

February 2019

Canadians like to dwell about the weather – I won't in this newsletter, because we all know what wild fluctuations we have been through so far in '19. Hopefully the majority of the gophers were correct, and better weather is coming our way soon.

Surprisingly, those left in the pig producing business don't complain much about prices (or at least don't complain like many used to throughout my career). However, they do have reason to be grumpy. The forecasts of better times because of assumed dramatic increases in pork purchased by China, or from ASF breaks elsewhere in the world, or from various new trade agreements, have proven to be premature. Cash prices are wallowing again as I write this, and unfortunately are heading south again, despite a weaker Canadian \$ the past 4 days. The hog futures are having another sour day, and summer price forecasts have eroded significantly. Those that trade in the futures market are jittery, because conditions could change in a heartbeat, with any changes in the trade or pig health or political landscape.

Jeff Buchanan

If one was merely looking at Chicago Board of Trade futures for the month of January, one would assume that Commodity values were largely unchanged during the month of January. While this was mostly true for Corn (down \$3/mt) and Wheat (down \$2/mt), it was certainly not the case for Soymeal which was down \$30/mt. The biggest reason for the big drop in the Soymeal price was a 3-cent appreciation in the CDN \$. Basis levels dropped significantly. While it would make sense that the Corn and Wheat basis should also have dropped, this was not the case. Corn basis in particular has stubbornly refused to drop. The only thing that I believe can explain this is that the VOM issue is going to continue to cause cautiousness in the market.

We are also starting to see weather issues in South America starting to have some influence. As is normally the case this time of the year, some areas are a little dry and some areas are too wet. While large crops are still being anticipated, this is something to keep an eye on.

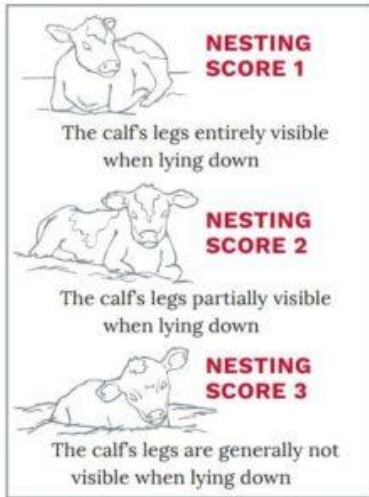
Going forward, hopefully World political climates improve and thus stop having such a major (and unknown) effect on Commodity markets. Favorable weather patterns in South America would also be a blessing.

THE DAIRY TEAM

Building a Strong Foundation

In keeping with our theme of Building a Strong Foundation/Building a Strong Calf, the topic of winter management is of great importance. During winter months some of the challenges include respiratory disease, scours, and growth rate.

Deep straw bedding is one solution that can help minimize these challenges. Deep straw bedding allows the calf to nest and trap warm air around their body. Just as cows make more milk when they spend more time lying down, research has proven that calves grow more when more time is spent lying down.



Your goal should be Score 3. The addition of calf coats can bump the score up by one.

Feeding free-choice water to pre-weaned calves in the winter improves average daily gain (ADG) from birth to weaning by 33%, compared to calves receiving no water. According to New York calf and heifer specialist Sam Leadley, this increase is due to an increase in calf starter consumed by the calves with access to water. That increase in calf starter intake drives an increase in rumen development and immunity which allows calves to grow more and fight off diseases.

Deep straw bedding and free choice water, two musts in winter weather calf raising.

Jan Morris

Snow Shovelling Safety

Shovelling snow is an often necessary, if not popular, winter task. There are some things you can do to work safely and avoid injury.

- Avoid shovelling if you're not in good physical shape. It can be a strain on your heart and back.
- Warm up before you start with some stretching and flexing exercises.
- Use the right tool for the task. A snow shovel should be light, about 1.5 kg., and the blade should not be too large. The handle should be long enough so you don't have to stoop to shovel.
- Dress for the job in several layers of warm, lightweight clothing. Wear a hat that covers your ears. Gloves should be light and flexible and give you a good grip. Boots should be warm, water-resistant and high-cut, and provide good traction.
- Pace, don't race. Shovelling snow in heavy-duty clothing can be as strenuous as weightlifting. The trick is to shovel efficiently without getting fatigued.
- Push - don't lift if possible. If you must throw it, take only as much snow as you can easily lift.
- Face - don't twist. Turn your feet in the direction you're throwing. Avoid throwing snow over your shoulder or to the side.
- Consider using a snow scoop to push the snow instead of lifting if the location allows.
- Take breaks if your task is lengthy. Drink some warm, non-alcoholic fluids. If the weather is very cold and windy, shovel for 15 minutes then take a 15-minute break.

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Be safe out and about. As always, thank you for your business.

Sincerely,

Mark