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ICA Applauds Comm. Staples' Stand

Lockhart, Texas –March 12, 2008 – For Immediate Release – The Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas supports the work of Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples for his recent stand concerning the importation of breeding stock into Mexico. As a result of the actions of Commissioner Staples, Mexico has announced the reopening of the Mexican border to U.S. breeding cattle born after January 1, 1999. The opening of the Mexican border means the renewal of future sales of Texas cattle valued at more than \$80 million each year.

ICA President Peanut Gilfillian said, "The action taken by Commissioner Staples to halt the import of Canadian dairy heifers into Mexico was the determining factor in getting the Mexican officials to the table on this matter. All of the work by USDA, our association and other groups had continued to place pressure on the Mexican officials but the Commissioner's efforts got it done."

Since 2003, Mexico had refused entry to U.S. breeding cattle while continuing to export over one million head of feeder cattle to U.S. feedlots. The Mexican officials had continued to cite the risk of BSE infected cattle entering Mexico as the major reason for denying entry to U.S. cattle. When Mexico opened their border to the importation of Canadian cattle, that argument became groundless. The cessation of Mexican cattle trade in 2003 had severe impacts on many Texas breeders who previously sold purebred cattle to Mexico. Texas ranchers were forced to find other, less profitable, markets while they waited on the border to reopen.

The Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas, with over 7500 members is a Texas organization representing ranching families in Texas on issues that affect their rural lifestyle and economy.