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Dear Ms. Youngs:

I am writing in response to the Spring 2010 Inspired Magazine article "Easy Being Green", and in particular, to the suggestion to "try going meatless once a week".

I am the Executive Director, Communications for the Beef Information Centre (BIC), the beef marketing division of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. We represent Canada's 86,000 beef cattle producers and work with beef industry stakeholders such as consumers, retailers, foodservice operators, health professionals, government and media promoting Canadian beef.

BIC has had a long partnership with Sobeys and its value chain partners in the marketing and merchandising of Canadian beef. We appreciate that Sobeys have recognized the value of our programs and have benefitted from our knowledge on meat case management, cutting and merchandising as well as our wealth of resources that target consumers. Sobeys recently partnered with our Canadian beef brand launch, supporting our radio ads with gift cards for consumers, and have committed to use some of the Canadian beef brand merchandising materials in the meat case.

Consequently, we were very disappointed to see Sobeys suggest consumers cut a healthy and nutritious product like Canadian beef from their diet once a week and feel that this suggestion was likely made based on erroneous information.

The article says that eating less meat will help consumers lower their cholesterol and saturated fat intake. Sobeys' customers should know that Canadian beef is lean. In fact eight cuts of Canadian beef, plus lean and extra Lean ground beef, as well as ground sirloin, chuck and round; qualify for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's Health Check™ program. BIC was instrumental in bringing this program to the meat case and it is a program in which many regions within the Sobeys group take part.

The article mentions that legumes, tofu, peanut butter and shelled nuts are all recognized by Canada's Food Guide - so is Canadian beef. Lean beef is full of nutrients, 14 that Canadians need every day, including zinc for healthy growth, iron for oxygen and protein to build and repair the body. Canadians would be better served to eat a healthy balanced diet from all four food groups, rather than cutting nutritious Canadian beef from their diets. In fact, many Canadians are neglecting to eat the

recommended daily servings from each of the four food groups and are getting 22 per cent of their total daily calories from foods low in nutritional value, like snack foods.

The article also suggests that eating less meat is better for the environment. Canadian cattle producers are leaders in the environmental management of the land and water they use to raise cattle. The long term sustainability of their farms and ranches depends on it.

The temperate grasslands where cattle graze are twice as efficient at storing carbon as are temperate forests. Pastures exist where food crops can't - on land that is too steep, too cold, too dry or inaccessible to farm machinery. In Canada, nearly one third of our agricultural land is unsuitable for crops, but is suitable for grasses which are used to raise grazing livestock and support wildlife. These grasslands are part of a natural carbon cycle where they capture and store carbon while they grow in the spring and summer and release carbon as they fall dormant and decompose through the winter.

Farmers and ranchers use cattle to harvest grass (inedible for humans) and convert it into a nutrient-rich food for people. As part of the digestion process, cattle produce green house gases such as methane. Emissions from cattle are largely a factor of feed quality and digestibility. As feed quality increases, emissions per pound of meat produced decreases. Due to producers' land management practices, the quality of feed and pastures in Canada exceeds that of most other countries. As well, selective breeding programs in the Canadian cattle herd have lead to cattle that are very efficient in feed conversion minimizing emissions from the digestive process.

It is important to understand agriculture's contribution to Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). According to Environment Canada, Canadian agriculture is responsible for about 9.5% of Canada's GHG emissions. In comparison, transportation is 22%; fossil fuel production is 22%; electrical generation is 16%; heavy manufacturing is 16% and residential is 7%. (source: Canada's Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Understanding the Trends, November 2008, Environment Canada)

Canada's 86,000 beef cattle producers are proud of the product they produce and the way in which they raise it. I would suggest that there are much better ways to contribute to the preservation of the environment than encouraging Canadians to eat less Canadian beef. Please feel free to contact BIC at any time for information on our industry and product. We look forward to continuing to work with Sobeys in the future. I can be reached in our Calgary office at 403-451-0916, [rglaser@beefinfo.org](mailto:rglaser@beefinfo.org).

Sincerely,



Ron Glaser  
Executive Director, Communications  
Beef Information Centre