
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mar. 15, 2006

The Editor
Cowichan News Leader

Re: "MLA leading farms to the slaughterhouse," Mar. 11, 2006

While I appreciate the effort that MLA Routley is making to promote healthy agricultural practices, I would note that government is already working to address the industry's concerns, and the concerns of small processing plants in particular, and has been for some time.

My responsibility, as Minister of Agriculture and Lands, is to develop the agriculture and food industry. One of my main priorities is to expand the meat processing industry in B.C. Provincial slaughter capacity is vital to the agriculture industry, and these province-wide health regulations are necessary to protect consumers, who are insisting upon a consistent and ever more reliable food safety system. These regulations will contribute to the sustainability of the meat processing industry for the long term. The province is very serious about maintaining food safety and feels it is critical that we protect human health.

We are committed to working closely with producers, processors and members of the public through this transitional process to ensure that everyone's concerns are heard. We are examining a number of options which will assist in maintaining the sustainability of small processing plants. Let me assure you, the ministry actively promotes supporting the local economy by encouraging consumers to purchase product from their local farmers.

I am working with my colleague at the Ministry of Health, Minister Abbott, to explore options to help B.C. livestock slaughter plants and more information will be available soon.



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Minister of Agriculture and Lands
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