



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

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Position Statement: Water and the Beef Cattle Industry in British Columbia

Water is critical for a healthy and sustainable cattle industry to meet the Province's food security needs, now and in the future. The BC Cattlemen's Association demands that the Province recognize the vital role water plays in the viability of the cattle industry. Modernization of the *Water Act* must provide water security¹ for both livestock drinking water and irrigation purposes.

The Province imposed the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to protect agricultural lands for food production but neglected to protect food security by ensuring agriculture has water security. The BC Cattlemen's Association recommends the Province implement measures that ensure all ranchlands, but not exclusively ALR lands, have necessary water security.

The cattle industry remains committed to good stewardship and conservation in managing our valuable water resources. The BC Cattlemen's Association insists the Province offer programs and incentives to all agricultural water users that encourage water conservation and assist with water storage.

The Association outlines several recommended actions by the Province to increase water access and security for the ranching industry.

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¹ The BC Cattlemen's Association defines water security as affordable, long-term access and use of water resources with adequate supply.



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Recommendations on Water Security & Access for the Ranching Industry

ISSUE	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
<p>WATER ACCESS</p> <p>Food security is dependent upon equal protection for land and water. For long-term food security, the province must recognize the livestock industry's requirement for animal drinking water and irrigation water and these supplies must be protected in legislation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Province must acknowledge the livestock industry's present access and future need for in-stream livestock drinking water by issuing water licences with volume allocations.
<p>WATER LICENCING</p> <p>The BC Cattlemen's Association believes the Province must secure access to water for agricultural lands to meet the Province's food security needs. The association demands the Province recognize the important role water plays in the viability of the cattle industry by taking immediate steps to provide the cattle industry with water security for both livestock drinking water and irrigation purposes.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The province must provide agricultural lands with secure access to water. 3. The province must continue to recognize the <i>First In Time</i> model for water licencing and allocation. 4. The province must allow the necessary livestock drinking water volume to be transferred from in-stream usage to off-stream watering facilities. 5. In order ensure a sustainable agriculture industry that meets the Province's food security needs, water resources are required to be reserved for agriculture.
<p>WATER CONSERVATION</p> <p>Ranchers have invested in and adopted water-efficient practices such as low flow irrigation nozzles. The cattle industry remains committed to conservation in managing this valuable resource and the BC Cattlemen's Association believes the Province should offer water conservation incentives for agricultural landowners.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The Province should offer water conservation incentives and assistance programs for agricultural producers.

<p>WATER STORAGE</p> <p>Many ranchers have developed water storage facilities to capture high water flows for use later in the season. A side benefit to these storage facilities is that they provide valuable fish habitat and create recreational fishing opportunities.</p>	<p>7. The Province should work with cattle producers to offer water storage solutions, incentives and assistance that contribute to enhanced fish habitat and provide ecological value while also increasing water flow during critical periods.</p>
<p>WATER STEWARDSHIP</p> <p>The BC Cattlemen’s Association and its members are committed to water stewardship. The Association works to encourage best management practices for environmental stewardship by promoting programs such as the Environmental Farm Plan program.</p> <p>Additionally, the Association delivers a Farmland Riparian Interface Stewardship Program (FRISP). This program is designed to help ranchers protect and enhance water quality and riparian vegetation while preventing (or mitigating) impacts on streams and lakes.</p> <p>For seventeen years, the Association has annually recognized BC ranchers with <i>The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA)</i> for their outstanding stewardship achievements. In 2002 and in 2009, British Columbia ranchers were awarded the National TESA for their exceptional stewardship efforts, standing out among their peers across Canada. These are achievements that all British Columbians can be proud of.</p>	<p>8. The Province must continue to provide financial support for environmental stewardship programs that assist agricultural producers with meeting objectives laid out in the British Columbia Water Plan for Agriculture.</p> <p>9. The Province should explore the feasibility of waste water as a source of irrigation water and provide financial support for these emerging technologies.</p>
<p>DROUGHT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The cattle industry aims to look at possible models and applications of a Drought Management Strategy in BC. Ensuring water security and protecting agricultural access is a high priority for the BC Cattlemen’s Association in the future.</p>	<p>10. The province should develop a drought management strategy in conjunction with the ranching industry.</p> <p>11. The province should facilitate a process to prevent and/or resolve land-use conflicts that arise during periods of drought.</p>

LAND WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE	
<p>The creation of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) by the province has protected agriculture lands but neglected to protect agriculture's access to water. The Association believes that the province therefore has a responsibility to ensure that lands within the Agriculture Land Reserve have secure access to water.</p>	<p>12. All levels of government and the Agricultural Land Commission must consider the present and future water needs for agriculture and ensure these needs are given priority over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Subdivisions or community expansion, ○ Oil & Gas development, and ○ Other industrial uses. <p>13. A moratorium should be implemented on the practice by the Oil & Gas Industry of deep injection of water that is suitable for agricultural purposes.</p>
LAND NOT WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE	
<p>Much of the land that is used for cattle production is not included within the Agricultural Land Reserve. These non-ALR lands are critical to the overall ranching operation and require water security.</p>	<p>14. The province must provide water security for lands not included in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).</p> <p>15. Lands not within the ALR must be recognized and considered in the British Columbia Water Plan for Agriculture.</p>

Definitions:

The BC Cattlemen's Association defines these keywords and phrases that were including in our Position Statement and Recommendation on Water.

Water security	Affordable, long-term access and use of water resources with adequate supply.
Livestock access	The right for livestock to physically access a water source along with the recognition of the volume of water consumed.
Ranchlands	All lands that are essential to the ranching operation including: private deeded lands, leased lands, and Crown lands, regardless of whether they are within the boundaries of the Agricultural Land Reserve.
Water footprint	An indicator of the total volume of freshwater that is used to produce the goods and services consumed or produced.

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