



# BRITISH COLUMBIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Beef Cattle Industry of British Columbia*

AGRI CENTRE - #4 - 10145 DALLAS DRIVE, KAMLOOPS, B.C. V2C 6T4 PHONE (250) 573-3611 FAX (250) 573-5155

For Immediate Release

May 11, 2007

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Funds Announced to Help with Drought Crisis in Northern and Central BC**

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(May 11, 2007) The British Columbia Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) recognizes the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia for their funding contributions to the Drought Assistance Program. The recent funding announcement is a \$7.5 million federal/provincial (60/40) cost share program intended to assist producers in northern and central BC who have been affected by last year's drought.

The federal portion of the funding is intended to directly assist cattle producers who experienced significantly lower crop yields in 2006 due to record drought conditions and who consequently had to purchase and transport feed from outside their region and sometimes out of province. The cost of this feed and the expense to move it, compounded by the large volume of feed needed to carry producers through a notably harsh winter has created a crisis situation in the affected areas.

"This money will help producers pay a portion of the feed costs they incurred over the last winter," says Ed Salle, BC Cattlemen's Association President and rancher. "While the drought relief is welcome in the affected regions, other pressures on the feed situation still need to be addressed."

In addition to the severe weather conditions, dramatic increases in ungulate populations have had devastating impacts on the cattle industry. Several regions in the province are facing the added pressure of wildlife depleting their feed supplies. Salle explains, "Ranchers can no longer continue to afford to experience feed losses due to ever increasing wildlife pressure, particularly in times of drought."

The BCCA is encouraged by the province's acknowledgment of the scope and severity of wildlife issues in BC. The provincial portion of the announced funding will target these wildlife issues and support the development of wildlife mitigation programs.

In addition, these funds will support improved agricultural extension in forage production. We are pleased to see the province's renewed commitment to agriculture extension. Budgets for these programs have in the past been reduced while the demand among agriculture producers remains.

Finally, the BCCA aims to work with government to design a production insurance model that will properly address future drought situations and minimize the need for Ad Hoc programs.

BC Cattlemen's Association represents over 1,400 beef producers. BC's beef cattle industry earns \$318 million directly from the sale of cattle. British Columbia represents almost 6% of the national beef cattle herd.

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**For More Information:**

**Andrea Barnett**, BCCA Communications  
**Bob France**, BCCA General Manager

**P (250) 573-3611**  
**P (250) 573-3611**