



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

QSH✓ program marks 250th registration

May 5, 2003 (Guelph) – Registrations by Ontario beef producers into the new Quality Starts Here (QSH) Verified Beef Production program have now topped the 250 mark. For the first 500 producers, the cost of both taking the workshop and the on-farm audit process are subsidized.

Paul Stiles and Dan Ferguson, the two provincial QSH coordinators, say that they've been extremely pleased with producer uptake of the program, which they describe as being a "proactive approach" to food safety.

The Quality Starts Here✓ model was initially developed by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association in 1994. It has now been expanded into an on-farm food safety program and is being introduced, by provincial cattlemen's associations, to beef producers across Canada. The Ontario Cattlemen's Association is cooperating with Beef Improvement Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food to deliver the program in this province.

The intent of this voluntary, industry-lead program is to promote good production practices on the farm that help to ensure food safety, while providing consumers with the assurance that they can have confidence in beef. Workbooks take participants through five basic areas of their operation – animal health, cattle feeding, shipping and receiving, pest control and yard maintenance and biosecurity.

Following the workshop, both Stiles and Ferguson are available for follow up visits to help farmers with on-farm implementation. Producers wanting to be officially recognized as QSH-VBP certified must undergo an on-farm verification. This process will include an audit of the producers' standard operating procedures and supporting management records.

Producers requiring on-farm support developing their record-keeping systems are encouraged to call the QSH office at 1-866-887-8858. The same number should be used for producers wanting to book a QSH course in their own area.

Auditors are currently undergoing training and will be working in locations across the province by late fall.

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For further information:

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Press Release