



# BRITISH COLUMBIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Beef Cattle Industry of British Columbia*

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Honorable Bruce Ralston  
Minister of Forests  
Email: for.minister@gov.bc.ca

February 2, 2024

BCCA File: 2024-003  
SENT BY EMAIL

Dear Minister Ralston,

**RE: Follow Up Message from BCCA Regarding Provincial Elk Management**

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Members of the BC Cattlemen's Association are very concerned about the impacts of elk on agricultural lands. While we are supporters of enhancing ecosystems and cultivating biodiversity, the increased populations of elk have had detrimental impacts to the cattle sector all across the province.

Many ranchers have seen immense losses in their standing hay and grain crops, harvested stored feed, and damage to their grazing fields, fences, irrigation systems and other farm equipment. In 2022 alone, there was reported \$462 000 in crop loss from wildlife. Elk are one of the major culprits and habituation has been a topic that we have addressed with government numerous times over recent years, and ranchers can no longer tolerate this level of damage as a result of provincial wildlife.

As a follow up to our previously sent letters, the BCCA is requesting:

- Regulations that allow for a three-point or better bull elk hunting season, and an open season for antlerless elk in areas demonstrating greatest conflicts, presently these are the Thompson, Cariboo, Central, Peace, and Kootenay regions.
- To introduce regional Wildlife Allocation Committees in areas where they are not yet established and have Agricultural representatives to sit on all established and future committees.

We are pleased to see the provincial Agriculture Wildlife Program, has increased the payment of compensation, which reaffirms the growing need for compensation for losses attributed to wildlife, especially elk. We look forward to seeing this program continue and encourage government to investigate avenues to provide fair compensation for losses sustained by cattle ranchers, not presently eligible for damage compensation.

Our Association welcomes and encourages further discussion with government on the impacts of elk, and how to effectively mitigate the burdens sustained by ranchers. We look forward to your response.

Best Regards,

Brian Thomas,  
President  
BC Cattlemen's Association