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## **Canadian Cattlemen's Association Monthly Report February, 2006**

By Cindy McCreath, CCA Communications Manager

### **New Case of BSE Diagnosed**

Confirmation of an additional case of BSE in an Alberta cow was not unexpected. It has been recognized by animal health authorities in Canada, the United States and around the world that a few additional cases of BSE would likely be detected by Canada's surveillance system. Countries that have reopened to Canadian beef and live cattle have done so recognizing that a few additional cases of BSE would likely be diagnosed and this latest case should not affect access to those markets.

While the animal was born after the introduction of the feed ban, almost every country with BSE has found and continues to find a few cases born after the introduction of feed controls. The United Kingdom has had over 100 to date. Canada's feed regulations have been thoroughly investigated by Canadian, U.S. and international authorities and found to be robust.

The incidence of BSE in the Canadian cattle herd remains extremely low and continues to decline due to intervention measures such as the ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban.

### **2005 Surveillance Target Solidly Surpassed**

Final totals for the 2005 BSE surveillance program have been tallied and Canada has surpassed its surveillance target by over 90%.

The target, as recommended by the world animal health organization the OIE, had been to test 30,000 animals for BSE in 2005. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency tested 57,766 animals submitted to the surveillance program by Canadian cattle producers.

Surveillance programs allow countries such as Canada to demonstrate that the prevalence of BSE is extremely low and that preventative measures, such as the ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban, are successfully preventing the amplification of the disease. Other measures, in particular the removal of specified risk materials from all cattle slaughtered for human consumption, assure food safety.

### **Legal Update**

R-CALF is attempting to move forward its motion for a permanent injunction against Canadian live cattle and beef imports. R-CALF's motion for a permanent injunction remains before the U.S. District Court, Montana Division. On January 6, R-CALF filed a motion asking Judge Cebull to schedule argument on, and promptly decide, the cross-motions for summary judgment that are pending before him.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the defendant in the case. USDA has filed its opposition to R-CALF's motion. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association and Alberta Beef Producers, Government of Canada, and a coalition of U.S. beef packers have filed briefs offering information to the court that is relevant to the case. The CCA/ABP brief shows that the dire consequences predicted by R-CALF to support the issuance of preliminary and permanent injunctive relief have not come to pass. Following the lifting of the preliminary injunction and the re-opening of the border to live Canadian cattle the quantities of Canadian cattle that have been imported into the U.S. have been below historical levels rather than at excessive levels, U.S. cattle prices have increased rather than decreased, U.S. consumer confidence has remained high rather than collapsed, and export markets for U.S. beef have become more open rather than more closed.

Judge Cebull will decide whether or not to accept the briefs, and may render his decision on a permanent injunction without further hearings, hold further hearings, or refrain from making a decision indefinitely. There is no timeframe in which he must take any particular action.

An update on legal activities is maintained on the CCA website [www.cattle.ca](http://www.cattle.ca) under BSE Updates.

### **Enhanced Controls for Cattle Exported to the U.S.**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has enhanced controls to ensure that cattle exported to the U.S. are neither pregnant nor over 30 months of age. These enhancements were developed in consultation with cattle exporters and CCA. As of January 12 new shipments must be segregated and physically separated by gender for at least 60 days if pregnancy testing is done by palpation, and for at least 45 days if pregnancy testing is done by ultrasound. Pregnancy testing can also now be done by approved blood test.

Exporters that do not meet the requirements of the U.S. Minimal Risk Rule will be suspended immediately until completion of a full investigation. The development of a detailed corrective action plan, including tighter controls to prevent future non-compliance, will be required before suspended individuals can resume exporting cattle to the U.S.

While the Canadian Cattlemen's Association is working to see the removal of all remaining restrictions on the movement into the U.S. of cattle born after the feed ban, it's imperative that everyone do all that they can to ensure no infractions occur while current regulations are in place.