

Social License to Operate

Background

The extent to which any business or industrial endeavour can properly function and generate economic benefits for society depends on its social license to operate. Social license exists when society trusts and accepts the purposes and practices of an industry, and individual communities approve of an industry carrying out its activities in the local and regional spheres, and beyond. Social license is a function of society's beliefs and perceptions about an industry. Since beliefs and perceptions are subject to continual change, an industry's social license can be gained as well as lost. Broad social acceptability and local community approval must be earned and maintained. This is accomplished through ethical and responsible behaviour, transparency, accountability, meaningful dialogue, and effective two-way communication.

Guiding Principle

ACFA believes that the essence of our sector's social license to operate rests in the fact that cattle feeders play a vital role in Canadian beef production and are committed to providing safe, healthy, and high quality food in an economically, environmentally, and ethically sustainable and socially responsible way.

Position

The cattle feeding sector's social license to operate is earned and maintained by our members' dedication to four pillars:

- Following industry standards of animal care;
- Employing best practices in animal health and production;
- Practicing good environmental stewardship; and
- Investing in our people and their communities.

The dedication of ACFA members to these four pillars demonstrates our social license to operate. Our commitment will manifest itself through a strong and continually improving industry reputation, enhanced levels of public trust, and increased consumer confidence. Commitment to these four pillars is essential for the cattle feeding industry to grow and develop, improve profitability and competitiveness, and increase our ability to serve new and existing markets.

Actions

To strengthen the social license of the cattle feeding sector, ACFA is committed to:

- Developing and implementing an effective awareness campaign and communications program about the cattle feeding sector through traditional, digital, and social media.
- Actively communicating our commitment by emphasizing what cattle feeders do, how cattle feeders do it, and the fact that cattle feeders do it well.
- Working within Alberta's network of agricultural associations and organizations, ACFA will provide leadership on matters of social license and work to strengthen the broader license of Alberta's agriculture and agri-food industry.
- Providing opportunities for cattle feeders to interact with consumers and the public through events and activities such as the annual *Producer Days* held at *Save-on Foods* locations across Alberta.
- Giving back to our communities through acts of service, volunteering, and fundraising for community-based charities.

Key Messages

- *Cattle feeders play a vital role in Canadian beef production and are committed to providing safe, healthy, and high quality food in an economically, environmentally, and ethically sustainable and socially responsible way.*
- *Cattle feeders demonstrate this commitment by following world-class standards of animal care, employing best practices in animal health and production, serving as faithful stewards of the environment, and investing in their people and their communities.*
- *Cattle Feeders are committed to more than meeting the expectations of the communities in which they operate. Cattle feeders strive for continual improvement.*

Approved by the Board on: November 19, 2015

Subject to Review by: November 19, 2017