



Canadian Cattlemen's Association

## News Release

### **Canadian Cattlemen's Association Announces Action Plan Priorities - Seek Immediate Initiation of Dispute Settlement Proceedings**

(March 28, 2005) The Canadian Cattlemen's Association has approved a set of priority actions to ensure the immediate survival of producers and long term strength of the Canadian cattle and beef industry. Amongst the priorities are actions to increase slaughter capacity, increase access to international markets, extend set-aside programs and expedite age verification systems.

"Canadian cattle producers are determined to regain control of their destiny," said CCA President Stan Eby. "We are positioning the industry to deal with whatever circumstances present themselves".

The central objective of the action plan is to ensure that Canadians have options to market live cattle and beef at profitable prices. The industry must process more cattle in Canada as well as pursue legal action to regain access to US facilities. The CCA has already sought intervenor status in the U.S. District Court in Montana, where a small group of U.S. producers is seeking to permanently prevent the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) from resuming cattle and beef trade with Canada. The action plan requests the Government of Canada to take a further step by immediately initiating dispute settlement proceedings under trade agreements.

"Despite the U.S. Department of Agriculture and President Bush agreeing that trade in cattle should be resumed, the matter has been frustrated by other U.S. entities that want the border to remain closed" remarked Eby. "We believe that initiating formal consultations under the North American Free Trade Agreement will provide a further avenue to demonstrate why resuming trade is in the U.S. best interest".

The Action Plan was approved by the CCA during its Annual General Meeting which took place in Ottawa, March 22 - 24. Other highlights of the plan include seeking changes to the Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization (CAIS) program, development of an emergency cattle harvest strategy and elimination of supplemental beef imports.

Also at the Annual General Meeting, Stan Eby of Kincardine, Ontario was re-elected to a second one-year term as President and Hugh Lynch-Staunton of Lundbreck, Alberta was re-elected as Vice-President.

## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **BSE Action Plan Priorities**

Realizing that the development of a comprehensive strategy is difficult given the uncertainty of future events, it is important to develop a set of immediate recommendations to governments and producers. This process can begin while the final comprehensive contingency plan is developed to deal with the ongoing issues that the cattle industry is facing. Additionally, the strategies may need to be modified if events, unknown to the industry at this time, occur.

There are several actions that can be initiated immediately that will assist the industry regardless of these future events. For this reason, a set of action items and recommendations has been developed. Within the action plan, there are key recommendations that, if implemented, could have positive effects on other areas, or make these recommendations less time critical. For this reason it is prudent to prioritize some of the key items to provide clarity to the recommendation process.

#### **Immediate Action Items**

1. Actions to create increased slaughter capacity in the shortest time possible.
2. Actions that would protect and increase access to international markets.
3. Extension and enhancement of the set aside programs to provide stability to cattle prices.
4. Actions to fast track age verification within the CCIA system.

#### **Critical Action Items**

1. Implementation of changes to CAIS to provide access to income support.
2. Comprehensive evaluation of export certification, including BSE testing for market access.
3. Identification of new international markets that could be accessed through greater certification.

#### **Important Action Items**

1. Announcement of intention to eliminate supplementary import permits.
2. Commencement of trade dispute actions by the Federal Government.
3. Preparation of an emergency slaughter strategy that could be quickly implemented if necessary.

#### **For further information:**

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