



LAKELAND COLLEGE NOW A VBP+ REGISTERED BEEF OPERATION

Late this past spring the 105-year-old Lakeland College attained fully registered status with the Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) program. It's a great fit with the college's goals for its beef cattle operations to provide a safe product and help enhance the beef cattle industry while contributing to food production in a safe and sustainable manner.

Established in 1913, Lakeland College serves more than 7,000 students annually at its campuses in Vermilion, Alta. and Lloydminster, Alta./Sask. as well as through online and off-site programs and campuses. The school of agricultural sciences offers programs in animal science technology, animal health technology, veterinary medical assistant, and agribusiness, to mention a few. A unique aspect at Lakeland is that students in the animal science and crop technology diploma programs are involved in crop, dairy, sheep, commercial or purebred beef, or livestock research units and take the lead on the college's award-winning student-managed farm (SMF) — powered by New Holland. The SMF is great example of the college's focus on student leadership.

The SMF extends beyond the classroom with Lakeland's almost 2,000 acres of crop and pasture land, hundreds of livestock, and facilities such as the G.N. Sweet Livestock Research Facility, Artificial Insemination Facility, Equine Centre, Cattle Barn and their newest edition — a Dairy Learning Centre. Working in teams, Lakeland students take charge of research, finances, production,



management decisions, public relations, sustainability and stewardship. They run the show and develop the skills they'll need for life and career.

On the animal production side of the SMF there are four units covering various livestock types plus a research unit. It's a team-work approach and this past year Lakeland had 75 second-year students split amongst five teams making all the management and production decisions for their respective units. The commercial beef unit has 100 Simmental-cross breeding females raising replacement females. All steers are shipped to a feedlot in the fall. The purebred unit raises Black and Red Angus males and females and sells bulls at the college's Beef Day Sale each March. The livestock research unit manages the Information & Collection, Extensive (ICE) herd with 80 Angus-cross females conducting studies on residual feed intake

and genomic data and will expand research areas soon.

Lakeland notes that having VBP+ registration will open doors for Lakeland, making it possible to market its feeder cattle to other VBP+ registered feedlots and cultivate business relationships with industry. "VBP+ is about allowing producers to be transparent in demonstrating their stewardship for both cattle and the environment," says Christine McKinnon, commercial beef student rep from P.E.I. "As a college, we are expected to be transparent and becoming verified allows us to be recognized as such. We are leaders for the industry and this is a big step towards that for us."

Bevin Hamilton, Lakeland instructor and staff adviser to the commercial beef unit, affirms the college has a large external audience watching how they manage cattle and all aspects of their beef operation. "We also have a large internal student audience, and to see how they came together and worked together to go through the VBP+ audit process was awesome," he notes. "They each took to their jobs and provided their own pieces in health and production records, and changing our standard operating procedures where required to meet the standards set out in the process."

Hamilton hopes the Lakeland graduates who farm "manage and keep records on their own operations in the same way as they did here!"

For more information on Lakeland's programs visit lakelandcollege.ca and for more information about VBP+ visit verifiedbeef.ca.

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