(December 29, 2004) The rule to once again allow imports of live Canadian cattle and all beef products into the U.S. from Canada and other regions at minimal risk for BSE took a major step forward today with the announcement by the United States Department of Agriculture that the rule will be published in the U.S. Federal Register on January 4, to become effective on March 7. This means live cattle under 30 months for feeding and for immediate slaughter and all beef products will be eligible for export beginning March 7.

“Today’s announcement by the United States Department of Agriculture has been a long time coming and is the result of a tremendous amount of work that has taken place on both sides of the border,” says Stan Eby, president of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association (CCA). “Canada’s cattle producers are delighted. This announcement will put confidence into the live cattle market in Canada. Getting slaughter cattle back moving to the U.S. will help relieve the bottleneck at the packing plants that has been the main reason for depressed cattle prices in Canada.

“The cattle industry continues to recognize the need to expand slaughter capacity in Canada and CCA remains committed to finding solutions to this issue. We will also continue to work on regaining access for all categories of live cattle, including breeding cattle, so we may have totally unrestricted trade within North America. We’re also committed to regaining and expanding markets for Canadian beef around the world. We expect that many other markets will follow the lead of the United States and adopt similar science-based measures.”

The rule as published is over 500 pages and will take time to completely review. The CCA will be undertaking this review over the next several days.

With the end of the economic crisis for Canadian beef cattle producers potentially in sight, news of the disaster that is continuing to unfold in the Indian Ocean region puts the issues of the Canadian beef industry into perspective. The Canadian Cattlemen’s Association would like to remind Canadians that the toll free phone number to donate to Red Cross disaster relief efforts is 1-800-418-1111.

www.cattle.ca

*CCA is the National Voice for the Beef Cattle Industry, representing over 90,000 Cattle Producers*