

Beef Industry Alliance Calls New Legislation "Historic"

Edmonton, April 28, 2009 - The Beef Industry Alliance (BIA), a broad based coalition of beef producers from across Alberta, is calling the provincial government's new legislation for a refundable check-off for the beef industry "historic".

"This is truly a great day for the Alberta Beef Industry and for all industry producers and participants", said BIA Chairman Russ Pickett. "This legislative change represents choice for producers, accountability for the industry, and an exciting new direction forward in which all members of the beef value chain will be represented in the industry governance system".

The beef industry has been at an impasse. The status quo was no longer an option. Since the BSE crisis, Alberta producers have been forced by legislation to pay over \$70 million in check-off levies to the Alberta Beef Producers (ABP). However, there has been a failure to open up international markets or to address the concerns of producers. BIA has been seeking to change the check-off system and working to modernize the industry through the development of a new business plan for the industry.

"This new legislation will allow producers themselves to determine who will represent them, the government has given choice back to the industry and all its participants," stated Pickett. "A refundable check-off is an enduring plebiscite that will mean that organizations will have to earn producers' support every day. The governance structure that will result from this legislation will be more representative and empower all members of the beef value chain to work together towards a new business model for the beef industry in Alberta. This is an important step to repair some of the fractures that have developed in our industry".

Minister Groeneveld and the Government of Alberta have taken bold and necessary steps to address the serious crisis facing the beef industry. First, with the introduction of the Alberta Livestock and Meat Strategy (ALMS), and now with this change to the governance system that will bring the accountability and creative drive necessary to ensure that ALMS will be successful.

"We believe that with this legislation there is a real potential to bring all members of the beef supply chain together and build a better future for this industry", said Pickett. "I know that the members of the BIA are eager to engage other players in the Alberta beef industry to grow this business. We will be contacting ABP in the coming days to discuss how we can work together to implement these changes and improve the beef industry in Alberta for all. The actions of the Government of Alberta today represent the first step in that process towards a new business model for our industry".

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