

It's time to take action!



Last September, Justin Trudeau's Liberal Government was reelected for a third term with a minority mandate. In black and white in their election platform, the Liberals declared their commitment to ensure fair and full compensation to mitigate the effects of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) and to determine the payment amount and terms in the first year of their mandate. You can count on me: we'll be there to remind them!

CUSMA has been in force since July 2020, American products are entering our markets and dairy farmers are already experiencing severe financial impacts, but there has still been no formal announcement on compensation measures for this Agreement. Of course, many promises have been made since CUSMA was signed in 2018. Now that the Trudeau Government has been reelected, it's time for it to take action.

Our demands are clear: the Federal Government must pay direct compensation to the farmers, define the conditions of these payments, announce the amounts for each year, and include the total allotted compensation in the next budget. The compensation must cover lost markets, as well as the additional costs of eliminating the milk ingredients class and capping exports.

Let's remember that the agreement made with the United States and Mexico has severe economic consequences for the dairy sector. First of all, CUSMA provides for additional access of 100,000 tonnes of dairy products, the equivalent of 3.9% of the Canadian market, a volume we were in the position to fill completely through our investments in our farms. Under these quotas, products can enter Canada at any time, disrupting orderly production management. The purpose of supply management is to allow us to balance supply and demand precisely. The unpredictability of imports makes it much more difficult to forecast demand and plan production.

But that's not all. The changes made to Canada's dairy policy to comply with CUSMA, the capping of exports of skim milk powder, protein concentrates and infant formula, and the associated penalty, also generate significant additional costs. It's undeniable that CUSMA has weakened the business environment by creating uncertainty and commercial limits. By accepting the cap of 35,000 tonnes for skim milk powder, the government has greatly restricted our ability to add value to solids non-fat (SNF) on the international markets. It has also forfeited part of Canada's sovereignty by increasing the obligations of transparency and introducing consultation of the American authorities into our decision-making process. The Federal Government has created obstacles for us by amplifying our SNF surplus problem, also intensified by the consumption trends for fat-rich dairy products, such as cream and butter, and the decline in drinking milk.

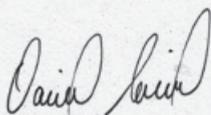
The entire industry will make efforts to address this structural challenge. The implementation last August of our new on-farm component payment policy is a good example of concrete action. The processors must also contribute by increasing their processing capacity and finding new outlets for SNF. But we can't get there alone! Major investments are required. We need government assistance. The commitment and support of governments are necessary to ensure our sector's vitality.

Many promises of compensation have been made since CUSMA was signed in 2018. Now that the Trudeau Government has been reelected, it's time for it to take action.

This is especially true given that CUSMA's negative impacts aren't the only problems facing producers. There are the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, the soaring increase in production costs, the instability of milk prices linked to declining world prices, and the other two trade agreements in force, the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which represent \$450 million in perpetual average annual losses of farm gate sales. Yes, the compensation program announced by the government for these two Agreements can absorb a portion of the losses, but it won't restore the market growth we were in a position to fully supply.

Decisions made by the governments over the past few decades have gradually weakened our agricultural model and our production sector. The uncertainty and economic shocks we are experiencing can be attributed to a series of government decisions detrimental to dairy farmers. Our porous borders have caused serious impacts for dairy farmers, through bypassing of border controls for imports of protein concentrates, diafiltered milk and butter oil, to name only a few. So have the market accesses conceded in the WTO agreements and in the three bilateral agreements.

We need stability. We also need a government committed to protecting and maintaining supply management. The government must keep its promise to make no further concessions in any other free trade agreements. This system is effective for our businesses, for Canadian consumers and also for regional economies. Investments and compensation payments are spent locally and benefit our economy and our food autonomy. It should be kept in mind that the dairy industry provides thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in economic spin-offs. The Federal Government has sacrificed our industry too often in recent years. It is now time for it to move from talk to action by giving us the tools we need to ensure our sustainability.



DANIEL GOBEIL
Chairman

The hidden face of hypocalcemia

- Producers are familiar with clinical hypocalcemia, also known as milk fever, since it is easily detectable. However, there is also a subclinical form in which animals show no visible symptoms, but which can affect more than 50% of cows in a herd. Here are some steps to identify and prevent it.

HYPOCALCEMIA OR MILK FEVER

The calcium requirements of a dairy cow increase dramatically around calving time. Normally, the parathyroid (PTH) and calcitonin hormones easily regulate serum calcium levels. When a cow has a calcium deficiency, the PTH instructs the bones to release calcium into the bloodstream. It also improves the kidneys' ability to re-absorb calcium and activates the production of vitamin D, which is needed to support calcium absorption from the digestive system. Calcium is essential to induce contraction of all muscles, including the heart, the uterus, and the digestive system. It is also partially responsible for the proper functioning of the immune system. A cow that has hypocalcemia is, as a result, more vulnerable to other diseases.

The production of colostrum, which requires twice as much calcium as milk, increases calcium demand temporarily. Furthermore, a cow decreases its feed intake about 30% around calving. Serum calcium levels therefore gradually drop below the normal range about two days before calving and reach their lowest level 24 to 48 hours postpartum.

All producers are familiar with the clinical form of hypocalcemia that typically affects no more than 5% of cows. However, subclinical hypocalcemia, which cannot be detected by simply observing an animal, can affect over 50% of cows in some herds. Various studies have shown that subclinical hypocalcemia has negative effects on health (metritis, ketosis, abomasum displacement, mastitis), production, culling and even fertility. Given the exceptionally high number of affected cows, subclinical hypocalcemia is much more costly for a dairy operation than the clinical form.

TRANSIENT VS ACUTE SUBCLINICAL HYPOCALCEMIA

Recent studies have shown that it is acute subclinical hypocalcemia, i.e., when a cow lacks calcium more than two days after calving, that adversely affects its health and output. According to two U.S. studies, the acute form can affect up to 25% of primiparous and 40% of multiparous cows. Subclinical hypocalcemia is said to be transient if it disappears within three days of calving. The transient form has few negative effects.

How can you evaluate the prevalence of subclinical hypocalcemia in a herd? Ideally, the evaluation is done on a blood sample drawn on the third day of lactation. The tube of blood can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 10 days without damaging its contents. The calcium concentration can be analysed at the veterinary clinic or at the lab. Your veterinarian can help you design a procedure to determine whether this problem affects your herd. A minimum concentration of 2.15 millimoles of calcium per litre of blood is the suggested threshold.

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF SUBCLINICAL HYPOCALCEMIA

Every effort must be made to prevent hypocalcemia. Prevention is the key to reducing postpartum diseases, improving the cow's wellbeing and, hence, increasing the dairy farm's output and profitability. An efficient preventive strategy must focus on management of the transition period, with emphasis on the herd's feed ration. Providing feed with low potassium content, formulating anionic rations, or limiting the quantity of calcium available for absorption by the digestive system, either by feeding the animal a low-calcium diet, or adding a calcium chelator, are the prevention strategies most commonly used on dairy farms. Several researchers have shown the benefits of calcium supplementation immediately after calving for certain groups of cows at risk, particularly cows that are older or high producers,

show signs of lameness or have gone through a difficult calving. Prevention is highly effective in reducing the incidence of clinical milk fever and can reduce subclinical hypocalcemia by 50% to 30%, according to the research.

Intravenous administration of calcium should be reserved for cows unable to get up and should never be considered as a means of preventing hypocalcemia. The blood of a healthy cow contains about 3.5 g of calcium and its interstitial fluid contains 7.5 g. A bottle of 23% calcium borogluconate contains about 10 g. The administration of a large quantity of calcium to a cow

not suffering from severe hypocalcemia will harm her natural homeostasis system. The initial peak of serum calcium after an intravenous treatment will be followed by a drastic drop. It is preferable to supplement these cows orally or subcutaneously.

Despite excellent transition management, some cows will go into subclinical hypocalcemia on the third day of lactation. There is still no quick, efficient, and inexpensive test available to assess a cow's calcemia directly on the farm. Several companies are working on the development of this test, but the prototype studies currently

available have proven inconclusive. Will a cow with chronic hypocalcemia on the third day of lactation benefit from calcium supplementation? Given that there is no way to measure serum calcium on the farm, no research has been done to assess this hypothesis. But science is evolving rapidly, and the answers will not be long in coming.

Nevertheless, subclinical hypocalcemia is very frequent and can greatly affect your farm's health and profitability. It is easy to verify if this disease is too prevalent in the herd and, in this case, reduce it by preventive feeding and oral supplementation. ■

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Centralized Quota Sales System (SCVQ)

SEPTEMBER 2021

Fixed Price: \$24,000.00

	Number	kg of BF/day
Offers to sell		
Total	31	254.82
Eligible for allocation	31	254.82
Successful	31	254.82
Reserve		
Quantity purchased (-) / sold (+)		+0.49
Offers to buy		
Total	1,798	20,007.38
Eligible for allocation	1,798	20,007.38
Successful	1,798	255.31

Participation on a prorata basis in any unprocessed purchase offers of 0.86 kg of BF/day or higher.
After the sale, the balance of quantities available for regional priorities is 0.00 kg of BF/day for Gaspésie-Les Îles and 0.00 kg of BF/day for Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

ALLOCATION OF OFFERS TO SELL AND TO PURCHASE PER PRICE STRATUM

SALES				PURCHASES		
Number	kg of BF/day	Cumulation	Price offered \$/kg of BF/day	Number	kg of BF/day	Cumulation
			< 24,000.00			
31	254.82	254.82	24,000.00 ceiling price	1,798	20,007.38	20,007.38

ALLOCATION TO BUYERS AND SELLERS

	Number	kg of BF/day	%
Buyers			
Startup Assistance Program	0	0.00	0.0
Holding of less than 12 kg of BF/day	0	0.00	0.0
Reimbursement of startup loans	19	1.90	0.7
Regional priority	0	0.00	0.0
Iteration (0.07 kg of BF/day)	1,797	125.79	49.3
Prorata (0.64%)	1,775	127.61	50.0
1.28% of the offers have been processed	255.30	100.0	
Sellers			
Seller who stopped producing 1 or more month ago	0	0.00	0.0
Offers partially processed in the previous month	0	0.00	0.0
Offers in the current month	31	254.82	100.0
100.00% of the offers have been processed	31	254.82	100.0

Quota prices in Canadian provinces SEPTEMBER 2021

	\$/kg of BF/day		\$/kg of BF/day		\$/kg of BF/day
Nova Scotia	24,000 ceiling	Quebec	24,000 ceiling	Alberta	48,625
Prince Edward Island	24,000 ceiling	Ontario	24,000 ceiling	Saskatchewan	42,250
New Brunswick	24,000 ceiling	Manitoba	-	British Columbia	-