

SHIPMENT OF CANADIAN LIVESTOCK

OCTOBER 2007

FROM CANADA TO RUSSIA

OUT – ABOUT AND BEYOND!

The news is **OUT** about top Canadian Livestock Genetics going **BEYOND** the shores of Canada to dock in the Port of Novorossiysk, Russia with 2,220 head of Holsteins, Angus and Herefords. AltaExports International Ltd., under the capable management of Gary Smith, President, and Kate Kolstad, General Manager, skillfully pieced together all the very intricate plans for the second shipment of breeding cattle to Russia this year, gathering them from four hundred farms and six provinces across Canada. There were three quarantine stations located at Maple Creek, Saskatchewan; Delburne, Alberta; and Lindsay, Ontario. They included some of the best genetics from three breeds in order to establish new herds for individuals and federal programs in Russia.



Pictured: Gary Smith, Kate Kolstad, Ron Wells



Hereford heifers at the Lindsay Quarantine Station



Hereford bulls at the Lindsay Quarantine Station

The immense planning and size of this project comes into focus once you actually see the final stages unfold before your eyes. We turned into the dock at Becancour Port, located immediately across the great St. Lawrence Seaway from Troi-Riviers, Quebec, just prior to sunrise and security was very certain that all papers were in order before anyone even considered entering the dock area. There was somewhat of an eerie feeling as a brisk cool fall breeze swept the black tarmac that was dotted with two even rows of quieted tractor-trailer trucks and loaded pots, twenty-two in total, seemingly not in any hurry to move.



There was an unspeakable amount of work to be done before they would give up their cargo to the sleeping giant floating nearby. After all, the rubber had barely cooled from traveling the long distances that night. One by one, drivers spilled out, all as inquisitive as were, to know what was next on the agenda. The Pilipino crew and captain of 26, mostly young men who leave home to work for ten months at a time, started to appear as ant-like size men on such a large vessel, working quickly and effectively going about the orders of the day that they obviously had performed before. Now, with the sun's early rays gleaming golden on the side of the trailers and the horizon turning orange and blue, the hum of engines, forklifts and clanging of steel soon grabbed our attention. Activity began everywhere with the arrival of those who would put the plan for the day into full swing. Hardly an animal could be heard, so obviously they were a contented bunch.

Tractor trailers that delivered the cattle



The ship!



Forklift moving hay for the journey

A huge crane from on board the ship lowered a precisely built loading ramp that spanned from the back of the trailers to the opening in the ship. Every animal would pass through this ramp in single file under the watchful eye of Canadian Food Inspectors, Russian and Canadian Veterinarians, and the Ship Master. Many gathered to watch, including breed representatives, dock supervisors, ship operations owners and many more who all were key players in the developments taking place this day. Rick Sibernagel, of Continental Cattle Carriers Ltd., Alberta, master planned all the trucking from across Canada, guiding each load into what seemed like marching orders to line up, knowing what each trailer held and making sure it coincided with the stowage plans.



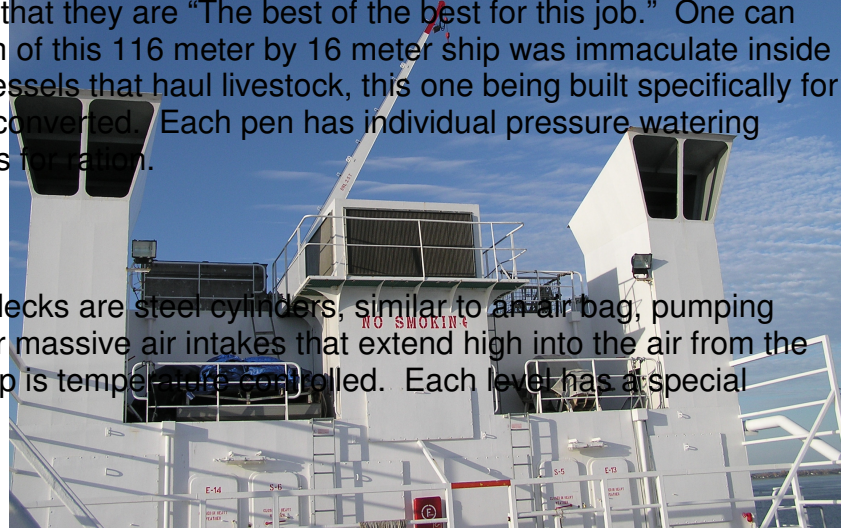
Herefords walking up the loading ramp to the ship



Watching the loading process

All 2,220 head were divided into five decks on the ship, and then divided three to fifteen head per pen. Peter Smith, President of Sea Air International Forwarders, was responsible for engaging Scandia Shipping Canada Inc. for this shipment, thus the “MV Shorthorn Express,” Manila, would be the carrier of this precious cargo. His company handles 99.5% of all livestock exported, mostly by air, with the largest plane cargo being 350 head. Smith comments that they are “The best of the best for this job.” One can easily see why, as every inch of this 116 meter by 16 meter ship was immaculate inside and out. This is one of six vessels that haul livestock, this one being built specifically for the job while others may be converted. Each pen has individual pressure watering bowls as well as feed troughs for ration.

Down both sides of the five decks are steel cylinders, similar to an air bag, pumping fresh air continually from four massive air intakes that extend high into the air from the surface deck. The whole ship is temperature controlled. Each level has a special



designated area for any animals that may need veterinary care. The flooring is similar to pavement that can be easily washed and disinfected, with the penning being made of

Huge fresh air intakes onboard the ship

what appeared to be heavy aluminum square tubing. Jonathan Bourdages, manager of sales and marketing for Quebec Stevedoring Company Ltd., is manager of many ports. He explains to us that this is the only port that is so spacious with facilities for inside and outside storage, as well as the only port to be totally paved. This particular Livestock Express does not travel down the St. Lawrence through the lock system, thus this is the farthest inland port that it will dock at. This port is open year round with very little ice formation. The individual Captains take great pride in their vessels with both the Canadian and Philippine flags blowing in the breeze on either end of the ship.

Consider, if you will, the exact quantity of bedding (shavings), hay and rations required for this number cattle, mainly bred yearling heifers. How about 140 tons of hay, 105 tons of bulk rations, and 100 ton of bagged ration. The constant whine of feed being blown into huge silos within the ship, the skipping back and forth of forklifts on the ground and on the ship, and the crane placing platform after platform of compressed hay bales wrapped in bundles of twenty, onto the top of the ship for the crew to maneuver into place to fill the top deck of the ship with supplies, makes one realize the many details that must come together in perfect precision.



A glimpse of the rations

These operations continue throughout the day and extend into the following day, while on the ground the tractor trailers release a swish of air to lower their decks in order to meet the chute system as levels change with loaded cargo lowering the ship and sometimes tide varying the level eight to ten inches at this port.

It seems that on this day, history is being made, as it has been over thirty years since the last registered Hereford cattle left our Canadian shores to bolster the genetics of



Pictured: Nadine Wells, Kate Kolstad, Norma Dunn

beef production abroad. Perhaps some people will recall John Hayes from Alberta taking part in that. Norma Dunn, along with her late husband, well known Alberta Ranchers and Hereford Breeders, have participated in setting milestones along the way for the Hereford Breed, and today, October 21, 22 & 23, 2007, Norma rides the waves of excitement in seeing, and being a part of this export. AltaExports has supplied the market with embryos to many corners of the world, as well as live shipments.

Gary Smith states that currently in Russia the Hereford breed is more like the old style of animal, some even tracing back to bloodlines from that shipment thirty years ago. "They like them big, with tolerance for the cold, sometimes, minus thirty or forty degrees below zero. They like the Herefords!"

As each animal walked the line, it was our hope that they would do for their individual owners in Russia what they so capably have done for us, by producing a product that is second to none in quality and flavour, and a pleasure to work with to boot. Now that's not the end of the story. Two young cowboys, Beau Switzer and Blaine Prichard, Blaine being a veterinarian, are also traveling onboard for the 18 day journey across the big pond to help care for and, oh yes, teach the language maybe - to say co boss or something like that.



Pictured: Beau Switzer, Blaine Prichard

You can bet on it that Gary and Kate and some of the others will be on the edge of the Black Sea to see the safe landing of all. Perhaps this is just unlocking the door for a market that, we, as Hereford breeders in Canada can continue to press forward into with our purebred breeding programs, setting the pace for expanding our borders and maintaining a desirable gene pool for the world **BEYOND**.

October 23, 2007
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