



JOHNSTON'S
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Bonnie Windsor - A Processors Perspective on the BCFACC

I am honored to be asked to speak to you today about what the BCFACC means to processors. I speak not only from Johnston's perspective, but also on behalf of the all the processors and growers across BC that I represent through the BC Assn of Abattoirs.

The meat industry has changed substantially in recent years. Gone are the days that the consumers main concern was around quality and price. It is my belief that animal rights groups have done a good job of taking a few negative examples and painting a grim picture of the entire industry, causing suspicion in the minds of the consumer. While the activist groups may have been successful in changing the eating habits of a small percentage of consumers, a much larger percentage are 'sitting on the fence'. I see this as opportunity.

Since Johnston's became active in marketing in the past 2 years, I have had the opportunity to speak to hundreds of retailers and thousands of consumers. My findings have been, without question, that the consumers number one concern is animal welfare. While they still expect quality and affordability, it is quickly becoming animal welfare that influences their buying decisions. I think it is important to note that women will generally, because of natural maternal instincts, tend to be more sensitive with regards to animal welfare than our male counterparts. It is just, if not more important, to note that recent studies have shown that women make the majority of decisions around purchasing our products.

We are in an age of information. Information is at everyone's fingertips. If we are not providing information about our industry, someone else will, and it is not likely to be the message we want consumers to hear. While processors and producers in the past have been inclined not to talk about animal welfare issues, or disregard bad news stories, it is very important for the long term sustainability of our industry that we do talk about it and get involved. We need to understand that this is an opportunity to get out there and promote ourselves and our practices. We need to be proactive, rather than reactive. If we are being proactive, it reduces the need to be reactive.

The BCFACC, even in it's early stages, has provided tremendous support to the industry. They have added credibility and are helping to provide us with a 'social license' if you will. We have seen some great tools for the industry come out of the BCFACC in the past 2 years. Animal Handling courses – these have been beneficial to both producers and processors. At Johnston's, we have seen staff embrace what they have learned, and more importantly, practice it on a daily basis. The BCFACC has promoted and provided the CLT (Certified Livestock Transport) course and certification. This has been invaluable and has provided education and accountability to the haulers, and provided a certain comfort level to consumers and processors alike.

As a whole, the information and education that is being provided to producers and processors has raised awareness and understanding in our industry regarding animal care and welfare. Every link in our value chain is aware that good practices and reduced stress at every stage makes for better quality and affects everyone's bottom line. Animal care is everyone's responsibility.

I am very proud to be a part of the BCFACC and this industry. I look forward to the many positive things that we will, not can, accomplish moving forward.