



# News Release

For immediate release

## Key Step Completed on Road towards Canadian beef access to South Korea

**Ottawa, Ontario, December 30, 2011** - Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and International Trade Minister Ed Fast today announced that a major step has been taken towards restoring access for Canadian beef in South Korea with the South Korean Parliament ratifying the import health requirements for Canadian beef, under 30 months of age. This is one of the final steps prior to Canadian beef re-entering the South Korean market.

"This has been a long journey and today's announcement is a big step forward for our hard working beef producers to once again bring their world class product to the South Korean marketplace," said Minister Ritz. "The re-opening of this market will benefit our industry and the entire Canadian economy and we look forward to the finalization of the commercially viable agreement and the commencement of trade."

"I recently raised this issue with my Korean counterpart at the WTO. Canada has closely monitored South Korea's domestic process and we are working towards complete access being restored," said Minister Fast. "We will continue to work closely with our South Korean counterparts to deepen the trade ties that create jobs and prosperity in both countries."

Following Canada's first case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in May 2003, South Korea banned Canadian beef and beef products. After years of emphasizing that there is no scientific basis for the ban, Canada requested a World Trade Organization (WTO) Panel to review South Korea's ban on Canadian beef.

Last June, Ministers Ritz and Fast announced a breakthrough in restoring access bilaterally. Both the Canadian and South Korean governments agreed on a process to restore access by the end of 2011. Following this agreement, Canada formally requested a suspension of the WTO proceedings.

The process to restore access is now close to conclusion. Earlier today, the South Korean National Assembly deliberated the issue and passed the Import Health Requirements (IHRs) for Canadian beef. The South Korean Government still has to promulgate the IHRs early in the new year, then issue a list of approved beef establishments for export and formally accept the import health certificates. This is expected to happen early in 2012. South Korea's progress meets timelines established, therefore the WTO Panel remains suspended.

The lucrative South Korean beef market – which Canada Beef Inc estimates could be worth \$30 million to Canadian producers by 2015 – was the last major Asian market banning Canadian beef. In 2002, South Korea was Canada's fourth-largest beef market.



For more information, media may contact:

**Media Relations**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Ottawa, Ontario

**613-773-7972**

**1-866-345-7972**

**Meagan Murdoch**

Director of Communications

The Office of the Honourable Gerry Ritz

**613-773-1059**

**Trade Media Relations Office**

Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

**613-996-2000**

Follow us on Twitter: @Canada\_Trade

**Rudy Husny**

Press Secretary

Office of the Honourable Ed Fast

Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway

**613-992-7332**