



Canadian Cattlemen's Association

News Release

Colombia accepts Canadian beef of all ages

September 18, 2009

Calgary, AB – The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) applauds the Government of Canada's announcement that Colombia will restore full access for Canadian beef from cattle of all ages. This announcement builds on Colombia's decision, in May 2009, to partially re-open its border to Canadian beef. CCA is very pleased that Colombia has taken this further decision toward fully restoring Canada's beef access.

Travis Toews, CCA Vice-chairman and Foreign Trade Committee Chair says, "The Colombian market is estimated to be worth approximately \$6 million for Canadian beef products, plus \$1 million for Canadian livestock and genetics exports. According to the Federal Government, exports will resume once valid certificates are agreed with the Colombian government."

In May 2007, the OIE officially categorized Canada as a "controlled risk" for BSE due to our effective BSE surveillance, mitigation and eradication measures. The "controlled risk" status allows for the safe trade in all beef and cattle under certain conditions which Canada has met. The announcement by Colombia means that 14 countries, plus 27 member-countries of the European Union, have fully recognized Canada as a controlled-risk country and removed their BSE restrictions on Canadian beef. CCA believes that momentum is growing and looks forward to additional countries following the leadership demonstrated by Colombia and these other trading partners.

Toews says the remaining piece of the puzzle will be implementing the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The Canadian parliament is currently debating Bill C-23 to implement this agreement. "The CCA supports the speedy enactment of Bill C-23. Colombia's 80-per-cent tariff on Canadian beef has been a formidable barrier to accessing that market in the past. The Canada-Colombia FTA will immediately provide duty-free access for up to 5,250 tonnes of Canadian beef and offals. The remaining tariff will be eliminated over a 12-year period. With the FTA in place, the potential for Canadian beef exports to Colombia could more than triple, annually exceeding \$20 million."

For more information on the Colombian trade agreement, other major trade initiatives, plus the export-market-access strategy laid out in the "Enhanced Market Access Recommendations", recently undertaken by Canada's beef cattle industry and the Government of Canada, please visit our website at www.cattle.ca.

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For further information, contact:

Sharon Jensen
Communications Manager
403-275-8558, ext. 406 | jensens@cattle.ca