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Brian Thomas, President  
British Columbia Cattlemen's Association  
10145 Dallas Dr.  
Kamloops, BC V2C 6T4  
[bccattle@cattlemen.bc.ca](mailto:bccattle@cattlemen.bc.ca)

Dear Brian Thomas:

Thank you for your letter of July 7, 2023, outlining the challenges faced by cattle producers due to very dry conditions and the impact on feed supplies. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Ministry) recognizes the beef sector is a key contributor to the province's agriculture industry and the provincial economy. We appreciate how resilient you have been when faced with challenging times and understand the stress wildfires and drought have placed on British Columbia's (B.C.) beef industry.

To assist farmers and ranchers in response to drought, Ministry staff are working directly with the agricultural community and various levels of government to identify and assess all options of support for farmers and ranchers in B.C. Information provided by you and other industry partners is helpful for informing this work, including the summary from the BC Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) directors and the eight zones. BCCA's detailed member survey and compiled results are useful to Ministry staff as we keep apprised of the ongoing situation and assess all options of support; this includes taking BCCA's recommended actions into consideration.

We are pleased to fund and partner with BCCA to deliver the new Access to Feed program which will connect existing hay and feed providers with agricultural producers in need.

Additionally, we are working with the Government of Canada to strengthen existing support programs to help farmers and ranchers through this difficult drought period.

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Canada and the Province have agreed to enable AgriStability [Targeted Advance Payments](#) (TAP) for cattle producers. Existing AgriStability clients that own breeding animals are being sent a letter advising them of the advance payment available to them based on how many breeding animals they have. Approved payments can be in the hands of producers within ten business days and can help provide the cashflow to cover necessary expenses, including the increased cost of feed and hay.

The Ministry, in collaboration with the federal government, has also acted to ensure that all producers who did not enroll in AgriStability by the April 30, 2023, deadline are still eligible for [Late Participation](#) and can apply for an interim payment. Cattle producers who enroll as late participants can also apply Targeted Advance Payments. Producers who have or will be reporting farm income to the Canada Revenue Agency for tax purposes are eligible to enroll in AgriStability.

To increase the amount of grain and oilseed crops that can be diverted towards livestock feed, the Province has implemented changes to crop insurance write-off levels for low yielding grain and oilseed crops. B.C. is allowing grain and oilseed producers that could bale, graze, or silage their crop, to have the abandonment threshold doubled as an incentive for the damaged grain or oilseed crop to enter the feed supply.

The Province is working with the federal government to conduct an AgriRecovery assessment and expedite approval of prescribed areas under the Livestock Tax Deferral Provision.

Please continue to encourage BCCA members to complete Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agroclimate Impact Reporter survey, which is open during the last week of every month over the growing season (April to October) as survey results help inform programming for drought affected areas.

The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Forests to ensure agricultural interests are considered in any proposed regulatory action. We continue to work with agricultural commodity associations and local community groups to promote water management strategies to minimize the likelihood of regulatory action, develop strategies to reduce agricultural impacts, and help producers prepare for and respond to water shortages and drought conditions. In addition, the Ministry's Emergency Management Branch is preparing for a variety of drought scenarios.

The Ministry's Industry Specialists and Regional Agrologists are in regular communication with affected stakeholders.

For beef producers requiring assistance, they can contact Laura Code, Beef and Livestock Specialist at 250-306-7452 or [laura.d.code@gov.bc.ca](mailto:laura.d.code@gov.bc.ca). Alternatively, they can call AgriService BC at 1-888-221-7141 where they will be directed to available Ministry staff.

Drought and other emergency situations can be stressful. The well-being of ranchers, farmers, workers, and their families is extremely important. We encourage BCCA to provide stress mitigation resources for your members by referring them to AgSafe BC's website, wellness practitioners, Do More Agriculture Foundation's peer-to-peer support AgTalk, and B.C. Mental Health hotlines.

I look forward to our continued collaboration as we work through this challenging time together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pam Alexis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Honourable Pam Alexis  
Minister