

Volume 1 | Fall 2018

# Inside *Proventus*

*The Importance of  
Forage Management for  
Beef Herds*

**Business Management:  
Perfect Storm or  
Bump in the Road**



WHAT DOES  
**PROVENTUS**  
MEAN FOR  
**CANADIAN  
FARMERS?**





**“We have worked with XLVets member Dr. Lisa for the past couple of years. We really appreciate her professional advice and passion for wanting to help us improve our farm. She is a real team player”**

*- Terry Wagner, Evergraze Holsteins in Armstrong, B.C. with Dr. Lisa McCrea*

# Welcome to the First Issue of *Inside Proventus!*

In this issue, we focus on improving your farm through collaboration.

We highlight some of the changes in our Canadian agriculture industry, and write about how important it is to work together on farm as a team.

We explore what Proventus is doing for farmers in Canada, and touch base with one of our clients in British Columbia on how Proventus has been providing their farm with management and mentorship to allow them to transition into a more progressive and productive business.

In articles written by Proventus advisors, we also explore protocol development for farm employees with Dr. Reg Clinton, forage management with Dr. Blake Balog, Cow Comfort with Dr. Lisa McCrea, and Udder Health with Dr. Betty-Jo Bradley. In their articles they explain animal health issues, preventative measures and management, as well as how to



*Kassie Jansen, Editor*

use your team of experts to work for the benefit of your herd.

We hear from Larry Batte a Proventus business advisor, on how dairy farmers can benefit from his article on cost production, benchmarking, making use of & understanding financial statements, as well as working together in a team.

Lastly, Dr. Brent Fawcett talks about XLVets Canada, and how XLVets and Proventus work together to benefit farmers around Canada.

***We hope you enjoy our first issue of Inside Proventus.***

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"I want to take over the farm, but don't know the best way of doing it"

"I want someone to help me create a business plan, but to also take into consideration how my herd can affect my finances"

"I want someone who can help manage my company with the rest of my service providers"

"I know there's lots I could be doing but I haven't got the time... what should I do first?"

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# What does Proventus mean for Canadian farmers?



Historically, Canada has been a land of opportunity for farmers. In the twentieth century hard working immigrant families moved to Canada and started farms with next to nothing and found themselves prospering. Although they often faced adversity in the form of droughts, economic recessions, and high interest rates; Canadian farmers have always been able to persevere through hard work and fiscal responsibility. However, in today's rapidly changing world the keys to success have also changed as farmers are facing additional challenges in the industry.

In 2018, Canadian farmers are having to address many new added challenges including: regulatory requirements, changes in consumer buying behaviour, market sensitivity, land efficiency, competition for resources, and political and economic uncertainty. In addition, farm demographics are changing, and labour and human resources are becoming difficult to find. Proventus Agri Solutions is an exciting, new

agri-business that is working with Canadian farmers to overcome these challenges.

The goal of Proventus is to ensure long-term profitability and success. With farmer ownership and direction, Proventus is well positioned to understand what farms want. Designed to bring unbiased, professional experts to the table, Proventus is already assisting farmers with their business management issues and animal health concerns.

Every Canadian farmer is having to make crucial decisions for their farm. These decisions, in many cases, involve large capital investment and always have a significant outcome on the farm. Whether this large capital investment succeeds, or has long term consequences, producers often lament the lack of specialized consultancy options for assisting these decision processes with professional, sound, unbiased advice. With a collaborative approach, Proventus assists in co-ordinating a

team of experts to work with you and your farm to solve problems, to plan, to monitor and to help you achieve your goals.

Many Canadian producers are currently (or will be) facing big projects or business decisions in the upcoming years that will have a high impact on farm. These decisions will



**Kassie Jansen**  
Communications Coordinator  
Proventus Agri Solutions



involve the reorganization of financial resources, potential change in staffing needs, and will certainly change how cows are managed.

How do you put together a business plan and who evaluates it to ensure that it is clear and concise? How do we



Dr. Brent Fawcett consulting with Tony Neels at Mountain Shadow Acres, Rosedale, BC



**“I see Proventus  
as a tool to  
mentor the next  
generation” -  
Tony Neels**

factor in our financial health, staffing changes, and cow management? Your current advisors will certainly do their best to help, but in many cases where major decisions and investments are being taken, it is important to involve experts that are not emotionally invested in your operation, allowing you to have access to the unbiased input you need. It brings the talents of a variety of sources together, often sitting at the table with you.

That’s exactly what happened at Mountain Shadow Acres in Rosedale, B.C. where owner Tony Neels and his son Jason operate a 110-cow dairy herd. When Tony is asked why he chose to work with Proventus, he gets to the heart of the matter instantly “I’m on my way out and Jason is on the way in. And with a relatively modest 110 cow dairy that might otherwise struggle to survive, we need to sharpen up our performance.” “We need to be more efficient” Tony adds. Tony has recently engaged Proventus to begin working on a wide range of interconnected services including helping the family through a smooth transition from one generation managing the farm to the next. “I may have done things my way, but there are new ways that can take him far beyond what I could do” explains Tony. “Through Proventus, Jason will receive mentoring to pursue a higher level of management and best practices, guidance on record keeping and how to track performance so that a comparison can be made to other farms. I see Proventus as a tool to mentor the next generation,” he concludes.

The use of Proventus experts certainly does not replace the day to day role of current providers. The Neels family wants to continue to use their current veterinarian, book keeper, and accountant. The farm will also retain their nutrition company and hoof trimmer. What will happen differently going forward, is that Proventus will bring this group together, to work effectively as a team. And of course,



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the Neels family and Mountain Shadow Acres will benefit from this. There will be goal setting and benchmarking for both the business and animal health sides of the farm. “I see Proventus as bringing a higher level of professionalism and access to the latest developments. I just felt that we didn’t have access to the best information,” explains Tony. The Neels understand the stress that young farmers will be under in assuming large debt and the day to day ups and downs of farming. For them, Proventus is an investment in supporting the passing of the torch and ensuring the next generation is given the best chance to succeed and take the family farm to the next level.

Although farms share many things in common, no two are the same. Families and farms have their own goals. They also have their own unique strengths, weaknesses and challenges. However, if there is one thing that is for certain, it is that we are living in a rapidly changing world;

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one that is bringing new challenges to Canadian agriculture. For farms to continue to be successful, they must adapt. Tony Neels summarizes, “Proventus is an opportunity to engage with experts in a new way. They will help to bring a higher level of professionalism to our farm.”