



## **LRIC 2023 in Review**

Last year saw LRIC take on several new roles based on member needs. While deadstock is not a new issue, it warranted additional effort and so LRIC took on a special project on behalf of members. This work documented the whole picture and led to a meeting of all parties involved... a simple yet critical step. A second project is starting focused on centralized pickup centers with a goal of making pickup costs reasonable for farmers.

On behalf of members, we met with the President and Vice President of Research at the University of Guelph to express concern about communication of the University's daycare centre to switch to a vegan diet. Arising from that meeting, we hosted these individuals on two day-long tours of beef, dairy, swine and aquaculture farms to highlight the importance of and innovation on Ontario livestock farms. Another session is being organized for spring focused on poultry.

LRIC was instrumental in the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute's documentation of the importance of the livestock sector to Canada's economy, environment and food security. Their full white paper, and a condensed version are accessible on our website ([www.livestockresearch.ca](http://www.livestockresearch.ca)). This work will be invaluable to livestock sectors as they work with funders and policy makers.

Universities, governments and industry groups all face the challenge of hiring staff with farm experience. Our mentorship program for early career faculty is in its fourth year and has built better industry connections for twenty faculty. This year we extended our efforts to "get some dirt on boots" and build connections across academia, government and industry by launching a structured farm tour program. Our first trip was to a dairy farm near Woodstock, and it is clearly an effort needed by all.

Getting research into practice (GRIP) remains a big challenge. We co-hosted a second GRIP roundtable, bringing researchers, government staff and industry together to acknowledge the challenge we face and to build new and better approaches. Our own efforts in GRIP include writing articles for members organizations, BFO included, for their producer magazine; regular articles in Farmtario; our monthly newsletter; several speaking engagements; participating in the Canadian Beef Technology Transfer Network and an active social media presence.

We remain very active with members and government regarding research priorities. Each year we provide a cross sector analysis of research priorities for Ontario livestock. This past year, University of Guelph faculty submitted 37 livestock research proposals for Alliance funding. LRIC reviewed all as well as coordinated additional industry reviewer input (about 90 in total),

all of which is considered as we participate in the review panels to decide which project proposals receive funding.

We enjoy strong support from members as well as OMAFRA from whom we receive funding through a five-year transfer payment agreement. We were successful in our request for additional funding which will carry on until March 31, 2028. With this new funding, we hired Kelly Somerville, our Manager, Member Relations. Kelly has a beef background and work experience with Cargill, OFA and OSCIA.

Our Board approved a new strategic plan with a clear purpose (“Drive Innovation”) and a focus on member services. Our International Research Advisory Committee gathered in Canada and met with industry, government and researchers. Their mission for the coming year is to identify what we all need to be doing today and into the future to ensure that, thirty years from now, livestock farmers will say “We got tremendous value from the research facilities.” That value doesn’t just happen, we need to collaborate to make it happen. Central to that success will be funding and industry groups will need to be active in their efforts to ensure adequate funding from all parties.

If you have questions on any of our initiatives, please contact us.