

OLPC 2024 Membership Meetings

In-person meetings will be at Beef Farmers of Ontario, 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph.

- April 12, 2024 - virtual
- June 14, 2024 – in person
- August 16, 2024 - virtual
- October 11, 2024 – in person
- December 13, 2024 - virtual

African Swine Fever Presentations

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has posted a number of recorded presentations related to African Swine Fever on-line. [Click here](#) for the playlist.

African Swine Fever in the Dominican Republic

[Click here](#) to access the recorded webinar.

Dr. Silvia Kreindel and Dr. Fred Soltero were the speakers for this webinar. The presentation focused on APHIS's efforts to control the disease in the Dominican Republic and mitigate the potential escape of ASF into the US and the rest of the American continent. Dr. Soltero discussed the ASF Protection Zone and implications for Puerto Rico.

Products Contain ASF DNA

In Italy, the sampling of 300 products (many with Chinese labels) from ethnic shops throughout the country found 81 (~27%) contained ASF DNA, indicating that products contaminated with ASF are now widespread in the area. [Click here](#) for article (in Italian).

Taped Presentation -Factors Influencing Vector Range Expansion and Impact on Zoonotic Disease Transmission

On February 29th, the Public Health Agency of Canada's Zoonoses and Adaptation in a Changing World Webinar Series hosted a webinar with a focus on Factors Influencing Vector Range Expansion and Its Impact on

Passing of Gordon Coukell – OLPC Chair

The OLPC membership was saddened at the sudden passing of Gord Coukell on January 14, 2024. Gord was Chair of OLPC for over 17 years, a former Vice-Chair of the Farm Products Marketing Commission, former Chair and Board member of Dairy Farmers of Ontario, and a founding member of the Ontario Farm Animal Council (now Farm & Food Care). In addition, Gord was the recipient of numerous awards including the Carl Block Award, Friend of Ontario Farm Animal Council Award, and the Ontario Agricultural College Volunteer Service Award.

Gord was also proud of his vast collection of milk bottles and dairy antiques which truly was his own private museum. It was not well known he researched and co-authored a history book entitled, *The Cheese Factories, Creameries and Dairies of Clearview Township and Collingwood*.

Gord was very passionate about OLPC. His leadership and guidance will be missed.

Cattle Industry Emergency Preparedness Training Exercise

The cattle sector organizations updated their emergency response plans and are interested in working through a tabletop exercise on disease management and response. As an initial step, the Ontario Livestock and Poultry Council was approached to assist the cattle organizations with preparatory training.

The Beef Farmers of Ontario and Dairy Farmers of Ontario emergency response plans were reviewed and compared with the Feather Board Command Centre and Ontario Swine Incident Command Centre plans. A written report was prepared for BFO and DFO highlighting some gaps and providing recommendations for improvement.

There were three Incident Management System (IMS) 100 level training sessions held, one for Beef Farmers of Ontario and two for Dairy Farmers of Ontario with Veal Farmers of Ontario staff attending two of the training sessions. In total, 58 people attended with 52 pursuing certification.

OLPC hosted a Foreign Animal Disease Workshop on March 5, 2024, on behalf of the cattle associations. The associations extended invitations to their staff, directors and committee members, veterinarians, and government personnel. There were 52 in-person attendees and 13 on-line for portions of the day.

The workshop was intended to stimulate conversation among stakeholders regarding the necessary assets, vulnerabilities and response resources including personnel, skill sets, equipment and supplies required to respond to a foreign animal disease. The morning program consisted of several speakers and presentations on emergency preparedness and response. The afternoon session focused on a tabletop disease exercise. There was an overall recognition that all of the associations need to work together if there is a cross-species disease like Foot and Mouth Disease or any other cross-species emergency.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Ruminants in the U.S.

On March 20, 2024, Minnesota announced that HPAI had been detected in a goat kid that lived on a farm where an outbreak had recently been detected in poultry. The goats at the farm began to kid only days after the poultry were depopulated. Ten goats died, ranging from five to nine days old. Brain and tissue samples from five goat kids were positive for H5N1, clade 2.3.4.4b.

Zoonotic Disease Transmission. You can watch the recording by clicking the link below.

Webinar Recording

Link: <https://zaacw.eventkaddy.net/>

BCRC Foot and Mouth Disease Webpage

The Beef Cattle Research Council has launched a new Foot and Mouth Disease webpage [click here](#) The webpage contains general information about Foot and Mouth Disease, including symptoms, diagnosis, biosecurity measures as well as what Canada's response to an outbreak would look like.

Bill 171, Enhancing Professional Care for Animals Act, 2024

The Ontario government introduced Bill 171, Enhancing Professional Care for Animal Act, 2024 on March 7, 2024. It has passed Second Reading and is currently at committee. If passed, the Act would better define the scope of practice for veterinary professionals, improve transparency and oversight, and align the regulation of the veterinary profession with other self-regulated professions in Ontario.

The new Act would also bring veterinary technicians under the same regulatory college as veterinarians, renaming it the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario to reflect a team approach to the practice of veterinary medicine. Other improvements would include streamlining the complaints and resolutions process and ensuring more public representation on the council of the regulatory college. If passed, this will be the first significant change to the legislative framework that oversees veterinary medicine in Ontario in almost 35 years.

The USDA, FDA, and CDC, as well as state veterinary and public health officials, are investigating an illness among primarily older dairy cows in Texas, Kansas, and New Mexico that is causing decreased lactation, low appetite, and other symptoms. As of Monday, March 25, unpasteurized, clinical samples of milk from sick cattle collected from two dairy farms in Kansas and one in Texas, as well as an oropharyngeal swab from another dairy in Texas, had tested positive for HPAI. Based on findings from Texas, the detections appear to have been introduced by wild birds. Initial testing by the national laboratory has not found changes to the virus that would make it more transmissible to humans, which would indicate that the current risk to the public remains low. [Click here](#)

On March 29th, the USDA also confirmed the presence of HPAI in a Michigan dairy herd that had recently received cows from Texas. Presumptive positive test results have also been received for additional herds in New Mexico, Idaho, and Texas.

The strain of the virus found in Michigan is very similar to the strain confirmed in Texas and Kansas that appears to have been introduced by wild birds (H5N1, Eurasian lineage goose/Guangdong clade 2.3.4.4b). Spread of symptoms among the Michigan herd also indicates that HPAI transmission between cattle cannot be ruled out.

There have been no reports of similar clinical signs in ruminants in Ontario or Canada to date.

Influenza A in Swine

Below is an excerpt from a report on Influenza A in the swine industry for the period of July to December 2023. It was provided by Dr. Christa Arsenault, Lead Veterinarian, Animal Health and Welfare Branch, OMAFRA.

Influenza virus in swine has various subtypes, including H1N1, H3N2 and H1N2. The H1N1 subtype was the predominant subtype detected until 2004 when H3N2 influenza was identified in Canadian pigs and spread to swine herds throughout all provinces including Ontario. The H1N2 influenza subtype was first identified in Ontario pigs in February of 2015 and since October of 2016 has become more common in Ontario swine herds.

However, since April 2023, the prevalence of H3N2 viruses has increased markedly: 78.6% have been genotyped as H3N2 and only 21.4% were H1N1/H1N2. The H3.2010.1 clade has become the dominant H3N2 strain in Ontario, and since its initial detection in April 2023, it represents 84% of H3N2 influenza A viruses from pigs. Ontario pig herds appear to be going through a rapid transmission cycle, but it is not yet known if the virus has appeared in other Canadian provinces.

Influenza is a zoonotic disease and in rare cases influenza viruses from pigs can affect humans. There are no known detections of this new clade infecting humans to date, but it is very important for anyone interacting with pigs to follow good biosecurity practices and use personal protective equipment when working with sick pigs. As well, swine farm workers should stay home if they may be sick with respiratory illness and/or are experiencing a fever.

Our Mission

Provide a forum to facilitate the development and coordination of an Ontario strategy to deal with foreign animal disease and other transmissible livestock and poultry diseases.