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For immediate release

## Verified Beef Production workshops now available online

**Calgary, Alta., February 25, 2009.** Beef producers across Canada wishing to participate in Canada's Verified Beef Production (VBP) on-farm food safety program can now complete their workshops online. That will improve availability of the program in all regions, says the national manager of the program.

VBP is based on internationally recognized food safety standards. The online workshops offer producers the same information and preparation they would receive at a live workshop, including an overview of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that support on-farm food safety, says Terry Grajczyk.

"This new online workshop feature is designed to improve VBP workshop access for producers in remote areas and for others who simply prefer the convenience of online training," she says.

"VBP has made a commitment to provide all Canadian beef producers the opportunity to learn about the food safety standards that VBP represents and give them the option of participating in the program's on-farm validation process. And with more and more producers today using the Web as a resource, we feel this online training tool is a good fit for VBP and its participants."

The VBP online workshop process has been designed to be simple and user-friendly, says Grajczyk. The first step for participants is to contact their provincial VBP coordinator for access information. Contact information for VBP coordinators in all provinces is available by visiting the VBP Web site and clicking "VBP across Canada."

The online workshop features the same SOPs that are central to the VBP program: animal health management, feed and water, cattle shipping, pesticide control and manure, and training and communication. Each SOP category features a cross-check to help participants review the material. When all five categories are completed, information will automatically appear to allow participants to send their "Notice of Workshop Completion" to the VBP office.

The VBP program fits directly into the management of modern beef operations of every size and type, says Grajczyk. "VBP is a voluntary, producer-driven on-farm program designed to complement food safety programs in meat processing plants and at the retail level to manage food safety risks across the food chain," she says.

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“Many of the practices outlined in VBP are designed to complement regular management practices in beef cattle operations across the country and perhaps provide other beef cattle management ideas. The VBP producer manual and the program’s supporting information contain a wealth of useful management information that can help producers make decisions that can help them become more profitable in today’s value driven marketplace.”

Managed by the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association, the national association representing the interests of Canada’s beef producers, Verified Beef Production is Canada’s auditable on-farm food safety program. Originally introduced as a general education program, it has since expanded to include an option for producer validation. More information is available at the VBP Web site at [www.verifiedbeef.org](http://www.verifiedbeef.org).

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