

APRIL 2019

Weather wise, I am not sure whether March went out as a Lion or a lamb, as the saying goes, but from a pig price perspective, it sure went out as a lion. The 100% base market hog contract price, per 100kg dressed, for Friday, March 29th, was \$29.17 higher than the previous Friday. I have been keeping records for almost 25 years, and that is the greatest one week increase that I have ever recorded. That kind of increase is not sustainable, but all pig producers are grateful to the difference that price makes to their margins.

NOTICE – Please take a few minutes to plan your feed requirements for the Easter long weekend!

We will be closed Good Friday - April 19th, 2019

JEFF BUCHANAN

Commodities

In looking at my Newsletter from last March, it was apparent that the markets saw significant drops in commodity values a year ago. This March, things were a little more stable. At least until Friday, March 29th. Up until the USDA released their Stocks and Planting Intentions reports, values had been fairly stable. Corn was up \$3, Soy was up \$4 and SRW was flat. The pre-report thoughts were that more soybeans and less Corn would be planted. The USDA threw this out the window. The predicted increase in Corn plantings coupled with higher than expected Stocks on Hand, caused a sell off and the bushel price of Corn fell over 17 cents/bu. (\$6.70/mt) in a little over 2 hours. I think their predictions need to be taken with a grain of salt as there is speculation that the USDA is grossly underestimating the damage done by the recent massive flooding in the U.S. Midwest. Huge amounts of stored Corn are currently under water and the thinking that all fields will dry up and be ready for Corn planting is certainly optimistic. If farmers can't get in their fields, they will switch to Soybeans.

Looking forward, I believe there could be volatility in both the Corn and Soybean values in the next couple of months.

THE DAIRY TEAM

Well, another winter will soon be behind us and spring is just around the corner. With spring comes a busy time of year, hauling manure, spreading fertilizer and planting our small grains, corn, and soybeans. Hopefully our weather cooperates.

This might be a little early to talk about forages, but after your planting season comes the harvesting of your 1st cut Haylage. Remember your forages are a major source of nutrients needed for maintenance, production, and reproduction of your dairy herd. When formulating diets for dairy cattle, the quality and amount of forages needed to meet nutrient and fibre requirements are always our first consideration. The digestibility of the fibre in the forage will be the limiting factor in the amount of forage you can feed. High quality forages allow you to meet the animals' requirements while feeding less purchased feed. Your goal should be to have an RFV (relative feed value) of 150 or better. Factors that will affect your forage quality include maturity at cutting, forage mix, the weather the crop was grown in, and the storage of the haylage.

I hope everyone has a great spring.

JAN MORRIS

Workplace Fatigue

Fatigue increases the risk of injuries or other accidents, including in the workplace. The cure for fatigue is sleep, but it's best not to get fatigued in the first place – easier said than done. Be aware of workers who show signs of tiredness or sleepiness, memory lapses, difficulty concentrating or slower reaction times. Fatigue is a workplace hazard, and it needs to be managed in the same way as other hazards. As an employer, try to:

- Manage your work environment and practices to minimize factors that could contribute to fatigue;
- Make sure your workers understand why they need to manage the risk of fatigue and how to minimize their fatigue level;
- Encourage workers to manage personal out of work fatigue risk factors;
- Try to vary job tasks so workers stay engaged and alert;
- Allow workers to take regular breaks.

Ways we can all reduce fatigue:

- Make sleep a priority. Have a regular bedtime routine; make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and comfortable; get treatment for sleep disorders;
- Choose a healthy diet that includes light, nutritious meals. Heavy meals make you drowsy;
- Drink plenty of water; minimize caffeine and alcohol intake;
- Know how to recognize signs of fatigue so you can take a break or have a power nap.

Source: www.mhca.mb.ca/worksafely

JASON ELG

Being Ready

Hog futures look a lot different than they did a month ago. I think everyone had been waiting to see a price increase caused by a shortage of pork due to African Swine Fever – and now that it is here, is everyone actually ready for it? There are 2 things a producer has to do to be ready for an upswing in futures before even considering whether to lock in some production – have the pipeline full of pigs and know their cost of production. Preparing during average or down markets gives the big reward during the high markets. Our team at MFS has helped many producers formulate and execute plans for maximizing use of facilities (full pipeline and greatest production efficiency) and discovering cost of production. Establishing breeding targets, sourcing for customers purchasing pigs, doing batch closeouts on an ‘all-in, all-out’ or ‘continuous flow’ situation are just a few ways we can lend a hand. Let us know where we might be able to assist your farm in getting ready for an upswing – our passion is seeing our customers succeed!

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As always, thank you for your business. By the time our next newsletter comes to you, there may be some cereal grains and corn in the ground. You will be even more pressed for time once you start to put in your crops. Take a minute now and re-read Jan's Fatigue article above. Be safe.

Sincerely,

Mark

“Goals are dreams with deadlines.”