



Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

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NEWS RELEASE

Subject: **CFFO issues advisory on moving beyond BSE**

Guelph, April 2004. In an effort to aid the work of other farm groups in helping Ontario farmers move beyond BSE, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario has issued a six-point advisory statement outlining constructive steps that require action.

"The CFFO remains extremely concerned about the desperate and uncertain situation facing Ontario's farming communities because of the BSE crisis," said John Kikkert, the CFFO's president. "We believe a number of options need to be pursued i

The CFFO advisory statement, adopted recently by delegates from 22 district associations across the province, calls for a combination of international trade rule changes, better testing, and incentives for increased slaughter capacity and a greater animal cull. In brief, the statement calls for:

- **A shrinking of the Canadian cattle herd.** CFFO delegates note that there is no easy way to shrink the cattle herd. Destroying healthy animals or donating meat to low-income families appear to be unworkable options. Incentives to cull animals may be the only option available.
- **More slaughter capacity for Ontario.** CFFO delegates note that upgrading and expanding the slaughter of cull cattle is an excellent place for government investment, even though challenges exist for entrepreneurs from a rising Canadian dollar and an eventual opening of the U.S. border. Increased slaughter capacity could be underwritten by a government-funded risk management initiative.
- **Changes to international trade rules.** CFFO delegates note that a great need exists for binding international rules that make sense for countries with an incidental occurrence of BSE. Currently, most countries are using the World Organization for Animal Health's ad hoc guidelines designed to deal with an outbreak of epidemic proportions in the United Kingdom.

- **Better practices and testing.** CFFO delegates note that removing specified risk material from the food chain, and targeting high-risk animals for testing, is the best way to create a firewall within the industry. In addition, delegates agreed that if Japan or any other country will publicly state that they will open their markets to our cattle or livestock products, if tested, we should be willing to do so as soon as possible.
- **Changed import rules.** CFFO delegates note that Canada’s import rules for ruminant livestock and products from countries with a low incidence of BSE should match the rules that others have set for imports from Canada. In addition, Canada needs to encourage HACCP-based food safety program implementation and recognition as soon as possible and require imports to be produced under the same standards.
- **Improvements in the tracing of animals.** CFFO delegates note that Canada’s cattle identification system needs a higher profile and further investment so that traceability will be improved. The development of an ear tag for cattle that remains in the ear is an urgent need.

In addition to the development of an advisory statement, the CFFO also announced that it will be holding BSE information meetings in a few key cattle-producing regions of the province.

“There is a lot of information available on BSE and trade relations,” said Kikkert. “We plan to take that information to cattle producers and give them a chance to voice their concerns about farming.”

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