



New Livestock Extension Services Unit at your service...

The Agriculture Branch is developing a livestock extension program to assist and support Yukon livestock producers. The new unit offers valuable livestock education programs, farm visits and responds to information requests. The unit hopes to build a strong relationship with livestock producers and keep them informed on livestock-related topics of local or national importance. The Livestock Extension Services unit aims to connect livestock producers with other industry members to help grow their business and connect to their target audience.

Meet Livestock Extension Services unit's team

The core team for the unit are the Livestock Health Technicians - Bastien Ipas and Hanna Fish. They work closely with the Department of Environment's Animal Health Unit, primarily with Dr. Michelle Thompson of the Veterinary Services Program.

Bastien has a diverse background in local and international agriculture. He has a Master's Degree in Agriculture with a specialization in livestock and food industry from Bordeaux, France. Bastien joined the Agriculture Branch in 2017 and is the territory's primary meat inspector.

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To support the growing industry, the Agriculture Branch hired Hanna in July 2021 as a secondary meat inspector. Hanna holds a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Biotechnology with a concentration in Agri. Business from the University of Lethbridge, Alberta. She has extensive experience in large cattle production through her family farm. Through her degree's Co-Op program, she worked at the Lethbridge Research and Development Centre in ruminant nutrition and at the Perlich Bros Auction Market.

Available services: on-site visit and assessments

The Livestock Extension Services team can assist livestock producers by conducting on-site visits. These visits can establish a base line of husbandry, health, and welfare of the animals. During the unit's initial visit, producers can showcase their animals and property and discuss how their operation works and any issues or ideas for improvements. The unit can help by proposing customized solutions relevant and applicable to issues flagged by the producer.

Other services

The Livestock Extension Services unit also offers the following services:

- testing feed and producing a nutritional analysis (done by out-of-territory consultants);
- providing information to assist livestock producers in their day-to-day operations;
- offering educational information through workshops, information sheets, handbooks;
- communicating relevant livestock information through the Agriculture Branch's InFARMatIon products and distribution channels; and
- responding to information requests or concerns.

Contact the Livestock unit

Contact the Agriculture Branch's Livestock Extension Services unit by emailing agriculture-livestock@yukon.ca or calling 867-667-5838 or toll free: 1-800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred.

Director's Message

Thank you for welcoming me back as the Director of Agriculture Branch.

I am excited to be working with you on our upcoming opportunities and challenges. I want to build on our work over the past few years to overcome some key issues and plan for the future of the Yukon's agriculture sector.

My first month with the Agriculture Branch has been busy getting caught up, preparing for the season ahead and planning longer term. Over the summer, the Agriculture Branch's staff are working on many program areas like the veterinary services program, avian influenza, the next agricultural funding programs to replace the CAP (Canadian Agricultural Partnership), livestock extension services, lands programing and research trials. More information on these topics are found in this newsletter.

The branch is also working on a number of challenges including winter abattoir/slaughter services and damages caused by elk. We will communicate updates to you on these issues as we progress. The Animal Health Unit and the Agriculture Branch will continue to provide information on avian influenza and the sheep and goat control order. If you have questions on any these matters, contact either of us, our numbers are in the contact section of the newsletter.

I wanted to thank the previous Agriculture Branch Director Bobbie Milnes for his dedicated work over the past year. Bobbie pushed for progress on many files like the negotiations for the next CAP funding program, launching a pilot project of an expanded Yukon Grown program and dealing with the matters of the day.

I hope everyone has a productive and safe season. We welcome you to contact us anytime to discuss your issues and needs.

Kirk Price
Director, Agriculture Branch

Avian Flu

Protecting your birds

The Government of Yukon confirmed that the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus has been found in wild migratory birds in the territory. Read the Chief Veterinary Officer for Disease Monitoring's [statement](#) issued on May 27, 2022.

Why is this important

This strain of the avian flu virus causes severe illness and a high death rate in birds. While rare, the virus can spread to other mammals such as domestic livestock, house pets or wildlife.

The avian flu is a concern for all Yukon bird owners:

- commercial poultry and egg producers;
- backyard flock owners, even 1 or 2 hens or other birds raised for meat or eggs;
- owners of birds (pets, hobby, show and ornamental, sport);
- people who feed wild birds; and
- domestic pigs farmers.

Infections of mammals by avian flu are rare and exposure does not always result in illness. The virus can spread from direct and close contact with infected birds or contaminated areas.

More information is available at yukon.ca/avian-flu

What to do

You can reduce the risk of your birds catching the virus by:

- implementing strict [biosecurity practices](#) for commercial poultry producers;
- preventing contact with wild birds or carcasses;
- cleaning coops, water dishes and feeders as well as your clothing and boots;
- avoiding having bird feeders close to poultry barns; and
- keeping birds or poultry products in one farm instead of transferring them.
- keeping pigs separate and avoid all contact with poultry or birds.

Find out how to protect your birds: [Protect your flock from bird flu](#) from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Watch for symptoms that show-up in infected birds. The symptoms progress to death in 24 to 48 hours and the mortality is near 100 per cent. Read the information update for a list of symptoms. Refer to the [Avian influenza – Information for poultry producers in the Yukon](#).

If you suspect that the virus is in your flock, it is important that you report it to your veterinarian or the Animal Health Unit at 867-667-5600 or animalhealth@yukon.ca. You can also complete the Government of Yukon's [reportable hazard form](#). This will be sent to the Animal Health Unit.

If you find sick or dead wild birds, report it to the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525 or yukon.ca/TIPP. Conservation officers will remove the bird or carcass and do tests to confirm if the virus is present.

What happens next

Reporting the potential presence of the avian flu means that the Government of Yukon may put a quarantine order in place. The quarantine order prevents the virus from spreading. A quarantine order is required for farmers and producers to access compensation.

Contact

Agriculture Branch

Email: agriculture-livestock@yukon.ca

Phone: 867-667-5600 or toll-free -800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred.

Animal Health Unit

Email: animalhealth@yukon.ca

Phone: 867-667-5838 or toll-free 1-800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred.

Poultry health and biosecurity

If you missed the presentation on poultry health and biosecurity, you can watch Dr. Gigi Lin of Canadian Poultry Consultants' presentation [here](#). Video available until July 15, 2022.

New veterinary services program available

The Government of Yukon has improved its Veterinary Services Program and launched a new one-year pilot program to better meet producers' needs. Veterinary services are available for producers raising livestock for food or fibre and is free for those who enroll in the program.

The Veterinary Services Program improvements include:

- a telemedicine service available anywhere in the territory with a cellular or Wi-Fi connection to make it easier for farmers to get veterinary advice;
- providing vaccines, parasite treatments and prescription medicines at no cost to farmers; and
- \$1,000 per premises per year to cover the costs of private veterinarian services.

We encourage farmers to register to the Veterinary Services Program to access these services. All previously registered participants are being automatically enrolled in the new pilot program.

What is telemedicine?

Telemedicine allows farmers to consult directly with a veterinarian directly using a phone or digital platform. This can include a cell phone app, emails, text messages or video calls.

The veterinarian uses the livestock owner's observations along with photos and/or videos to help assess the animal and provide expert advice.

Veterinarians can help with:

- diagnostic dilemmas (What's wrong with my animal? Is this normal? Why did my animal die?);
- caring for neonatal and young animals (How do I keep young animals healthy? How do I set up them up for life-long health?);
- breeding and pregnancy (What animals should I breed and how? Is my animal pregnant? How do I improve reproductive success?);
- parasite control (Do my animals have parasites? How do I treat for parasites?); and
- preventative medicine and vaccinations (What vaccines or supplements do my animals need? How can I protect my herd/flock from contagious illness?).

Veterinary program limits

The Veterinary Services Program is not available for after-hours emergency calls or for surgeries. Contact private veterinarians for these situations.

Planning for emergencies and help with unexpected costs

The Veterinary Services Program can help you plan for emergencies.

If you have an emergency and need a private veterinarian to attend on-site, the Veterinary Services Program offers funding that covers up to \$1,000 in private veterinarian costs.

In cases where private veterinarians are not available to attend an emergency, livestock owners must be prepared to humanely euthanize animals that are suffering or in distress. The Veterinary Services Program can help you plan for these types of situations.

Sign-up to benefit

Farmers must enroll in the Veterinary Services Program to benefit from its services. You will need a premises identification account prior to enrolling in the Veterinary Services Program.

Find instructions on how to get a premises identification account and how to sign-up to the Veterinary Services Program at: Access to the [Veterinary Services Program for farmers](#).

Contact the Veterinary Services Program by calling 867-667-5600 or 1-800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred or sending an email to animalhealth@yukon.ca.

Update on new agriculture funding programs

As many of you know, the Government of Yukon's Agriculture Branch is engaged with its provincial and territorial counterparts across the country in negotiating for new agricultural funding programs to start in 2023.

As part of the process, the Government of Yukon sought input from farmers, food producers and individuals involved in the agriculture sector. We hired Upland Agricultural Consulting to engage directly with the agriculture industry and we also did a 60-day public engagement that closed on May 30, 2022.

Next steps

Upland Agricultural Consulting will deliver a Multi-Year Development Plan with recommendations. We will make the report publicly available on yukon.ca. The Multi-Year Development Plan will be used as a guiding document for both industry and the Agriculture Branch.

We will also produce a What We Heard document from the public engagement process. Once finalized, we will post it on yukon.ca/engagements.

We will will these documents to inform our policy decisions and direct our federal-provincial-territorial negotiations for the new agricultural funding programs to replace the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program.

Milestones for Next Policy Framework

In the meantime, we continue negotiations with the federal government and expect a multi-lateral agreement to be signed in summer 2022.

With a multi-lateral agreement in place, the Government of Yukon will start one-on-one negotiations with the Government of Canada on funding for specific Yukon agricultural programs.

These negotiations will culminate in the signing of a bi-lateral agreement in winter 2022/2023. We anticipate launching the new agricultural funding programs in spring 2023.

Deadline extended to enrol in AgriStability 2022

The AgriStability enrollment deadline has been extended to June 30, 2022.

AgriStability helps farmers manage production loss, disease outbreak, increased costs and changing market conditions. The program is designed to help producers manage large income declines. Farmers experiencing losses are encouraged to apply for interim payments under AgriStability for more rapid support.

Producers can access a comprehensive suite of Business Risk Management programs, including AgriStability, to help manage significant risks that threaten their farm's viability and are beyond their capacity to manage.

Business Risk Management programs are often the first line of support for producers facing disasters. Farmers are encouraged to make use of these programs to protect their farming operation and contribute to a more resilient Canadian agriculture sector.

For more information, please visit the [AgriStability website](http://AgriStability.website)



Sunnyside Farm's milk jugs ready to be filled for market. Their Yukon produced milk is available at Tum Tums, Bigway and Porter Creek Super A. Their butter is available at Cultured Fine Cheese. Photo: Courtesy of Sunnyside Farm Yukon.

Prepare your pastures for spring grazing

Here are a few good practices to help prepare your pasture for your animals:

- drag your pasture to breakup manure piles as soon as they are thawed. This helps to distribute nutrients stored and forage seed from within the manure;
- check fence lines before allowing animals in the pasture to keep animals contained and safe;
- observe natural water sources within your pasture, get water sources tested to ensure it is good quality and non-toxic for your animals; and
- move waters, feeders and mineral sources from high traffic areas to new locations to reduce the damage that may have occurred over fall or winter. This allows the area to rest and reseed itself.



Photo : Courtesy of Horse Haven Ranch

Time to cow-culate your pastures carrying capacity

Knowing your grass types can help you decide what to grow throughout the grazing season. Tall growing cool-season grasses (orchardgrass, quackgrass, smooth brome grass, or timothy) must be about eight to 10 inches high before allowing animals to graze.

Allow short-growing cool season grasses like Kentucky bluegrass to grow to six inches high before allowing animals to graze.

It is also important for regrowth to release grazing pressure when the tall grasses are at four inches high and the short grasses are at two inches.

Check out the Beef Cattle Research Council's inter-active [Carrying Capacity Calculator](#).

Things to consider for healthy pastures

- Test your soil in the fall to know what types and amount of fertilizer to apply in the spring;
- Drag your pastures later in the season to help increase parasite controls as it disrupts the life cycle stages of external parasites.
- Drying out fresh manure piles kills the larvae and can potentially reduce the external parasite load within the pasture;
- Grazing pastures too early can stunt growth as it does not allow the plant the chance to replenish its root reserves;
- Create a rotational grazing plan. Rotating within and between pastures can improve pasture productivity by including rest periods that allow desirable plants to recover and regrow. This helps distribute the grazing pressure across the pastures, giving you more access to available forage throughout the season;
- Plant height is important. Shorter plants increase the risk of bloat in your animals. As plants grow, the bloat risk progressively decreases. Note that forage that is too mature becomes unpalatable and has low nutritional value for animals; and
- Avoid grazing high-risk pastures. When pastures are wet or frosty they pose an increased risk of bloat in your animals.

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Prepare your pastures article continued from page 6.

Get your farm soil tested

The Agriculture Branch offers free soil testing to Yukon farmers who are selling products to customers or have entered into small scale agricultural activities.

The standard analysis test includes:

- nitrogen (N);
- phosphorus (P);
- potassium (K);
- sulphur (S);
- pH;
- electro conductivity; and
- organic matter.

For commercial producers, we can conduct a more complete analysis of the soil to understand some of the micronutrient levels and cation exchange capacity.

Contact us to book your soil test. The Agriculture Branch staff will:

- set up a field visit;
- discuss what is going on in the field;
- do the soil sampling;
- provide an in-depth interpretation of the soil analysis results; and
- help develop a nutrient management strategy for your farm.

Resources on preparing for grazing

Check out the Dirt Rich Podcast's [episode 31: Managing Spring Grazing](#). While the information presented is based out of Minnesota, USA, the podcast presents valuable information on how to plan grazing in your pastures.

Contact us

Contact the Agriculture Branch's Livestock Extension Services unit by emailing agriculture-livestock@yukon.ca or calling 867-667-5838 or toll free: 1-800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred.

Fitness for transportation

Springtime heralds the influx of new livestock being transported into or within the territory.

Transporting animals requires diligent care and preparations involve assessing the transport unit, the animals and the driver. All three aspects work together and are important to moving livestock properly and safely.

Assessing your animals' level of fitness for travel

Animals that are fit for transport show no signs of injury, sickness or poor health. Assessing fitness in individual animals includes observing whether they:

- are able to bear weight evenly on all legs;
- are bright and alert, showing normal signs of movement;
- are in good body condition; and
- are unlikely to give birth during transportation.

Animals unfit for travel display signs of:

- pain or suffering;
- lameness or reluctance to walk;
- non-ambulatory (inability to walk);
- bloating, hernia, prolapse, severe laceration, laboured breathing, or other serious ailments; or
- fever, illness, or generalized nervous system disorders.

How to ensure a safe trip

When planning to transport livestock, consider the expected weather conditions and your transport unit's ability to cope with the various types of weather. Consider whether extra ventilation may be required in exceedingly warm situations, for delays during the journey or when waiting at auction mart or slaughterhouse etc.

Proper bedding is required to prevent the animals from slipping or falling during transport. A half-inch thick rubber mat between the trailer floor and the bedding helps with the animals' comfort and safety.

Do not put animals together that do not typically commingle in the trailer compartments. This includes animals with large variations in size and weight and particularly those of different species or with aggression issues.

Article continues on page 8.

Flood preparation

Take steps to keep your farm safe from flooding. Learn more: yukon.ca.

Should your farm be impacted by flooding, you can apply for flood relief. Learn more: yukon.ca

Fit for transport article continued from page 7.

Ensure your transportation unit is in good repair for a safe trip. Regular inspection and maintenance of your transportation units is ideal. Washing and disinfecting the units can help identify any defects or hazards. Not only will this ensure a clean, safe trip but it reduces the biosecurity risks associated with moving animals.

Prepare for long-distance trips

Prior to each long-distance trip, and for units that experience a high flow of animals, we recommend that you routinely pressure wash, scrub soiled areas clean and use a commercial sanitizing solution (or white vinegar or household bleach as a substitute) to clean and disinfect your transportation units.

Allow adequate time for the trailers to air dry completely to avoid mold or mildew from developing and to air out leftover vapors that could affect your animals.

For long distance trips, the federal Health of Animals Act defines the maximum time intervals that animals can go without feed, water and rest:

- a maximum of 12 hours for all animals eight days of age or less, compromised animals and ruminants too young to be fed exclusively by hay or grain;
- a maximum of 36 hours for ruminants;
- a maximum 36 hours for monogastric animals (except for horses and pigs, their maximum is 28 hours); and
- a maximum of 72 hours for hatching birds, from the time of hatching.

Get more information

Learn more from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's [Livestock Transport in Canada booklet](#).

Check out Beef Cattle Research Council's Updated [Livestock Transport Regulations and What You Need to Know](#) webpage. It includes a handy transport decision tree graphic.

Contact the Agriculture Branch's Livestock Extension Services unit by emailing agriculture-livestock@yukon.ca or calling 867-667-5838 or toll free: 1-800-661-0408 (ask to be transferred).



Sunnyside recently became the Yukon's first territorial inspected fluid dairy operation. Photo above is Sunnyside's two cow milking parlour. The parlour is temporarily installed in a sea can while Sunnyside Farm builds up their herd and operations. Photo: Courtesy of Sunnyside Farm.

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To contribute an article idea, add an advertisement to the newsletter, or share your thoughts, contact us:

Email: InFARmation.agriculture@yukon.ca

Tel: (867) 667-5838 or toll-free outside of Whitehorse 1-800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred.

Fax: (867) 393-6222,

Mail : Agriculture Branch Energy, Mines and Resources, Box 2703 (K320A), Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2C6

Or visit us at: Room 320 (third floor) in the Elijah Smith Building, 300 Main Street in Whitehorse

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