

Q: What is happening?

A: Effective September 15, 2011, the province will no longer reimburse Alberta cattle producers \$150 for each eligible sample submitted under the Canada and Alberta BSE Surveillance Program (CABSESP). However producers will continue to receive \$75 per sample from the federal government (CFIA).

Q. Does this mean the BSE Surveillance Program is ending?

A: No, the program is not ending. It is important that producers continue to submit samples as they have been doing over the last seven years.

Q: What is the BSE Surveillance Program?

A: The Canada and Alberta BSE Surveillance Program is vital to keeping borders open, to gaining access to new international markets and to maintaining Canada's BSE controlled risk status under the World Organization of Animal Health, as well as ensuring continued consumer confidence in Canadian cattle.

Q: Why is the reimbursement no longer being offered?

A: The reimbursement to cattle producers was intended to be a temporary incentive to increase awareness and participation in the program. After seven years, producers in Alberta have come to recognize the value and importance of participating in the program and, as such, the extra \$150 per sample incentive from the Government of Alberta to submit samples should no longer be required.

Eligible producers will continue to be reimbursed \$75 for all samples from eligible animals submitted under the program.

Additionally, this change brings Alberta more in line with what is happening in other provinces. The only other province that has provided a producer top-up on the BSE surveillance program is British Columbia.

ARD will continue to monitor the program to assess the impact in sampling numbers.

Q: Is the program still paying for veterinary services?

A: ARD continues to support BSE surveillance by contributing to the veterinary payments, maintaining the administration of the CABSESP and by sharing BSE laboratory testing so that producers will continue to benefit from the animal health assistance that veterinarians provide while collecting the BSE samples.

Q: Where is the money that was being paid to producers going?

A: ARD will consider redirecting some of the savings from this program into other programs such as diagnostic testing and marketing, which producers have told us is very important to them.

Q: How many samples are submitted every year by producers?

A: The average producer in Alberta submits a BSE sample through this program about once every two years.

Q: Are there any changes to the testing guidelines?

A: CABSESP will still target animals that are the greatest risk of developing BSE and provide the most information on BSE prevalence in the country. This includes testing on cattle between 30 months of age and older that are in the high-risk categories.