

Address at TRU January 14, 2009

As Chair of the Cattle Industry Development Council I am proud to be part of today's announcement. The CIDC is a group of elected representatives from four provincial cattle producer organizations.

In 1994, the Cattle Industry Development Council accepted responsibility to administer the earnings of a 9.3 million dollar trust fund. The earnings of the Beef Cattle Industry Development Trust are accessible for projects with matching dollars that benefit the beef industry in British Columbia. In the 14 years of operating, over ten million dollars have been matched from the earnings of the Trust for 315 projects

As Dr. Van Wagoner has outlined, TRU's Dr. Tom Dickinson first came to CIDC in 2005 with the idea of the Chair position. Council and the cattle industry were excited about the proposal. We worked with Dr. Dickinson and then Dr. Van Wagoner as the proposal developed into the reality of today's announcement.

The cattle industry's contribution of \$625,000 is by far the largest of our projects to date. The co-operation of all the funding partners has brought forward the importance of the cattle industry in B.C.

BC cattle numbers represent five per cent of Canada's beef herd – the cattle industry in Canada is the largest single source of farm cash receipts, contributing \$25 billion to Canada's economy in 2007.

BC's cattle industry has a long and colorful history. We have had our ups and downs and are currently in the midst of an historic low point. High input costs for fuel, fertilizer, feed and labour combined with depressed prices for our product have created a dismal picture for our industry. But cattle producers in BC are still moving ahead. We are unique in B.C. as we are able to utilize forage on Crown ranges during the snow free grazing season. Most cattle producers in B.C. depend on access to that Crown range – our cattle are able to harvest that forage that helps produce nutritious and safe beef for the consumer. A continued vibrant cattle industry in B.C. contributes to the economic stability of many communities throughout the province.

You should know that we lead the rest of Canada in the percentage of cattle that are age verified. Many producers have embraced Environmental Farm planning. We provide thousands of acres of green space, wildlife habitat and biodiversity on our lands. We are always looking for tools to increase our sustainability and profitability.

We see the establishment of this Chair position at TRU as a great opportunity to provide research to benefit the industry.

We are looking forward to participating on the Advisory Committee to the Chair to help develop research strategies and priorities that can provide meaningful results to the cattle industry – additional tools for us to use.

I think I can safely say that while our industry is in a downturn now, that over the years cattle ranchers in B.C. for the most part have adhered to an old saying “When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on!”

We have heard today from Dr. Kathleen Scherf of the diversity of areas of interest and the great mix of folks that will be working with Dr. Church. With the tools they have the potential to provide to the cattle industry, we will be able to let go of that rope.

In conclusion, I would like to again congratulate Dr. Church on his appointment and extend a hand of cooperation from the cattle producers of British Columbia to both TRU and Dr. Church – we look forward to working with you.

Linda Allison
Chair
Cattle Industry Development Council

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