



April 14, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

**Sent via Email: [mark.carney@parl.gc.ca](mailto:mark.carney@parl.gc.ca)**

**Subject: Canadian beef is NOT a bargaining chip—Stand up for Canadian ranchers and farmers**

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO), we are writing to express our strong opposition to the Mercosur trade agreement. While BFO supports science-based, rules-based trade and the Prime Minister's ambitious trade agenda, this support depends on achieving meaningful, reciprocal market access.

Any expansion of beef market access for Mercosur countries into Canada would create a significant trade imbalance in their favour, harming our domestic market and Canadian producers. The industry is deeply concerned and urges the Government of Canada to reject any additional beef access for Mercosur countries. At a minimum, if such access is considered, the industry must be fully consulted at every stage and assured full and fair compensation for the significant and lasting impacts

Beef farmers across Canada, including here in Ontario, strongly oppose granting Mercosur access, as it would introduce lower-cost, lower-quality imports that ultimately harm consumers, the environment, rural communities, and farm families. Such a deal risks undermining Canadian farmers and ranchers at a critical time, as the national cattle herd is in the process of rebuilding. We recognize the pressures food inflation has placed on Canadian households.

However, with clear signs that Canada's beef herd is beginning to grow, there is an opportunity to stabilize prices and meet domestic demand through increased domestic production. This is precisely the moment for government policy to reinforce Canadian-raised, sustainably produced beef—not to increase reliance on imports from jurisdictions with lower standards. While imports may offer short-term price relief, they would do so at the direct expense of Canada's domestic industry. This impact would be particularly pronounced in Ontario, where the majority of imported beef enters and is distributed due to the province's large consumer market.

Canadian beef farmers and ranchers operate under some of the highest standards in the world for animal health, labour, and food safety. The result is a product that is not only safe and high-quality, but also environmentally responsible—supporting ecosystem protection, carbon sequestration, and wildlife habitat. Canada is a global leader in sustainable beef production, generating approximately 52 percent fewer emissions per kilogram than the global average. In contrast, Mercosur countries produce significantly higher emissions per unit of beef. According to FAO data, Canada produces 58.1 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per kg of meat protein, compared to 167.6 in

Brazil, 145.2 in Argentina, 189.8 in Paraguay, and 154.3 in Uruguay. Strengthening domestic production supports some of the most sustainable beef in the world, while policies that displace it would directly undermine Canada's environmental objectives.

Labour cost disparities further highlight the imbalance. Wages on beef farms in Mercosur countries are significantly lower than in Canada—by as much as 80 percent on average. The gap is most pronounced in Brazil and Paraguay, where minimum wages are roughly nine times lower than in Canada when measured in USD. Meanwhile, Canadian producers are required to meet rigorous standards for worker safety, insurance, and regulatory compliance, all of which contribute to higher—but necessary—labour costs.

There are also serious and ongoing concerns regarding animal health, particularly related to Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) history and BSE reporting transparency in parts of the Mercosur region. These risks underscore the importance of prioritizing strong animal health protections within Canada's trade policy. Canada's beef industry maintains robust biosecurity measures from national borders to the farm gate to protect the national herd.

However, recent developments in Mercosur raise significant concerns: Brazil's transition in June 2025 to FMD-free status without vaccination, alongside Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina maintaining FMD-free status with vaccination, creates uncertainty and risk for Canadian producers. Notably, the European Union—despite granting Mercosur increased access—has experienced five FMD incursions within a 15-month period. Canada, by contrast, has maintained FMD-free status without vaccination since 1952.

Mercosur would severely and irreversibly harm beef farmers across Ontario and Canada, putting our domestic industry at risk by displacing high-quality Canadian product with lower-standard imports. The level of risk posed by this agreement cannot be overstated.

We urgently call on you to stand with Canadian farm families, protect our national food security, and defend the long-term viability of our industry by firmly opposing any Mercosur beef imports.

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss our concerns in further detail.

Sincerely,



Jason Leblond  
President

c.c. The Honourable Maninder Sidhu, Minister of International Trade; The Honourable Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food; The Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; The Honourable Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness