

Wendy Reynolds
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As their website states, “Over its long history, XL has formed dedicated relationships at every step of the beef supply chain, resulting in a direct, reliable and predictable source of quality cattle.” Forming long-term relationships is important to the ongoing success of XL Foods. Likewise, ARD is also committed to forming personalized, professional relationships with the companies it supports. Reynolds sums it up this way – she’s formed many personal relationships with ARD staff over the years. Even if they no longer work for the department she feels she could call one of them up and they’d offer advice or direct her to someone if they didn’t know.

For example, Scott Dundas provided assistance with processing foreign workers, not only with their home governments, but with the Canadian government as well. Doing this in an efficient and timely manner requires expertise in cross-cultural communications, and familiarity with foreign workers’ programs in locations around the world. As well, ARD provided support by standardizing the policies and procedures across all five of the XL locations, bringing them in line with corporate best practices found throughout the business sector in Calgary. ARD was also fundamental in helping update the human resources policies at XL, according to Reynolds. These policies needed updating and standardizing, and this was especially necessary because of the many workers rise to supervisory positions as a result of their length of employment with the company. ARD held workshops to train supervisors regarding professional standards involving the handling of worker complaints, job descriptions, benefits packages, cross-cultural communications, and so on. One immediate and positive result from this has been the improvement in worker retention because of increased worker satisfaction at the plants.

Wendy Reynolds at XL Meats’ Calgary facility says, “It’s been amazing ... they’ve literally all been on the floor.” She is describing the many program directors and analysts from Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) who have paid them a visit. XL Meats is a division under the corporate umbrella of XL Foods, a full service meat processing company that has been in business in Alberta for more than a century. “The beef industry requires specialized services,” she says, “and teams from ARD have been there with passion and support for what they are trying to do at XL.” Reynolds is especially impressed with the personalized touch provided by ARD staff.