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For immediate release

National Cattle Feeders' Association develops PAACO Certified Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment Program

Calgary (February 24, 2016) — The National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) has developed a new Canadian Feedlot Animal Care Assessment tool for auditing animal welfare. This tool has earned Certified Audit status from the Professional Auditor Certification Organization, Inc. (PAACO) that sets standards in animal welfare audits, and is the first certified audit designed for the feedlot segment of the food production industry.

The audit is the result of a collaborative effort by feedlot operators, packers, retail and food service customers, veterinarians, ethologists, animal scientists, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and covers the delivery of cattle to the feedlot right through to loading of cattle for transport to the packing plant. Cargill, JBS, and Tyson were integral to the development of the feedlot audit.

"The feedlot industry has been proactive in working collectively with our processors and other stakeholders, such as our retailers, to develop this assessment tool," said NCFA Chair Larry Schweitzer. "It was important to involve all players in the beef supply chain to create a credible audit instrument, which PAACO's process brings to this tool. Our goal was to have a program that satisfied our packer customers and their retail and foodservice customers without adding costs, duplication, or a bureaucratic burden on feedlot operations. We wanted to see one common national feedlot animal care assessment tool used by all players in the beef supply chain. We hope to eventually also harmonize the Canadian feedlot animal care assessment program with the USA for a North American feedlot animal care audit/assessment program, similar to the NAMI audit for processing plants that is widely adopted in U.S. and Canadian establishments."

With full approval from its board, NCFA is now focused on educating Canadian feedlot operators on the expectations and criteria of the Canadian feedlot animal care assessment tool that its customers will hold it accountable to.

"I commend the Canadian feedlot industry for taking on this animal welfare initiative that will serve as a complement to the NAMI plant audit tool. Consumers increasingly rank animal welfare as an important factor in their buying decisions and this tool will provide confidence in an integral segment of beef production. This initiative presents an opportunity for our industry to increase transparency and share our animal welfare values with discerning customers and consumers," shared Lily Edwards-Callaway, PhD, JBS Beef Cattle Welfare leader and NAMI Handling Committee chair.

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About National Cattle Feeders Organization:

The NCFA was established in 2007 as the voice of Canadian cattle feeders, with a mission to promote: growth and sustainability, competitiveness, and industry leadership. Visit <http://www.nationalcattlefeeders.ca> for more information.

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