



# News Release

For immediate release

# Harper Government Invests in New National Traceability Service

Calgary, Alberta, July 13, 2012 – The Harper Government is making an important investment to help build a single national livestock traceability system with robust data management capabilities. Parliamentary Secretary Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell), on behalf of Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz, today announced the creation of the Canadian Agri-Traceability Services (CATS) at the Calgary Stampede.

"A national traceability system allows Canada to demonstrate our solid farm practices in animal health, our zoning capability, our emergency management, and our food safety systems," said Mr. Lemieux. "Knowledge is power in agriculture. This investment will help track information, ultimately protecting the bottom line of our beef, dairy, bison, sheep, and other animal producers."

CATS will bring together the combined experience of the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) and Agri-Traçabilité Québec (ATQ) to reduce costs and simplify data reporting. Once established, the new, independent CATS organization will provide traceability data services for the CCIA, ATQ, and other stakeholders. The Harper Government is providing \$500,000 to create the single data system and \$265,000 to help the CCIA and ATQ improve their data management capabilities.

The CCIA and ATQ have set up a joint project steering committee to guide the creation of the new integrated data service. "I am very pleased with the process and leadership that CCIA and ATQ have taken in creating a single national database system for all species in Canada. I applaud Minister Ritz on his commitment and funding to support this project that meets national standards and the specific needs of industry and producers," said Richard Maheu, ATQ President.

"As a cow/calf operator, livestock dealer, and exporter, I am very pleased with the process and leadership CCIA and ATQ are taking to help build a multi-species traceability system which will allow Canada to manage risk proactively and respond to demands from governments and buyers for demonstrable assurances on food safety and biosecurity. As one of the co-chairs of the CATS project steering committee, I applaud Minister Ritz on his commitment to reducing costs, simplifying data reporting, and enhancing data integrity within Canada's traceability program," said Steve Primrose, board member with the Canadian Livestock Dealers Association and past chair of the CCIA Board of Directors.

This Growing Forward investment of \$765,000 is being made through the Government's Canadian Industry Traceability Infrastructure Program, which supports the development of industry-led systems that collect and verify identification and movement data, and that accelerate and increase industry's tracking and tracing capacity. This program is part of the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative.



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For more information on the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative, please visit www.agr.gc.ca/cifsi.

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

## Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA)

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency is a not-for-profit, industry-initiated and -led organization established in 1998. It was incorporated to establish a national beef and dairy cattle, bison, and sheep identification program to support efficient trace back and containment of serious animal health and food safety concerns in the Canadian herd. The Agency is led by a board of directors made up of representatives from all sectors of the livestock industry, and it manages the Canadian Livestock Tracking System (CLTS) database, which is a trace back system that maintains Radio Frequency Identification tag information. The CLTS allows producers to record tag information pertaining to the three pillars of traceability (animal identification, premises identification, and movement), as well as value-added information (such as age verification).

# Agri-Tracabilité Québec (ATQ)

Agri-Traçabilité Québec is a standalone, not-for-profit organization established in September 2001 to develop, implement, and operate a permanent identification and traceability system for Quebec agricultural products, both animal and crops. The traceability of animals from the farm to the slaughterhouse has been implemented since 2002 in the dairy and beef cattle sectors, since 2004 in the ovine sector, and since 2009 in the cervid sector. ATQ's mission is to help improve food safety and the competitiveness of Quebec's agricultural producers by tracing individual animals to the herd of origin, learning the animal's history, movement, and current location. The Board of Agri-Traçabilité Québec is composed of two representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Quebec, four representatives from the Union of Agricultural Producers, and one representative from La Financière agricole du Québec.

## **Canadian Agri-Traceability Services**

Both the CCIA's and ATQ's boards of directors agreed to support a collaborative effort to establish one multi-species database for all traceability administrators, which resulted in a joint application for government funding to support the analysis of database capacity, scalability, operability, and performance requirements.