

## Message from the President

Rick Oakes



What a run it has been in the cattle markets these last three years - culminating in record-high prices this past year. As always, the Livestock Marketers of Saskatchewan is proud to have played a role in this market, promoting competitive bidding in the ring and establishing true price discovery.

My two-year stint as LMS Chair has been a great experience and a good opportunity for me to work closely with our individual marketers in the best interest of the cattle industry. I first joined the LMS board as a director in 2019 and appreciate the members of our board of directors who have voluntarily stepped forward to provide guidance, support and expertise to me in my role, and to LMS as an organization. I would also like to extend my gratitude to our administrative group and the entire membership of LMS.

In addition to the active members, associate members, sponsors and partners have also contributed to the sustainability and success of LMS since 1972. There are more than a few “remember when...” stories that demonstrate that competition and collaboration can coexist. There are more than a few individuals, agencies and businesses that have demonstrated their commitment to the livestock industry. And from producing a livestock handling manual to presenting at the University of Saskatchewan College of Agriculture and Bioresources to facilitating an annual livestock marketing webinar, there is a solid record of LMS seeking out and addressing ways to improve the livestock marketing industry.

The 2025 year saw some changes with LMS. After sixteen years with the Livestock Marketers of Saskatchewan, our General Manager, Adele Buettner, officially retired on October 31st. We would like to thank Adele for her dedicated service to our organization. She brought a very high level of professionalism and integrity to our organization and will truly be missed by our organization and the entire Saskatchewan cattle industry. We will wish Adele all the best in her retirement.

With Adele's departure, we have welcomed Liz Allen to the Livestock Marketers of Saskatchewan. Liz brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to her role as Board Administrator. We look forward to working with Liz as we move forward.

Livestock Marketers of Saskatchewan looks forward to working with our industry partners, including the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Livestock Marketers of Canada in 2026, in the best interest and betterment of the cattle industry.

Have a great year!

[livestockmarketers.ca](https://livestockmarketers.ca)





## Livestock Services of Saskatchewan

### Jason Pollock, Chief Executive Officer

It is my privilege to provide this Year in Review summary, looking back on operations over the last fiscal year. The timing of the information is always a challenge as a significant amount of time passes before the data and results are settled for a fiscal year and reporting can be concluded. Through a year defined by both transition and opportunity, Livestock Services of Saskatchewan (LSS) continued to demonstrate stability, professionalism, and value in delivering our mandate under *The Animal Production Act* and *The Animal Production Regulations*.

Our inspection and integrity teams delivered a commendable level of service across Saskatchewan and Manitoba. LSS inspectors recorded 1,601,707 head inspected, a modest decline from last year's 1,673,056 head as national cattle inventories continue to contract. Despite lower volumes, the estimated market value exceeded \$4.0 billion, underscoring the scale of economic activity supported by our inspection program.

Behind these numbers is the diligence and professionalism of our front-line inspectors, who uphold ownership, support compliance, and protect the integrity of transactions every single day. Their work directly safeguarded more than \$18 million in withheld or redirected settlements, resolved complex ownership disputes, and supported theft and irregularity investigations across 618 head, worth an estimated \$1.545 million. When measured against operational costs, the LSS value analysis demonstrates nearly \$19 million in net measurable value delivered back to the Saskatchewan livestock industry.

The 2025 fiscal year closed with revenues of \$4.77 million against expenses of \$4.76 million, resulting in a narrow net income of just over \$10,000. This slim margin reflects the ongoing pressures of inflation, declining head counts, and increasing expectations across regulatory and technology platforms.

In December 2024, recognizing the unsustainable long-term trajectory of current fees, the Board initiated a formal request to the Ministry of Agriculture to request an adjustment to our inspection fee structure. LSS has responsibly used its contingency funds to maintain operations; however, financial sustainability demanded action to ensure the long-term viability of the inspection program and the ability to recruit, retain, and support skilled staff.

In addition, LSS is a self-sustaining operation relying solely on revenues from its services to maintain operations and infrastructure. Significant investment in our internal database will be required in the next five to seven years and it is anticipated that this will cost millions to upgrade or replace.

Surplus revenues will be relied upon to fund this investment and the fee increase proposed by LSS accounted for this future expenditure as well.

Operationally, transition to the new (July 2024) Animal Production Regulations required LSS to undertake a significant internal refresh of policies, procedures, and training to ensure seamless compliance. This work culminated in the execution of an updated Livestock Inspection Administration Agreement with the Ministry, renewing and modernizing the authorities delegated to LSS. The regulatory updates required substantial organization-wide effort, and our team's ability to adapt ensured that producers, dealers, transporters, and other partners received clear guidance and uninterrupted service under the new legislative framework.

A major step forward this year was the acceleration of digital transformation through our partnership with SaasyCloud. LSS advanced the development and rollout of the MyLivestock platform, enabling producers to complete brand renewals and manage non-inspected movements and manifests online. Future work and capability will allow producers, transporters and dealers to manage manifests, inspection documents, brand renewals, and compliance requirements within the platform that is designed as a mobile-first tool. As federal requirements for traceability and humane transport continue to evolve, these digital tools position LSS at the forefront of compliance support and industry innovation. The groundwork established this year will pay increasing dividends as adoption grows in future phases.

Our effectiveness continues to be enhanced through strong collaboration with:

- The Ministry of Agriculture, where open communication ensures LSS remains aligned with provincial objectives and emerging policy needs.
- The RCMP, particularly through the dedicated Livestock Investigator role, supports enforcement and criminal investigations.
- Interprovincial partners, Alberta and Manitoba, enabling seamless cross-border inspection and compliance.
- Our owner organizations SCA, SSGA, SCFA, SHF, and LMS, whose governance ensures that LSS remains accountable to the industry we serve.

These partnerships are essential to ensuring secure livestock commerce in Saskatchewan and beyond.

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## Livestock Services of Saskatchewan Report Continued...

As we move through 2025–26, we do so with a clear understanding of both challenge and opportunity. Herd rebuilding will take time, keeping inspection volumes soft. It is unclear presently to determine if the industry is fully in a rebuilding phase based on market volumes and heifer sales. YTD inspection numbers are more than 10% lower than last year. This is more than 14% below the five-year average and more than 10% below the ten-year average. Inflationary cost pressures continue to strain operational budgets, and all efforts continue to be made when considering how to deliver a high-value, high-response service level to industry and balance the rising costs of doing business.

The fee increase of \$0.50 in September of this fiscal year will help to ensure a sustainable financial picture for LSS as inspection numbers decline and operational costs experience consistent pressure from inflation. It is encouraging to see that technology adoption continues to accelerate, improving efficiency and data quality. LSS will continue to explore opportunities to exploit technology and information that allow for greater efficiency and support for industry initiatives. LSS is strong, stable, and united in its mission. With the continued support of our owners, partners, and the livestock community, we will maintain and strengthen the secure marketing environment upon which Saskatchewan's livestock sector depends.



**Saskatchewan Verified  
Beef Production Plus**  
Erika Stewart, Provincial Coordinator



Another year has come and gone and, thankfully, 2025 brought record-high cattle prices. What an exciting time to be in the cattle industry! Saskatchewan Verified Beef saw another busy year, organizing training workshops, assisting producers with certification and attending events to bring program awareness to producers. The Verified Beef Program was created to be a risk mitigation program in the areas of biosecurity, food safety, environmental stewardship and consumer trust. The program is founded on a third-party verification model and participating operations are required to meet established standards and undergo assessments, ensuring consistency and credibility.

The Verified Beef Program emphasizes verifying to a standard rather than prescriptive production models and this allows flexibility for producers and marketers while maintaining clear, measurable outcomes. This approach helps ensure the program remains practical, scalable, and relevant across diverse operations.

As global markets evolve and expectations around sustainability and verification continue to rise, Saskatchewan Verified Beef positions the province's livestock industry to adapt and succeed. The program

represents both a practical marketing asset and a strategic investment in the future of Saskatchewan's Beef Industry.

The Saskatchewan Verified Beef board completed a Strategic Planning Session this fall and a focus for the future is on accelerating producer participation, expanding awareness, and collaborating with other organizations. The Board of Directors has identified growth as a key strategic priority, with a clear plan to expand and retain the certified producer base while maintaining strong audit integrity and program credibility.

A key to the strategic growth is collaborating with industry partners. Saskatchewan Verified Beef is looking forward to collaborating with LMS in the future to share information about the financial incentives available to producers who participate in the VBP+ program. These incentives are: rebates on equipment from the Government of Saskatchewan, FCC term loan holders can receive up to \$4000 from FCC and lastly, the possibility of \$20 per head on cattle sold through the Qualifying Cattle Credit.

Saskatchewan Verified Beef continues to work hard to provide producers with information about the program and appreciates working with your organization.



# 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Thank you to our marketing webinar partners:



## ACTIVE MEMBERS



## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



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