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Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas Urges Secretary of Agriculture to Delay Imports of Older Canadian Cattle and Beef

Lockhart, Texas – July 28, 2006 – For Immediate Release – The Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas, on behalf of its officers, board and members, has requested Secretary Mike Johanns and the United States Department of Agriculture protect the U.S. beef and cattle industry by postponing any rulemaking that would allow the importation of live Canadian cattle and beef from Canadian cattle over 30 months of age until the prevalence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Canada has been determined and effective preventative measures have been established.

“The continuing discovery of new BSE cases in Canada, especially in post-feed ban aged cattle, is alarming to Texas cattlemen and members of the Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas,” said Bruce Dopslauf, State ICA President.

ICA pointed out in its letter to Secretary Johanns that the latest case of BSE, in a 50 month old cow, is the youngest infected animal found in Canada and is further proof that the Canadian feed ban is ineffective. ICA added that once a clear assessment of the Canadian BSE problem has been accomplished, then World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) rules should be applied to determine whether to accept beef and cattle from this BSE-infected country.

“To allow this at-risk, imported beef into our beef supply would taint the health and safety standards, not to mention the reputation of U.S. beef, which the U.S. beef industry has worked diligently to establish,” said Dopslauf, who added this as another reason that mandatory country-of-origin labeling should be implemented in the United States.

“Many countries around the world continue to refuse Canadian cattle and beef products over 30 months of age, and some even request that U.S. suppliers verify that no Canadian beef is being commingled with U.S. beef,” said Dopslauf. “We must not lower our import standards and expect our trading partners to accept a lesser quality product.”

ICA added that USDA must recognize that the incidence ratio of positive BSE cases per number of at-risk cattle tested in Canada is many times greater than that of the U.S. herd and in excess of many European countries with a long history of BSE infestation.

ICA has requested that the USDA continue to work with Canadian health officials to correctly assess Canada’s BSE prevalence and the effectiveness of their feed ban, and to adopt the OIE export rules that apply to the Canadian BSE prevalence situation.

The Independent Cattlemen’s Association of Texas represents land and cattle owners on legislative and regulatory issues of importance to the cattle industry and agribusiness. For more information, contact ICA at 512.620.0162 or visit www.icatexas.com.