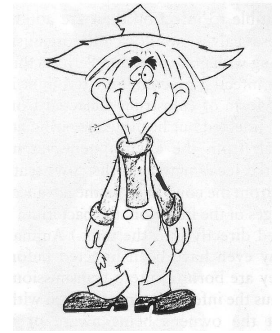


# Rancher Rob

by Wendy Belcher

*Rancher Rob and his cronies are fictitious characters (but the scenarios are real) created by the author.*



It was a busy summer for Rancher Rob and his family. July was busy with field days, picnics, family weddings and what was supposed to be the Canadian National Junior Gelbvieh show in conjunction with the Junior All Breeds “Synergy” show in Olds, Alberta. Ranch Rob was disappointed that there were only a few Gelbvieh juniors exhibiting cattle at the show which offered excellent opportunities for the young exhibitors.

Weather pushed haying into August which was a good thing this year as Rancher Rob was able to get his hay crop up with little or no rain. With his Canola in swathes, his cereal crops desiccated and the combines prepped and waiting for the sun to shine, Rancher Rob is using these wet fall days to catch up on his paper work. With his calves weaned and weighed, Rancher Rob completed his calving report (which he did not get submitted in the spring) complete with weaning measures and sent it off to the CGA office.

Back in the winter, Rancher Rob had participated in the Canadian Beef Breed Council’s, Purebred Risk Assessment, Business Tools interactive on-line info sessions. He had loaded the programs from the CD he had received from CBBC into his computer. Using the Purebred Sales Reporting Workbook, Rancher Rob submitted his sales figures from his Spring bull sales to CBBC so that pricing statistics can be generated to verify the value of pedigreed seed stock to the insurance and banking industries. Next Rancher Rob opened up the Purebred Producer Cost of Production (COP), Product Pricing and Benchmarking Workbook.

Now Ranch Rob already keeps extensive records on his cattle & grain operations. With traceability and age verification important in the industry, he knows the value of documenting when calves are born as well as keeping well documented ranch records to monitor where they are and how well they perform, etc. Rancher Rob keeps a detailed inventory of his cattle to track things like the number of cows exposed to bulls, number of cows at calving, number of calves weaned, the number of cattle sold or dead and the date along with the number of cattle purchased and the date, number of replacement heifers and the number of bulls. Animal Identification (CCIA tag numbers, prefix and tattoo, registration numbers), animal weights (birth, weaning, yearling & cow weight when calf weaned), pregnancy data, calving data (calving and udder scores), pasture usage, feed purchases and so on. By entering the data into the CBBC COP workbook, Rancher Rob was able to gain a better knowledge of his operation.

## **CBBC Cost of Production Workbook Goals**

- The first goal of this program is to allow purebred beef producers to identify their own specific internal cost of production. Breaking down production costs is by definition a complex process and governed by a number of risk management protocols, both internal and external. As a result there is a certain level of complexity in order to produce the most reliable results for planning.

- The second goal is asset pricing (i.e.: livestock planning) which is directly related to identification of production costs. The selling price is the means by which a producer truly captures the value it has created by producing purebred livestock. Understanding the costs of raising purebred animals allows for the recognition of the minimum selling price required for livestock to recoup production costs. A pricing tool allows producers to quickly evaluate different pricing scenarios and quickly evaluate how a change in price affects profit.

- The third goal is to provide benchmarking statistics for the producer and the Canadian purebred industry. The purpose of benchmarking is to stimulate and facilitate performance improvement and organizational change by identifying and analysing specific and measurable performance gaps and establishing and achieving business performance improvement targets based on best or better practices. Together with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council, it will be possible to compare the individual producer’s benchmark statistics with those of the industry, both nationally and provincially.

The last project for Rancher Rob on this rain enforced office day was to send off the DNA Hair samples to the CGA office. Back in the summer, after his animals were selected for the Canadian National Gelbvieh Sale and the GAA/BC Wish List Sale, Rancher Rob took the time to go out and collect his hair samples and send them off to the CGA office so there was plenty of time to get the results before the fall sale season rush. However, while processing his calves at weaning time, Rancher Rob had his crew take hair samples for DNA on his complete calf crop as they went through the chute. Rancher Rob also plans to take DNA hair samples on his cow herd when he runs them through the chute for pregnancy testing later in the fall. Going forward, Rancher Rob plans on only selling parentage verified animals from his operation. In addition, with the DNA hair samples on file with the CGA office, his animals will be included in any future Genomic research programs which the Association partners in.

## GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING HAIR ROOT SAMPLES FOR DNA GENOTYPING

<p><i>Items you will need:</i></p> <p><b>Hair Sample Envelope</b> (Write animal I.D. , etc. on envelope before collecting sample.)</p>	<p><b>Application Form</b> (Obtain from CGA Office or download blank form from <a href="http://www.gelbvieh.ca">www.gelbvieh.ca</a> )</p>	<p><b>Comb or Brush</b> (Clean and rid tail switch of old hair prior to pulling sample.)</p>	<p><b>Tape</b> (Use to secure hair samples before placing in envelope.)</p>
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COLLECT HAIR FROM THE TIP OF THE TAIL (SWITCH). THE ROOT ENDS CONTAIN THE DNA. *SAMPLES ARE TO BE PULLED NOT CLIPPED.*

1. Clean the tail switch to remove any foreign material. Comb or brush the tail to remove any dead hair. If needed, wash clean and rinse with water. Wait for the tail to be completely dry. The sample must be free of urine or manure. Dirty samples will not be processed. Contamination will make the sample unfit for DNA testing. Dirty hair rarely yields any useable DNA.
2. Wrap approximately 5 strands of hair around a finger, about 2 inches away from the skin, and give a sharp pull. Inspect the hair to ensure that the follicles are attached. Hair strands without follicles do not contain DNA and cannot be tested.

3. Repeat Step #2. until you have obtain 50 - 60 hair roots.
4. Place all of the hair roots at one end with the long strands pointing straight down. Secure the hairs together with adhesive tape wrapped approximately 1 inch from the follicles. Trim excess hair leaving 2 - 5 inches of hair. Place the sample in the labeled envelope and immediately seal to minimize contamination. Hair from only one animal is to be placed in each envelope.
5. If doing more than one animal, WASH HANDS before starting on the next animal or use a clean pair of surgical gloves. This will reduce the risk of cross-contamination of DNA samples. Repeat Steps 1 to 4 for each animal.
6. Place the completed application form and identified hair sample envelope in a larger envelope addressed to:

**Canadian Gelbvieh Association  
109, 2116 - 27 Avenue NE  
Calgary, Alberta T2E 7A6**