



CANADIAN
CATTLEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION

National Voice Of Cattle Producers

News Release

Honorable Gerry Ritz recipient of 2017 Beef Industry Innovation and Sustainability Award

October 6, 2017

Calgary, AB – The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) presented the Honorable Gerry Ritz with the 2017 Beef Industry Innovation & Sustainability Award at the Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence in Calgary. Presented on behalf of the beef producers who operate Canada's 60,000 beef operations, BIISA recognizes innovations that contribute to the competitiveness and sustainability of the Canadian beef industry.

The Centre of Excellence is a fitting venue for the presentation to Ritz, who in 2014, as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Minister, announced \$3.85 million in funding for the innovative new facility. At the time, Ritz noted that funding such innovation would give the Canadian beef industry a competitive advantage in showcasing Canada's top-quality meats and enable producers to capitalize on new and existing market opportunities. To date, the Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence has directly engaged 226 domestic and 242 foreign companies in business development programming; has hosted 46 international missions and 42 domestic missions; and helped generate over \$380 million in new Canadian beef business.

A farmer himself before entering politics in 1997, Ritz brought an intimate understanding of agriculture to government. By living his catchphrase of 'putting farmers first,' Canada's agri-food trade would increase nearly 80 per cent during his tenure as Agriculture Minister and the sector rightfully gained prominence as a significant contributor to the Canadian economy. He was instrumental in encouraging talks that would lead to the beginnings of trade deals of benefit to the beef industry, like the Canada and Europe free trade deal and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

As Agriculture Minister between 2007 and 2015, under former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Ritz successfully fought for fair and open access for producers and exporters and against unscientific trade restrictions on Canadian products. Understanding the importance of global markets to farmers who produce world-class beef and cattle, Ritz travelled extensively to open, restore or expand market access for Canada's high-quality cattle and beef products using a science-based approach to trade.

For the beef and hog sectors, Ritz led the long and arduous battle against U.S. Mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (COOL), pulling no punches in calling it blatant protectionism. He stood 'shoulder to shoulder' with beef producers as Canada pursued all options available to resolve the dispute, including the establishment of a World Trade Organization compliance panel on COOL.

*The CCA is the national voice for Canada's beef cattle industry representing 60,000 beef farms and feedlots.
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Recognizing that science and innovation are essential in enhancing the sector's competitiveness, Ritz was instrumental in securing the \$14 million federal match for the second Canadian Beef Industry Science Cluster.

His open and genuine collaboration with the beef industry, asking advice on where he could boost advocacy efforts or outreach efforts on difficult issues, effected positive results and remains appreciated by the industry today.

Canadian cattle producers are pleased to honour Ritz's outstanding legacy in Canadian agriculture with the 2017 BIISA.

About BIISA

The Beef Industry Innovation & Sustainability Award (BIISA) is presented on behalf of beef cattle producers by the CCA. BIISA publicly recognizes individuals, industry stakeholders and value chain members for their outstanding commitment to the sustainability of Canada's beef industry through innovation. For more information on BIISA and the nomination process, click [here](#).

For further information, contact:

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