

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT BLACK  
SENATOR – ONTARIO



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SÉNATEUR – ONTARIO

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CANADA

February 23, 2022

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

*Minister*  
Dear ~~Minister~~ Bibeau,

I recently met with representatives of the National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) to discuss concerns facing their members. As you know, the NCFA is dedicated to the advancement of the national fed cattle value chain and represents Canada's major cattle feeding regions, including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec.

During our meeting, the NCFA highlighted that, like many industries across the country, the cattle sector is facing a challenging time. In addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, they also face the impacts of climate change, high grain prices, labour shortages, and more. While the cattle sector remains strong, these challenges add to the difficulties of an already unprecedented time.

I would like to highlight that NCFA representatives shared the success of the Trusted Trader Program, which has allowed established members to continue moving larger convoys of cattle despite the attempts by the United States to limit the export to three trucks per certificate. That being said, they expressed their hope that a similar 'Trusted Employer Program' could be established in relation to the Temporary Foreign Workers' (TFW) Program.

As a longstanding member of the agricultural community, I have heard time and time again the potential value of such a program. The extensive application process is an unnecessary burden to place on employers who have been successfully hiring, and retaining the employment of, TFWs for decades. I strongly encourage your office to investigate the possibility of implementing this recommendation, as it will help support the agriculture and agri-food industry through the widespread labour shortage it currently faces.

...2

The NCFA also highlighted the upcoming update to the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, particularly regarding the need to include a new pillar on competitiveness. I wholeheartedly agree that this Partnership should include support programs and services that will strengthen and enhance Canadian agriculture's competitiveness within the global market. It is imperative that we take this opportunity to maintain and stabilize Canada's position as a leader in agriculture, not only in terms of our domestic market, but also on the international stage.

The last concern that the NCFA shared with me was regarding the current state of existing business risk management programs. They highlighted, and I echo, their hope that the next generation of BRM programs meet the unique needs of different agriculture sectors and factor in increased farm size, higher production costs, changing business and economic realities. It is critical, especially during these challenging times, that programs like AgriStability and the Livestock Price Insurance Program are updated and improved to reflect current state of Canadian agriculture.

At this time, I would also like to share that the representatives of NCFA provided positive feedback on their working relationship with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). I was pleased to hear this, given the less-than positive feedback that members of the agricultural and agri-food industry have previously shared in regard to their relationship with CFIA.

Minister, thanks in advance for your attention to these matters. It is clear that the cattle sector is a significant part of the Canadian agricultural industry. I am hopeful that your government will work collaboratively with industry and key stakeholders to ensure their continued success.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Robert Black  
Senator – Ontario  
Chair, Canadian Senators Group  
Chair, Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee

c.c. Janice Tranberg, President and Chief Executive Officer, [jtranberg@cattlefeeders.ca](mailto:jtranberg@cattlefeeders.ca)