

News from

Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council
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For Immediate Release

MCEC applauds Federal Slaughter Improvement Program **Funding guidelines addressing gaps in regional processing capacity**

Winnipeg, July 17, 2009 – Regional beef production received a strong show of support last week with the federal government's release of the guidelines for its Slaughter Improvement Program. The \$50 million program, announced as part of the government's 2009 budget, is to "support the red meat packing and processing sector to help strengthen the competitiveness and to address regional slaughter capacity gaps in the industry."

"This program is really encouraging for Manitoba's cattle producers and for the entire industry across the country," said Kate Butler, executive director of the Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council. "If there is a capacity gap anywhere in Canada, it's here in Manitoba, which makes no sense considering the size and quality of our herd, our agricultural leadership, and our strategic location."

"People want to know their food is safe and, more and more, they want to know where it comes from. We're in the rich grain belt of the Prairies – with clean air, lots of land and abundant clean water – which means we are perfectly suited to raise some of the best beef in the world."

MCEC, which was formed to help bring federally-inspected beef plant capacity back to Manitoba, will be working with Keystone Processors Ltd. as well as other eligible Manitoba processing plants to apply for funding under the program. For Keystone Processors, funding would be used to help the company complete its upgrades to make the plant fully compliant with Canadian Food Inspection Agency standards for both slaughtering and processing cattle. The company plans for the renovated plant to accept up to 500 cattle per day, which it will channel into premium niche markets in North America and around the world. The company is working to develop markets for a variety of products including hormone and anti-biotic free beef, Kosher and Halal beef, and premium, aged beef.

"We applaud Ottawa's support for regional beef packing capacity. We strongly believe that economic trends are favouring vibrant, efficient regional processing capacity," said Butler. "There's strong demand from local buyers and we're seeing equally strong desire from consumers, restaurants and stores to buy quality, federally-inspected Manitoba beef."

MCEC worked hard over the past few months to ensure that the government, Members of Parliament as well as officials at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada understood the importance of supporting regional beef packing capacity. The council developed and distributed a white

paper on the subject – Intelligent Solutions: The Manitoba Pillar in a Canadian Federally-Inspected Beef Packing Industry – which is available to the public at www.mancec.com.

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