



INSIDE B13- B36 Minor Sports



JUNE 2022



Livestock producers and livestock organizations have expressed concern about federal labelling that targets ground beef and pork as unhealthy.

Concerns about new federal labelling for beef

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Recently Health Canada announced that packaged foods in Canada, which include ground beef and ground pork, will fall under their new front-of-package nutrition symbol of labelling foods that contain 15 per cent of the recommended daily intakes of sodium, sugar and saturated fat.

The new label requirement is intended to help consumers make better and healthier choices when buying groceries. Yet, there have been discussions on why beef should require front-of-package nutrition symbols, as

other single-ingredient meats and dairy products are being exempted from the new requirement.

"We don't think it should move forward for the label warning for ground beef because we don't think that's what they're trying to achieve by getting people to eat less ultra processed foods, when beef is a high quality source of protein, B12, it's the good stuff," said Ryder Lee, CEO of Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association.

"We've already put the nutrition label on beef products so this isn't new, but if ground beef is the only meat in the grocery store that has a warning label on it, that's not positive.

"Then if Canada is the only country that does that, that's also something we wouldn't like to see when you think of international trade and exports. Half of what we produce gets exported. That's just not workable and really is something we're trying to inform the government about."

Aside from his concerns about labelled beef products impacting the beef industry financially, Lee spoke about how it may impact consumers to believe beef is not a healthy option to eat.

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PDAP eligibility expanded

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Government of Saskatchewan recently announced lifting the requirements for the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) allowing farmers who make more than \$2 million in gross revenues to be eligible for the program.

The new program will assist those with more than \$2 million in gross revenues who otherwise meet the definition of a small business, and will be available to producers who were affected by disasters that occurred during the month of April 2022.

This will help agricultural operations impacted by extreme weather events this spring, but who did not qualify under the original PDAP revenue restrictions.

"It was nice to see the government come through, we ran into the same situation in 2011 and there were no changes made then," said Trevor Green, RM of Moosomin and APAS representative.

"Whether they came around thinking the changes would help some beef producers or it was a little pressure from APAS, I know the guys at APAS worked really hard on it, Ian and Steven, also the employees we hired for APAS, Donavan and Duane.

"It will help people get through until we can get some production insurance for the beef side of things."

Green was asked what role APAS played in having the provincial government expand the eligibility requirements for the program.

"APAS is basically a lobbying group that takes farmers' voices to the government, so that we have one group sitting at the table to talk about the main issues in farming," he said.

"They do have a seat at the table with the provincial government, as long as we can keep the lines of communication open between APAS and the Ag Minister, it shows that we can come to a solution when there are issues in agriculture.

"We have to work together with the provincial government as APAS, and have a good working relationship to bring the farmers' voice to the government, some-

times hear the government's outlook on the farm too."

Now that the eligibility for PDAP has expanded, Green said he knows it will help southeast producers in need.

"I definitely know a few producers that will be applying for it now that it has changed," he said.

"It will help with the disasters that farmers faced in April for the dead calves. For these producers, it's definitely going to be a huge help to large beef producers because some of them had well over \$100,000 in losses, which is pretty significant."

He explained why he thinks the Government of Saskatchewan made changes to the program.

"I think they saw a need in the southeast to maybe help out in the industry, to help some calf and cow farmers who had significant losses," Green said.

"It's a very important industry to the province and we have to do everything to keep it going. The end goal is we need a production insurance for cows, you can insure every acre for farmland, but I can't insure a cow."

Ultimately, Green said he hopes the provincial government can come up with an insurance program that helps livestock producers.

"That's our end goal for where we have to get to, we have to have some type of production insurance for livestock, whether it be sheep, beef, or whatever," he shared.

He spoke about his reaction when he saw the provincial government's adjustments to the program.

"It made me feel that the government is listening, and that there's an open line of communication between producers and the government," he said.

"It's good that it happened, we have a lot of work ahead of us to get a production insurance program ahead of us, it's a step in the right direction though."

Happy to see PDAP open its eligibility requirements

Mark McCorriston, a grain and cattle

farmer who farms west of Moosomin shared his thoughts on the new PDAP requirements.

"It's good news. After the storm happened I originally read in the newspaper that they were bringing back PDAP. My wife and I looked into the program and after a little bit of reading, we learned that we were exempt from it because we also fall into the circumstances where we gross more than \$2 million," said McCorriston.

"I felt a little singled out, just because we chose to take on a little more workload than some other people, I just didn't feel like we should be exempt from the program. If there's one thing I can say about farming, it's pretty easy to gross quite a bit of money, but netting it is a lot more difficult.

"My wife and I definitely lost some calves and we had some long days during the storm, when you lose your little baby calves it's pretty emotional. It's hard on

everyone, you kind of lose momentum on the ones you gain because you feel sorry for the ones you lost, then you're not focused on the ones that you should be caring for.

"It was a tough go during those couple of storms, my wife and I will definitely be applying for that program now that we're eligible."

McCorriston said losing the calves he did on the farm not only impacted his production income, but also increased his expenses.

"Not only did we lose income, we had far greater expenses. We were bedding three or four times a day, there was the extra diesel fuel, there was the straw you're putting down which gives them something dry to lay on to cope with the storm," he said.

Continued on page B9

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Building strategies to counter inflation and interest rates

BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

Inflation and interest rates can be touchy points for farmers, especially those who lived through the 1980s.

Land prices dropped in the 1980s and in the early 1990s, driven lower by record-high interest rates, poor commodity prices and drought.

Concerns about inflation and rising interest rates returned in 2021, and although both are out of farmers' control, producers can use an understanding of these risks to mute their effects.

STRATEGIC APPLICATIONS

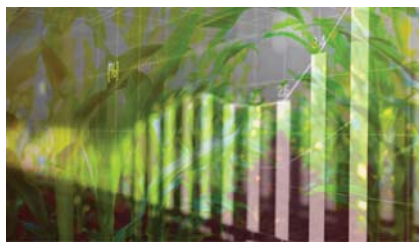
Inflation has a direct impact on farmers' costs of production, as well as interest rates, as the Bank of Canada (BOC) will adjust its policy rate until inflation is around 2%, explains J.P. Gervais, FCC vice-president and chief economist.

What farmers can do with in-depth knowledge of inflation and interest rates is develop a strategy, one that starts with understanding their debt repayment capacity and how higher interest rates would influence it:

- determine the net income your business generates
- calculate debt obligations
- work out how much room you have to phase in higher interest rates

"The idea is to understand what kind of risk you're exposed to and establish a financial strategy in line with your risk exposure, as well as your aversion or ability to take on some risk," Gervais says.

He believes one strategy may be to lock in interest rates



to avoid paying higher rates down the road.

"When you lock in rates, usually you pay a higher interest rate, but you have this assurance that you're going to be okay from a financial standpoint paying that debt down."

ADVISORS CAN HELP

If computing financial ratios seems overwhelming, there's nothing that says these steps need to be taken alone. Consult your banker, accountant, farm manager

Start with understanding debt repayment capacity and how higher interest rates would influence it

and anyone else who can help run relevant economic scenarios and simulations and devise a sound strategy for your operation.

"You just need to be able to surround yourself with the right people to lean on," Gervais says. "You lean on the know-how and technical expertise, but you also lean on the market assessment of the business environment that you're in."

Be your own CEO, he advises. CEOs aren't experts in everything, but they can be the architects who put together a knowledgeable team and lead strategic direction.

"Being a CEO is to surround yourself with the expertise that you need and pick the right business relationships to get your farm to that next level."

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Three ways farm management software optimizes profitability



BY REBECCA HANNAM

No matter the commodity you produce, there is never a shortage of activity on the farm. Simultaneously managing tasks and employees, making day-to-day decisions and preparing for what's next can become chaotic and overwhelming for any farm business owner.

Enter business management software. More and more farmers are using it to help them stay on top of their game and ultimately, it's boosting their bottom lines.

WHAT IT IS

In agriculture, software can be used to manage crop plans, monitor crop progress and track field activities. Or you could use it to track livestock inventory, manage feeding and grazing plans, and record sales. Financial management software automates record keeping, tax returns and payroll, generates valuable reports and supports activities like budgeting and benchmarking.

Although technology is always advancing, using management software is not about buying the newest phone and the latest apps. In fact, it can start by entering data into Microsoft Excel instead of writing in the ledger book or transitioning from spreadsheets to accounting software such as FCC AgExpert Accounting.

MOBILITY MATTERS

Almost all management software can be used at a desktop computer or on smartphones and tablets. The functionality provided via browser-based software or a mobile app is an enormous benefit to farm managers, allowing them to record data while in the barn or access financials without a trip to the office. No more transferring info from notebook to computer—mobile devices mean software tools are available when and where you want them.

WHY IT MATTERS

If you're asking yourself why using farm management software makes sense, consider these three benefits:

Improved organization

Many management programs provide a holistic view of all farm activities. It's a one-stop shop to easily track day-to-day tasks and record financial transactions, and there is no chance of digitally recorded notes dropping out of your pocket.

Having the opportunity to easily review previous activities and business decisions will help you plan every season more efficiently.

Better data

Access to information is vital to a successful farm business, but simply having

more information isn't always helpful. Software improves the quality of your information by lowering human error and flagging potential mistakes in data entry.

It also helps you gain the type of valuable insights that are tough to see in paper form, like generating forecasts for next season or identifying your least profitable venture.

Quick access to accurate, current figures as well as year-over-year data allows you

to make more informed production and operational decisions and provide accurate numbers for transition planning.

Increased productivity

At the end of the day, management software makes daily and seasonal routines faster and simpler. Working smarter allows more time to analyze and improve the efficiency and profitability of your operation and be alert to new opportunities you may have otherwise missed.

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USask project aims to give Ag producers easier access to data

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Government of Canada is investing \$400,000 over the next two years to help the University of Saskatchewan lead a project that focuses on creating a user-friendly data analytics platform, that will be developed to support commercializing new ag-tech solutions.

With the complexity of agriculture technology increasing, the project aims to give Ag producers better access to data that will be useful, and improve productivity and efficiency for their operations.

"Currently smart farming is a pan-Prairie smart farm network where our focus is on cropping systems," said Scott Wright, Director of Livestock Forage Centre of Excellence (LFCE) at USask.

"We see a gap, if you will, for the livestock and forage industry where the opportunities to see technologies coming into the livestock and forage industry, as a targeted outcome.

"For us the LFCE represents an opportunity for us to put those smart farm technologies to test, where we are emulating what would happen in southern Saskatchewan where communications is a bit of a challenge.

"We're going to be coming up with a specific type of band, to be able to read those answers and transmit the data. At this point, the partnership really starts with reading those sensors and transmitting that information for evaluation and interpretation. Then finally, we'll be having a dashboard that will use the records of useful information, that producers will be working with."

The project is part of the "smart farming" research and innovation for the agriculture sector at USask, which involves collecting and analyzing Big Data to help producers make informed and sustainable farm management decisions to improve productivity and efficiency.

Wright was asked what type of data will be collected during the project.

"The things that we're looking to start with range from soil temperature monitors, we're looking at GPS air tags for the livestock so that we can look at not only where they are, but how they're moving," he said.

"There's accelerometers in these tags that allow us to flag if the animal has stopped moving, or how it's moving.

"We believe the AI is going to lead us to know if the animals are well or sick, to identify heat cycles for example, to identify breedings when animals are in the same sight, we'll be tracking that type of information."

The "living lab" the project will be working in will bring together producers, established tech companies, and ag-tech start-ups, to create an environment and a platform that reduced current barriers to adoption of smart farming practices,

while enhancing the probability of success for all.

"It's a step forward, and the other thing that comes with this project is we're doing a 'day in the life' of a livestock farm for technologies that have ideas and have applications that can understand what is really needed in the livestock and forage world," Wright said.

"To be able to assist farmers in replacing labour, in replacing effort elsewhere, really for time saving and increased information that's available to them.

"In that two year period of the project, we look to have a number of different types of sensors of the data that we're asking about. That's operating and moving into a data collection process, so that we can begin to work through that dashboard.

"By the end of two years, we expect to have a dashboard certainly of the data we have in place right now. If you think about a red, green, yellow kind of tagging, where all things are good within the parameters that we want would be in green, in yellow here's something we might want to pay attention to more, and red for example would be an animal that hasn't moved in four hours."

The project primarily focuses on the livestock industry, however it will slightly incorporate the forage industry as well.

Wright spoke about why it is important to develop agriculture-related technology.

"Labour is one of the key and critical issues on the farm, this project has some opportunities for replacing labour, replacing hands-on challenges," he said.

"The second piece is, the more useful

information that's being available and assessed, the more we can create efficiencies, economic, social, and environmental efficiencies within that livestock and forage industry."

The project is led by the College of Engineering and College of Agriculture and Bioresources, in partnership with USask's Livestock Forage Centre of Excellence.

"I hope this is the first announcement of many, and I believe we will see industry becoming more involved in this space, and working with us to look for those opportunities," Wright said.

The partner organizations that are contributing their expertise or investments for the project are: SaskTel, Mera Group Companies, North Star Systems, Smart Paddock, Wood River Controls, and Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association.



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Manitoba unveils new protein research strategy

Manitoba is taking another major step toward becoming a global leader in sustainable protein production by releasing the Manitoba Protein Research Strategy (MPRS), Agriculture Minister Derek Johnson announced on June 8.

"One of the key pillars of the Manitoba Protein Advantage is the harnessing of the great wealth of agri-food knowledge and research expertise in our province," said Johnson. "The Manitoba Protein Research Strategy will strengthen the working relationship between Manitoba's protein research community, industry and government, leading to collaboration between our province and global experts and institutions to advance strategic priorities in protein research and innovation."

The Manitoba Protein Research Strategy is a comprehensive strategy that forms a blueprint for the province's success in the global protein market, noted Johnson. The MPRS highlights 46 strategic research projects under four main themes including climate resilience of sustainable protein food systems, novel sustainable protein product development and processing, digital agriculture to enable sustainable food systems, and waste, water, by-product and co-product utilization.

"Through the effective collaboration of government, industry, academia and non-profit organizations, we have succeeded

in developing a strategy that will be key to Manitoba's success in the global protein market," said Dickson Gould, chair, Manitoba Protein Consortium. "I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to this important work and shares our vision of Manitoba as a world-class provider of sustainable protein in the global marketplace."

The Manitoba government will also invest \$1.5 million to support the hiring of a new Strategic Research Chair in Sustainable Protein at the University of Manitoba, the minister said. In addition to providing specific research expertise, the strategy calls for the chair to become the nexus for research collaboration and knowledge translation activities.

The chair will engage researchers, businesses and industry while leading strategic research priorities that will support investment for long-term economic growth and development of Manitoba's booming plant and animal protein sectors, the minister noted.

The MPRS builds on the Manitoba Protein Advantage Strategy. Released in 2019, the Manitoba Protein Advantage Strategy aims to grow the plant and animal protein industry, create new value for producers and processors through innovation and value chain collaboration, and attract new investment of \$1.5 billion and 1,550 jobs by 2025.



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PDAP eligibility expanded

Continued from page B4

"It was not only a huge loss of potential income, it was also a huge creation of way more expense," said McCorrison.

"Any kind of help that we get would be greatly appreciated, the whole livestock industry is definitely a struggling industry right now, with inflation, changes in prices of fuel, and high feed cost because of the drought last year.

"There's not much left in the commercial livestock industry for the bottom line right at these times. My wife and I talked about cutting back, we've talked about selling the cattle, but we both love our animals."

McCorrison said he will be applying for PDAP now that he is eligible.

"Anything from the government would be appreciated, I'm just not sure what to expect. I haven't heard from anyone else who received anything, but anything would be appreciated," he said.

"The cost of trying to keep the cattle dry, the added expenses, the extra time, the disheartening events of losing calves, and we're still struggling from the backlash of the storms.

"Our corral system, I've never seen it so muddy in my life. I was talking with a gentleman closer to the Manitoba border, he lived in his yard for 33 years and had cattle the whole time, he said he's never seen his corral so sloppy. It's like even when we want to work with the few cattle that are in the yard now, it's not easy because the corral are just slop."

Aside from equipment issues because of the weather, McCorrison said he is still dealing with sick calves from the snowstorms in April.

"It's been hard all around and we still have some calves who got pneumonia, we gave them basic medication and some of the expensive stuff. Some did live, but they're not 100 per cent and they're not going to bring in the top dollar that you hope to get in the fall," he said.

"Not only was there that initial shock of losing a percentage of your calves, it's an ongoing situation that will probably last for the rest of the year. Mother Nature, at least I feel, has been relentless to us in the southeast corner."

He was asked why he thinks the Government of Saskatchewan made the changes in PDAP, to accommodate farmers who make more than \$2 million in gross revenues a year.

"I would say on average that most of the farms in the area probably gross over \$2 million now, and a lot of them if they don't, there will probably be a gentleman or a lady in that family farm that maybe works in town or has a job somewhere else," he said.

"They might take care of the family farm after hours, or on the weekend, but I would think that most farms on average especially a mixed operation, to gross \$2 million, it's just not that much money anymore."



Farmers in Southeast Saskatchewan are happy to see the provincial government adjust the eligibility requirements for PDAP, now allowing farmers who make more than \$2 million in gross revenues, to apply for the program.

"If you think about it, if you want to go buy a new pickup truck it's \$100,000. I'm glad that they made the change, and I think they made the right choice to do that."

McCorrison commented on APAS working with the provincial government to make this change in PDAP happen.

"APAS seems like they're wanting to do something for the people right away, and they were lobbying the government that's above them to do something and it looks like the change has been made," McCorrison said.

"I feel that they put their nose to the grindstones and lobbied the right people, and got the change that should be made. I think they did excellent and did their job, and I appreciate the people that were with APAS who were digging their heels and rallying for us farmers."

"Farming is a labour of love, a lot of people do it for the rewarding aspect of a new calf, when people talk about losing calves and they maybe say it nonchalant, I myself can personally say it's pretty tough."

"When you're loading the dead calf into the loader and you have to take them out to the orchard, it's an emotional thing for everyone, myself included."

"When people talk about losing calves it's more of an emotional thing than they let on, and they're just being gentlemen by not getting too in-depth, but it's definitely hard on everyone."

Appreciative for APAS working with the provincial government

Kevin Woods, who has a grain and cattle farm and a feed lot near Moosomin said he was happy to see agriculture organizations put pressure on the provincial government.

"I'm happy they finally made the changes, I feel they're (government) playing catch up, but no complaints," said Woods.

He explained why he thinks the provincial government made the changes to the program.

"I think because it made sense, also because Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, APAS and a few other producer organizations put a lot of pres-

sure on them. That's what helped make the change, there's no question on that," Woods said.

"No one individual went about it themselves, it was done throughout a co-ordinated effort from several associations. I also think the program is kind of outdated, that was put in place 10 or 15 years ago, and obviously a lot has changed since then."

"I think they're just trying to catch up, it's definitely welcomed, I'm happy about it."

Kevin Hruska, who farms in the north of Esterhazy, Bredenburg and Langenburg areas, shared his thoughts on the adjustments made towards PDAP as well.

"It's nice they're being fair about it and not ostracizing the large successful farms," he said.

Although his farm was impacted by the storm, Hruska said he managed to finish seeding on time.

"We did get everything seeded, we don't have unseeded acre so I'm not sure if we'll be eligible, but our seeding was delayed because of the storm," said Hruska.

"We just finished seeding on June 5 which is unusual. In all honesty the crops are in good condition in our area, we're not worried for this year."



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Concerns about new federal labelling for beef

Continued from front

He explained why ground beef is a healthy source of food, and why it should be exempt.

"We do have iron deficiency challenges in Canada, we have vitamin B12 deficiency challenges in Canada, and how do you get those things? One of them is a supplement, well supplements are a way to fix a problem that doesn't need to be there. If you can incorporate ground beef into your diet it's affordable, and it delivers the nutrients along with the protein and calories that you need," he said.

"Our understanding of this move towards front-of-package labelling was to help people make healthy choices and really to move away from ultra processed foods, if you have a warning label on ground beef it's like having a warning towards home cooking and that's not going to help our population.

"The modern problems that we have with our diet aren't going to get fixed by getting rid of old fashioned staples like ground beef we need more of that, more home cooking."

Lee was asked why he thinks beef should be exempt from this label requirement.

"Well part of it is that fair treatment, there's a recognition that some of these other products deliver healthy fat and have good value for your calories, and we think ground beef is right there along with them," he said.

"We just like to be treated the same way. This is a good product that delivers good things, you need protein, you need fat, iron, zinc, your B vitamins, it's the opposite of something that needs a warning and we just want to get that figured out before we go ahead."

The Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association has been reaching out to the government to inform them about their views regarding the new label requirement, said Lee.

"We are asking people to help us out and letting the decision makers know how they feel about this, you can go to: www.dontlabelmybeef.ca, and get in engaged individually," he said.

"That is important, that does have an effect. We're also doing direct outreach in capital cities across the country and in Ottawa. We're having conversations about why beef shouldn't be labelled.

"I think sometimes these things advance as people work on them in Ottawa without everyone knowing what's going on, that's why if we shine the light on certain things that are happening, members in parliament, ministers, and others can have a closer look before making any final decisions."

MP Wagantall shares her concerns

MP for Yorkton-Melville, Cathay Wagantall also commented on the federal government's front-of-package nutrition symbols proposal.

"It's going to increase the cost for these products, for

ground beef and pork, there are many other single-ingredient products that are meat, vegetable and fruits, dairy products that are exempt from this," Wagantall said.

"It feels like Health Canada is deliberately targeting our ground beef and ground pork as unhealthy, that is a protein and that is healthy for Canadians.

"This also impacts lower income and middle income Canadians who tend to eat a lot of ground beef and pork in comparison to other meats. It's an unreasonable expectation that I really feel, it's going to impact our ability to even export as well."

Other single-ingredient products that are being exempt from the front-of-package nutrition symbols, are fruits, vegetables and dairy products. Wagantall explained why beef should be included in the exemption.

"Beef is a single-ingredient product, there are other meats that are not included in this, it's just our ground beef and our ground pork," she said.

"You try to think through why they targeted those products specifically, and I do believe they want to change the mindsets of Canadians in regards to where they get their protein sources. It's just trying to force change onto Canadians through their ideology, when there is nothing about ground pork or beef that changes them from a single-ingredient product."

Wagantall was asked if she thinks they can change the federal government's mind about exempting beef in the proposal.

"We push, we amend, and we see that they're not doing everything that's in the best interest for Canadian needs, and today again you'll see that Bill C-11 was moved along because of the support from the NDP," said Wagantall.

"I would say they do have the same mind set and rationale for doing this, it would be very difficult, but regardless we will stand up for the community. On our side of the floor we certainly value all food-production in Canada because we have the best products, what we raise, what we grow we do have the highest standards, we certainly don't see this as something that should be proposed on our livestock producers."

Dr. Kitchen expresses his thoughts on new label requirement for beef

Dr. Robert Kitchen, MP for Souris-Moose Mountain, shared his thoughts about the recent announcement for front-of-package nutrition symbols for beef.

"I think it's disgusting that they are actually putting this forward, affecting one of the best food sources of protein that we have," Kitchen said.

"They're trying to put labelling on it that runs the risk of not only creating an impact on consumer use of it here in Canada, but also internationally. You look at the significance of the cattle and beef sector, aside from it putting meat on the table, it's \$22 billion in Canada's GDP. We export over 500 million kilograms of beef to international markets, that's a big concern when we start putting labels on what is a very good protein source that we have in Canada.

"They'll be putting labels on ground beef in the grocery store, it's not the same type of meat that is put in a big mac for example, and if you take that another step, the government has pushed forward for no warnings on free fentanyl that they're giving out in parts of this country, but they're going to put it on ground beef."

Kitchen spoke about the concerns he has heard from cattle producers and his constituent regarding the proposal.

"They're concerned are where's this is going, they're already having troubles from when we had the winter storm when calving, and the huge impact it had particularly in our area," he said.

"Now you throw in this on top of the cost of their feed, cost of transportation, those are huge costs being dumped on them and that is all part of the picture of the pain they're feeling."

He said him and his constituents hope to change the government's mind.

"We're pushing on them, we hope they listen and will try to get them to hear from this industry because of how big it is. We're hoping that will get them to focus on making some changes, we'll have to see where that goes."




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