

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY: UNDER ATTACK

Introduction

Focus

In 2003, Canada's economy suffered severe setbacks as a result of several unexpected and devastating events. No part of Canada escaped unscathed. This *News in Review* module examines the economic impact of some of these events, with a special emphasis on SARS, mad-cow disease, and the forest-fire season in British Columbia.



Sections marked with this symbol indicate content suitable for younger viewers.

At the beginning of 2003, the Canadian economy seemed to have everything going for it. It was continuing to outperform the U.S. economy and those of other Western countries. The federal government and several provincial governments were predicting substantial revenue surpluses. The country's exports continued to far exceed its imports, resulting in a substantial trade surplus. Unemployment rates were low throughout most of the country. It appeared that Canada's good fortune would only improve as the year progressed.

By the end of August, the story was very different. Unemployment had risen. Governments, including the federal government, had seen their projected surpluses severely cut or even disappear. Several provinces were in danger of running substantial deficits.

Some of Canada's leading industries were in deep trouble. Air Canada was in bankruptcy protection as it restructured in order to deal with a steep decline in airline travel. Tourism from overseas and from the United States was at its lowest level in over a decade. Many hotels were booked far below the rate required for them to break even on expenses. The export market for beef, one of Canada's most important agricultural products, had disappeared. At the end of August, for the first time since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Canada announced that the economy had actually had a three-month period of negative growth. There was even talk of a recession.

What Went Wrong

The underlying cause of Canada's difficulties was not a single event but an

entire series of surprising disasters and setbacks. While the possibility of any one of these taking place had been recognized for some time, few would have predicted that all of them would happen in such a short period.

The first to strike was SARS, a new respiratory disease first seen in late 2002 in China. Far more deadly than pneumonia, it rapidly took hold in Toronto-area hospitals, eventually killing 44 people and making hundreds of others extremely ill. While it was never actually a great risk in the larger community, the World Health Organization issued a travel advisory urging people to avoid travel to Toronto and, in effect, all of Canada. The tourist industry was immediately devastated. Although the advisory was lifted after one week, the number of tourists visiting the Greater Toronto Area and many other parts of Canada continued to be well below normal.

The second major blow was the discovery of a single Alberta cow suffering from bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as mad-cow disease. In the 1990s the British cattle industry was almost destroyed by an outbreak of BSE when it was discovered that a form of the disease, which has no treatment or cure, could likely be transmitted to humans. The response to Canada's one case was swift, as the United States and over 30 other countries closed their borders to all Canadian beef products. Hardest hit were Alberta ranchers; Alberta raises about 70 per cent of Canada's beef. By the end of August the U.S. was once again allowing imports of some Canadian beef products, but not of live

cattle. In a further blow to Western Canadian agriculture, now in its fourth year of drought, the U.S. ended August by declaring an increased tariff against Canadian wheat imports, a move that many observers believe will effectively close the border to Canadian durum wheat.

Once again Ontario took a hit in August, when the electrical power grid around Lake Erie malfunctioned, and the power went out in eight American states and the province of Ontario. Ontario, heavily dependent on nuclear power—some of it from aging reactors—took over a week to come back to full capacity. During that period several major industries—including the automotive industry—were forced to cut back or stop production altogether. (See *Blackout: The Day the Power Went Out* in this issue of *News in Review* for more details on this story.)

And then there were the forest fires. Hot, dry conditions in the West meant that forest fires, once begun, were difficult to control. British Columbia was especially hard-hit; and the lumber industry, already suffering because of the softwood dispute with the United States, saw hundreds of square kilometres of forest go up in smoke. Tourist and agricultural areas were also threatened, parks were completely destroyed, and many people, including hundreds of residents of suburban Kelowna, lost their homes.

Despite the many difficulties faced by the Canadian economy in the first half of 2003, most economists predict that the outlook is for a marked improvement during the rest of the year. While there have been setbacks, and some sectors are still far from recovering, solutions are being sought—and found—by governments, industries and individuals.

To Consider

1. SARS, BSE, and B.C.'s forest fires have all had a negative effect on Canada's tourist industry. Other than the immediately obvious groups and industries affected (for example, the airline industry, travel agencies, hotels and restaurants), how does a decline in tourism ultimately impact on almost every aspect of the economy?
2. The Canadian economy is closely integrated with that of the U.S., and the suffering is immediate when the U.S. closes its border to Canadian goods. Is there any pressure that Canada, a much smaller economy, can bring to bear to re-open the borders to goods such as cattle, softwood lumber or wheat?
3. In your view, which problem—SARS, BSE, fire or blackouts—poses the greatest threat to the Canadian economy? Explain.

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Video Review

This video review is in two parts. The first is a series of questions that will help you to recall some of the information that is presented in the video. You should answer these on the lines provided.

The second part is a series of discussion questions based on your knowledge of the information presented in the video that will give you an opportunity to express your personal opinion. You may wish to view the video a second time before beginning the discussion.

Recall

1. What was the state of the Canadian and U.S. economies at the beginning of 2003?

2. In what part of Canada was the SARS outbreak concentrated?

3. What happened to Canada's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) after SARS struck?

4. How was Air Canada affected by SARS?

5. How widespread was mad-cow disease in Western Canada?

6. What is the dollar value of the U.S. market for Canadian beef?

7. What is the expected dollar loss to the Canadian economy caused by the discovery of one case of BSE in Canada?

8. How successful was the Toronto concert headlined by the Rolling Stones?

9. What was the effect on Canadian industries of the largest blackout in North American history?

10. What is the "r" word that is beginning to seem a real possibility as the Canadian economy stalls?

11. How did the forest fires in 2003 affect B.C. tourism?

12. On what other economic recovery does the Canadian economy's continued expansion likely depend?

Discussion

None of this year's blows to the Canadian economy had been specifically predicted. However, experts had warned of the possibility of each event—the spread of a virulent new disease; the discovery of a case of mad cow in a North American animal; the collapse of a large part of the North American power grid; and forest fires in a part of the country suffering from continued drought.

1. Who has the responsibility to plan for these kinds of disasters? Explain.

2. Describe carefully how well you think Canadians are prepared to deal with future threats to their economic prosperity.

3. How well are you, personally, prepared to deal with future threats to Canada's economy?

4. What do you feel will be the main lessons of 2003 for Canada's future?

5. What have you learned about the threats to Canada's economy? Be specific.

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The Impact of SARS

Did you know. . .

As of August 27, 2003, Canada had experienced 375 probable or suspected cases of SARS and 44 people, all in the Greater Toronto Area and including three health workers, had died? One patient, also a health-care worker, remained in hospital, but was expected to make a full recovery. Worldwide, over 800 people died. China, the country most severely hit, had 5 327 cases, and 349 dead. It released its last two patients from hospital on August 16, 2003.

Definition

Gross Domestic Product: the annual total value of goods produced and services provided.

The impact of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) on sections of the Canadian economy was immediate and devastating. Following the first patient diagnoses and deaths in March 2003, the number of visitors to Canada declined even faster than it did following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. While Toronto, the centre of the Canadian outbreak, was hardest hit, the effects of SARS were felt throughout Canada.

Tourism

SARS in Canada, although recognized by medical authorities as almost exclusively a hospital-acquired infection with few cases contracted in the general community, kept tourists away from both Toronto and the rest of the country. The Canadian Tourism Commission projects the ultimate cost to the Canadian economy will be nearly \$1-trillion dollars. In 2003 alone it anticipates a loss of \$402-billion in international tourism-related business. It also expects a loss of another \$118-million in spending by Canadians who decided to avoid travelling in their own country.

Statistics tell much of the story:

- In April, international visits to Canada were down 5.8 per cent from the previous month; visits from the U.S. were down 5.4 per cent. U.S. visits to Ontario dropped by 8.7 per cent.
- The numbers for May were even worse. Overseas visits to Canada declined an additional 13.4 per cent; and from the U.S., a further 4.1 per cent. In Ontario, the numbers were truly dramatic: overseas visits down by 21.6 per cent, and U.S. visits by 5.5 per cent.

According to the Canadian Tourism Commission, these figures are the lowest for May since 1990.

Even before the second SARS outbreak in Toronto, the Conference Board of Canada predicted that the city would be especially hard-hit. In its May forecast it revealed that the Toronto GDP for 2003 would be down by about \$1-billion.

The hardest-hit industries in Canada and Toronto were air travel, hotels, restaurants, live theatre and spectator sports. Some businesses saw a decided increase in consumer spending: grocery stores, take-out food restaurants and specialty television providers all saw business improve as the public stayed away from crowds and “cocooned.” It was also a great year to be selling surgical masks; Canada imported a normal year’s worth in April alone.

The Hotel Association of Canada estimates the cost of SARS in lost revenue in Toronto alone to be \$186-million from March through May. Business in the food-service industry declined over 20 per cent; hotels were fortunate if 30 per cent of their rooms were booked. In April, 12 000 hotel and restaurant workers were laid off; another 20 000 saw their hours cut as they were forced to share jobs. Major conventions, such as the American Association for Cancer Research (with an expected attendance of 12 000), were cancelled. Each delegate to such a convention spends about \$400 per day on hotels, restaurants, transportation and entertainment.

Did you know . . .

Some Canadian medical experts predict that major cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal may become primary targets for the "globalization of diseases" such as SARS and West Nile?

Medical Costs

The medical costs of dealing with the SARS outbreak were also high—over \$1-billion dollars, according to the Ontario government. The province's finance minister declared that fighting SARS meant that a predicted \$73-million budget surplus would be lost. Not only did the government have to dip into its contingency funds for most of the extra medical costs, but provincial revenues also declined sharply by at least \$127-million. Most of this decline was directly due to lost taxes from the tourism industry.

Several Toronto hospitals saw their budgets depleted by the additional measures required to fight SARS, combined with income lost when

visitors were denied access to hospital facilities like gift shops, parking, and cafeterias. The provincial government was forced to make a timely injection of additional funds so that some hospitals could meet payroll demands.

The medical costs of fighting SARS have become the subject of a dispute between Ontario's Tories and the federal Liberals. Ontario believes that the SARS outbreak should be eligible for disaster relief, and that the federal government should pick up at least 90 per cent of the cost. To date, the federal government has offered an initial infusion of \$150-million with a likely second contribution of an additional \$100-million.

Discussion

What financial responsibility do you feel the federal government has in reimbursing the Ontario government in its fight against SARS? The Canadian Tourism Commission estimates that a re-emergence of SARS, hitting Vancouver and Montreal as well as Toronto, could mean a loss of \$10.8-billion to the Canadian economy through 2006. Should this estimate in any way encourage the federal government to invest additional money to ensure the further control of the disease in the Greater Toronto Area?

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BSE and the Cattle Industry

Did you know . . .

BSE in the United Kingdom resulted in the slaughter of the entire cattle population of the country? The U.K. found a total of 180 000 official BSE cases.

Did you know . . .

The ban on Canadian beef led to a huge build-up in the cattle herd by June of 2003? The number of animals swelled to a record 15.7 million cattle. Beef prices in Alberta dropped 16.4 per cent in June. Farmers could not afford to continue feeding animals that could not be slaughtered and sold.

No sooner had SARS re-emerged as an active threat in Canada than the country received further frightening news. In mid-May, one cow from an Alberta farm tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), popularly known as mad-cow disease. The cow had actually been slaughtered January 31 when it was thought to be suffering from pneumonia and was underweight. At that time, the inspector who ordered its slaughter did not believe the animal's symptoms were consistent with BSE. When the brain was finally tested, it was discovered to be Canada's second-ever case of the disease. The previous case was in 1993, found in a bull imported from England. The infected cow was not processed for human consumption.

BSE

BSE is actually a brain-wasting disease in which the brains of infected animals become increasingly porous, like sponges. Before dying, cattle become disoriented and then demented, or "mad." The human equivalent is Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), with similar symptoms. It is believed that some people who have eaten tissue from the brain and central nervous system of BSE infected cattle can develop a form of CJD. Both diseases are very hard to diagnose, and both have no vaccine, treatment, or cure.

It used to be common practice to feed the ground-up remains of farm animals to other farm animals, and it is believed that this is how the disease is primarily spread. The disease was first identified in Britain in 1986, in cattle that had been fed the remains of sheep that had

died of a similar disease called scrapie. The practice of "cattle cannibalism" (feeding dead cattle to live cattle) was banned in Canada in 1997. It was rarely used in this country because of the amount of grain and pastureland readily available. However, cattle protein may be used in chicken or pig feed, which in turn may find itself in cattle feed. Some experts feel that only a complete ban on cattle protein from the animal feed market will effectively halt the spread of BSE.

International Reaction

The international reaction was swift. The United States and about 35 other countries immediately banned the import of cattle, beef, and related products from Canada. The total ban would continue until September, although the U.S. and Mexico agreed in early August to permit the import of cuts of meat that it considered at low risk for BSE infection. The ban on the import of live cattle, however, showed no signs of being lifted.

Economic Impact

The Canadian beef industry had 11 years of record profits as it watched its Asian and U.S. markets grow, and the industry is now seriously impacted. Consider the following facts:

- Canada is the third-largest beef exporter in the world, after the U.S. and Australia.
- Canada is a world leader in the sale of breeding cattle, bull semen and embryos (all affected by the ban).
- 3 million Canadian cattle are processed annually.

More Bad News

On August 28, 2003, the Chief Medical Officer of Ontario and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency issued a recall for meat produced by an Ontario company, Aylmer Meat Packers. The meat was deemed unsafe for human consumption because it allegedly had been prepared from animals that were dead before arriving at the abattoir.

"Drought and grasshoppers you can find a way to manage, but this is out of our control."
— Janet Yule, feedlot operator
(*Toronto Star* August 9, 2003)

- The food-animal industry accounts for only about 0.4 per cent of Canada's GDP, but directly and indirectly contributes about \$15-billion to the economy.
- The beef cattle industry and its offshoots employ almost 400 000 people.
- Alberta sells roughly 70 per cent of Canadian beef.
- 70 per cent of Alberta's beef is sold to the United States.
- Approximately half of Canadian beef is exported.
- The three largest importers of Canadian beef in 2002 were the United States (\$1.8-billion), Mexico (\$200-million), and Japan (\$81-million).

As a result of the ban:

- The industry is losing at least \$11-million per day. Initially, slaughterhouses have taken the biggest hit.
- In the eight weeks following the ban the loss to the industry was \$600-million; by the end of August it was over \$800-million.
- Of the \$7.9-billion dollars in cattle-farm receipts, about \$5.9-billion is earned in Alberta.
- Cattle farming is second in importance only to oil to the Alberta economy.
- 60 per cent of Alberta beef industry workers lost their jobs.
- Five Alberta counties declared economic states of emergency.

Partial Resolution

Following a visit to Washington by Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and behind-the-scenes lobbying by the Canadian government, the U.S. partially lifted the ban on Canadian beef. It will now permit the import of those cuts—mostly from cattle considered too young to contract BSE—it considers safe. This means that about 50 per cent of Canada's trade with the U.S. will resume. Mexico and other countries have made similar decisions. Japan, however, is refusing to accept any Canadian products.

Japanese attitudes are generally considered to be the main reason why the U.S. continues to ban trade in live cattle. The Japanese are insisting that any beef products sold to them be clearly labelled as to country of origin. In 2002, the U.S. sold \$842-million worth of beef to Japan, one-third of U.S. exports for that year. Obviously, the U.S. is eager to hold on to that market.

In reality, however, the U.S. and Canadian beef industries are closely intertwined. In fact, 500 000 head of Canadian cattle were in U.S. feedlots when the border was closed. As well, several U.S. meat packers have major operations in Alberta. It seems realistic to expect that the Canadian and U.S. governments should soon be able to resolve this problem.

To Consider

1. What steps do you think the Alberta and Canadian governments might take to encourage Japan to drop its ban on Canadian beef?
2. BSE has been found in several Japanese cows during testing. This has had a detrimental effect on the country's own beef cattle industry. How is this likely to affect the country's willingness to accept new imports from Canada?

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Forest Fires Ravage B.C.

Did you know . . .

Forest fires are ranked by a system numbering them from 1 to 6? Rank 1 is a fire that smoulders on the ground and creeps along the surface. Rank 6 is a true conflagration, a fire so hot that it generates its own windstorm. The Okanagan Mountain Park fire that destroyed homes in Kelowna was a Rank 6 fire; by August 29 it had been re-classified to Rank 1. Authorities cautioned that several hours of high winds, however, could easily fan it back to a Rank 6.

2003 had another major challenge in store for Western Canada. After a winter with almost normal precipitation, many believed that the current period of drought was finally over. That this was not the case became truly apparent as spring moved into summer. Hot, dry weather—especially in the interior of British Columbia—resulted in one of the worst years ever for forest fires in B.C. history.

By the beginning of August, 353 fires were burning in B.C. One of these, a true firestorm that spread 50 to 100 metres per minute, destroyed 60 homes in Barriere. By August 21, the number of fires had increased to almost 900, and over 155 000 hectares of land had been burned, with many more expected to be lost. Last year, forest fires burned 7 558 hectares; the 20-year average in British Columbia is under 30 000 per year.

Earlier in the month the government in Victoria declared a provincial state of emergency, permitting it to draw resources from across the province to fight the blazes. One of its most dramatic measures was to create a huge restricted travel zone, from Prince George to the U.S. border, and from Vancouver Island to the Alberta border.

Kelowna

The fire that best captured the country's attention was that in the Okanagan Valley near Kelowna, a city of 100 000 people. It began with a lightning strike to a single tree and was soon suppressed, but it started up again and grew to a 130-square-kilometre conflagration within a week. At least 250 firefighters, over 100 pieces of heavy equipment,

and 13 helicopters tried to contain it by building fire guards.

Unfortunately, they were not successful. On August 22 and 23, 26 000 people, about one-third of the city's population, had to be evacuated. Winds of 70 kilometres per hour helped the fire advance at a rate of 100 metres per minute. Flames as high as 30 metres destroyed 244 homes.

On August 24 Prime Minister Chrétien visited Kelowna and was visibly shocked by the devastation he saw. The PM is a close friend of Senator Ross Fitzpatrick, owner of a local vineyard and winery, and has often visited the area. His visit served as a morale booster for the emergency workers; but he also promised that the federal government would do its part to rebuild the area.

Other Fires

While the destruction of homes in Kelowna caught Canada's attention in late August, other parts of the B.C. interior were also being devastated. The largest fire, the McLure-Barriere blaze that destroyed 60 homes at the beginning of the month, had now consumed 256 square kilometres. Other fires, especially those near Kamloops and Chase, were burning out of control.

Over 3 000 firefighters and 1 000 military personnel (soon to be raised to 1 500), with massive amounts of equipment on the ground and in the air, were spread out throughout the southern interior. They were moved from one fire to the next as old ones came under control, new ones started, or controlled fires revived. Experts insisted that five straight days of rain would be required

"The scope of these fires is beyond anything you can imagine when you're seeing (it) on television or reading about it."
— B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell
(*Toronto Star*, August 25, 2003)

to put out the fires; but these five days were in no weather forecast.

Estimating Costs

The B.C. government has already spent \$160-million fighting the 2003 fires, which is over five times the annual average. It estimates its continuing costs at about \$6-million per day.

While still uncalculated, some additional expenses seem obvious. The cost of replacing homes in Kelowna—where many of the destroyed houses were quite luxurious—and elsewhere will be considerable. The cost of providing for over 36 000 evacuees will be high as well.

Hardest hit, however, will be the forestry and tourist industries. Some of the most popular areas of B.C. have been closed to travel; media coverage of the devastation has also had an impact. Several parks were closed to visitors.

Even Vancouver, which has received only half of its usual rainfall, has been affected by the fire threats. Stanley Park has been designated high-risk, and the

North Shore mountain trails declared off-limits. The near-total devastation of areas of natural beauty like Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park will make them unattractive to visitors for years to come.

The forest industry, already hard-hit by the softwood lumber dispute with the United States, is taking yet another blow. In Louis Creek, for example, the sawmill, the community's largest employer, was razed by fire. The owner has made no commitment to rebuild; without the sawmill, the town is unlikely to survive.

It will also take time to tally the environmental and health damage. There is concern about the effects of smoke from the fires on the health of people with respiratory problems. The physical and psychological health of firefighters is also a growing concern. They have fought long hours and lost far more territory to the flames than is the norm.

One thing is certain. The final tally for B.C.'s long, hot summer will be high.

Discussion

Since the beginning of the rash of fires in B.C., many insurance companies have refused to give new policies to homeowners in affected areas, or to renew existing policies if they feel the risks are too high. What responsibility do you think insurance companies should have in these circumstances? What should governments do if some companies refuse to provide insurance?

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Fighting Back

It is often claimed that adversity brings out the best in people, and it is certainly true that those individuals most involved in dealing with the three major crises mentioned in this story have fought long and hard to control events. These include the medical workers who have, in some cases, sacrificed their health and even their lives to help victims of SARS. It includes the ranchers who have held their herds together in hopes that foreign markets will open up. And it certainly includes the firefighters who have been attempting to control some of the most destructive forest fires in Canadian history.

Outlined below are some of the steps that governments, organizations, and individuals have taken to assist Canada in recovering economically from the effects of SARS and BSE (economic responses to destruction from the B.C. fires are being developed as we prepare this report). As you read through each list, select one or two that you feel are especially important—either directly, through monetary assistance; or symbolically—in helping improve Canada’s international profile. Be prepared to support your choices in discussion. You may also wish to make suggestions for additional steps that might be taken by any of the interested parties.

SARS

The Ontario government estimates its spending to deal with SARS at about \$1.2-billion, and wishes to recover at least \$950-million from the federal government.

Ontario has also developed a two-year tourism recovery plan worth \$128-million. This includes large contribu-

tions to programs like the Stratford and Shaw festivals, which saw major declines in (especially U.S.) attendance in 2003. Also part of the package is a five-month “tax holiday” on admissions to many places of amusement and accommodation across the province. A new Convention Development Fund has also been created.

The province sponsored a six-hour “Stars for SARS” Concert for Toronto held simultaneously in Skydome and the Air Canada Centre, which it hoped would get international attention for the city.

The federal government offered approximately \$250-million to the province to assist with the medical costs of SARS. The federal government has also set aside an additional \$110-million to finance development of a vaccine, to promote tourism, and to improve the country’s entry and exit controls.

The tourism portion of the federal package amounted to \$21-million; \$10-million of this would go to support local Toronto events.

MP Dennis Mills was the guiding force behind the Rocks for Toronto Concert, headlined by the Rolling Stones, AC/DC, The Guess Who, Rush and many others, which attracted over 425 000 people (a Canadian record). The concert had two objectives: to put everyone in the hotel and hospitality industries back to work and to create an international message that Toronto, Canada, was back in business. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein hoped the message got “. . . around the world to show we’re not afraid of SARS in Canada and our beef is the best” (*Toronto Star*, July 31, 2003).

Further Research

To learn more about the work of the CFIA and to investigate other health threats to Canada's food supply, visit www.cfia-acia.agr.ca.

Business and community leaders created the Toronto3 Alliance, a private not-for-profit corporation that would oversee tourism recovery efforts. One million dollars in seed money was donated by the banks.

BSE

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is developing new procedures in testing for and controlling potential cases of BSE. These will likely include:

- spot checks in slaughterhouses across the country
- deadlines in determining whether BSE is detected
- new measures for handling tissue from brains, spinal cords and eyeballs (the tissue which, when diseased, is believed to be the source of BSE in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans who consume it)

An international panel of experts has been empowered to review how the federal government dealt with the recent case of BSE.

Testing will be boosted from about 3 500 of the three million cattle slaughtered each year in Canada to between 25 000 and 75 000.

The federal government is considering a total ban on feeding the remains

of farm animals to all other farm animals. This ban is currently in effect for cattle, but there are fears that such feed is still available and that it could be used intentionally or unintentionally.

A thorough investigation of the one recent case of BSE, along with the slaughter of 2 700 animals with which the affected cow came in contact, found no additional cases of infection.

Aggressive lobbying by Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and by federal officials has resulted in a partial re-opening of the U.S. and other markets. Trade in live cattle, however, remains closed. Klein even visited Washington to make a strong case with congressional leaders for the safety of Canadian beef.

Klein has defended the safety of Canadian beef to the Japanese by offering up to \$20-billion to any Japanese person who eats nothing but Canadian beef for one year and then comes down with the human equivalent of mad cow.

The premiers of several beef-producing Canadian provinces set up and cooked at a huge barbecue line serving free Canadian beef at the Rocks for Toronto concert with the Rolling Stones.

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Restoring Canada

The world knows the bad news about Canada: SARS, mad cow, the blackout and the forest fires. Now it's your job to restore Canada's good image with the rest of the world.

In groups of three or four, brainstorm a list of five great things you feel the world should know about Canada. These can include almost anything, from Canada's natural beauty to its exciting cities; its natural resources to its technological leadership; its Aboriginal, French and English heritage to its multicultural present; its proud war heritage to its role as an international peacekeeper. Try to choose those things that you feel make it most interesting or unique, things that people from other parts of the world would find most interesting. List your five choices here:

Five Great Things about Canada

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Now develop a plan to let the world know how you feel about Canada. This could take almost any form you choose—from traditional advertisements in newspapers and magazines (always popular with Canada's tourism departments), to television specials or Web sites. You might even develop a way to give your ideas the kind of product placement that has become so popular in movies and television programs. Your ultimate aim is to make Canada a "brand" that is universally recognized and admired.

Once you have completed your plan, present and compare your approach with those of your classmates.