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NEWS RELEASE

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MBP Welcomes Expanded Beef Access to Japan

WINNIPEG – Manitoba Beef Producers applauds the federal government’s announcement on an agreement with Japan to significantly increase the potential for beef exports from Canada.

“I want to thank Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Gerry Ritz and Minister of International Trade Ed Fast for their work on this file,” said Ray Armbruster, Manitoba Beef Producers president. “The agreement announced today will benefit all sectors of beef production in Manitoba.”

Starting Feb. 1, Japan will allow beef imports from animals 30 months of age and under. This is a significant improvement over the current regulations which only allow imports of Canadian beef from cattle younger than 21 months.

In 2003, Japan closed its beef market to Canada following the detection of a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Japan partially re-opened its market in 2005, but only to beef from younger cattle. The limitation has presented a significant challenge to Canada’s ability to supply beef to Japan on a year-round basis.

“Manitoba’s beef industry is dependent upon export markets, with about 50 per cent of our production leaving the country,” said Armbruster. “Every new market opening or expansion of market access provides new opportunities for our producers and gives added support to the economic viability of our ranch families and feedlot operators. I am especially pleased with the announcement from Japan. This is a high value market that appreciates the exceptional quality of the beef we produce.”

Japan is Canada’s third largest beef export market. Even with the restriction of only beef from animals under 21 months of age, Canada’s exports to Japan have been worth \$70 to \$75 million. Industry estimates that potential exports will expand to \$140 to \$150 million under the new regime.

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Manitoba Beef Producers is the exclusive voice of the beef industry in Manitoba. Our role and mission is to represent our beef producers through communication, research, advocacy and education. Manitoba Beef Producers represents 8,000 beef producers across the province.

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