



**Sustainable Canadian  
Agricultural Partnership**

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# Glen Campbell

*Helping keep farms  
in the green*



**Canada**

## Association looks to build competitive edge in Island beef herd

“Beef are hard on the furniture,” jokes Glenn Campbell, owner of a 110-head cow-calf beef operation in Grahams Road, Prince Edward Island (PEI). “They’re big and they push back.”

“It’s important to have good facilities to protect the animals and the people working with them.”

That’s why he is happy to have a new swing gate handling unit that can be operated by a single person to safely move his cattle, and to keep them still when they need to be.

“Any time we have to get a vet in to do herd health, they always comment about how smooth the process is with the handling system we have now,” says Campbell.

“This system saves me time and money, while being safer and more comfortable for both animals and people.”

Campbell says the new handling system also allows him and his staff to load his cattle more efficiently.

“All cattle on PEI are trucked somewhere, whether it’s to the pasture or the feedlot, and the better your system is for loading, the less stress there will be on both cattle and people.”

The gate was purchased in part through the new Agriculture Livestock Strategy Genetics and Cattle Handling Program offered by the PEI Cattle Producers Association and supported by the federal and provincial governments through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP). The program has approved more than 30 projects to create a competitive edge in PEI’s 8,000-head cattle herd in terms of quality and cost of production.

In fact, Campbell’s own handling system lets him keep track of the weight of his animals with a built-in scale.



Grahams Road cow-calf beef producer **Glenn Campbell** with his new swing gate handling system. The equipment was purchased through a new PEI Cattle Producers Association genetics and cattle handling program supported by the federal-provincial Sustainable CAP. The association has approved more than 30 projects to create a competitive edge in PEI’s 8,000-head cattle herd in terms of quality and cost of production.

“If there is a target weight where you want to sell your cattle, you can run them through the gate and see where they are. And you can compare the weight to your feed and health records to get a better handle on your feed efficiency and production.”

Amy Higgins, a project coordinator with the Agri-Commodity Management Association, which supports some administrative tasks of the PEI Cattle Producers Association, says the investments in handling equipment are part of the association’s effort to see the Island industry “firing on all cylinders” when it comes to safety, quality and efficiency gains.

“A big part of our program is focusing on the genetic potential of our herd,” she says. “But if you are not feeding right, if you’re not doing the proper herd health, and if you’re not working in a safe environment, you’re not going to be able to realize that full potential.”

While current demand for beef is high across North America, it is also a challenging time for the Island beef industry with a shrinking herd and a growing number of aging producers who would like to retire and pass on their operations.

Higgins says she hopes the association's program encourages gains in herd size that make it more appealing to younger entrants.

"This is always going to be a volatile market but I think there are opportunities if we can reduce risks. That includes improving our herd through genetics and better practices."

Through the genetics and cattle handling program, producers have been able to purchase genetically superior bulls and heifers and to test the genetics of their own herd both on their farm and through the Maritime Bull Test Station in Nappan, Nova Scotia.

For his part, Campbell says he makes sure that the bloodlines of many of his heifers can be traced back to top performing cows on his farm. He also ensures that any animals he purchases come from farms where developing good genetics is also a top priority.

"Our main goal is to keep the bar moving up," he says. "The industry in Atlantic Canada has been able to develop really good genetics, in part due to our relatively small size."

"We want to produce the best calves possible. The reality is the poorly producing calves take up as much space in your barn and eat as much food. You want a lot less of the poor ones and a lot more of the good ones."