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February 12, 2026

The Honourable Heath MacDonald, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
1341 Baseline Road Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5

Dear Minister MacDonald,

On behalf of Canada's beef cattle feeders, the National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) is writing to express concern regarding Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's recent decisions affecting federal cattle, beef, and forage research capacity. These changes place at risk decades of progress in science, innovation, and public-good research that strengthen the competitiveness of Canada's beef and cattle feeding sector.

NCFA is aware of the financial pressures currently facing the federal government and the difficult choices that accompany them. Feedlot operators are no strangers to volatility or constrained budgets. However, targeted cuts to core research facilities and expertise create risks far beyond short-term cost savings. The programs recently impacted support essential work that cannot be replaced by private industry or academia and has no equivalent elsewhere in Canada's research landscape.

Cattle feeders have significantly increased their own financial commitments to research because strong, independent science is crucial for fair beef grading, resilient forage systems, and market access. The loss of federal capacity in places such as Lacombe, Nappan, and Quebec City removes critical pillars of public research that the feedlot sector depends on to remain competitive in a global market. These facilities and experts play a major role in ensuring Canada has the scientific depth needed to respond to international regulatory expectations.

Feedlot producers also have concerns about the substantial industry investments already committed to ongoing research tied to AAFC facilities. If publicly led projects are terminated before completion, producers risk losing check-off dollars that were invested strategically and in good faith. We respectfully request assurances that industry funding will be protected should any project be discontinued.

NCFA supports the recommendations for critical capacity and program transfer as outlined in the February 3<sup>rd</sup> letter from the Canadian Cattle Association and the Beef Cattle Research Council.

We recognize that these decisions are difficult. NCFA's priority is to safeguard essential research infrastructure so that Canada's beef industry can continue to meet the expectations of consumers, trading partners, and regulators.

Sincerely,

  
Janice Tranberg  
President & CEO