



## COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION

RELEASED FOLLOWING COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION MEETING ON FEBRUARY 23 AND 24, 2004

### **Beef Strike Force A National Approach to the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Issue**

**At the First Ministers' meeting held in Ottawa in February 2004, First Ministers discussed the establishment of a National Beef Strike Force mandated to undertake high-profile actions to rebuild international confidence in Canadian and North American beef. More specifically, the duties would include:**

- **Lead international missions to raise awareness of the safety and quality of North American beef;**
- **Be ambassadors for the safety and quality of Canadian and American beef and disseminate information to dispel the myths about BSE;**
- **Develop promotion programs linked to tourism and economic development;**
- **Gather input from the public on the beef issue;**
- **Provide speakers to international audiences, especially in the US to clarify facts about Canadian and American beef;**
- **Make submissions to international bodies;**
- **Provide advice to provincial and federal governments on the BSE issue;**
- **Liaise with the industry on scientific and technical issues.**

**Premiers discussed actions in relation to this proposal.**

- **On February 6, 2004 six Canadian meat associations wrote to federal Agriculture and Agri-food Minister Speller proposing the establishment of a Trade Relations Directorate. The Directorate as proposed, would take the lead on all bilateral international agriculture-related trade issues. The directorate would work to ensure that trade barriers affecting Canadian agri-food products are identified, addressed and resolved in a timely fashion.**
- **As a follow-up to discussions at the January First Ministers' meeting, Prime Minister Martin wrote to Premiers the week of February 16, indicating that he is supportive of the Beef Strike Force concept and has asked Minister Speller to lead in the development of a strike force in consultation with the Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan.**

**Premiers noted that the proposed Trade Directorate may complement the Beef Strike Force initiative. They also expressed their desire to work cooperatively and immediately with the federal government to complete the establishment of the Beef Strike Force.**

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For more information:

Patrick Dorsey  
Premier Pat Binns' Office  
(902) 368-4400