
CCA and NCFA calling for swift resolution to impending Canadian Pacific Railway strike action

March 3, 2022

Ottawa, ON – The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and the National Feeders' Association (NCFA) are highly concerned about the potential impacts of a rail strike, including devastating consequences to Canada's beef industry.

Western Canadian cattle producers are dependent on feed shipments from the U.S. because of the hard-hitting drought producers faced last year from BC through to Ontario. A disruption in shipments of feed grain from the United States (U.S.) will significantly impact the ability of beef producers to feed their cattle. Prior issues with rail and transportation had already reduced feed availability and feeders have been managing their needs on a train-by-train basis. There is no buffer in the system.

CCA and NCFA are strongly encouraging both sides to reach a solution prior to the strike action deadline. In the event a solution cannot be reached, the parties should move directly to binding arbitration to avoid a strike and the resulting necessity of implementing back-to-work legislation. It is imperative to prevent the serious consequences that would arise from a shortage of critical feed supplies on Canadian beef operations.

According to Statistics Canada, Alberta and Saskatchewan corn imports in 2021 were up 400 per cent.

Key considerations:

- Drought 2021 caused a small crop and what was available was of moderate to good quality.
- Estimated current available feed supply is one to two weeks.
- On February 1, 2022, there were 1.1 million head of cattle on feed in Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- One rail car is estimated to feed approximately 8,000 head for one day, therefore we need nine to ten trains per week.
- According to Statistics Canada, Alberta and Saskatchewan corn imports in 2021 were up 400 per cent.
- It is estimated that over 1,000 super-B trucks would be needed weekly to replace the volume of feed grain currently be transported by Canadian Pacific Railway trains and trucking capacity is not available leaving no alternative solutions.

Quotes:

"We are very concerned about the potential impacts of a rail strike on the ability of beef producers to feed their cattle, particularly feedlots. It is imperative that essential services are not interrupted, including the movement of agricultural products by rail."

Bob Lowe, CCA President

“A rail strike would be devastating to our industry. With last year’s drought and recent transportation issues, feeders have been reliant on CP rail bringing up feed from the U.S. If trains stop moving, there will be no other options.”

James Bekkering, NCFA Chair

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