



National Cattlemen's
Beef Association



Canadian
Cattle
Association

May 15, 2024

Raquel Buenrostro Sanchez
Secretaria de Economía

The Honorable Katherine Tai
United States Trade Representative

The Honourable Mary Ng
Minister Export Promotion, International
Trade and Economic Development

Dear Secretaria Buenrostro, Ambassador Tai, and Minister Ng:

The North American cattle and beef supply chain is the largest in the world, representing 27% of the world's beef production. The cattle industries of North America, represented by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Ganaderas (CNOG), and the Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) continue to call for a science-based and rules-based approach to international trade policies. Beef cattle producers in Canada, Mexico and the United States provide the world with safe, high-quality, sustainably produced beef.

The market-based and science-based standards of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA/CUSMA/T-MEC) fostered trade between our countries, benefited our North American industries, and allowed for the safe and efficient movement of live cattle, feed, and beef in response to consumer demand. While there are ongoing trade disputes involving other commodities and industries, we believe the goals and standards of the agreement should be a model for future trade agreements, and caution against policies that will encourage further disruptions.

The efficiencies and marketing opportunities of USMCA have been mutually beneficial for each of us, but we cannot rely on the success of USMCA alone. We strongly encourage each of our governments to re-engage and refocus your efforts on expanding market access for beef exports. It is concerning that the lack of new market access for beef exports has been met with an expansion in new access for beef imports from other countries. For example, Brazil and Paraguay gained access to the U.S. market, Brazil and Argentina were also given beef access to Mexico, and the United Kingdom gained beef access to Canada – but none of these actions have resulted in meaningful reciprocal trade for U.S., Mexican, or Canadian beef products. If this trajectory does not change, it will put North American producers at a tremendous disadvantage to our competitors.

It is disturbing that Brazil and Argentina were given beef access to Mexico's market without thorough food safety and animal health audits, and most importantly, without consultation with the Mexican cattle sector. Likewise, Brazil and Paraguay were granted access to the U.S. market in spite of strong opposition from the U.S. cattle sector who cited numerous science-based justifications for why these countries pose a risk to the health and safety of the U.S. cattle herd. Foot-and-Mouth Disease is present in South America, and we need our governments to prioritize

the health and safety of our cattle over the expedience of winning friends in South America. Instead, we need you to hold these countries accountable and conduct current, in-country, science-based food safety and animal health audits and be transparent by sharing the results with cattle sector stakeholders. We believe in science-based trade, and accountability is the foundation and integrity of our standards.

As the world faces the challenges of climate change, food insecurity, and geopolitical tensions – international cooperation must be at the center of any long-term solution. It is important that we trade with partners who take a cooperative approach to trade and sustainability and abide by rules-based and science-based trade with transparent policies. Specifically, sanitary, and phytosanitary regulations (SPS) must be based on scientific and risk-based principles, relevant international standards, and not create unnecessary barriers to trade. Under Article 4 of the SPS WTO Agreement, countries should attain SPS equivalency even if the measures differ as long as Members can demonstrate the appropriate level of SPS protection.

In North America we are proud of the cattle we raise and how we produce beef. It is imperative that our three countries continue to uphold science-based and rules-based trade. Failure to take such an approach will setback global food security efforts and ultimately undermine farmers, ranchers, and food processors across the world. We urge you to continue to hold our trading partners accountable and promote science-based and rules-based standards that promote sustainable production practices.

Sincerely,



Sr. Homero García de la Llata
Presidente
Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Ganaderas



Mr. Mark Eisele
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association



Mr. Nathan Phinney
President
Canadian Cattle Association