

Initiative tackles issue of livestock feed cost, effectiveness

The Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency will invest \$8 million to tackle the single largest day-to-day issue plaguing livestock producers - the cost and effectiveness of feed for their animals.

"As a beef producer, I know feed accounts for over half my production costs," said Agriculture and Rural Development Minister George Groeneveld at a central Alberta conference on Seizing Feed Grain Opportunities. "That percentage is even higher for other livestock producers. So investing in better feed, and better use of that feed, will be a positive influence on the bottom line for producers."

Funds will be used to:

- further develop livestock feed;
- identify better links between feed and animal nutrition; and
- influence better use of feed grains.

Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency board chair Joe Makoweki said the initiative fits squarely with the agency's mandate of affecting long-term strategic change for the province's livestock and meat industry. "This problem is decades old and there are stacks of studies to prove it. The investment from the agency means we are finally tackling a basic competitive issue for the industry."

Jack de Boer, Chairman of the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association said: "A healthy feed grain industry is critical to the success of the livestock sector, which is why our organization was a key driver in

helping chart solutions."

Terry Young, Chairman of the Alberta Barley Commission said: "This initiative has the potential to transform the feed crop sector, through research and investment in better feed grains more suited for the livestock sector."

The investment is a major step forward for the Alberta Livestock and Meat Strategy, designed to move the province's livestock industry to a status of internationally respected, competitive and profitable. It also furthers one of the agency's four key priorities.

Feed for livestock accounts for the largest production cost for all commodities - cattle, hogs, chicken, turkey, dairy, lamb and diversified livestock. The \$8-million investment by the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) will help develop improved feed for animals and find better ways to use that feed. This

will improve the bottom line for Alberta producers and make the entire livestock industry more competitive.

Over the past year, ALMA worked with key industry stakeholders who came together to develop a Feed Grain Strategy, which will serve as a backdrop for the initiative. Those industry part-

ners include the Alberta Cattle Feeders Association, Alberta Barley Commission, Alberta Pork, Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund as well as Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. Moving forward, the list of stakeholders involved with the initiative will grow.

Livestock producers will benefit from a better bottom line through improved production practices. Feed grain producers will see higher values for higher-quality feeds. The entire industry will benefit from an improved competitive position.

Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Groeneveld announced the Alberta Livestock and Meat Strategy in 2008 as a roadmap for real change.

