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**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance
of the Fall 2025 Federal Budget**

By

National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA)

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Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Continue to negotiate the return of an **unimpeded and tariff-free border** to support an **integrated North American beef industry**.

Recommendation #2

Ensure Canadian farmers are supported by **business risk management programs** that better **reflect realities** of the sector today.

Recommendation #3

Significantly improve **government approval systems** so that **Canadian farmers can access innovative** products and technology at the same time as global competitors.

Recommendation #4

Develop **immigration policy** that recognizes the indispensable **role of foreign workers** for Canada's **food security and affordability**.

Recommendation #5

Recognize a **reliable national transportation supply chain** as a critical **nation-building project** by investing not only in national corridors but also in the **roads and bridges** that take agriculture products **from the farm-gate to national corridors**.

Who we are

The National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) works to improve the growth, sustainability, and competitiveness of the beef sector in Canada.

Canada's beef industry contributes \$9.7 billion in farm cash receipts annually, contributes \$21.8 billion to national GDP annually and accounts for 347,000 jobs, each one of which supports another 3.9 jobs elsewhere in the economy. Canada's beef sector is an important part of the equation to building the strongest economy in the G-7.

NCFA respectfully submits the following pre-budget recommendations that will unleash the potential of Canada's agriculture sector while delivering food security and affordability.

Recommendation #1

Continue to negotiate the return of an **unimpeded and tariff-free border** to support an **integrated North American beef industry**.

Historically, the Canadian and US beef industries have operated within a single North American market and have enjoyed a relatively unimpeded and tariff-free border. The deeply integrated nature of the industry can result in cattle crossing the border more than once in their lifetime – i.e. born in the US, fed in Canada, processed in the US.

Canada exports \$7 billion of live cattle and beef annually and of that, \$6 billion goes to the US. While we look to diversify trading markets, we must continue to work collaboratively with the US towards a positive outcome for the North American beef sector.

The **challenge of transporting live animals over long distances has fostered a strong interdependence between both the Canadian and US cattle industries**. The integration of the sector also includes the import and export of essential inputs such as feed ingredients and veterinary drugs. Animal care and the affordability of beef products relies on a high functioning and unobstructed border.

During these unprecedented times, NCFA calls upon the government to continue its strategic negotiations with the US to ensure the best outcome possible for Canadian farmers and consumers including **no tariffs on live cattle, feed ingredients or veterinary products**.

Recommendation #2

Ensure Canadian farmers are supported by **business risk management programs** that better **reflect the realities** of the sector today.

The **Agri-Stability program** serves as an important business tool for Canadian farmers, offering essential support during periods of unforeseen adversities. It is the **only business risk program** that has the **potential to work for Canadian cattle feeders**.

However, for over 20 years, the Agri-Stability payment cap of \$3 million remained unchanged. Meanwhile inflation and farm input costs have skyrocketed such that producers must invest significantly more to achieve the same production margins.

NCFA acknowledges that the federal government commitment to double the cap to \$6 million for the 2025 program year, but this increase must be made permanent and must be significantly larger to have a meaningful impact.

A recent study conducted by MNP found that Agri-Stability's coverage has decreased by two-thirds since 2013. Taking this into account and considering there has been no permanent adjustments to the cap since the start of the program 20 years ago, **NCFA recommends the Agri-Stability cap be increased to \$15 million with a consideration to review the cap in 5 years.**

Feedlots are large in size compared to other livestock operations; thus they reach the original \$3 million or proposed \$6 million payment cap very quickly. This leaves farmers shouldering tens of millions of dollars in risk and loss. Feedlots remain family operations - often involving multiple family members and generations. While **the total number of feedlots in Canada may seem low, the amount of food production and economic contribution from these feedlots is profound.**

Agri-Stability no longer reflects the level of trade, disease and climate risk that is being taken on by these farm families. Today's farmers and their successors need assurance that meaningful support programs are in place.

Recommendation #3

Significantly improve **government approval systems** so that **Canadian farmers can access innovative products and technology** at the same time as global competitors.

Agriculture is one of the most innovative sectors, yet the government is focused on regulating the sector as opposed to providing an **efficient and timely approval process for new innovative products and technology**. Innovations that are already providing more cost-efficient and sustainable solutions to global competitors.

NCFA calls upon the government to take immediate and concrete steps to address barriers preventing Canadian access to innovation including veterinarian pharmaceuticals, veterinarian health products, feed and water additives, vaccines, parasiticides and pesticides that help maintain animal health and ensure the required supply levels of livestock feed.

This will require the government to **transform** and modernize the mandates of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency in order to be **partners – rather than obstacles**. This will catalyze investment in Canadian agriculture. Maintaining food safety standards and consumer confidence can be done on a parallel track to supporting growth in the sector.

For example, transformations can include Canadian regulators providing provisional registration or approval of products that are already approved by two or more trusted global jurisdictions. This type of change will result in immediate government efficiencies while farmers will have timely access to the innovative products needed to increase productivity and product quality.

Recommendation #4

Develop **immigration policy** that recognizes the indispensable **role of foreign workers** for Canada's **food security and affordability**.

In the Prime Minister's mandate letter, he prioritized '*attracting the best talent while returning overall immigration rates to sustainable levels.*'

Given the profound and chronic labour shortage in the agriculture sector, NCFA is concerned with government's plans to reduce immigration and cap the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program. Any government action on this front must be done with care so as to not negatively impact the affordability and accessibility of food for Canadian consumers and to ensure Canadian farmers still have a path of growth and productivity.

The urgent need for labour in agriculture cannot be overstated. The [Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council](#) reports over 28,000 unfilled jobs in 2022 alone and anticipates a 15% increase by 2030.

We welcome solutions for increasing the Canadian workforce on farms, but despite multiple initiatives over many years – the challenge remains unresolved. Canadians cite the rural location of the job as a key factor for not wanting to work on farms and feedlots. The strenuous nature of the work is also cited as a deterrent.

Foreign workers are a necessity to maintain and grow the beef sector. The majority of the foreign workers hired by the cattle feeders are for year-round, long-term jobs – not seasonal. With no other option available, feedlots bring in employees through the TFW program and then move them through the system to permanent residency where they and their families become a productive and integrated part of the rural community.

NCFA calls upon the government to exempt agriculture from any TFW caps and to welcome immigrants who are willing to work on farms and live in rural communities.

In addition, NCFA calls upon the government to transform its processes and systems for hiring foreign workers as the current programs are complicated, backlogged, and fraught with unnecessary and impractical obstacles.

Recommendation #5

Recognize a **reliable national transportation supply chain** as a critical **nation-building project** and invest not only in national corridors, but also in the **roads and bridges** that take agriculture products **from the farm-gate to national corridors**.

A reliable and efficient national transportation supply chain is critical to a united Canadian economy.

To be a trusted supplier of agriculture products to both our national and international customers, farmers need reliable rail and port services. Labour strikes in recent years have eroded confidence in Canada as a consistent export supplier and has put at risk the welfare of animals who rely on the timely delivery of feed.

NCFA calls upon government to deem rail and port service in Canada as essential services in order to prevent the profound economic impact of labour strife.

Live cattle travel by truck across Canada and to the US. As such, the beef industry depends on national transportation corridors and federal investments in these corridors is essential. However, there is a significant gap when it comes to the rural roads and bridges required to move **agriculture products from the farm-gate to these national corridors.**

Small rural communities do not have the tax-base to appropriately build and maintain roads and bridges that are so critical for the agriculture sector and the movement of our food in Canada. Some rural communities have implemented 'livestock head taxes' to address the shortfall. This is not the path to rural economic growth as it puts our farmers at a competitive disadvantage. NCFA believes there is a role for the federal government to support the transport of our food supply from farm-gate to Canadian consumers and our export markets.

We call for the creation of a **dedicated infrastructure program** that will support rural municipalities in the building and maintaining of rural roads and bridges that are critical for the production and transportation of food to the rest of Canada and the world.

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In closing, the NCFA thanks you for your consideration of these recommendations and looks forward to the opportunity to present these recommendations as a witness before Committee.