

## Canadian Shorthorn Association

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May 8, 2017

Dear Canadian Shorthorn Association (CSA) Members,

Recently you may have received a communication from Bob Merkley, CSA board member from BC, sent in an email under his wife's name. This was not sanctioned by or with the knowledge of the rest of the CSA Board. It is unfortunate that the structure and process implicit in Board member responsibilities to work together and respect the majority decisions taken has been disregarded. As your President, the following information is a message to all members based on decisions made by the Board.

In two conference call Board meetings held in April and in full accordance with the Canadian Shorthorn Association bylaws and constitution, the board voted by majority to adopt the IGS performance evaluation system and Digital Beef's registry software for the CSA. This decision followed five months of extensive and in-depth research and study of all options available to the CSA that could meet our needs.

Over the last few years we have been discussing how to modernize our registry system and on-line submission of data. As most of you know, the requirement to seek a new partner for performance reporting and EPD's came as the result of the American Shorthorn Association informing us in November 2016 that effective June 2017 they would no longer be continuing to provide Canadian members with performance evaluation and EPD's and that in due course the current Canadian data in their registry would no longer be available. The CSA Board immediately recognized that a search for a replacement EPD provider and requisite reporting on our registry had become an urgent reality and it was the Board's direct responsibility to its members to ensure the decisions taken were the best available for a broad and diverse membership.

The Board's first order of business was to engage a project manager who could provide the required in-depth research required and develop options for consideration by the Board. The Board agreed that ideally we needed close to full time work on this project and relevant expertise. Current Board members were not in a position to take this on and none were able to volunteer. The Board was very fortunate to learn that Bob Riviere, ULURU Shorthorns, was willing and available for this project. Bob was approached because his very relevant and extensive experience in large-scale project management for over 30 years with the Royal Bank of Canada was exactly what we needed. As Vice President with RBC he developed and directed implementation of global systems based projects. Coupled with Bob's lifelong knowledge of the cattle industry and his on-going involvement and enthusiasm for the Shorthorn breed, Bob was an ideal fit to head up our project team. In the months following Bob provided numerous detailed reports of all options available as well as testimonials from every other breed in Canada.

While the performance evaluation program was the Board's initial requirement to fulfill, it is inextricably tied to a registry's platform capability to display data and provide member opportunities to use the data as it individually fits their needs, and therefore, registry options were also researched.

IGS was chosen to be the CSA's EPD provider primarily because it is currently the only multi-breed EPD service available in North America. In addition, our EPD's have been provided for us through the American Shorthorn Association by IGS and therefore there would be no change in context and we would continue to be directly linked and comparable with our fellow Shorthorn breeders in the US. Canadian Shorthorn members have known only CLRC as their registry for decades. However, as much as it would have been convenient to stay, it became very clear that our current CLRC registry could not accommodate our performance evaluation requirements (EPDs) without extensive new programming which would be very time consuming and very expensive as the CSA would have to pay 100% of the upgrades. The change to Digital Beef is by no means driven by EPDs alone. Far more evident to the large majority of our members was the need for an updated on-line facility that would allow one

transaction input of data with instant results. Currently CLRC input is still primarily manual and results are weeks after the fact. Digital Beef's registry software, which will be tailored and programmed to our exact Canadian rules, regulations and specifications allows for a huge amount of additional information to be available for members to look up and analyze. There are layers of data available to help any breeder or potential buyer scroll through their cattle's traits, history and future mating's, for example. Finally, we consulted with a group of Canadian Limousin and Gelbvieh breeders and their breed association staff in Canada who currently use the Digital Beef registry and all comments came back recommending Digital Beef.

A great deal of time has been spent by some members recently detailing errors made by Digital Beef on the ASA registry which would therefore exclude them as a viable option to be considered. Errors can occur anywhere, including in our current CLRC registry and no system can be perfect. It is also likely that some of the errors cited are the result of data transferred from ASA's old registry. The ability for Digital Beef to program appropriate checks and balances and catch inconsistencies has been carefully studied as part of our research mandate. The ASA, Limousin and Gelbvieh breeds have confirmed they are happy with the overall accuracy they experience.

Digital Beef is the most advanced, professional, user driven, on-line registry software available in North America at this time. The Board saw Digital Beef as a well-timed opportunity to upgrade to the best available system for our registry. While the cost of utilizing this software system is more than another might be, it is often the case that progress comes with a cost.

In closing, we want to draw your attention to the fact that there are discrepancies and omissions in the cost data supplied in Bob Merkley's email. Most obvious is the missing costs for CLRC programming upgrades. In addition, important parameters such as timing and target completion dates are not considered. For those of you who wish to review the option comparisons in summary prepared for the Board by Bob Riviere, CSA Project Manager please see the [attached PDF file](#).

I welcome your questions and comments and encourage you to contact me directly or your provincial Board representative who would be happy to discuss any of these decisions with you.

Sincerely,  
Richard Moellenbeck, President  
Canadian Shorthorn Association

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