

Canada Increases BSE Surveillance by Almost 800%

(May 2, 2005) - The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) today commended Canada's beef cattle producers and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for increasing BSE surveillance by almost 800 percent in each of the first four months of 2005 compared to the same period in 2004.

"Canada's cattle producers recognize that to rebuild our industry we must take all the steps necessary to maintain our minimal risk status," says Stan Eby, CCA President. "This includes testing for BSE surveillance purposes at levels recommended by the OIE. Our target this year is 30,000 tests of high risk animals. This level of surveillance is statistically valid to indicate BSE prevalence per million head of cattle. With the first four months of testing now completed, Canada is on target to surpass our surveillance target for 2005 by at least 100 percent."

In 2004, Canada tested 386 animals in January, 550 animals in February, 797 animals in March and 877 animals in April. A huge increase has taken place in 2005 with 5,194 animals tested in January, 4,990 tested in February, 5,591 tested in March and 5,572 tested in April according to records posted on the CFIA website www.inspection.gc.ca.

"Our largest month for surveillance ever was achieved in December, 2004 when 7,088 animals were tested," points out Eby. "This is traditionally a month when cattle producers are making their decisions regarding which older animals are retained for breeding and which will be removed from the herd."

"Canada's cattle producers are to be congratulated for their participation in the surveillance program. It's dedication such as this that has helped keep demand for Canadian beef strong by reassuring our customers of our commitment to food safety."

That commitment has also been recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which on April 29 released its technical team report on Canada's BSE cases. "Our technical team has completed its review and found that Canada's epidemiological efforts were not only appropriate but exceeded levels recommended by an international team of BSE experts," said John Clifford, APHIS deputy administrator for veterinary services. "Canada's animal identification program allowed for a successful, comprehensive epidemiological investigation."

For further information:

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