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**national farmers union**  
*In Union Is Strength*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CANADIAN NFU COMMENTS ON R-CALF AND INTERNATIONAL MEETING**

**RIMBY, Alta**—Canada’s National Farmers Union is not working with the US cattle organization R-CALF, we have no plans to do so in the future, and we have no agreements to collaborate with R-CALF on any initiative. Until NFU officials first met R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard at a 14-organization, international meeting in Billings, Montana last week, no one from the NFU had ever spoken to him. Thus, we are surprised to see media commentators linking the NFU to an organization that we have never worked with and rarely, if ever, communicated with. To make such links is to mislead farmers.

The NFU strongly defends Canada’s Wheat Board and the interests of cattle producers. Thus, the NFU has *profound* disagreements with R-CALF in its attacks on the CWB (1999) and on cattle farmers’ interests—especially R-CALF’s courtroom attempts to keep the Canada-US border closed to cattle following the discovery of BSE (2003 to present).

The NFU does acknowledge that R-CALF has done very effective work in drawing attention to the damaging power of large meatpacking corporations in North America and in educating farmers about packer ownership of cattle (captive supply).

“On many issues—on analysis as well as tactics—the NFU vehemently disagrees with R-CALF and will continue to do so. But in order to resolve pressing problems within the North American cattle sector, we are willing to listen to the positions of a broad range of organizations to understand their analyses of packer power and corporate concentration,” said NFU Board member Neil Peacock.

Incorrect inferences about a connection between R-CALF and the NFU flow from an R-CALF news release that included statements by NFU members. What is missing from media reports is the context of those statements: R-CALF’s work on captive supply, the takeover of North American packers by JBS corporation, and anti-trust actions against large packers. The last sentence of the R-CALF release provides that context, saying: “We were pleased to learn that Canadian producers support R-CALF’s efforts to prevent further concentration in the meatpacking industry and to eliminate anticompetitive cattle procurement practices going on in each of our countries. We look forward to sharing

information with Canadian producers that will help both Canada and the U.S. restore competition for all cattle farmers and ranchers.”

Since the NFU released its groundbreaking report on the cattle price crisis in November, our organization has had tremendous success helping farmers, policymakers, and journalists come to understand that cattle farmers are making too little because packers and retailers are taking too much. Many in the established order find themselves threatened by the NFU’s disclosures about who’s taking the profits in the cattle and beef sectors. These interests find it convenient to discredit the NFU in any way they can. However, farmers must not be distracted. The issues are packer and retailer power, farmers’ prices, and who’s pocketing the profits.

Last week’s Billings, Montana meeting included 14 organizations from Mexico, Canada, and the US. This broad-based meeting focused on hog, cattle, food safety, and trade issues in all three nations. The meeting did not create any formal agreements to work together. The NFU did find common ground with organizations such as Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) and Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) on issues such as captive supply and reform of trade agreements (see the NFU’s February 13 release at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca) ). The NFU looks forward to sharing information with a broad range of international organizations on how we can end the cattle price crisis and defend family farms against those who are threatening them.

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