



September 9, 2022

The Honourable Nate Horner
Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic
Development
Government of Alberta
131 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

RE: Federal Funding for a Canadian Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine Bank

Dear Minister Horner,

On behalf of the beef, pork, goat, and lamb producers of Alberta we write to request your aid in obtaining urgent federal funding for the creation and maintenance of a Canadian Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine bank. For Canadian livestock industries, FMD is the most economically devastating, transboundary disease threat. A single case of FMD found in Canada would close our borders to live animal and animal-product movements from all cloven hoof livestock, including beef, dairy, pork, sheep and lamb, goats, and bison. A large-scale FMD outbreak has the potential to create a \$50-60 billion financial impact on the Canadian economy.

Currently, Canada participates in the North American FMD vaccine bank with Mexico and the United States. Canada's contribution to the vaccine bank entitles our sectors to a combined 330,000 doses of FMD vaccine. This represents only a fraction of the 2.5 million doses that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has indicated would be required should an outbreak of FMD occur in a livestock dense area of Canada. The U.S. has already secured funding to enhance their supply of FMD vaccine through the National Veterinary Vaccine and Countermeasures Bank (NVVCB). It is critical that Canada do the same.

Historically, vaccination has often been considered a tool of last resort. However, experiences from recent FMD outbreaks in Japan and the Republic of Korea have

led to new epidemiological models and changes to the World Organization for Animal Health (formally the OIE) guidelines. Moreover, due to new diagnostic testing options, vaccines have been increasingly accepted internationally, and vaccination is now expected to play a central role in the event of any large or uncontrolled outbreak in Canada. Canada is fortunate that FMD vaccines are readily available, highly efficacious at mitigating an outbreak, and increasingly accepted as one of the best paths for a country to return to a “Foot and Mouth Disease Free without Vaccination” trade status. However, without rapid access to sufficient doses of vaccine through a Canadian FMD vaccine bank, our industries remain under grave threat.

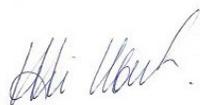
Foot and Mouth Disease is common in Asia, the Middle East, South America, and parts of Africa. Indonesia is actively fighting an outbreak, with over 3,000 cases reported since detection in May 2022. In July, Australia increased its domestic biosecurity for travelers returning from Indonesia and Bali, and detected non-viable FMD viral particles in legally imported food products. Animal Health Australia has played a pivotal role, alongside Australia’s regulators, in responding to this elevated threat level. We are confident that our investment in Animal Health Canada will allow us to do the same.

The projected annual cost of a Canadian FMD vaccine bank is \$3.2 million, including potency and licensing testing. While government officials have indicated that they clearly understand the potential impacts of an outbreak of FMD on our sectors and the broader economy, the major impediment to the creation of a Canadian vaccine bank continues to be securing and allocating the required government funding. Given that a large-scale outbreak of FMD could cost our sectors tens of billions of dollars in the absence of an adequate vaccine supply, \$3.2 million annually to stock and maintain a Canadian vaccine bank is an extremely small price for the federal government to pay.

The responsibility for prevention, preparedness and recovery from foreign animal disease is shared broadly between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the CFIA, affected industries, and provincial-territorial governments. The regulatory responsibility for foreign animal disease response lies with the CFIA. On behalf of Alberta’s beef, pork, goat, and lamb industries, we implore you to help secure federal treasury funds, without further delay, for the proposed Canadian FMD

vaccine bank. This vaccine bank is a key priority for Alberta livestock producers towards mitigating any outbreak of FMD and ensuring the economic viability of our sectors in the future.

Sincerely,



Melanie Wowk
Chair, Alberta Beef Producers



Jake Bueckert
Chair, Alberta Cattle Feeders Association



Brent Moen
Chair, Alberta Pork



Brittany Walker
Chair, Alberta Lamb Producers



Mallory Kaiser
Chair, Alberta Goat Association

cc: Deputy Minister Marchand, Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Economic Development
cc: Dr. Keith Lehman, Chief Provincial Veterinarian