



Canadian Cattlemen's Association
#310, 6715 – 8th Street N.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2E 7H7
Phone: (403) 275-8558
Fax: (403) 274-5686
www.cattle.ca

Canadian Cattlemen's Association Monthly Report
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By Kelsey Chomistek

CCA Semi-Annual Meeting

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) Board of Directors held its Semi-Annual Meeting and Convention August 16-18 in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

The theme, "Trade: Our Future", covered a wide cross-section of thought-provoking speakers. From a recent survey on consumer preferences to an overview of the global beef markets and competitors to an analysis of the current status of the WTO negotiations, the speakers' program covered a range of issues related to beef trade.

CCA President Hugh Lynch-Staunton noted, "We're particularly proud of the program that was developed this year. Canada will continue to be a key player in the global beef market, and we wanted to take this opportunity to provide information for producers on the current status of the WTO negotiations, the competition we are facing, and the complexities of our diverse range of customers."

Competitiveness was a key issue at the semi-annual meeting. The CCA approved a set of principles to guide discussions on the development of a national traceability system. It was agreed that any national system for beef cattle shall not impede or delay commerce and the technology must be capable of reading identification at a rate which accommodates normal commerce; the costs of the system must not result in the industry becoming non-competitive; the tolerance ranges for readability must be acceptable to the industry standards; and that producer information must remain confidential.

In order to address the pending elimination of the own use provision for veterinary pharmaceuticals, the CCA is advocating a permit-based program for importing veterinary products from the U.S. This program would be applicable for veterinary products from the U.S. that are approved for use in Canada. The CCA will be working with other industry groups and livestock sectors on this proposal.

In addition, while Canada has had unprecedented success in regaining access to markets since the discovery of BSE, there are still a number of key markets that have not reopened to Canadian beef and cattle or have not regained full access according to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) regained access. Therefore, the CCA will be requesting that the Government of Canada ensure that the basis for any further market openings be in conformity with the OIE standards and provide access for all live cattle and beef from cattle of all ages. In addition, due to the continued difficulties in negotiations to regain access to the South Korean market, the CCA is calling on the Government of Canada to initiate dispute settlement proceedings through the WTO and to suspend the free trade negotiations until this matter is resolved.

Epidemiological Reports Released

The epidemiological reports from the two most recent cases of BSE were released this month. The first report was from the Manitoba cow announced in early July. This animal was found to be at least sixteen years old and was likely infected in 1989 or 1990, when the use of meat and bone meal in cattle feed was an accepted and legal practice.

The second report was from the fifty-month old animal found in Alberta. This animal died of complications unrelated to BSE and was detected due to the highly sensitive nature of the BSE surveillance program. The animal died on farm and no part of the animal entered the animal feed chain or human food supply.

Because the animal was born after the implementation of the feed ban, CFIA placed a high priority on identifying the likely cause of infection. The investigation found strong compliance with the feed ban; however, an incident was identified in 2002 where improper flushing occurred between a load of non-ruminant material and the batch of cattle feed destined for the farm of origin. The entire batch of feed was shipped to the BSE-positive animal's farm. The enhanced feed ban announced in June will ban all potentially infected cattle tissue (specified risk material) from all animal feed. This prevents more than 99% of potential infectivity from entering the animal feed chain and will essentially eliminate the risk of downstream contamination.

Canadian Cattlewomen Raise \$35,000 for Breast Cancer Research

The CCA would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the women in our industry involved with the Cattlewomen for the Cure golf tournament this month. This tournament was open to all women involved in agriculture, whether as primary producers or by involvement in the industry through their careers. All money raised this year went to the Canadian Cancer Society for breast cancer research.

A full contingent of 144 golfers participated in the event, and far surpassed the goal of raising \$10,000. Through the generous support provided by companies and individuals, nearly \$35,000 was raised for the cause.