong global demand for beef combined with a tight supply delivered by **Brett Stuart**, CEO of



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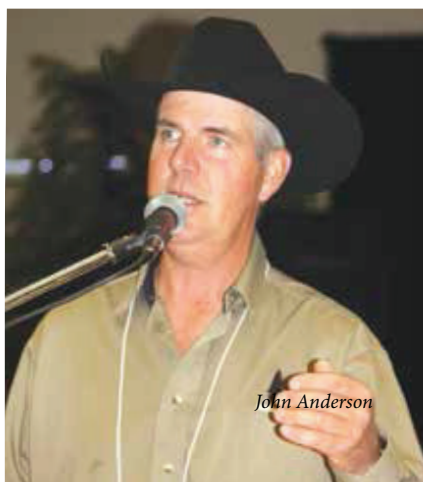
Global AgriTrends. Stuart noted that there are both global and local opportunities to grow the Canadian cattle industry. He offered two key pieces of advice to the audience. In a world with strong consumer demands around production, produce what makes you the best return. A few million consumers may demand specialized production practices but billions worldwide need conventionally produced, and priced, food. Stuart also urged producers to know how their calves performed at the feedlot through to slaughter. He said, "You cannot manage what you don't measure."

Education Day wrapped up with closing remarks from Bruce Vincent. In a presentation that delivered on its promise to bring both laughter and tears, Vincent concluded the Education Day

with a call to action. Vincent encouraged the audience to get involved in conversations with local non-agricultural members of the community and to add one hour of activism each week to their business plans. He argued that inaction could jeopardize the social license and freedom to operate and the heritage and promise of animal agriculture culture could be lost.

Enthusiastic Response to Education Day

Reaction to the Education Day was exceptionally enthusiastic as was demonstrated by the strong response to the short survey available following the event. An estimated 45 per cent of the audience, 66 participants, completed the survey. Overwhelmingly, participant response was positive. Eighty-eight percent of respondents selected the top category in the survey questions related to the usefulness of the event and when asked to rate the event. They found the event to be "excellent" and "absolutely" useful, the other 12 per cent of respondents referred to the event as "good" and "somewhat" useful. (See statistic on Page 34)



John Anderson



Haley Rutherford

Thank you to our Education Day Event Sponsors

BC Strategic Outreach Initiative



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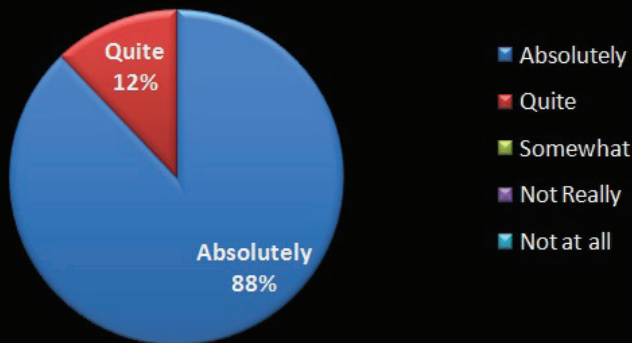
Beef Cattle Industry Development Fund



McGillivray Land & Livestock.

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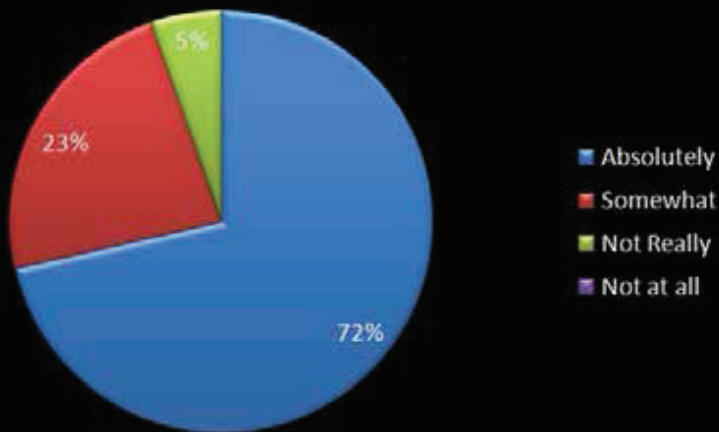
Overall, were you satisfied with the content and organization of this event?



Event Satisfaction

88 per cent indicated that they were “absolutely” satisfied and the other 12 per cent indicated that they were “quite” satisfied with the content and organization for this event. Zero respondents selected the satisfaction levels “somewhat”, “not really” or “not at all.”

Did you learn anything that you think you will implement in your own operation?

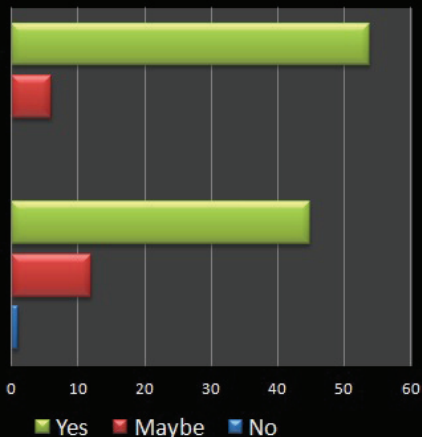


Implement on Own Operation

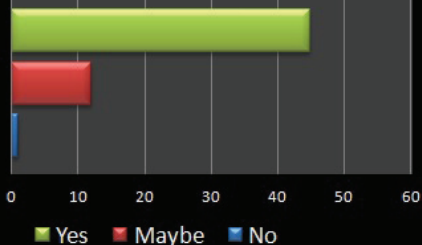
In responding to questions about the practical nature of the event, over 50 per cent responded that they believed the information learned at the Education Day would impact their ranch competitiveness and 72 per cent believed that they would implement information from the event on their own operation.

As part of BCCA's Technology Transfer Pilot Program, we are creating some videos from today's event.

Would you recommend that your peers (not in attendance today) watch video segments from this event at a later date?



Would you find it valuable to go back and watch short segments from the event?



Videos from Event

One of the goals of the Technology Transfer Project is to provide producers with a variety of mechanisms, including innovative technology, to access relevant industry information. With that in mind, the event was videotaped with the intention of creating videos for viewing by producers that could not be in attendance. Participant feedback indicated both a strong desire to view video segments from the education day (58 per cent) and to share video segments with others not in attendance (60 per cent). Immediately following the event, many ranchers requested the video to share with their family and with their local associations.

The audiences' positive response indicates a strong desire for other education events. Many indicated that they would like to see either a follow-up event to the Education Day or other forums on a variety of beef industry topics. Through the Technology Transfer Pilot Project, BCCA has two additional events in the planning stages that will focus on 1) forage development and 2) environment. Watch for updates on those events in the coming months.