



July 9, 2025

The Honourable Heath MacDonald
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Government of Canada

RE: Reinstating 2% Strychnine for Richardson Ground Squirrel Control

Dear Minister MacDonald,

First, thank you for taking the time on July 8th to learn more about our industry. We're excited to welcome you as Canada's new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and look forward to working together to support producers and strengthen Canadian agriculture.

I'm writing today to express our urgent concern regarding the restrictions on 2% strychnine for controlling Richardson's ground squirrels. These pests are highly destructive across Alberta's rangelands, pasturelands, and croplands, all critical for beef production.

Richardson's ground squirrels are prolific breeders and well-adapted to modern agricultural landscapes, leaving producers with limited and often ineffective options for control. In times of drought, when every bale of feed matters, their damage can mean the difference between surviving and culling a herd. Currently, losses caused by these pests are not covered under any risk management programs, leaving producers without a safety net and without effective tools.

While some alternative control methods exist, they are labour-intensive and impractical at the scale required to address severe infestations. We urgently need access to practical and effective tools, including 2% strychnine.

We strongly urge your government to reverse the PMRA's decision and immediately reinstate the sale of 2% strychnine for Richardson's ground squirrel control. Every delay compounds the problem; timely action is critical.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and work with your office to find a solution that protects both the land and the livelihoods that depend on it.

Sincerely,

Doug Roxburgh
Alberta Beef Producers, Chair

Cc: Honourable R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Tyler Fulton, Chair of Canadian Cattle Association