

Minister  
of Agriculture and  
Agri-Food



Ministre  
de l'Agriculture et de  
l'Agroalimentaire

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0C5

Quote: 270823

May 18, 2022

The Honourable Robert Black, Senator  
The Senate  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A4

Dear Senator Black:

Thank you for your letter following your meeting with representatives of the National Cattle Feeders' Association, in which you share some of the challenges faced by the Association's members. I sincerely regret the delay in this response.

I recognize that the cattle sector is a significant part of the agriculture and agri-food sector, and I share the stakeholders' concerns about the impacts of climate change, high grain prices and labour shortages. For that matter, one of my key [mandate letter](#) commitments is to develop a sector-specific agricultural labour strategy to address persistent labour shortages in farming and food processing. I am keenly aware of the need to address short-term pressures, including by supporting timely access to labour, and advance long-term solutions for producers and food processors.

Even as we look to longer-term approaches to resolving labour shortages, international workers will remain critical for the sector. In this regard, the Government of Canada continues to strengthen the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, improve worker health, safety and quality of life as well as ease the administrative burden for employers. I am pleased to inform you that, as part of these efforts, the Government is developing a trusted employer system to streamline the application process for Canadian employers with a good history of employing temporary foreign workers, which includes the vast majority of the sector. Additionally, I am working with my colleagues to expand pathways to permanent residency for international agricultural workers to make it easier for these individuals to contribute to the Canadian food system.

I have started to work with my provincial and territorial counterparts to develop the successor to the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, which will expire March 31, 2023. As you will have seen, the provincial and territorial agriculture ministers and I announced the [Guelph Statement](#) in

.../2

November, 2021. The Statement sets a direction to position Canada's agriculture and agri-food producers, processors and other stakeholders for continued success as world leaders in sustainable agriculture. Moreover, the Statement lays out a vision and defines the priorities that will set the foundation for the next policy framework (NPF) and ensure a sustainable and resilient sector. The Statement also contains a specific pillar on building sector capacity, growth and competitiveness in order to support emerging primary, value-added and processing opportunities. Another pillar highlights the ongoing importance of market development and trade with a focus on supporting export readiness and the pursuit of market opportunities abroad and across the country. Under the NPF, we will continue to work on meeting domestic and international demand for sustainable production and processing practices.

As part of my mandate letter, another key commitment is to work with provinces and territories to update business risk management (BRM) programs to integrate climate risk management, environmental practices and climate readiness planning, among other objectives. This undertaking is sustained by the Guelph Statement, which committed to providing BRM programs that are timely, equitable and easy to understand. As we look to enhance these programs for the NPF, special consideration is being given to AgriStability and the Livestock Price Insurance program, which both Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Western provinces recognize as an important risk management tool for the cattle and hog sectors in Western Canada.

Finally, I am pleased to hear that members of the National Cattle Feeders' Association are providing positive feedback on their working relationship with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. It is important that all government departments and agencies work collaboratively with the sector and its stakeholders if we are to see continued success for the producers.

I trust that this information will be of assistance to you. Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, PC, MP