



Canadian Cattlemen's Association

News Release

Cabinet appointments welcomed by Canada's beef cattle producers

November 3, 2008

Calgary, AB – The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) welcomes the return of The Honourable Gerry Ritz, as Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Continuity in this key position is critical for the nearly 90,000 Canadian beef cattle producers who require successful resolution of several critical domestic and international issues facing their industry.

CCA President, Brad Wildeman says, "The return of Minister Ritz and several new appointments indicates the federal government's plans to renew focus on improving the long-term health of Canada's agriculture sector. We believe it's further reflected in the choice of The Honourable Stockwell Day as Minister of International Trade and The Honourable Jim Prentice as Minister of the Environment. We applaud these appointments and look forward to working with these Ministers."

CCA's Foreign Trade Committee Chair, Travis Toews, conveys his hope that Minister Ritz's return will expedite a trade challenge at the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the U.S. Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) law. "COOL has cost the Canadian cattle industry over a million dollars per day since it was implemented over a month ago. Minister Ritz stated in a televised agriculture debate last month that he bluntly informed the U.S. government that Canada will initiate a WTO panel when this law comes into effect. We look forward to swift fulfillment of that commitment."

Toews also noted Minister Day's appointment restores confidence in the government's intent to address significant trade barriers in several foreign markets in Asia, Latin America and Europe, whether reducing excessive tariffs or eliminating other trade barriers to imports of Canadian cattle and beef. "We encourage Ministers Day and Ritz to act quickly on the CCA's proposals to enhance Canada's trade negotiation capabilities. Regaining the markets lost over five years ago to BSE will raise the value of Canadian cattle by at least \$100 per animal."

Wildeman also indicated that improvements to programs which impact producers' day-to-day operations will provide much-needed assurance that the federal government will see them through the dark days ahead. "If the government extends emergency provisions of the livestock cash advance program for an additional year, it will help producers stay afloat until better times return. The recent extension of the On-Farm Equipment Assistance Purchase Program until December 31, 2008, enables more producers to implement the Verified Beef Production Program's food safety protocols. With the federal government moving ahead in other key areas, as promised, to improve slaughter capacity, ensure strategic reviews of the business-risk management programs and supporting improvements in animal health and welfare, producers should have renewed hope."

He added that Canadian producers must work actively together to ensure a sustainable future for vital natural resources and as true stewards of the land. Wildeman believes the appointment of Minister Prentice to the environment portfolio shows the government's willingness to bring a much-needed, focused approach to significant research in livestock and agricultural resources. "Canadians need to know that our cattle and beef industry works hard toward creating sustainability of land, resources and food supplies - ensuring a safe, reliable and sustainable future for all Canadians. It's our way of life and livelihood - it's our families' futures too."

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Visit www.cattle.ca or contact:

Natalie Arnieri
Communications Coordinator
Canadian Cattlemen's Association
403.275.8558
arnierin@cattle.ca