

New electronic tracking system can help improve veal farm management

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Upcoming meeting in Stratford to showcase new technology

Guelph, Ontario, September 6, 2011 - A new on-farm management tool for veal farmers has successfully undergone testing in commercial farm settings – and will be demonstrated at a workshop for veal producers on September 28th in Stratford.

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The software and hand-held computer, complete with radio frequency identification (RFID) scanner, have been in use on several Ontario veal farms over the last year through a project led by the Ontario Veal Association (OVA) to develop and customize the technology for veal producers.

“RFID readers used in conjunction with a management software package is a way producers can efficiently maintain accurate records, as well as quickly identify individual animals and track animal movements,” says OVA project co-ordinator Jennifer O’Rourke. “We’ll be demonstrating the technology at our upcoming producer workshop and featuring a panel of producers who have been working with the tool over the last year.”

The OVA worked with Merit-Trax Technologies, a company that had developed software to accompany RFID readers for the beef industry, and a working group of five producers representing small, medium and large scale grain-fed veal farms and one large milk-fed veal producer to launch on-farm trials in order to test and customize the application for the veal industry.

The goal is to have a tool that will track everything – animal movements, weights, medications and withdrawal times and packer data – so that farmers don’t have to buy and use multiple software packages. There is funding available through the Livestock Auction Traceability Initiative (LATI) to help offset part of the costs for the program and RFID readers. The OVA can assist veal farmers with any questions they may have regarding their funding applications.

The September 28th workshop will be held upstairs at the Stratford Agriplex, starting at 7 p.m. Producers can preregister by contacting the OVA office at 519-824-2942.

This project was funded in part through Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of Growing Forward programs in Ontario. The Ontario Veal Association represents grain-fed and milk-fed veal producers and is dedicated to promoting and enhancing a viable and competitive Ontario veal industry through innovation, marketing, advocacy, and education.

For more information:

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