

# Ontario beef farmers grateful for federal funding

The announcement of a \$488 million federal government compensation program clearly indicates that the government recognizes both the severity of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) crisis and the important role that the beef industry plays in the Canadian economy.

Ron Wooddisse, President of the 21,000 member Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA), was pleased with Agriculture and Agri Food Minister Andy Mitchell's announcement. Wooddisse noted that the amount of the funding – and the structure of the programs announced – reflects significant input from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and beef producers from all provinces. CCA's Board of Directors, of which Wooddisse is a member, approved a strategic plan last month that contained many components of the recently-announced program. That plan can be viewed on CCA's website at [www.cattle.ca](http://www.cattle.ca). Said Wooddisse, "We're pleased that they took so much direction from us in developing programs that will sustain, and hopefully

improve, our crippled industry."

While the reopening of the United States border to live cattle continues to be a priority of industry and government alike, the new programs are designed to enhance profitability for the Canadian beef industry with or without a border opening.

Today's announcement will help to increase Canadian processing capacity which is much needed. Matching the supply of cattle to the available capacity was a key component of the CCA proposal. Two set aside programs, one for market-ready cattle and one for younger cattle, will give producers the option of retaining their animals for the short term – and selling them when prices may be stronger. This should hopefully enhance financial returns to producers. Finally, the funding will help to improve Canadian beef tracking, trace back and BSE surveillance systems – enhancements that can only help to regain the confidence of foreign markets.

While only the federal government has announced funding, to date, Ontario's Minister of Agriculture and

Food, Steve Peters, and his staff, have been in discussions with OCA on provincial participation in a cost-share arrangement similar to the one that has already been announced in Alberta. Said Wooddisse, "We expect and anticipate an Ontario funding announcement in the near future."

Prior to BSE, beef was Ontario's second largest commodity in terms of annual farm gate receipts with a value of approximately \$1.2 billion. Beef exports from Ontario to the U.S.A., in 2002 (the last normal year of trade) were valued at \$354 million in live cattle and an additional \$292 million in beef product.

## Carr appointed to new committee

Andy Savoy, MP from New Brunswick and chair of the National Liberal Caucus announced today the appointment of Gary Carr to the new immigration committee.

"As we move into a new parliament with a minority situation it is more important than ever that we bring strong policies forward for parliamentarians and Canadians to consider," Savoy explained. "These three committees will ensure that our policies on three topical issues are well founded before we implement them."

The Special Liberal Caucus Committee on Immigration was one of three new committees created by the Liberal Caucus following a planning retreat in Ottawa from August 23-25.

The committee begins its work immediately to provide input on the Speech from the Throne and later a more detailed agenda for the government.



Gary Carr

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