

**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE ANDY MITCHELL, MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD ON THE RULING IN THE NINTH
CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS**

OTTAWA, July 14, 2005 - I join the Canadian livestock industry in welcoming the ruling delivered today in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. We are very pleased that the Court has overturned the preliminary injunction issued by the District Court of Montana. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Government of Canada have long argued there is no basis in science to keep the border closed.

It has taken a lot of hard work, at all levels, in both of our countries to reach where we are today.

We will be working with the Canadian livestock industry and the USDA in the next few days to act on the decision.

The federal and provincial governments have been working closely with industry to address this important issue. In fact, provincial colleagues and I began our recent annual conference in Kananaskis, Alberta with a discussion and an analysis of contingency planning to address any possible outcome of the July 27th hearing

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Despite this ruling, R-CALF will still have their hearing on the July 27th, at which point, Judge Cebull could do one of three things; 1. Reverse his original injunction that would allow the “Rule” to be implemented; 2. Maintain the status quo or; 3. Expand the injunction to include stopping the movement of beef across the boarder.

Obviously the prospect of closing the boarder totally has cattle producers in this country very concerned. There is contingency planning under way should the judge expand the injunction. However, it is hoped that today’s favourable ruling and the discovery of BSE positive cow in Texas will all weigh in our favour when Judge Cebull makes his ruling.

The US administration is committed to a strong defense of the “rule”. There is also indication that soon after the court hearings are complete, and if the rulings are favourable, that the US will publish a second rule that would allow for a more complete list of products to move across the boarder. There are clear indications that a second rule has not been published as it would be counter productive while the initial rule is in the courts.

Canadian Sheep Identification Update

Jennifer Fleming, Executive Director

Over the past eighteen months, Canadian sheep producers have purchased just over 1.3 million* sheep identification tags; Ontario has purchased the greatest number of tags (562,415), followed by Alberta (317,522). This means that Canadian sheep producers have invested over \$400,000 of their income to ensuring that an animals' (or carcasses') farm of origin can be identified, should there be an outbreak of a foreign animal disease, or should problems be identified at an abattoir.

It is an appropriate time to evaluate where the program is currently and how the industry would like to see it evolve. The Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) was designed to be straightforward and affordable. The program was also intended to be flexible, in that it would evolve in response to the changing needs of producers and the industry. As such, the Canadian Sheep Federation's National Identification Committee met in Ottawa in mid-June to review the current program and undergo a strategic planning session.

At the meeting, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), who are responsible for enforcing the program, indicated that based on 364 inspected sites and over 42,000 sheep 96 per cent of the sheep were tagged in accordance with the CSIP. This is a clear indication that Canadian sheep producers recognize the importance of this producer owned program and contributed to its overwhelming success.

Given the success of the program, the CSIP committee has recommended that the program continue with the current tagging options which are the: Ketchum Kurl-Lock #3 tags; Allflex dangle tag or; Allflex RFID tag in conjunction with the Allflex dangle tag or the Ketchum tag. The CSF will work to identify affordable alternatives to address issues surrounding; the rate of infection for permanently tagged sheep; aiding with management decisions and; reducing labour.

The CSF continues to lobby the federal government for an active scrapie surveillance program and when this is implemented the desire for full traceability and retirement of tag numbers from the breeding portion of the flock may necessitate additional affordable tagging options.

Canadian producers can be very proud of the fact that this program has been created by and for Canadian Sheep producers. As such, it is up to the producers to ensure that the program has integrity. It is the producers' responsibility to ensure that they keep on-farm records of movement of all sales, shipments and receipts of sheep over 18 months of age. Ongoing compliance will ensure that the program continues to run smoothly and producers will not have to incur extra costs. Producers are doing a good job and need to continue to be seen to be doing a good job.

The next stage of the CSIP program will be the on-farm audits that the CFIA will be conducting. These audits will be done to ensure that all tags being used on each farm are

* This number does not include the tags sold to Quebec producers

registered to that farm and that record of movement forms are maintained and available if (or when) they are needed in the event of problems.

The CSF's National ID Committee, which is comprised of sheep producers, remains committed to ensuring that the program continues to evolve remaining affordable and simultaneously meeting the needs of producers.

Consumer perception of food safety in Canada

France Lanthier, National On-Farm Food Safety Coordinator

The frequency with which food safety is making headline news is increasing. Whether it is the U.S. E.coli (“Jack-in-the-box”) crisis of 1993 or the recent BSE scare getting prime coverage, it seems consumers have been bombarded with negative images of their food supply for the past decade. How has this affected the Canadian consumer?

According to an Ipsos-Reid survey (2001b) 32% of Canadians feel that their food supply is safer than it was 10 years ago, while 32% feel it is as safe, and 35% feel it is less safe. When asked at what level of the food production chain they thought the greatest chance of a food safety problem was most likely to develop, the majority of respondents felt that the most risk was at the processing level, then at the food service level, followed by the farm and retail levels (Table 1).

Table 1. Where do you feel the greatest chance for a food safety problem to develop?

Source	%
At the farm level	12
During the processing of foods	37
At the retail level (ie. grocery stores)	12
In the home	9
In food service outlets (ie. restaurants)	29
Other	1

(Karman, J., 2003)

The survey revealed no striking differences in concern of food safety problems developing at the farm level between gender, age categories, or marital status. There was, however, a wide range in the level of concern between provinces (Table 2). While the level of concern was the highest in the province of British Columbia at 23%, residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan were the least concerned with issues of food safety at the farm level, with only 6% expressing concern.

Table 2. Concerns of the chance of a food safety problem developing at the farm level, by province or region.

Province or region	%
BC	23
AB	15
MB/SK	6
ON	19
QU	19
ATL	16

(Ipsos-Reid, 2001a)

Food safety is a complex issue. A group of marketing researchers in the US evaluated the consumer assessment of risk following the European BSE crisis. Consumers from the US, the Netherlands, and Germany participated in the study. According to Pennings et al. (2002) two concepts come into play in regards to the consumer's assessment of risk: risk attitude and risk perception. "Risk attitude deals with the decision-maker's interpretation of content of the risk and how much (s)he dislikes the risk, risk perception deals with the decision-maker's interpretation of the chance to be exposed to the content of the risk."

With BSE, the risk is the contraction of Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (CJD). The result of this research showed that consumer assessment of risk regarding BSE or food safety in general depended on both risk attitude and risk perception. Risk attitude, which depends on facts, that is knowing what the danger is can be approach by scientific method which can address questions such as: "can I contract CJD from eating BSE beef?" or "how are animals evaluated, can we effectively identify and remove affected animals before they enter the food supply?"

Risk perception depends mostly how confident the consumer is in the government or food safety regulatory bodies. Pennings et al. (2002) suggest that responsible dissemination of information by government, industry and the media is the best method to approach perceived risk in the food supply and to instil confidence in the consumer.

These concepts are important and should be applied demographically so that we can best approach consumer concerns. For instance, why is there such a gap in concerns of the chance of a food safety problem developing at the farm level between provinces (Table 2)? Is it that the facts are not well understood? Is it that regionally consumer confidence in government or industry varies? Is it that media coverage (tv, activist or producer group newsletters) and its influence varies from province to province? As a commodity group we must address these questions in order to best tailor our food safety program to our needs and in order to reach our goal of solidifying consumer confidence.

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Agroterrorism and the livestock industry

Monica Seguin

As Canadians we have come to expect that our agricultural system will provide a safe, affordable and nutritious food supply. As a result of the September 11th attacks in the United

States, though, there has been increasing interest in the national spotlight in all forms of terrorism, including agroterrorism.

Agroterrorism involves the use of biological agents to intentionally produce disease in the agricultural industry. This type of deliberate attack could cripple livestock production and affect the safety of meat and dairy products in Canada.

Of importance to the sheep industry is *Foot and Mouth Disease* (FMD) which is an extremely contagious disease affecting cloven-hoofed livestock (i.e. cattle, sheep) and wildlife species (i.e. deer, elk). It is a viral disease causing fever and vesicles that rupture in the mouth and on the skin of the udder and feet. It can be spread quickly by several means including by direct contact between infected animals or by humans who have been in contact with infected animals via clothing, footwear, vehicles and equipment. Canada is currently free of FMD with the last reported outbreak occurring in 1952, although it is quite possible that this disease or any other could be introduced deliberately into the Canadian food chain.

In 2001, FMD raged through the United Kingdom costing the country nearly \$7 billion (Cdn) in losses throughout the agriculture and food-processing chain alone. And, more recently (May 10th 2005) New Zealand's livestock industry dealt with a hoax. Perpetrators of the hoax claimed that FMD was to be deliberately released on Waiheke Island (Northern island of New Zealand) if demands for money were not met and changes to the country's tax policies were not implemented.

New Zealand authorities considered this as a real threat by responding quickly and decisively, and informing trade partners. Fortunately, it was a hoax and FMD has not been found in livestock on the island, however this exercise did demonstrate their exceptional ability to respond to a potential agroterrorist attack.

These incidences clearly show the devastating impact that an either deliberate or accidental introduction of foreign animal diseases can have on a nation. Furthermore, the cost of recovering from serious animal disease outbreaks is much higher than just the cost of livestock and the disposal of the animals, as other industries (e.g., tourism) suffer.

Coping with accidental outbreaks of animal-borne diseases such as FMD, BSE, Avian Influenza etc. can be a difficult and demanding task. In Canada, the National Veterinary Service (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) is in charge of operational activities related to stamping out the disease. As seen with the outbreak of Avian Influenza in British Columbia in 2004, the essential feature to any response system is the speed in which it is handled. In regards to our industry, our ability to quickly trace and locate both affected and unaffected animals will reduce both the potential spread of disease and economic impact.

Producers and commodity organizations need to maintain strong partnerships with the scientific community and regulatory agencies to address threats to domestic animal agriculture.

New Zealand reports a sharp decrease in lamb exports for May.

New Zealand lamb exports for May were the lowest on record, with only 20,800 metric tons shipped -- a drop of 38 percent compared to last year, Meat and Livestock Australia reported. For the first five months of 2005, New Zealand lamb exports are 21 percent below the same period last year --at 123,000 metric tons.

“The decline in exports during May was largely due to a fall in the availability of lamb and low slaughter levels, a factor that has been prevalent throughout 2005,” MLA said.

New Zealand’s major lamb export market, the Europe Union, received 11,200 metric tons during May, taking shipments since the start of 2005 to 65,700 tons. During May, exports to the United Kingdom (4,620 metric ton) and France (1,640 tons fell 44 percent and 48 percent, respectively – while shipments for the first five months of 2005 are down 25 percent to the United Kingdom (29,700 tons) and 23 percent to France (10,200 tons).

Shipments to the Middle East in May totaled 1,600 metric tons, falling 35 percent compared to last year, while exports for 2005 were the lowest on record, totaling only 8,950 metric tons.

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Category: Announcement,Marketing,Research,Trade

[Domenick Castaldo, Ph.D.](#)

<http://www.meatnews.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Article&artNum=9743>

Push for English Lamb as consumption rises in Belgium

Belgian supermarket chains are gearing up to promote Quality English lamb this summer following a major push by the English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX).

As lamb consumption in Belgium hits a record high - up from a total of 34,000 tonnes imported in 2003 to 36,000 tonnes last year and still rising - English will be the flavour of the season around 900 stores across the country, including some of its largest chains.

Tasting sessions in a number of the stores are also planned to underline the flavour and succulence of the English meat.

Jean-Pierre Garnier, EBLEX Meat Export Manager, said: "The Belgian market is a demanding one but it is recognised that English lamb provides the quality and conformation needed.

"This promotion is just a beginning with several more projects in the pipeline for Belgium including offering a wider variety of lamb cuts."

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[Domenick Castaldo, Ph.D.](#)

<http://www.meatnews.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Article&artNum=9785>

Reprieve for animal movement system

The UK has the largest sheep flock in the EU-25 at just short of 25 million head, of which 16 million are breeding ewes. The latest official figures put Scottish numbers close to eight million head.

For the last three years farming organisations have been fighting a proposal from Brussels which would involve every sheep having a specific identity number. All sheep movements would have been required to be notified on an individual basis, using pen and paper, with double tagging of all animals. This would have been a nightmare in Scotland, where flock sizes are the largest in the EU and hill farmers typically run well over one thousand ewes under extensive conditions. So for the last three years movements have been logged with the Scottish Animal Movement Unit in Inverness.

In 2003, it was agreed that the UK would be granted a derogation, provided it maintained its existing movement and traceability system, which was basically centred around details of batch movements. Earlier this year EU officials visited the UK to check the robustness of the system and were generally satisfied that it worked well, with certain reservations regarding Northern Ireland.

There have nevertheless been fears that Brussels would still demand full records of individual sheep movements, but the EU's standing committee on the food chain and animal health has now concurred that the UK can continue with its present system, subject to a further inspection early next year.

Not surprisingly the news was welcomed by NFU Scotland, with vice-president Bob Howat commenting: "It's been a long-running battle to convince Brussels that our system works. It's probably been the most important lobbying exercise we have undertaken for the sheep industry in years and we are delighted that it is paying off.

"I am relieved that common sense has prevailed for the time being. But with another inspection timed for next year, no one can afford to take their foot off the pedal."

Ross Finnie, the rural development minister, added: "This is good news, but failure to comply fully could lead to our derogation being withdrawn and double tagging being introduced. "A consultation into minor changes needed to reflect EU requirements will begin over the next few weeks. The Scottish Executive will write to all sheep and goat keepers in the autumn explaining the revised system in full."
