



CANADIAN
CATTLEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION

National Voice Of Cattle Producers

News Release

Canada receives negligible risk for Bovine Spongiform encephalopathy (BSE); allowing for expanded international beef export opportunities

May 27, 2021

Calgary, AB – Today marks an important step forward for the Canadian beef industry as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recognized Canada as negligible risk for Bovine Spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

“The recommendation by the OIE’s Scientific Commission to grant Canada negligible risk status for BSE is a historic closing of the BSE era for Canada which brought unprecedented hardship to our industry in the early 2000’s,” said Bob Lowe, Canadian Cattlemen’s Association (CCA) President.

CCA worked closely with the Government of Canada to see the application for negligible risk come to fruition. This change in risk status will help facilitate expanded access to foreign markets for various beef products currently limited by BSE era restrictions.

The attainment of negligible risk puts Canada at the lowest level of risk for the transmission of BSE alongside the U.S. which attained their status in 2013. The control of BSE across the globe is a remarkable achievement for the membership of the OIE. To achieve negligible risk, a country must demonstrate the last case of classical BSE was born more than 11 years ago and effective control measures and surveillance systems are in place. Canada’s last case was born in 2009.

“We thank everyone involved in helping us attain this status including the Government of Canada, veterinarians across Canada and Canadian farmers and ranchers. We also thank Canadian consumers who supported Canada’s beef industry during the hardest times of BSE when Canadian beef couldn’t be exported,” said Lowe.

CCA will now focus on the removal of the remaining BSE era market access restrictions as well as the alignment of packing house requirements with international recommendations. The additional requirements placed on Canada’s processing sector because of BSE created a significant economic disadvantage in comparison with others in the international marketplace.

Canada’s first case of BSE was discovered in May 2003 and led to international borders closing to Canadian beef, a significant impact as 50 per cent of Canadian beef is exported. Although difficult to fully quantify the direct economic impacts of BSE, between just 2003 and 2006, losses were estimated to be between \$4.9 to \$5.5 billion. Further indirect costs have continued to be accrued, due to the opportunity costs of continued limited market access and additional processing costs for Canada's packing industry.

*The CCA is the national voice for Canada’s beef cattle industry representing 55,000 beef farms and feedlots.
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Following the economic hardship from BSE, 26,000 beef producers exited the industry between 2006 and 2011. Along with their exit from the industry, more than 2.22 million acres of pasture lands, and since that time further losses, were converted to other uses marking BSE as both a detrimental economic and environmental event for Canada with rippling impacts still being felt today.

For more information, please see the Government of Canada news release [here](#).

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