

News Release

For immediate release

B.C. BEEF INDUSTRY GETS \$12.5 MILLION TO IMPLEMENT FEED BAN

OTTAWA, Ontario, April 13, 2007 – The Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia (B.C.) are investing \$12.5 million in B.C.'s beef industry to help accelerate the elimination of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) from B.C.'s cattle herds. The federal-provincial funding will help the province's beef processing sector comply with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's enhanced feed ban, which takes effect on July 12, 2007.

"Canada's New Government recognizes the tremendous efforts of our beef and cattle industries to ensure the safest and highest quality beef products," said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board. "We are pleased to contribute funding to British Columbia's program to assist industry in meeting the new regulatory requirement."

"We are committed to providing British Columbians with an enhanced level of protection over the supply of our agri-food products," said Pat Bell, B.C.'s Minister of Agriculture and Lands. "Today's announcement will instil even greater consumer confidence in our beef industry and help our beef processors prepare for the safe handling and disposal of specified risk material (SRM) across the province."

This funding announcement will assist B.C.'s cattle industry in the removal of all specified risk material - tissues that can harbour BSE - from all animal feeds, pet foods and fertilizers. The program is supported through a 60:40 federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement.

The federal contribution of \$7.5 million to B.C. is part of an \$80 million commitment to SRM removal programs nationwide. Federal funding supplements the provincial contribution of \$5 million provided in 2005 to the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia for the Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative (LWTI).

The LWTI helps B.C.'s beef sector assess regular and emergency SRM disposal options and plan for compliance with the enhanced feed ban restrictions.

The effective implementation of Canada's enhanced feed ban will ensure the protection of animal health, increase consumer confidence, and strengthen the cattle and beef industry's markets in Canada and abroad.

For more information on Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative programs, please visit www.iafbc.ca/funding_available/programs/livestock/livestock.htm.

For more information on the provincial SRM program, please visit www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/index.htm.

Backgrounder on the Canada-B.C. Specified Risk Material Disposal Funding Program attached.

Note to Editors: A photo of the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, and B.C.'s Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Pat Bell, who marked the signing of the above mentioned agreement, is enclosed.

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BACKGROUND

Canada-B.C. Specified Risk Material Program

Why is the Government of Canada implementing the enhanced feed ban?

Canada's current feed ban has effectively limited the spread of BSE since being implemented in 1997. The enhanced feed ban is intended to further protect animal health, and will accelerate Canada's progress toward eradicating BSE from the national herd. Canada's actions are supported by an international team of animal health experts that reviewed the Canadian situation in 2003. Completing the feed ban requirement sends a message to the international trading community that Canada is committed to ensuring the highest quality and safest meat products possible for world trade.

What are specified risk material (SRM)?

Specified risk material are tissues that, in BSE-infected cattle, have been shown to contain the infective agent and transmit the disease. The following tissues are defined in Canadian regulation as SRM: skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia (nerves attached to the brain), eyes, tonsils, spinal cord, and dorsal root ganglia (nerves attached to the spinal cord) of cattle aged 30 months or older, and the distal ileum (part of the small intestine) of cattle of all ages.

What will the funding be used for?

Federal-provincial funding will be provided to a wide cross-section of industry to fund capital expenses for immediate and long-term infrastructure needs. Provincial funds will also be used to support research into new and innovative ways to dispose of SRM. This includes assistance to local governments to develop regional SRM disposal capacity, including ways to deal with carcass disposal during emergencies.

Who is eligible for funding through this program?

Funding will be available to a wide cross-section of industry including the following groups: federally regulated abattoirs that slaughter cattle; renderers; companies permitted to destroy or contain SRM; individuals and companies with new technologies that eliminate infectivity and add value to SRM; individuals and companies located in British Columbia, which provide disposal solutions for SRM generated in the province; and, provincially regulated red meat abattoirs and mobile butchers in British Columbia that slaughter cattle.

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For more information on the provincial SRM program, please visit www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/index.htm.

For more information on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's enhanced feed ban, please visit www.inspection.gc.ca/bse.

The CFIA news release on the preliminary recommendation from World Organization for Animal Health regarding BSE in Canada can be found at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/corpafr/newcom/2007/20070309e.shtml.