

## **Animal Welfare Expert Offers “The 30,000 Foot View” on Global Challenges**

*A recent article on their website ([www.meristem.com](http://www.meristem.com)) featured a perspective by internationally renowned animal welfare expert Dr. David Fraser of the University of British Columbia (UBC) who says there are three key global challenges for livestock welfare progress, with major implications for Canada’s livestock industry.*

“On a global scale, there are several emerging issues that will be very important over the next 10 years,” says Fraser. “These include achieving quality assurance without relying on regulations, finding the right balance in welfare standards and providing clear communication to the public.” Meristem Information Resources Ltd., in cooperation with partners in agriculture, food, environment and life sciences provides information on the sustainability of agriculture, food production and the environment.

“The concept of practicing good livestock welfare is simple enough - treat livestock with dignity, and care for them responsibly,” says Fraser. The vast majority of Canadian producers understands this and takes pride in the care of their livestock. But assuring this practice to consumers and powerful corporate customers on a global scale is another matter entirely. This is an area where expectations have risen dramatically, presenting major challenges to livestock and food industries worldwide.

Fraser has a unique view of what these industries are up against and what hurdles they need to cross to meet new expectations of animal care practices. Specifically, he has a self-described “30,000 foot view”, gained from broad international experience on the front line of animal welfare developments.

Fraser’s program at UBC is one of the leading research, education and public outreach programs on animal welfare issues. He serves as an adviser on animal welfare issues to the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada, the World Organization for Animal Health, the Food Marketing Institute, the National Council of Chain Restaurants in the United States, and the Burger King Corporation. Last year, he received the prestigious Animal Welfare Award of the British Society of Animal Sciences, for his ‘outstanding contribution to the science, philosophy and the practice of animal welfare’.

Among the key challenges Fraser pinpoints, perhaps most prominent, he says, is the need to achieve quality assurance without relying on regulations.

“The challenge is how to provide appropriate quality assurance to the public that animal welfare concerns are being met, when we don’t have regulations that solve the problem for us. The audit process put forward by the Food Marketing Institute and the National Council of Chain Restaurants in the U.S. is one option; several commodity groups in Canada are exploring others.”