



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

September 10, 2025

Honourable Heath MacDonald
Minister of Agriculture & Agri-Food
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SENT BY EMAIL

RE: Biological Control Research Scientists, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

With the recent news that Dr. Rose DeClerck-Floate and Dr. Rob Bouchier will be departing Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the Environmental Stewardship Committee of the British Columbia Cattlemen's Association would like to emphasize the importance of having two invasive plant biocontrol scientist positions at the Lethbridge Research and Development Centre. We strongly urge that both positions be filled promptly as these roles are critical for the continuation of research and development of new biocontrol agents for release on problematic invasive plant species in Canada.

These positions were both initially stationed at the Lethbridge Research and Development Centre, where scientists conduct necessary research and testing of possible new agents. This work not only deepens the understanding of potential bioagents—including determining how to increase population growth in laboratory settings, optimal timing for future field recollections, and developing release methodologies—but also supports the preparation of technical documentation necessary to gain regulatory approval for bioagent release in British Columbia. These two positions are also national leads for reporting out on the research findings, developing the petitions that are submitted for technical review and approval, and for the release of new biocontrol agents. The past success of biocontrol on hound's tongue, dalmatian toadflax and diffuse knapweed would not have happened without these key positions at AAFC. It has been brought to our attention that neither of these positions have been identified to be filled. This will significantly slow many of the projects currently in place, and we are concerned that projects may stall completely. The British Columbia Cattlemen's Association supports the research and development of biocontrol agents for release on problematic invasive plant species; as such, a resolution submitted at our Annual General Meeting in early June specifically requested development of biocontrol agents to aid in the control of scotch thistle, an invasive specie identified by the Invasive Species Council of BC.



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The British Columbia Cattlemen's Association recommends that two invasive plant biocontrol scientist positions at the Lethbridge Research and Development Centre be promptly filled. This action will ensure continuous aid in the conservation of sensitive environmental areas and the continued use of biological control methods, which allows reduced use of chemical control methods.

Sincerely,

Brett Squair
Environmental Stewardship Committee Chair

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