



## Canada Beef Export Federation

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# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **CBEF CONGRATULATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON TRADE BREAKTHROUGH**

*Calgary, Alberta January 21, 2009* – The Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF) congratulates the federal government on its breakthrough in expanding market access for Canadian beef as a result of a trade mission by Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz.

“Minister Ritz and his team of negotiators are to be doubly congratulated for their efforts and success in negotiating a breakthrough trade deal with India and Hong Kong,” says Gib Drury, Board Chair of the Canada Beef Export Federation.

“The first congratulation is for finally moving the beef market issue forward and obtaining meaningful access for Canadian beef exports with a new set time line for further trade expansion. The second congratulation is for listening to and accepting the advice of the industry-led Beef Value Chain Round Table which has advocated for this incremental access approach.

“The Canada Beef Export Federation, which represents all the major beef exporters as well as all the provincial and national cattlemen organizations, is very confident that our exporters can easily fulfill all the Hong Kong requirements as our beef already surpasses world standards for hygiene and safety,” says Drury.

“Now that Minister Ritz has found the secret to unlocking the Asian market – his personal visit – we hope he will turn his attention to Korea and China and get these important markets reopened to Canadian beef. Canadian farmers and ranchers want only to live by the dictates of the free and unfettered marketplace. We depend on our federal government to gain us open access to all the markets of the world.

“Thank you Minister Ritz for the encouraging trade breakthrough,” says Drury.

The opening of the Hong Kong market to bone-in beef sets an important precedent for similar access in other Asian markets. In these markets, bone-in beef is very popular, with meat close to the bone considered a delicacy. Many of our Asian clients and end-consumers prefer to see the actual bone in the bone-in product.

Hong Kong represents a primary export market for Canadian beef and also serves as a gateway to the Greater China area, which includes the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, and Mainland China. Many Hong Kong importers and

distributors are also active in Mainland China, where they have established supply and distribution channels. Any access achieved – especially priority access ahead of our competitors - not only benefits Canadian beef in the Hong Kong market but could lead to a bigger share for Canadian beef in the tremendous Mainland China market once that market reopens.

Hong Kong authorities are well respected for their food safety measures. The opening of the Hong Kong market to bone-in beef sends a message to other countries such as Korea, Japan and Taiwan that this is a positive move for the beef import sector and consumers alike.

Hong Kong opened to under-30-month Canadian boneless beef in November 2004. This followed the opening of Macau in February 2004 to all classes of Canadian beef and offal. These two key Asian markets opened to Canadian beef prior to US beef – providing Canadian beef with a considerable advantage in regaining market share.

In 2007, Canadian beef exports to Hong Kong and Macau totalled 17,000 tonnes (\$52 million), with continued increases experienced in 2008.

- 30 -

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