

Canadian Cattlemen's Association

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

Canada needs to focus on the competitiveness of wealth generating industries including beef cattle production. Innovation and international market access contribute significantly to the beef industry's long term competitiveness. Increased federal funding for agricultural research is needed. Global food demand is growing, while the land, water and other resources needed to produce food are shrinking. Canada's beef industry has an opportunity to meet this challenge, but innovations to increase production efficiency and competitiveness are essential. Canada's investment in public agriculture research funding is significantly lower than many of our competitors. Science Clusters are an important step, but additional gains can come from reducing administrative hurdles. • The next Science Cluster program needs to be ready to deliver funds April 1, 2013. Program funding gaps starve innovation. • Standardized forms and timely review of applications, contracts, and payment submissions are critical. Administrative efficiency and accountability need not be mutually exclusive. • The ability to transfer funds across fiscal years would improve the cost effectiveness of research. The current inability to rollover funds limits researchers' ability to adapt to program delays, climatic issues, etc., and fosters sub-optimal use of funding. • The leverage ratio of \$6 government to \$1 from industry should remain. Numerous return-on-investment studies have illustrated the benefits of agricultural research; a favorable leverage encourages industry investment. Greater international market access increases returns to producers and the economy by optimizing the value of Canadian beef products. The collaboration between federal government and industry in recent years to grow market access has produced positive outcomes and must continue. Once markets have been opened, Canada must compete with other exporters to promote its product. Following BSE the Canadian Cattlemen's Association Legacy Fund was created to help the industry recover markets lost due to BSE. Industry has consolidated its marketing organizations to create efficiencies in the management of the industry's national check-off funding for domestic and international marketing. Replenishing the Legacy Fund by the Federal Government will support the continued growth of Canada's global beef sales. This investment will improve the competitiveness and profitability of Canada's beef producers and result in positive returns to Canada's economy.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

Jobs are created by finding new customers for products Canadians can competitively provide. Relating to the beef industry, which exports 50% of our product, industry is focused on two areas. First is in the competitiveness of domestic regulations relating to the production of cattle and meat. Current rules relating to collecting and disposing of Specified Risk Material when processing cattle put Canada at a disadvantage to U.S. processors. Funds need to be invested in the research and risk assessment to

move Canada's regulations to equivalency with the U.S. The reduction in the North American cattle herd over the last six years means that slaughter capacity is in excess of what is required. As slaughter capacity is rationalized, costs associated with regulatory burden will affect whether plants are closed in Canada or the U.S. If Canadian regulations are not in alignment with the United States we are likely to lose more slaughter capacity and return to increased dependency on the U.S. for processing Canadian cattle. Events like the U.S. border closure in 2003, demonstrate the importance of having a strong Canadian processing sector. If Canadian slaughter capacity is reduced, another US initiated countervail case or an animal health incident would significantly impact the profitability and viability of many cattle producers across Canada. The second area of priority is the development of international trade opportunities. Canada has been very ambitious in opening negotiations with potential bilateral trade partners in the wake of the WTO's slow down, but negotiations need to conclude in successful agreements. Specifically, completing the Korea Free Trade Agreement, CETA with the EU and CEPA with Japan with meaningful duty free access for beef would provide a significant boost to the value the beef sector can realize per animal and result in significant economic spin-offs to the broader economy. Ensuring the investments at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Market Access Secretariat are secure and enhanced is essential to concluding these deals and being able to defend and maintain Canada's current access levels.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

a. Improve access to Temporary Foreign Worker program for agriculture employers by more efficient processes within Service Canada, and improved coordination between foreign embassies to attract dedicated and qualified applicants. Reduce processing times and increase communication of process stages so employers and potential employees understand requirements and where process is at, or any process changes. b. Reduce waiting times for Labour Market Opinions (LMO's) or accept past ones in areas where known labour shortages exist. The process is too long and complicated, even when the employer applicant is familiar with the system and required documentation. Expedite or eliminate LMOs in times of severe labour shortages. c. Allow more immigrant nominees from the pool of temporary foreign workers. If a temporary foreign worker desires the full-time position and the employer has determined the worker will fit the operation, allow these future tax payers into the country in an efficient manner and allow their family to also immigrate/obtain a work permit providing a job is feasible for them within the community. d. Improve coordination of training in the predominant local Canadian official language for employees intent on living in Canada. While some jobs would not require fluency in English or French to ensure success (need to allow for this), if an employee is to immigrate and be successful, they will need to develop a working ability in the predominant language of the local community. e. Recognize that jobs in agriculture neither fit the formal definition of "skilled" where more formal training is required, nor are they unskilled or suitable for anyone without proper experience. Workers with an aptitude for and experience in the proper handling of livestock and operation of expensive equipment is essential. This will assist in managing expectations so a so-called "skilled" job isn't necessarily interpreted in a narrow manner. This should apply to both temporary foreign workers and immigrant nominee programs. f. Lengthen the stay for temporary foreign workers, and if a current temporary foreign worker already in Canada reappplies, adopt a streamlined re-submission process without a further LMO. g. Continue to address public fears/misperceptions and address fraud.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

This change creates 3 challenges: a) continually aging producers who already work beyond usual retirement age, b) reduced replacement ability due to competing jobs for those prepared to enter industry (invest or become employee), and c) increased demand on producer's time/increased competing priorities. a. Assist with attraction of replacements through foreign worker programs, temporary assistance for labour if required (help fill out forms/work through process), and assist with human resource management through understanding of the different/changing workplace. b. If a sector is reasonably profitable and competitive, new entrants will be attracted. Therefore remove impediments to competitiveness for livestock sector, as compared to other sectors and other competing countries. Regulatory equivalence with the USA is also important. c. Assist in improving agronomic increases in forage/feedgrain production, feedgrain competitiveness with grains used for ethanol, and improved productivity through research and technology transfer in partnership with industry for animal health, reproduction, feedlot efficiency, rangeland management, and other traits associated with profitability/sustainability. d. Programming that supports improved technologies to assist producer management of labour, resources, equipment, and the production/marketing and safe, wholesome, quality food.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

Federal government should work with industry sectors along with the provincial government to address the misperceptions and sometimes mistrust of animal agriculture. Animal agriculture needs to continue to improve management at the same time, however basing practices on sound science is not enough. Positive, effective advocacy is required and assistance to do this in a partnership approach with industry would be beneficial to agriculture and to the public. Constructive criticism is welcome, however ill-informed media and negative activists' campaigns against animal agriculture provides Canadians with no benefit. Address misperceptions on the environment, animal well-being, so-called "corporate greed", food safety, and the different systems that may indeed be sustainable and contribute to food security.