



*For immediate release*  
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## **ALERT line assists producers and their livestock this winter**

Alberta's livestock producers are renowned for their world-class production methods but many animal caregivers have been put to the test due to the rough weather patterns experienced in some areas of the province. "Last summer's drought and the severity of this late winter have had an impact," says Susan Church, manager of the Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) Association but she's confident producers are doing a great job despite the tough conditions.

"In Alberta we have a responsive livestock protection program that combines the efforts of the Alberta SPCA constables and the **ALERT Line (Action Line & Resource Team)**," explains Church. Anyone can call **1-800-506-2273** to report livestock in distress and contribute confidentially to a successful resolution. Extended drought and severe market constrictions have resulted in an increase in calls to the line over the past 6 months.

"AFAC has set up the *Livestock Care Response Plan* to secure feed, water and bedding in case of a livestock care emergency," explains Tim O'Byrne, livestock consultant for AFAC. For the first time since its inception in 1994, the ALERT Line has received calls from producers themselves wanting assistance with their own livestock.

Through the Plan, AFAC has been instrumental in helping producers faced with limited options when caring for their livestock. The Plan is activated when producers cannot meet their obligations to care for the animals. "We've had to dip into our feed supply a few times this winter," says O'Byrne.

Although cases of livestock neglect are rare in the province, there is a definite need for a watchdog especially when some producers have been forced to utilize options they've never used before. AFAC is aware of problems associated with lease agreements for distant cattle pastures. "Producers need to remain highly vigilant when they send their cattle off to be tended by someone else for months at a time," O'Byrne states. "Anything can happen out there, it's a lessee-beware market."

AFAC continues to work closely with the Alberta SPCA, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development and the RCMP to make sure that livestock in jeopardy are properly cared for. If you have a concern about livestock call the ALERT Line at **1-800-506-2273**.

AFAC is supported by Alberta's livestock industry to promote responsible animal care.

**Animal Care Alert Line 1-800-506-CARE (2273)**

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