

Canadian Cattlemen's Association Statement



CCA's statement on Alberta's announcement

For Immediate Release: June 5, 2008

The government of Alberta through Agriculture and Rural Development announced today that it is unveiling a long-term strategy to help the struggling Alberta livestock (beef and pork) industry weather what it deemed a disaster and regain a competitive advantage. It stated that the Alberta industry needed a fundamental change if it is to survive.

Highlights of the announcement include an investment of \$356 million towards the industry over the course of the next two years with \$150 million to be distributed to producers immediately to provide short-term financial relief.

The CCA has been pushing for a short-term cash infusion to assist the beef industry on a national basis while it develops a long-term strategy. We are disappointed that this was not developed on a national basis.

Long-term, the CCA has been working towards implementing a national approach to regaining competitiveness and is currently overseeing a pilot project for its Canadian Beef Advantage (CBA) program – an overarching brand for Canadian cattle and beef. Much of what has been announced by the Alberta government is consistent with the CBA and the identification system is very consistent with what we have been working on. We agree with many of the features of this announcement but believe it must be national in scope and available to all producers across Canada. In addition, any program needs to be commercially viable and not add an onerous amount of paperwork to the industry.

The announcement outlined that \$56 million will be invested in the development of a new Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency that will report directly to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Agency's goal will be to support the livestock industry by directing funds, resources and programs towards eight strategic priorities. These priorities include: establishing a shared vision and common goals for the industry; animal health and food safety; the development of an Alberta Livestock Information System (ALIS); differentiation initiatives (including Alberta-branding livestock products and certification for hormone-free, grass-fed and naturally raised products); marketing and diversification initiatives; environmental stewardship; cost reduction and regulatory barriers initiatives; and industry governance and transition.

A key feature of the strategy will be to implement mandatory traceability.

The final \$150 million will be available in January 2009 to producers who have adopted age verification and premise identification practices. According to the government announcement, producers who are unable or unwilling to transform their business by meeting these new verification and identification conditions may need to consider ways to exit the industry.

We will keep you informed as more information becomes available.

-30-

For further information:

Theresa Keddy
Communications Manager
Canadian Cattlemen's Association
403-275-8558
keddyt@cattle.ca