



For Immediate Release
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2011 Calgary Bull Sale organizers buoyed by cattle industry optimism

CALGARY – The annual Calgary Bull Sale has long been a barometer for the Canadian cattle industry. And this spring, organizers are enthusiastically preparing for a change in the weather.

Since last fall, market prices for calves and fat cattle have risen significantly, meaning cow/calf producers and feedlot operators are once again in the black. The rejuvenation of the cattle industry is expected to make a bottom-line impact on the 2011 Calgary Bull Sale, the world's oldest continuous consignment bull sale, which will hold its 111th annual edition on Wednesday, March 2 and Thursday, March 3 at Stampede Park.

“There is some optimism out there. Prices have suggested that there definitely is a light at the end of the tunnel,” says Mabel Hamilton, president of the Alberta Cattle Breeders Association. “Last year, there was a wait-and-see attitude, with people spending their dollars very carefully. This year, it looks as though there'll be a few more dollars to spend.”

The very first Calgary Bull Sale in 1901 featured 64 bulls, with an entry fee of a dollar a head and an average sale of \$90. Today, Calgary's much-anticipated sale sets the bar for the rest of the bull-buying season, as it has for decades, as consignors offer the top bulls from Hereford, Angus, and other breeds to commercial ranchers or fellow purebred producers across North America.

The rise in cattle prices is said to reflect simple supply and demand, with the Canadian herd estimated to have dwindled by a third to about 4.3 million head in the past five years. Confidence has also returned to the industry, thanks to developments such as the re-opening of the Mainland China market to Canadian beef.

Even the strong Canadian dollar, now at par with the U.S. greenback, isn't expected to keep American buyers away at this year's benchmark Calgary Bull Sale.

“The quality of cattle at the Calgary Bull Sale has always been top of the line, and down in the United States, they're now making money in the cattle industry as well,” says past ACBA president Brad Dallas. “The people who are in the business for the long haul, if they want a great bull, they're going to come up and buy it here whether the dollar's at par or not.

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“The bottom line is that the cow/calf producer is starting to get some cash back into his program,” adds Dallas, “and now has some money to spend on good bulls again.”

The Calgary Bull Sale, steeped in tradition and boasting world-renowned genetics, annually rings up total sales of more than \$1 million. At last year’s edition, the sale price of the average bull at Calgary hit a nine-year high at \$3,803.73.

Following weigh-ins on Monday, Feb. 28, the 2011 Calgary Bull Sale kicks off with the show portion of the event on Wednesday, March 2. Angus lots go on display at the Victoria Pavilion at 11 a.m., followed by Herefords at 1 p.m. Ranch horse demonstrations will be held on Thursday, March 3 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. under the Big Top.

Sales get underway on Thursday, March 3 in the Pavilion, starting with Angus bulls at 12 p.m., and immediately continued by specimens from the Charolais, Gelbvieh, and Hereford breeds. The sale of ranch horses will follow at approximately 6 p.m. in the Pavilion.

The 2011 Calgary Bull Sale has 223 lots consigned, including 17 ranch horses.

The online aspect of the Calgary Bull Sale continues to gather steam. Once again, potential buyers can watch, listen, and bid online through Direct Livestock Marketing Systems (www.dlms.ca). Potential buyers should contact Mark Shologan in advance via telephone at 780.699.5082 or e-mail at mshologan@dlms.ca

Specimens to pass under the auctioneer’s gavel can also be viewed on the Calgary Bull Sale’s website. For a lot-by-lot catalogue, a complete list of consignors, and more, please visit www.calgarybullsale.com

“We’re getting a lot more people now who may not get to the sale, but watch it online,” says Hamilton. “Buyers have really started to embrace the technology available.”

Yearling bulls will be ribeye, marble and backfat scanned and published, while two-year-old bulls will be backfat scanned and published. All bulls will be foot rot vaccinated, all horses will be veterinary inspected, and Calgary Bull Sale officials will provide assistance with export requirements to all U.S. states.

A free shuttle service will run to and from the Best Western Calgary Centre Inn and the Blackfoot Inn on March 2 and 3, with shuttle times posted at both hotels and the Calgary Bull Sale’s show office.

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