



**Honourable George Groeneveld
Minister
Agriculture and Rural Development**

Red Meat Reception

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

**Royal Glenora Club
11160 River Valley Road
Edmonton**

Check against delivery

- Good evening, everyone. It is a pleasure to see all of you tonight.
- On behalf of Premier Stelmach and my colleagues at the Legislature, many of whom have joined us here this evening, I would like to thank the organizers and our hosts for putting on this terrific reception.
- Specifically, I want to thank:
 - Norine Moore from the Alberta Lamb Producers
 - Herman Simons from the Alberta Pork Producers, and
 - Rick Burton from the Alberta Beef Producers.
- The foundation of Alberta's economy was built on agriculture and this industry continues to play an important role in the success of and the prosperity of our province.
- Alberta's livestock industry, in particular has earned a world-wide reputation for quality and we are all proud of that reputation.

- Over the past two weeks we were able to make some important announcements for producers.
- One of them being Bill 43
- I know not everyone in this room agrees with legislation that we introduced yesterday...
- But, even if some producers feel he or she should have the choice of how their money is used...then it is worth making a change to give that group...whether a minority or not... that choice.
- It's safe to say that everyone in this room agrees that the other 3 announcements this government did make will have an incredibly positive impact on your industry.
- Growing Forward programming announced last Friday is much simpler and easier to access for individual producers and businesses alike...

- The Alberta government is investing \$109 million, and the federal government is contributing \$164 million to support these programs in Alberta...a total of \$273 million over 5 years.
- We increased the lending limits through AFSC...up from \$2 million to a cumulative total of \$5 million...
- And for large scale projects, the limit is \$25 million – up from \$10 million, and most importantly...
- ALMA has \$30 million available in grant programs that will focus on a number of areas, including international market development, research and development, on-farm technology adaptation and value-added market development.
- This ALMA programming are the funds that individual producers and your associations will be able access and leverage to unleash the potential Alberta's livestock industry has yet to tap...I know many producers also feel this way.
- I have said this many times before...change isn't easy.

- But often, we are better for it.
- Our department made a 12% reduction in order to direct \$30 million to ALMA...
- We went through a program review...and this process made our department stronger...We are now better focused on delivering services that are important to the Albertans we serve.
- I'm excited to see the proposals Alberta Pork will be bringing forward to begin the challenge of implementing the great revitalization strategy they put together last year.
- But under the leadership of Herman, Alberta Pork has taken that first step towards change...for the betterment of the industry.
- Unfortunately, the current issue is swine flu...and it certainly is affecting the industry.
- It is important to remember pork is safe to eat- Herman we need to work together and get this message out.

- I look forward to a good year for the red meat industry...it is important that we move forward together.
- Because this isn't about Government or associations, it's about the success and profitability of individual producers and we can't lose focus on that.
- Thank you for your time this evening.