

NEWS RELEASE

for immediate release



BC Food Processors Association

BCFPA: additional funding will help meat sector

(April, 2008) BC Food Processors Association Board Chair Robin Smith greets the recent announcement of \$3.8 million funding for BC's meat processors and producers with approval. "We appreciate the Province's recognition of industry needs," he says. "Meat processing plants are essential to the health of the livestock industry. Beef producers in particular are going through very challenging times and we are glad to help in the delivery of some support."

The funding is intended for two initiatives that are administered by the BCFPA. The first, the Meat Transition Assistance Program (MTAP), provides funds (up to a cap) to defray the capital costs for upgrading or building slaughterhouses to comply with the Meat Inspection Regulation. Phase 1 of the MTAP was fully committed in 2007 and this funding will allow for a second phase. The terms of reference for Phase 2 are now under discussion and the program will be launched in a few weeks.

The second initiative is the Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy (MIES), which includes a team of knowledgeable individuals around BC who assist plant operators with the requirements of plant licensing.

"We are proud of the work our team has done so far," says BCFPA CEO Nico Human. "We have two Professional Agrologists and three Public Health Inspectors on the team. One member is a former red meat slaughter plant owner-operator. The group has been of great assistance to the industry, and this funding will enable its work to continue for another year."

The level of effort required for licensing has proven to be significant, involving additional compliance requirements for waste, potable water, zoning and more. Human points out that "there has been an unprecedented level of support from agencies including the Ministry of Health, BC Centre for Disease Control, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Ministry of Environment and more. We are in constant discussion with all of them and have been able to work together to address a number of challenges plant operators have brought to us."

Smith concludes, "The goals of the Meat Inspection Regulation are to protect food safety and maintain consumer confidence and to ensure a viable meat processing sector. Our work so far has been a highly productive partnership with government, which should be positive for the livestock and meat sector in future."

- 30 -

For further information:

- Link to government news release http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2008HEALTH0041-000553.htm
- Robin Smith, President, BC Food Processors Association. Tel. 604-294-3775, rsmith@bcdf.ca
- Nico Human, CEO, BCFPA. Tel. 604-504-4409, nico@bcfpa.ca
- BCFPA programs and services www.bcfpa.ca/mies.html
- BC's Meat Inspection Regulation under the Food Safety Act: www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/protect/meat_inspection.html
- BC Centre for Disease Control licensing requirements: www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=144