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Federal Funding Supports Canadian Angus Association Research for Economically Relevant Traits to Improve Breeder Efficiency and Productivity

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ROCKY VIEW COUNTY, AB — The Canadian Angus Association (CAA) is very grateful for the investment of \$238,920 from the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (the Partnership) Agri-Assurance program to help us use genomic tools to select for foot and leg health and improve animal welfare. The funding was announced as part of an overall investment of \$8.3 million for six projects that will help support Canada's world-class beef industry.

The Canadian Angus Association research project aims to develop genetic selection tools for feet and legs in beef cattle. Lameness in cattle has been attributed as the primary cause of reduced animal welfare, production loss (breeding activity, milk production and growth), economic loss (early culling) and reduced consumer confidence. We are working with Canadian beef producers to phenotype 5,000 Canadian Angus animals for feet and leg structure. The data will be used to:

- Generate genomically enhanced Expected Progeny Differences (GE-EPDs) for feet and leg structure included in the CAA's suite of available EPDs
- Create economic estimations of trait impact for inclusion of traits in index EPDs
- Increase animal health, welfare, longevity and profitability through genetic selection for improved feet and leg structure

While the Canadian dairy industry has been measuring and selecting for improved feet and leg structure for several years, extensive grazing makes such measurement and selection more challenging for beef cattle.

These investments will help Canadian beef producers become more competitive and provide them with the tools they need to remain sustainable and innovative. "The support from the Partnership will provide the CAA with the ability to conduct new research on a number of economically important traits relating to improving the efficiencies and productivity of the Canadian beef breeder," says CAA CEO Myles Immerkar. "Currently the tools to measure, select and improve these economically critical traits are not available to the beef breeder and the development of these tools and the improvement in these traits will continue to impact the functionality of the Canadian cow herd."

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year, \$3-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector.

The Canadian Angus Association is Canada's largest purebred beef breed organization, registering about half of Canada's purebred beef cattle. The Association represents more than 2,000 members across Canada for the purposes of registering and recording the pedigrees of purebred Angus cattle in the closed HerdBook and promoting the breed across Canada. The member-approved mandate is to maintain breed registry, breed purity and provide services that enhance the growth and position of the Angus breed.

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