

Interview: Mr. and Mrs. Geert Keur
Quilchena Farms
708 # 9 Road

August 3, 1973

BEEF FATTENING: FEED LOT

Win Keur is the business bookkeeper.

Geert Keur:

Born 1906 in Holland in Groningen province...raised on farm...
a purebred cattle dairy

1927: came to Alberta...to Granum...farmed there 1½ years.

1929: to Richmond...to Colony Farms 7½ years milked test cows
4 times daily

1942-48:...bought Roy Brown (Sun publisher) farm 16 acres at 407
Brown Road...including machinery and over 100 Jersey cattle

1948: married Winnifred Antenen...bought Ewen Estate at # 9 Road,
487 acres which was previously a dairy farm...only round barn in
B.C. on property...used for storage, cattle in winter.

At first grew grain, dairying until 1962...because labor problem...
no milkers...so switched to fattening beef cattle last 11 years...
difference: 1) less labor, help

2) easier hours...start 7 am instead of milking cows
which meant 4 am start

Buy, fatten 4,000-4,500 cattle yearly...at Kamloops through auctions...
prefer buy straight from ranches...buy weekly...fly in by PWAirlines.

For Feed Lot: buy cattle weighing 700-800 pounds, up to 900 pounds

Spring: Buying to turn to grass...buy cattle weighing 500-600 pounds...
so weigh 800 pounds in the fall...then go into feed lot (grain ration)

Feed Lot Ration: rolled barley(from Dawson Creek, Peace River)
molasses, concentrate, salt, minerals, chopped alfalfa hay (from
Columbia Basin, Washington)

Hay shortage 1973 for first time, previously paid \$35-\$40 ton delivered
here...demand so great...last quotation \$80 a ton...not promised
delivery...Japan taking it...ranchers holding back expect higher
prices...talking \$100 a ton.

Result: increase beef cattle price 66 or gp pit pf business.

Won't grow hay here because sold equipment...buy enough cattle in

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spring to eat grass in pastures then put them in feed lot...too difficult getting help...now has 5 men on farm.

Meat prices are up but not in comparison with feed prices and labor.

Increase in finished product has not kept up with increase in feed, labor, general repairs, machinery, farm up keep.

Price of feeder cattle increasing tremendous rate i.e.

1973: 800 pound steers now selling at 60¢ a pound when sell as 'finished' cattle will sell at 52¢ a pound.

Formerly: could put a pound of gain on cattle for 25¢

Now: Putting a pound of gain doubled in last 6 months.

...everything uncertain now...US short of beef...importing beef cattle from US to Canada due to price freeze on fat cattle in US...US. is importing cattle from Canada because no price freeze on those cattle.

Nixon has a ceiling on U.S. beef but not on Canadian Beef...

So: Canadian packers are importing American beef...American packers are importing Canadian beef.

Sept. 12 price freeze is off in U.S.

"Beef is cheapest commodity people can buy to-day - price has increased so much last few months, should have been gradual increase, people wouldn't feel it." Keur

Weather plays a part in beef prices..draught up country...ranchers cannot make hay...ranchers had severe winter kill in alfalfa fields...

Kamloops area ranchers must bring in 70,000 tons of hay this year, to see their herds through the winter...first time in history.

Provincial government plus federal government plan to help re freight. Some hay will come from U.S. (if no embargo), also Alberta, Peace River.

Talk is: government to subsidize: rancher to pay \$5 a ton and the government will pay rest.

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Buy in cattle: quality

Hereford

Crossbreds...Hereford-Charolais

Now Simmental (French and Swiss)

Angus and Shorthorn not popular..in new grading act they get fat too quick.

No Jerseys

2-3% Holstein steers

Other crosses with Herefords Keur considers useful, now in Kamloops.

Main-Anjou, a French purebred

Murray Grey, English purebred

Simmental will be most popular, Keur says.

Hereford cattle short of milk for calves, Simmental puts more milk into the crosses...also not inclined to get fat as quickly as Angus and Shorthorn...Simmental are heavier boned cattle, have more stretch, more size when finished.

...trend is to leaner beef

...Simmental will cross better with Hereford than any other breeds brought in.

...names other crosses

Finish off 4,000 to 4,500 beef cattle per year...takes 90-120 days to finish feeder cattle depending on flesh on arrival, size and weight.

... Keur handles own vaccination vs I.B.R. Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis

...all cattle vaccinated for Black leg before arrival...sometimes have pneumonia, foot rot and treat cattle

Loss...from bloat, liver trouble...heavy feeding and pushing them hard results in loss of odd beef... Dead loss...is 1-2% per year.

Hobby: raises, shows, sells Arabian horses...have 30 purebred now... sells breeding stock...show at PNE...last year did well at the Nationals at Calgary and Edmonton....Yearlings sell \$1,000-\$2,000 if top quality.

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Sheep:...on farm earlier years...sold out 4 years ago, the reason: shearing time no help...lambing time...must be with them 24 hours a day...no help. Foot baths, foot rot disease, problems of low land. Good paying business if you can get farm help.

Backyard pen pets: French Alpine goats, family...2 toned color of grey and white.

Children: 2 daughters: Lynette (Mrs. Corbiel) a veterinarian at Cornell University completing her PhD...Gail (Mrs. Hunt) lives in Surrey.

Vancouver Sun August 4/1973

Interim Ottawa stand on feed grain a stop-gap, but some progress made

Special to The Sun

OTTAWA — The federal government announced Friday an interim feed grains policy for the crop year ending July 31, 1974, which Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan said would go a long way towards stabilizing prices.

But the question of a comprehensive feed grains policy has been left over for another year. The statement does, however, list proposals which will be the basis of discussions with the provinces and with agricultural organizations before the 1974-75 crop year.

The proposal for the present year calls for removal of the Saskatchewan boundary restriction for selling non-board grain — thus making it possible for prairie farmers to sell grain anywhere in the three Prairie provinces without

going through the Canadian Wheat Board.

It also plans to have the wheat board base its selling price outside of that area on non-board Prairie prices.

The announcement was made simultaneously in Ottawa by Whelan, in Regina by Otto Lang, minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, and in Montreal by Postmaster-General Andre Ouellet.

A Conservative spokesman — Jack Horner, from Crowfoot, Alta. — challenged Whelan's contention that the new policy would affect prices, but agreed that it would strengthen the livestock industry in central and eastern Canada.

Horner said it would weaken the authority of the wheat board. That was also the chief concern of NDP Leader David Lewis. In a brief statement

from his office, Lewis said the new policy as a significant erosion of the Canadian wheat board and thus a loss to the farmer. He said the party's farm experts would examine the statement in more detail.

"Under the new plan," the official government statement reads, "the off-board Prairie price and the Canadian wheat board selling price within Canada, will be directly related thereby reducing the discrepancies between the off-board Prairie prices and the prices charged by the wheat board to eastern and British Columbia buyers."

The federal government will guarantee the Prairie grain grower prices at or above the current board's initial prices and will establish a storage program so it can offer a constantly open quota for deliveries.

Whelan said chaotic condi-

tions caused by intense world demand made it impossible at this time to implement a longer-range policy. But he said there was no danger that exports would leave Canadian livestock feeders short of supplies.

He said the ideal solution to the problem is for livestock, dairy and poultry farmers to grow their own feed. Ontario, he said, is nearly self-sufficient in feed grain and more could be grown. Prince Edward Island is in a similar position.

But some provinces, he agreed, would never be able to meet their own needs for feed.

The feed freight assistance subsidies will continue through the one-year plan, but probably will be phased out in coming years if the proposals for the long-range policy are adopted.