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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Technology, Trade and Economic Development  
Thompson Rivers University

### **NEW RESEARCH CHAIR WILL SUPPORT CATTLE INDUSTRY**

KAMLOOPS – The Province and Thompson Rivers University are working together to help B.C. cattle ranchers improve profitability, protect grasslands and endangered species, and reduce greenhouse gases, Ida Chong, Minister of Technology, Trade and Economic Development, announced today.

John Church, who has a PhD in rangeland and wildlife resources, has been appointed B.C. Regional Innovation Chair in Cattle Industry Sustainability. His job will be to develop new techniques and technologies to help make B.C.'s cattle industry sustainable – both economically and environmentally.

“This \$250-million industry is vital to B.C.'s rural economy,” said Chong, who is also responsible for research and innovation. “By funding this chair, government and industry have partnered with TRU to support ranchers with innovations that will ‘beef up’ profits while caring for our province’s sensitive grassland areas and helping to fight climate change.”

Church will lead a multidisciplinary research team at TRU, working closely with industry through a steering committee. Church is particularly interested in developing feeding strategies to increase health-giving Omega 3 oils in beef, and to reduce the amount of methane – a greenhouse gas up to 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide – produced by cattle.

“Sustainable cattle ranching involves grazing practices that uphold the ecological integrity of the grasslands on which these operations depend,” said Church. “The cattle industry and the land will continue to flourish for future generations only through encouraging stewardship activities, information exchanges and partnerships that support the ranching practices that are so economically and socially important for Kamloops and our province.”

The Province provided \$1.25 million for the chair through the Leading Edge Endowment Fund. Matching funding includes \$625,000 from the Cattle Industry Development Council and \$250,000 from the Real Estate Foundation of B.C.

“TRU is located in the heart of the beautiful B.C. Interior where ranching and related industries have historically been central to the culture and economy of our region,” said Kathleen Scherf, president of Thompson Rivers University. “With this chair, and building on the expertise of our faculty and research facilities, TRU establishes itself as a world-class centre of excellence in integrated research and development related to sustainable rangelands, ranching, meat production and value-added meat products.”

The \$56.25-million Leading Edge Endowment Fund is establishing nine regional innovation chairs, along with 20 research leadership chairs to help attract top researchers to B.C., and to keep them here. Institutions provide matching funds secured from outside partners.

“The cattle industry in B.C. is an important part of our heritage and our current agricultural landscape,” said Stan Hagen, Minister of Agriculture and Lands. “The creation of this regional position is a proactive step to ensure that cattle ranching is also a part of B.C.’s future.”

This is the province’s fifth B.C. regional innovation chair. The endowment fund has already supported regional innovation chairs in rural economic development, Selkirk College; Aboriginal early childhood development, Vancouver Island University; sport technology, Camosun College; and tourism and sustainable rural development, Vancouver Island University.

Regional innovation chairs have three main goals:

- To support applied research, development and innovation that will bolster regional economic and social development in all areas of the province.
- To attract highly qualified people in areas relevant to regional social and economic development.
- To support collaboration between post-secondary institutions and their regional communities.

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