

April 13, 2026

April 13, 2026

Subject: Canadian beef is NOT a bargaining chip—Stand up for Canadian ranchers and farmers

Dear Member of Parliament,

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Cattle Association (SCA) and Canadian Cattle Association (CCA), we are writing to express our strong opposition to allowing beef access in the Mercosur trade deal. Across Canada there are 60,000 beef producers that contribute 347,352 jobs to the Canadian economy and an economic contribution of \$41 billion annually (2023-2025 average).

Canadian beef farm and ranch families cannot afford to allow beef access in a Mercosur trade deal, which would result in increased imports of low-quality beef. Displacing locally and sustainably produced Canadian beef with low-cost and low-quality beef is a loss for Canadian consumers, our environment, rural communities and farm families across the country.

Canadian beef cannot be used as a bargaining chip in trade negotiations. A beef deal with Mercosur risks undermining farmers and ranchers at a time when we are rebuilding the Canadian cattle herd. The herd cycle is slow due to the nature of raising cattle, which takes 18-24 months. The beef on the shelf today is a result of decisions that a beef producer made at least two years prior and demonstrates why increases in supply are slow to take effect. Now that there are positive signs of our beef herd growing, which will help fulfil demand, we need government trade policies to support Canadian raised, sustainably produced beef, not displace Canadian beef with imports from sub-standard countries.

Canadian beef farmers and ranchers are proud of our high standards for animal health, labour and food safety, which leads to responsibly produced Canadian beef, while providing vital environmental benefits like ecosystem protection, carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat. In contrast, Mercosur beef does not meet the same standards. Wages on beef farms are much lower in Mercosur countries compared with Canada—on average wages are up to 80% lower, with Brazil and Paraguay showing the largest gaps. Further, there are ongoing concerns regarding Foot and Mouth Disease history, BSE reporting transparency and sanitary compliance in parts of the Mercosur region—protecting animal health is foundational to Canada's beef industry and must remain a priority in trade policy.

Canadian beef producers are proud of our record in environmental sustainability. We are a global leader, and beef raised in Canada generates 52% fewer emissions than the global average thanks to our efficient production practices. Increasing production of beef in Canada supports consumption of some of the most sustainable beef in the world while also promoting biodiversity through habitat conservation. Thus, policy decisions such as allowing increased beef imports through Mercosur would take cattle off the land and reduce production, running counter to Canada's environmental goals.

We know that food inflation has been hard on the wallets of Canadians—we feel it too. Currently there are signs of the beef herd increasing in Canada which may help ease price pressures. However, allowing low-cost, low-quality beef, produced in countries with lower standards for animal health, labour and environment is not the solution.

The Government has been keen on trade diversification—we cannot diversify at all cost, when the only winner is the other country. In the case of Mercosur, there is no win—the outcome will negatively impact Canadian farmers and ranchers and instead incentivize increased beef production in other countries-where standards are lower. This sends the wrong signal to Canadian farm families and the next generation of Canadian farmers who want to grow beef for Canadians.

The numbers already tell this story. In the last two years, our beef import quota was filled in record time. By mid-January the annual quota was filled by Mercosur countries. The trade data is clear: Mercosur beef imports have rose from 12,000 tonnes in 2021 to over 40,000 tonnes in 2025, with 70% paying the existing tariff—showing current tariffs do not deter imports in today's market context. Beef imports in 2025 were the highest since 1993. It's clear any additional beef access to Mercosur countries will have a massive impact on Canadian beef farmers.

We're calling on all Members of Parliament to stand up for Canadian farm families and help us grow our herd so that we can provide more Canadian beef for consumers across the country—your constituents, who take pride in buying Canadian beef. Please stand up for Canadian ranchers and beef farmers and say no to Mercosur beef access.

Thank you for your consideration and your support for Canadian farm families.

Sincerely,

Chad Ross
Chair
Saskatchewan Cattle Association