NEWS RELEASE
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CANADA BEEF Staying Close to Beef Export Markets

Immediately following yesterday’s announcement by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency that a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in an Alberta cow had been confirmed, the Canada Beef Export Federation, in conjunction with the Government of Canada, commenced notifying key Canadian beef export markets in Asia and Mexico of the incident.

The Federation’s International Directors, in company with Canadian Embassy officials, informed foreign government officials in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China and Mexico of the case of BSE. Each foreign government was told of the steps Canada is taking to isolate and eradicate risks associated with BSE. Each government is being kept appraised of Canada’s current status and of new developments as they happen.

Local Federation representatives in those same key markets are in the process of providing all international clients of Canadian beef with initial briefings. These briefings will continue into the future to maintain market access where possible and to regain market access where needed.

Canadian animal health standards are among the highest in the world, and Canada has an excellent record of disease eradication. In dealing with this single and isolated case of BSE, Canadian government officials, backed up by industry leaders, are openly and confidently providing information on Canada’s surveillance and control systems for BSE. We are taking every step necessary to meet this challenge and regain our premiere status in animal health.

The Canada Beef Federation will remain engaged with international government regulators and industry through this issue. The Federation’s mandate at this challenging time is to facilitate a resumption of international trade while maintaining confidence in Canada’s beef products and industry. At the same time, the Federation’s focus remains the long-term development of export markets to the benefit of Canada’s cattle and beef industry.
Canada exported $2.2 billion of beef products in 2002. Of this total, $1.7 billion were exported to the United States. Over 90% of the remaining $500 million in beef exports were directed to Mexico ($286 million) and Asia ($187 million). The Federation is confident that the actions being taken by Canada’s government and industry leaders will reduce the eventual impact due to this single case of BSE in Canada. We remain focused on our long-term goal to export $1 billion of Canadian beef products to Asia and Mexico by 2010.

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