



#6, 11010 – 46th Street SE
Calgary, AB T2C 1G4
Tel: 403-769-1519
Fax: 403-209-3255

August 15, 2024

The Honourable Steven McKinnon, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour and Seniors

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C. M.P.
Minister of Transport and Quebec Lieutenant

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

Dear Ministers,

The National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) is urgently calling upon the federal government to consider all options available to avert a concurrent work stoppage of Canada's Class 1 railways.

NCFA was disappointed with the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) conclusion that a strike or lockout would not pose an immediate and serious danger to the safety and health of the public. This potential work stoppage, as we noted in our submission to the CIRB, would be devastating to the welfare of Canada's national cattle herd and the individuals who care for them.

The Canadian beef industry relies heavily upon the timely rail delivery of cattle feed from the United States to feed our national herd consisting of millions of animals. The volume is significant - on average a single railcar provides enough feed for 8,000 animals for one day. To transport the same volume of feed grain that trains currently deliver, would require more than 1,000 super-B trucks each week—an option that is not feasible.

Considering that a single feedlot will house tens of thousands of animals, there are limited storage options, so producers meticulously schedule their weekly feed supplies to coincide with the timing of rail deliveries. The cattle are on a very specific feeding schedule and the wellbeing of animals is at risk if there are even brief delays in feed delivery by rail.

Beyond the animal welfare concerns, we must acknowledge the mental health of the farm workers who care for these animals and the level of stress that will be created by a feed shortage for millions of cattle.

In the immediate term, we call upon the government to urgently work with the rail companies and unions to bring resolution to this matter prior to August 22nd.

In the longer-term, the government needs to implement a labour strategy that recognizes rail service in Canada as essential. The national economy cannot continue to function on an ad hoc approach to this critical service within the supply chain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Lowe Chair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "L".

Will Lowe Chair, NCFA