



Producers called to action to assist Manitoba beef producers affected by flooding

May 11, 2011

Calgary, AB – The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is making producers aware that immediate assistance is required by Manitoba producers affected by the urgent call for the evacuation of cattle in areas facing impending flooding threats surrounding Lake Manitoba. On May 10, Manitoba's Agriculture Minister declared a livestock emergency and indicated that up to 100,000 head of cattle may have to be moved.

The Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) is asking neighbours, producers, crown lands and grain farmers for any and all assistance for those producers that are facing urgent evacuation circumstances in the areas of LGD of Alonsa, RM's of Lakeview, Westbourne, Portage La Prairie, Woodlands, St. Laurent, Coldwell, Eriksdale, Siglunes, Lake Manitoba and Grahamdale. More RMs may be affected in the coming days.

Needed are available pasture, feed and/or places to hold cattle for both the short and long-term. In addition to the available pasture land, the MBP requires the following information: an approximate of how many pairs and yearlings can be placed at that location; feed availability to be used to feed these cattle in the event they are held there for a period of time; producer contact information and an indication of whether the producer is able or willing to care for these cattle while they remain on their land. Producers are urged to keep thorough records. Please contact the MBP office at 1-204-772-4542 or toll free at 1-800-772-0458.

CCA Vice-President Martin Unrau said the situation will require long-term management strategies by producers as the conditions created by the flooding won't be quickly resolved. "Flooding around the lake is an all summer situation," he said. "The immediate difficulty is moving cattle through the mud and down roads that are almost impassable and that's causing stress and frustration."

The CCA will be monitoring the flooding, and will evaluate the need for an emergency program response.

The MBP's call for assistance comes at a time when Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Community Pasture Program is nearly full and has already had to allocate some cattle between pastures in Manitoba that have experienced flooding.

Assuming no further flooding on AAFC pastures, the program will be able to accept all the cattle previously allocated and would still be able to take approx. additional 1,000 pairs, noted Rick Gaube, manager of the Community Pasture Program. As well, the CPP will be able to accept an additional 500 to 700 pairs on Saskatchewan pastures. However, he cautioned this is no way close to what is needed for grazing.

A few years ago, drought conditions in Alberta and Saskatchewan saw producers there make arrangements with Manitoba producers to take their cows for a couple of years. "The reversal is likely the best scenario in this case if there are producers in position to do so," Gaube suggested.

The MBP will update information on its website as it becomes available. Please visit: www.mbbeef.ca

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