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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

### **B.C. BEEFS UP SUPPORT FOR MEAT INDUSTRY**

**NORTH VANCOUVER** – With increased support for the meat industry, the Province is better protecting British Columbians who buy meat, as well as the farmers and processors who produce it, Healthy Living and Sport Minister Mary Polak announced today.

“We’re investing more to help processors finish getting their facilities licensed and deal with waste disposal,” said Polak. “We’re also increasing enforcement to ensure meat going to market is safe, and consulting with farmers in remote and isolated communities to help them find solutions to provide for their local communities.”

Government is providing more than \$3 million in additional funding for the Meat Transition Assistance Program (MTAP). Funding for meat processors to become fully licensed or upgrade existing facilities in order to meet health and safety requirements and increase capacity now totals \$11.9 million.

“I’m glad for the support of the province,” said Robin Smith, chair of the BC Food Processors Board. “With MTAP funding, we’ve seen several members build up facilities that meet all the health and food safety standards and better protect customers.”

“We’re so isolated we need to find a solution that’s tailored to our circumstances,” said Lisa Daniels, a Powell River farmer who is also a member of the Farmers’ Institute. “I support efforts that will create a unique local solution that will increase food production in our community.”

To further protect public health, health authorities will increase enforcement and ticketing of illegal slaughter. Environmental health officers working in health authorities will now put more emphasis on checking that meat comes from licensed facilities.

“My customers keep coming back and I know a lot of it has to do with the quality of the foods I serve,” said Barbara Schellenberg, owner of Ethical Kitchen in North Vancouver, who serves meat from her family’s ranch in the Interior that is processed at a provincially licensed facility. “It’s important that everyone going to a B.C. restaurant or butcher shop can fully trust the food they’re buying.”

The Province recognizes the unique challenges faced by meat producers across the province and the need to balance a range of interests while enhancing food security. A five-part strategy will be implemented, focusing on additional funding, increased enforcement, livestock tissue disposal strategies, the phasing out of Class C facilities, and the creation of a consultation group involving meat producers from Powell River, Bella Coola and the Queen Charlotte Islands to discuss challenges facing small-scale producers.

Since the meat inspection regulation was announced in 2004, the number of licensed provincial meat processing operations has more than quadrupled.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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