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## **Canadian Cattlemen's Association Monthly Report February 2007**

By Gjenna Vold, CCA Communications Assistant

### **Update on "Rule 2"**

Since Rule 2 was published in the Federal Register for public comment, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has been meeting with industry allies, U.S. government representatives and senior analysts in Washington to gauge reaction and developments concerning the rule. In addition, several staff and board members are attending the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's (NCBA) Annual Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, January 31 to February 2, to advocate for the rule, alleviate any unrealistic fears and to generally represent Canadian interests by ensuring the correct information is presented.

The CCA is also preparing to attend state meetings throughout the United States in March and April to advocate in favour of the rule and to develop support from state cattle associations.

If there are no further legal or political complications, the CCA hopes to see Rule 2 implemented by late summer or fall of 2007. The public comment period of 60 days will end on March 12, 2007. However, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has to review the comments, write responses to them and potentially amend the rule before it is returned to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with the USDA's report on the results of the public consultation. If the OMB approves this final rule, the USDA will register it for implementation. At this point, since the rule was designated as "major" there will then be a 60 day waiting period, during which time Congress may review the rule and potentially pass a resolution to disallow it.

Due to the fact that the USDA will be carefully reviewing all submitted comments, the more comments it receives the longer the process will take. To help minimize this, we will be collaborating as an industry to ensure we have a unified approach and that the same comments are not submitted multiple times. The CCA will prepare comprehensive comments to the rule in February and will submit them by March 12.

### **USDA Questions Export of Eight Canadian Feeder Cattle**

In December 2006, the USDA contacted the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding eight Canadian cattle that were presented for slaughter in the United States without appropriate documentation. These cattle were alleged to have been sold as feeder cattle in a South Dakota auction, fed in South Dakota and then marketed to a U.S. packer who reportedly identified them as improperly documented cattle.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association has looked into these rumours and allegations and has confirmed that the animals in question were in fact legally exported and all U.S. import requirements were met and certified by the CFIA. The CCA is not aware of what happened on the U.S. side of the border to confuse the cattle that left Canada legally, but will follow the investigation closely as further details develop.

Currently, according to USDA regulations, Canadian feeder cattle can be sold to a U.S. feedlot and may then be marketed to a U.S. slaughter facility before reaching 30 months of age. There are strict documentation and physical identification regulations as well as restrictions on movement in place to ensure that these cattle are controlled according to USDA requirements.

The USDA is investigating what happened to the cattle once the animals entered the United States and will continue to work with the CFIA to provide any further information required.

### **Crisis Communications Protocol**

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association, in conjunction with the Beef Information Center (BIC), is developing a crisis communications protocol. This initiative is part of an industry-wide emergency preparedness plan in the event of a foreign animal disease or food safety crisis.

On January 16, 2007 a crisis simulation workshop was held in Calgary to aid in the development of a customized plan for internal and external crisis communications. A crisis communication plan should anticipate potential emergency situations and outline how the organization will communicate essential information to all groups of people who may be affected.