A10
Saturday, October 28, 2023 — THE MEDICINE HAT NEWS

Ranchers brace for long, lean winter after droughts, soaring feed costs

By Amanda Stenson

It could be a long, lean winter in cattle country as drought-ravaged western Canada ranchers struggle to feed their livestock through the coming months.

Across large swathes of the country, extreme heat and dry conditions have set in for more than 30 of the last 36 months. As a result, this year’s cattle crop is the smallest since 2015.

“Head count reduction, or head count efficiency, has really hit the areas of AI and remote technology in order to maintain the fleet,” said Wasko, a cattle veterinarian. “The challenge is finding people that are comfortable with the utilization that means driving the cows, entering the pens and feeding the livestock," he added.

But drought’s effects aren’t felt only in the country’s western regions. For years, the entire country has been in a drought, with some areas reaching extreme conditions. In Alberta, wetlands have been depleted during the summer,” said Matt Hillmer, a beef market specialist with Agriculture Canada.

And it’s really expensive to truck feed and bale hay from other parts of the country and 69 per cent of Canada’s cattle production — the problem is most acute in southwestern Saskatchewan in particular have been hardest hit. In those regions — home to the bulk of our cattle feed — ranchers have now faced years of supply issues for the livestock industry.

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"We’re hoping to have an honest conversation around what’s the right risk mitigation program, that actually supports the cattle industry in a fair and consistent manner,” he said.

”We hope to implement for next year so that it fulfills its intended purpose of providing some stability to the industry. Because going to see this again. We’ve already seen it in the past,” he added.

Community invited to City-wide Public Engagement Open House

Participants are invited to the City’s first City-wide Engagement event on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at City Hall.

The City is seeking input from all residents, businesses, and organizations in the City on a variety of different topics, including:

• Outdoor Enjoyment
• Strong Towns
• Community Well Being Plan
• Environmental Framework
• Business Support Services
• East Ring Enhancement Project (electricity transmission lines)
• Teaching.

Any person wishing to submit a written/electronic submission for the City’s review is asked to submit their submission for consideration no later than 4 p.m. on November 1, 2023.

"We are excited to engage, and share your perspective on various City of Medicine Hat initiatives," said Karen Horten, City’s Manager of Community Engagement.

Don’t miss this opportunity to ask questions, share ideas and have your say directly to those involved in the following initiatives:

• Municipal Water Well Planning
• Environment Framework
• Strong Towns
• Community Well Being Plan
• Outdoor Enjoyment
• East Ring Enhancement Project (electricity transmission lines)

Protect Water Lines from Freezing

The following advice should be considered to protect your water lines during the cold weather months:

• Repair broken windows and ensure windows/doors are closed tightly.
• Turn off the outside water faucets close to the house. Hook up a hose to the faucet and have the water running out to freeze the water line.
• Wrap plastic tubing around the pipe may keep the pipe from freezing.
• If you have a self-draining faucet, remove the faucet and run hot water through it to prevent freezing.
• Bring inside vulnerable pipes using insulating materials, including:
• Insulate vulnerable pipes in unheated areas, including crawl spaces.
• For whole located at an un-insulated commercial outside wall.
• Open the early door to allow warm air to reach the water pipes.
• If a light bulb placed near the pipe may generate enough heat to keep the pipe from freezing.
• Heat tape wrapped around the pipe may keep the pipe from freezing.
• Do not use liquid pipes for freezing.

Imperial Oil lists its recently completed transition to self-driving trucks at its Kearl oilsands mine as it continues to produce from the site to all-time record levels, as the work continues toward a full transition to self-driving trucks at its Kearl oilsands mine.

The Calgary-headquartered Imperial, which is majority-owned by U.S. based ExxonMobil, said Friday that it has completed a multi-year effort to convert a portion of its heavy mining trucks at Kearl — which is located near Fort McMurray, Alberta — to self-driving.

Imperial CEO Brad Conrad said this means the company has made “considerable strides” in autonomous heavy trucks in service.

“While we’re creating the largest autonomous fleet in our industry, and one of the largest autonomous fleets in the world,” Conrad said on a conference call at which he discussed the company’s third-quarter financial results.

“We very proud of what we have achieved to date with this program and look forward to taking on further opportunities to expand our autonomous wellbore fleet and increase our area of our mine’s mining fleet,” he added.

The mining sector has been increasing significantly to deploy technology advances in the area of autonomous fleets as it seeks to remove human operators from some of the most dangerous jobs in the mining business.

Imperial, which has been one of Canada’s largest mining companies for decades, has been an early adopter of autonomous technology, with lower costs and lower environmental impact, though company executives said many former truck drivers have been retrained for autonomous jobs but has not been redeployed to work in the control room or other parts of the operation’s existing mines.

Head count reduction, or head count efficiencies, isalling, it is definitely one of the value drivers for autonomous — though it by no means the most significant,” said Conrad, Imperial’s senior vice-president for upstream.

“Really, the bulk of the value comes through productivity improvements,” he added.

Business

BYLAW 4795

A community meeting to consider the transition to self-driving trucks was held at Medicine Hat City Hall on Monday, November 6, 2023, beginning at approximately 6:30 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers (580 First Street SE). Any person who claims a personal interest in the matter shall declare such interest either orally or in writing prior to the commencement of the meeting.

The purpose of Bylaw 4795 is to close the laneway north of 240A 4th Avenue SE, south of 1 Street SE, between 207A and 207B 1st Street SE.

Notice of Appeal for the proposed Bylaw, if any, is to be filed in the office of the City of Medicine Hat, in the Province of Alberta, after the date of the meeting, and shall be filed at least 10 days before the date of the hearing.

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