



Grown-in-Canada Label: Marketing Alberta's Livestock

Background

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recognizes the contribution of agriculture to the provincial economy and that enhancing the strength of the sector is an important priority. Several organizations, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, have initiated “branding Canada” proposals to enhance our country’s image and advantages.

It is particularly important for Alberta’s livestock sector to join in this drive to overcome the effect of adjusting currency values, provide a market-based incentive to increase value added in the farm and food processing industries, and to provide a marketing link between grown-in-Canada product and the very strong Canadian standards for food safety and environmental stewardship.

In August 2006, Meyers Norris Penney was commissioned to do a market assessment of consumer demands for a Canadian label. Some of the significant results were:

- 90 per cent of Canadian consumers felt Canadian-grown product should be easily identifiable in stores
- 95 per cent of consumers would prefer to buy Canadian-grown product that is competitively priced
- 80 per cent of those surveyed felt a “Canadian label” concept was a good/very good idea, with the most appealing aspects being its connotation of quality attributes and ease of identification
- 46 to 50 per cent of consumers were willing to pay premiums for “labelled” beef, pork, poultry, grain, vegetable, and fruit products
- 73 per cent of consumers were willing to pay more of a premium if they knew the premium would go to Canadian farmers
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Overall the results showed strong support by Canadian consumers for Canadian-grown products.

Further, the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) and Growing Forward policies of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments both feature branding Canada as a theme. However, much more progress needs to be made on this file.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in its January 2008 report *Easing the Burdens, Unleashing our Potential: Fostering Growth and Investment in the New and Changing Global Commercial Environment* states that our position in the world and export growth should be tied to “a pan-Canadian brand, with common logos, images and themes.”

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Alberta’s livestock and value-added meat products are an ideal place for the government of Alberta to start vigorously implementing the mandate of APF and Growing Forward to label Canada, promote locally grown and processed product, and brand our exported livestock and meat products.

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends the Government of Alberta:

1. Work to achieve the goal of the Agriculture Policy Framework and Growing Forward to create a voluntary “Grown-in-Canada” label, logos, images, and themes that would identify with 100-per-cent Canadian-grown product.
2. Oppose mandatory country-of-origin labelling requirements that can be used to promote protectionist agendas and technical barriers to trade, especially within the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade rules and Codex standards and ensure that any Grown-in-Canada regulations uphold the spirit of this opposition.
3. Ensure Growing Forward works to develop branding skills and knowledge among farmers and processors.
4. Support the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in advocating a bold initiative by the federal government to create a pan-Canadian brand.