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# Show me the politics

## Montana ranchers keep border closed to Canadian beef

By DONNA DANIELLI

Monday, March 7 was to be a day of celebration for Canadian beef farmers, the day when the U.S. would open its doors once more after a beef ban that has cost the farmers an estimated \$7 billion in losses since May 2003. That door slammed shut though, less than a week before the proposed border re-opening, with an injunction from U.S. District Court Judge Richard Cebull.

The American border was closed to live Canadian cattle in May 2003, following the discovery of a cow with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) on a northern Alberta farm. Three more cases of infected cattle

have been traced back to Alberta herds since then, two of which were discovered after the an announcement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that the border would re-open to live cattle under thirty months. Officials for the USDA continued to insist that the March 7 proposed re-opening would hold, until Judge Cebull's injunction tied their hands.

Judge Cebull's thirty-page decision predicted that a "stigma" would be attached to all U.S. meat if the ban on Canadian cattle was dropped. "Once the Canadian beef is allowed to intermingle with U.S. meats, it will open a flood of speculation," he wrote,

adding that "Neither the contaminated meat nor the stigma associated with contaminated meat could be removed from the U.S. cattle industry."

Local cattle farmer and Ontario Federation of Agriculture Director Harry Brander was quick to express the frustration felt by those in the industry. "It's very disappointing, and frustrating," he said in a phone interview. "We're losing a lot of money. We didn't need this right now when agriculture is in such an economic crisis already."

Mr. Brander also noted that he had cattle ready for market in anticipation of the border re-opening, cattle whose price has dropped an additional five or six cents a pound, since the judge's injunction. Especially frustrating for Mr. Brander and his fellow cattle farmers is the fact that the injunction was issued in response to a Montana lobby group, Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund (R-CALF), which has opposed free trade in Canadian cattle since it's 1998 trade challenge to impose penalty tariffs. Although unsuccessful in that bid, R-CALF did succeed in blocking a USDA policy allowing ground beef and bone in cuts from Canada last April, an injunction that was also signed by Judge Cebull's. R-CALF is typically viewed by Canadian farmers as a protectionist group which has raised thousands of dollars to support it's self appointed role as the defender of the U.S. beef herd.

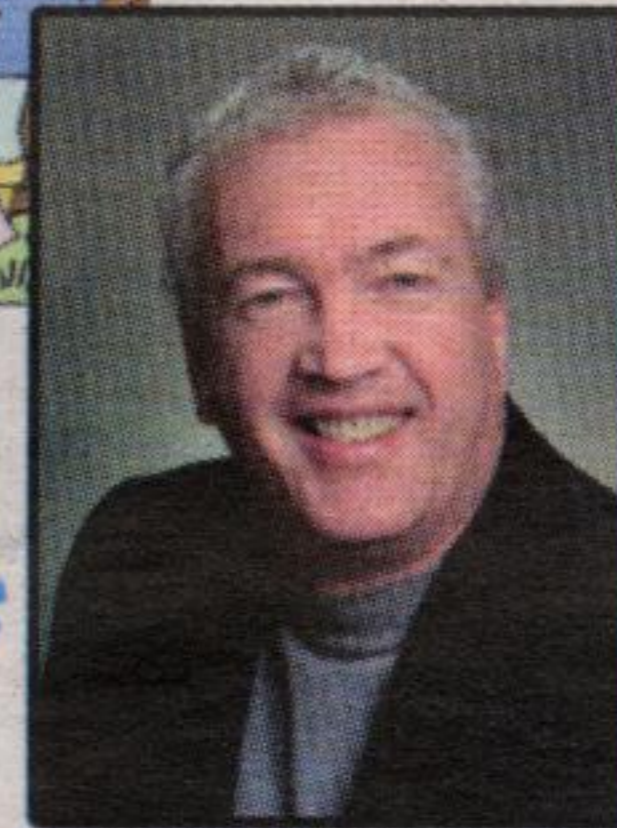
"It's all politics," accused Mr. Brander, who pointed out that U.S. beef cattle prices have remained high during the border closure. "It has nothing to do with science, I can tell you that."

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**Princess shows for children:**

Join Belle on Monday March 14th and Cinderella on Tuesday March 15th at 11:00am and 1:00pm each day.

**Local Author Visit:**

On Wednesday March 16th at 11:00am local Author and Illustrator Jenny Panda reads from her new book *Tales of Glissen*.

**Make a Craft to take home!**

Make a FREE St. Patrick's day craft for kids on Thursday March 17th from 11:00am-12:00noon. Presented by Lewiscraft.

**Family Storytime**

Saturday March 12th at 10:30am and Friday March 18th at 11:00am. Presented by the Milton Public Library.

**Preschool Drop In:**

The next Ontario Early Years Preschool Drop In and Parenting Information session takes place on Tuesday March 15th from 10:30am-noon. Located near the Food Court.

**Admission is free, but please bring a box of cereal for our food drive.**

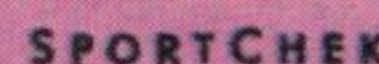
Support the Milton Salvation Army Food Bank by dropping off a box of cold cereal in Centre Court between March 11th-27th.



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