

# Final Trip Report

Mission to Chicago

Dates: November 3 – 5, 2013

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## **Purpose of travel:**

To participate in meetings with United States (US) beef packing industry leaders at the North American Meat Association (NAMA) Meat Import Council of America 2013 Outlook Conference (November 3–5, 2013, in Chicago). The purpose of the meeting was to continue advocacy efforts related to US mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (COOL), discuss common goals and more fully understand how COOL has affected US meat processing plants.

## **Overview:**

The NAMA Annual Outlook conference brings the leaders of North America's meat packing industry together at a single venue and presents an excellent opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest. At this time, COOL has imposed substantial costs on the North American meat processing industry, which are reflected in significant discounts for Canadian cattle and hogs processed in the US.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has ruled that COOL unfairly discriminates against Canadian cattle and hogs. Should further WTO panels uphold earlier rulings against COOL, Canada will be in a position to impose retaliatory tariffs against a range of US products, including beef and pork. NAMA members, Canadian cattle and hog producers, and Canadian governments have a mutual interest in ending the discrimination caused by COOL and avoiding retaliatory tariffs.

Minister Olson was joined by Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, as well as, Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture, Lyle Stewart, and Manitoba Minister of Agriculture and Rural Initiatives, Ron Kostyshyn.

## **Mission Objectives:**

- To reach a mutual understanding of how COOL impacts the North American meat and livestock industry.
- To build consensus on how to work to eliminate the discriminatory effects of COOL.

## **Results:**

- The meeting with NAMA members provided valuable insight into how COOL has affected the North American meat industry, particularly those processing plants that import significant numbers of Canadian cattle and hogs.
- At the time, US Congress was attempting to write new farm program legislation. This presented a strategic opportunity to advocate for an end to COOL.
- During the mission Minister Olson was also able to meet with representatives of JBS and Cargill, two companies which operate cattle processing plants in Alberta. These meetings focused on labor shortages, improvements to food safety processes, the benefits of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the harm caused by COOL.

- As a follow up to this meeting Minister Olson travelled to Washington, DC, on November 19-22, 2013, to meet with several members of the US Congress regarding COOL.

**Delegation:**

Honourable Verlyn Olson

Nick Harsulla

Jason Krips

Gordon Cove

Julie Crilly

## International Travel Final Expenses

Expenditures by Participants	Amount
<b>Travel</b> (includes airfare, airport service fees, ground transportation costs, including taxis, car rentals, parking, trains, buses as well as mileage to/from airport or taxis to/from airport in Alberta, including any cancellation fees)	\$ 4,398.20
<b>Accommodation</b> (room charges and related taxes, including any cancellation fees)	\$ 1,411.14
<b>Meals</b> (includes restaurant bills and tips, meals on hotel bills, per diem meal claims, share of group meals or working sessions)	\$ 388.66
<b>Incidental and Miscellaneous</b> (includes cell phone rental charges, incremental costs for all electronic devices such as roaming charges for cell phones, iPads and costs associated with communications such as the costs incurred for media call-backs, conference/registration fees, including cancellation fees, fax and internet charges, passport and visa fees, medical and inoculation fees, laundry and dry cleaning, baggage handling, out-of-country per diems, and other sundry expenditures)	\$ 182.45
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 6,380.45
General Mission Expenditures	Amount
<b>Receptions and Hosting</b> (receptions, luncheons, dinners, and events that are hosted by the GoA that are specific to the mission and include meeting related costs for room rental, room rental for hosted events, food, beverages, catering staff, service charges, entertainment, flowers)	\$ 0.00
<b>Incidental and Miscellaneous</b> (includes translation of documents fees, publications, shipping charges, gifts purchased specifically for mission, Canadian Embassy/High Commission/Consulate charges for services provided to the GoA)	\$ 269.29
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 269.29
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$ 6,649.74</b>

News release:

[Alberta to stand up for livestock industry in Chicago](#) (October 31, 2013)