

Alfred Bourrier and Barb Kingdon, Cattle Producers,
Dunrea Manitoba

Producer Profile

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Food safety begins on the farm. Proper handling of cattle helps farmers:

- reduce the chance of injury to the cattle
- reduce the chance of injury to the handler
- manage calmer animals
- maintain a healthier, more productive herd

Good cattle handling pays dividends

Buying new, locally made, livestock handling equipment is proving to be good for animal and human health on one southwestern Manitoba livestock operation.

Alfred Bourrier, who raises cattle on four quarter sections near Dunrea, says a cattle-squeeze chute with neck extender has made his work safer. The extender, made by Tuff Livestock Equipment (Notre Dame du Lourdes, MB), immobilizes the animal's neck when it is being placed in the chute for vaccination or any other treatment.

"It's far safer to work with the animal," Bourrier says. "The more control you have over the animal the better it is for you."

A typical squeeze chute only has one bar on each side of the neck. That leaves the animal free to move its head up and down, or side to side, putting both the farmer and the animal at risk. The neck extender has one pair of bars close to the head and another pair close to the shoulder. That gives the farmer access to the animal's neck for injections.

By making it possible to control animals more quickly in the squeeze gate for treatment, the new equipment reduces stress on the cattle. It also makes for healthier animals.

Bourrier was so pleased with the new equipment, he has recently bought a maternity pen with a neck extender, designed to safely hold a cows that are having a difficult time calving.

Bourrier is pleased to support local community businesses like Tuff Livestock. "They make a good product," he says. "We've been fortunate that we've got by without one so far."

Bourrier and his partner Barb Kingdon have a section of pasture and forage to support the 90 cows expected to calve this year. Bourrier, who also works full time, off the farm, got into farming in 1991, buying his first quarter section and four head of cattle.

The Food Safety Program, for Farms (part of the federal-provincial Growing Forward Initiative) provided \$750 toward the purchase of the squeeze chute and \$2,000 toward the maternity pen.

The Canadian Verified Beef Program (VBP), developed by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, helps producers prevent and reduce food safety hazards and risks on their farms. To be eligible for the equipment funding, Bourrier successfully adopted the VBP program and passed the first audit – and it's paying dividends already. ■

Food Safety from Farm to Fork

A vital component in beef production is ensuring beef products meet the highest food-safety standards.

- A team of Canadian industry leaders working with specialists from across the beef industry developed a national on-farm food safety program for beef producers called the Quality Starts Here (QSH), Verified Beef Production (VBP) program.
- It's a producer-led program designed to help implement and verify good production practices on-farm that minimize food safety risks.
- Producers take training workshops on potential, beef safety risks on-farm and implement good production practices that minimize those risks. ■



About The Food Safety Program, for Farms

The Growing Forward **Food Safety Program, for Farms** provides producers funds to set up, implement and monitor food safety, biosecurity and traceability systems on-farm.

Manitoba beef producers can apply for up to \$2,000 in funding to help offset implementation and equipment costs that support the VBP program.

Your Farm. Your Products. Your Plan.

There are many benefits to implementing food safety, biosecurity and traceability programs:

- improves food safety, biosecurity and traceability practices
- improves product quality and consistency
- maintains or increases market access
- demonstrates due diligence which reduces business risk and liability
- reduces the risk of product recalls
- enhances the record-keeping system

Enhanced food safety practices respond to market demands, manage risks and improve the health and well-being of Canadians. ■

For more information on how Growing Forward or other provincial programs can help improve farm profitability, contact your local Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Growing Opportunities (GO) Office or visit our website at manitoba.ca/agriculture.