

Beef Welfare : A Canadian Perspective

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Jaboticabal, Brazil

 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

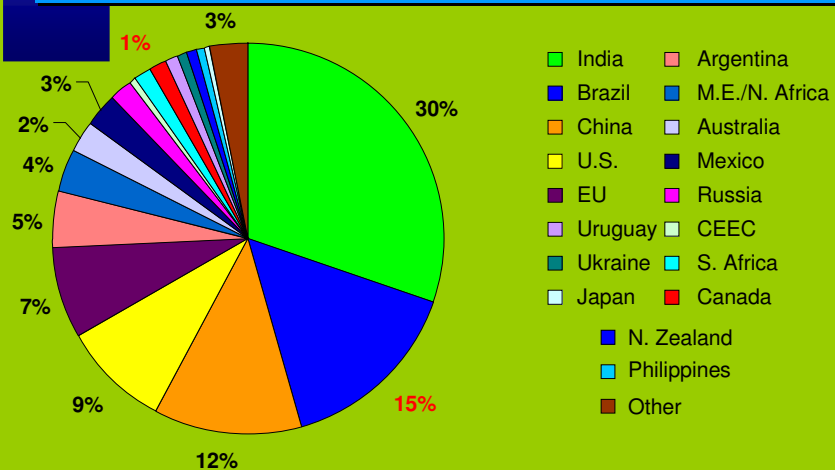
Points to cover

- **Cattle industry in Canada- General Overview**
- **Welfare Issues for Beef cattle**
- **Methods of welfare assessment**

Points to cover

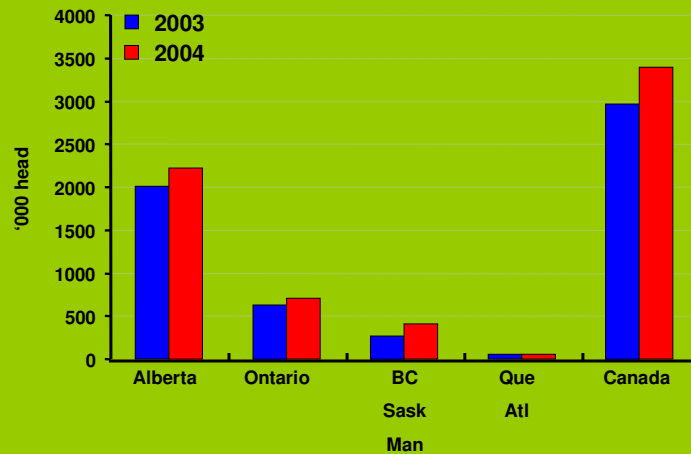
- **Welfare Issues and Research**
 - Routine Management Procedures
 - Husbandry
 - Health
 - Transport

World Cattle Inventories

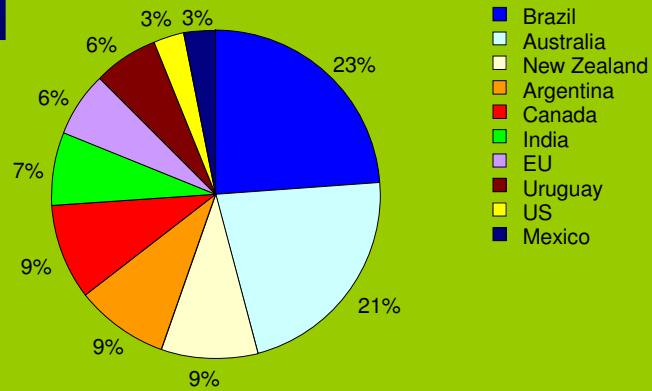




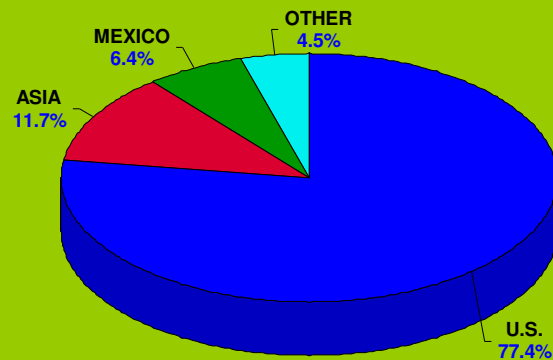
Fed Cattle Production



% of world exports – 2004



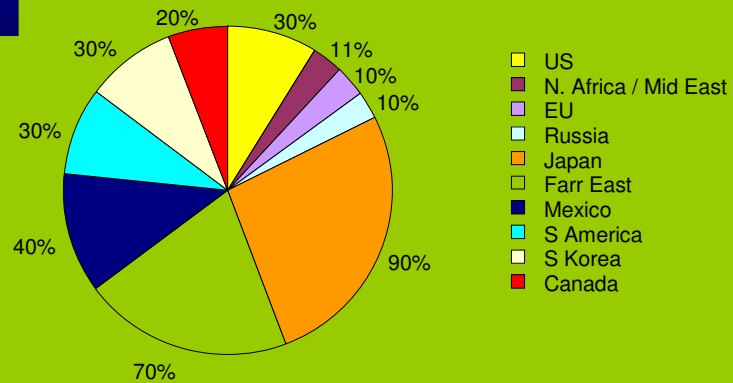
CANADIAN BEEF EXPORTS by COUNTRY 1999



Source: CFIA

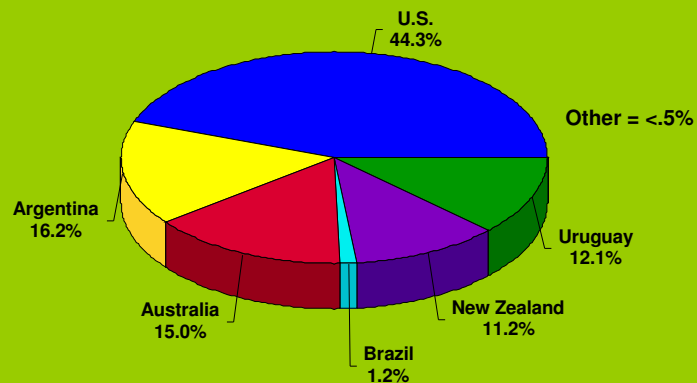


% of world imports – 2004



ORIGIN OF CANADIAN BEEF IMPORTS

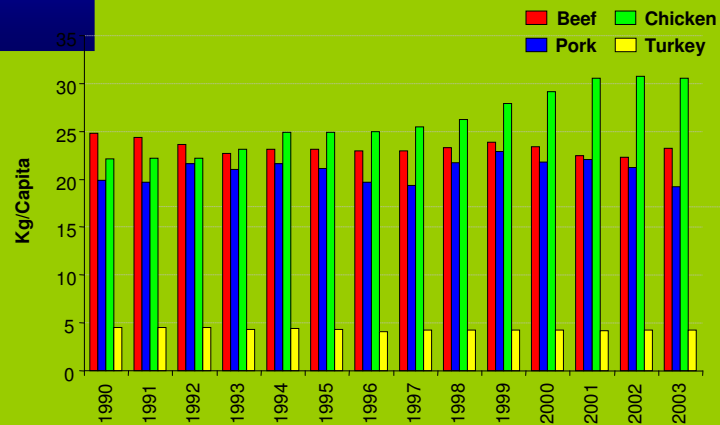
Jan - August 2000



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA



Meat Consumption in Canada

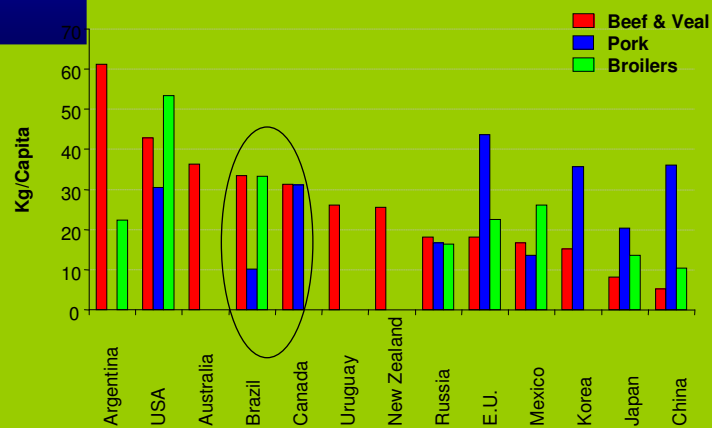


Canadian pop. 32,754,049

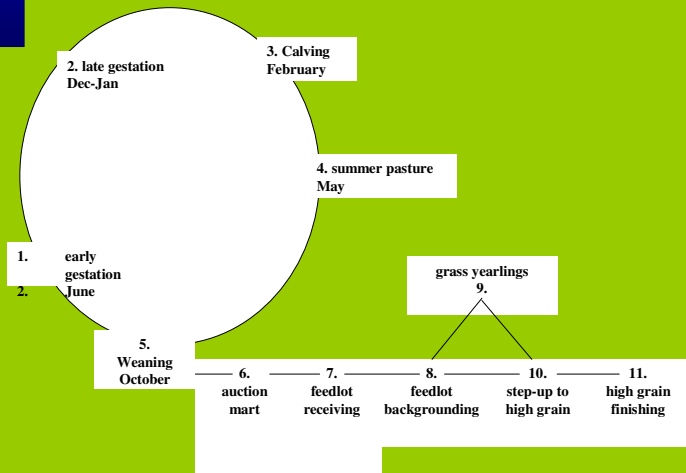
Brazilian Pop. 188,078,227

5.5 x

Per Capita Meat Consumption 2003



Beef Production Cycle

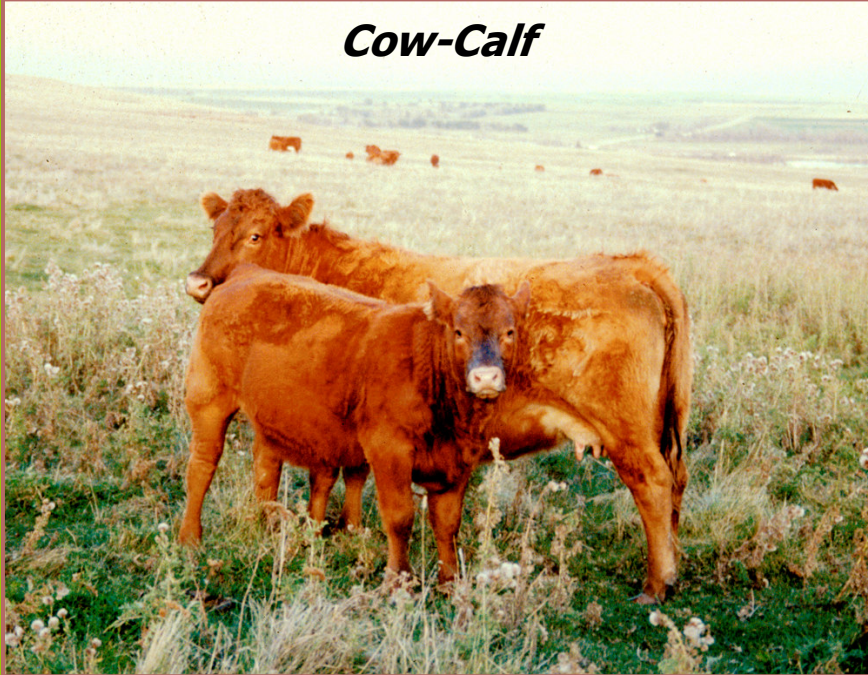


Cow-calf



- Retained ownership birth to weaning
- Sell calves at weaning or retain to finishing
- Cows bred - May to Aug
- Calving - Jan to May
- Weaning - Oct to Nov 6-9mo 225-325 kg
- Typical grazing period - May to early Oct

Cow-Calf



- Avg. 50 cows/herd

- Range 20-500/herd

- Typically British breeds

- Angus

- Hereford

- Simmental

- Shorthorn



Calf Management



- National ID
- Branding
- Castration
- Dehorning
- Immunization, growth implant
- Preconditioning



Preconditioning

- Developed to reduce large economic losses associated with high morbidity and mortality due to BRD in highly stress calves
- Weaned minimum of 45d
- Castrated and dehorned 3 wks before shipping
- Vaccinated 3 wks and 4 month of age
- Eating solid feed/ familiar with eating from a feed bunk

Ranch to feedlot

- Weaned
- Ranch direct
- Auction Market (mixing)
- Transport 1h- 48 h
→
- Feedlot Receiving calves



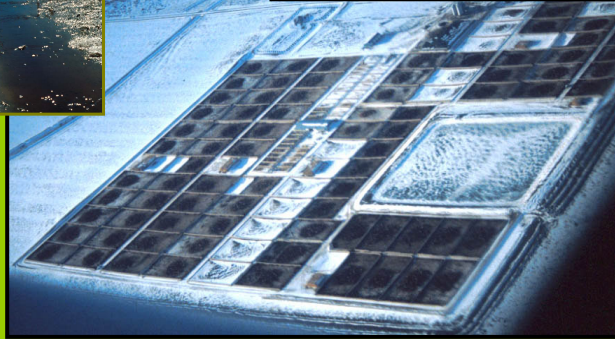
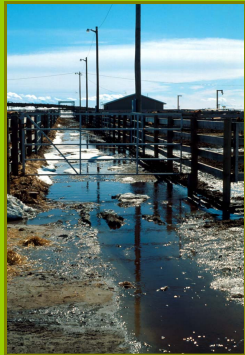
Receiving Calf Management

- Re-tagged
- Branded
- Castrated ?
- Dehorned ?
- Growth implants
- Vaccination
- Parasites





Feedlot Production



•2000 - 150,000 hd

Backgrounding

- Growing out of calves before they are fed a high energy diet
- Roughage cheapest feed
- High forage diets promote slower rate of gain
- Will reach market condition at too light a weight if feed higher concentrate diets
- Pasture or feedlot (90 d)
- Diet
 - ◆ 70% forage (barley silage)
 - ◆ 30% grain
 - ◆ Transition diet



Transition Diets

**40% to 90 % grain in 21 days
5% increments every 3 days**



Finishing

- 80-90% concentrate- Barley grain
- Finish weight 450-600 kg
- Economies of scale
- Southern Alberta
 - ◆ Dry climate
 - ◆ Warm winter (avg. -9 °C)
 - ◆ Close to markets





Major Challenges Confronting Animal Agriculture

- **Environmental Issues**
- **Food Safety**
- **Welfare**



What is Welfare?

- A multifaceted concept combining animal, technical, legal, and human perspectives.

Perspectives

- Animal's perspective, welfare may be defined as the ability to cope with the environment.
- The legal and human definitions described in terms of freedoms, needs and rights. The term "right" simply refers to the human consideration of animals.

Technical perspective

- **Reproduction and mortality rates**
- **Adrenal activity (stress related),**
- **Abnormal behaviour,**
- **Severity of injury**
- **Degree of immunosuppression or incidence of disease.**
- **In general, poor welfare results in the reduced fitness of the animal.**

Ultimately

- **Establishment of animal rights and freedoms provide a standard to ensure that animals under the care of humans are in "good" physical and mental health and able to adapt to their environment without suffering.**

Welfare vs Rights Movement

- We have a moral obligation to treat animals humanely.
- Public concerns about welfare should not be confused with the "animal rights movement".

Codes of Practice

- Guideline for the proper care and handling of livestock.
- Ultimately, serve to increase the consciousness of the livestock industry and promote self-imposed regulation instead of forced legislation.

New Emphasis on Animal Welfare for Food Animals

- Pressure for science-based standards in welfare for international trade (OIE)
- Retailer (McDonalds, Burger King, Food Marketing Institute) welfare audits
- Shift from voluntary codes to auditable welfare standards (Pork and Egg Producers)



Codes of Practice vs Auditable Standards

- Codes - serve to increase the consciousness of the livestock industry and promote self-imposed regulation instead of forced legislation.
- Better recommendations for codes
- Are the codes adequate?????

Animal Welfare Audit Programs

- Designed to provide NCCR and FMI members a credible 3rd party audit of their suppliers
- Provides suppliers an objective, consistent and thorough evaluation of their animal welfare practices and a single audit that is endorsed by NCCR and FMI member companies

(AMI, Kansas, 2004)

Animal Welfare Audit Programs (USA)

- ISO compliant
- Slaughter audits
- Production agriculture audits
- \$550/audit –admin fee cost of auditor separate

Key Areas of concern

- Acute and chronic pain due to surgical interventions, injuries or lameness
- Disease and mortality
- Impact of genetic selection on welfare
- Techniques to carry out on farm euthanasia
- Overall staff training and education

Welfare Concerns for Beef Industry and Public

Dehorning	4/5
Castration	3
Hot-iron branding	9/10
Use of whips prods	6/7
Humane transportation	8/9/10
Live animal exports	4/5

CCA, 1999



Five Focus areas

- **Painful Procedures-** dehorning, castration etc.
- **Husbandry-** transport, handling, feed restrictions
- **Livestock Health-** early detection of sickness, reduction of antibiotic use
- **Housing Environment-** housing environment, air quality
- **Developmental-** discovery of new methods to assess welfare