

Edmontonians' poll station

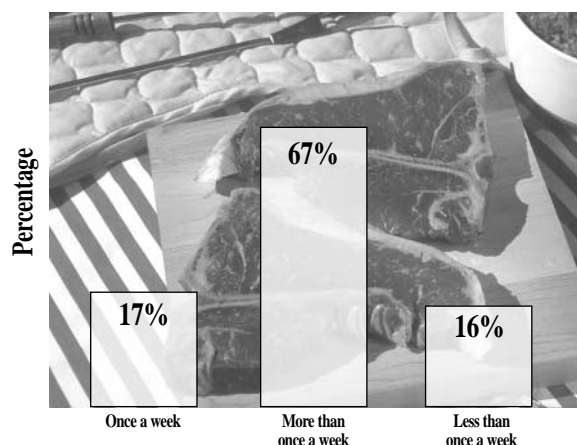
By Linda Banister

On May 20, 2003, BSE—bovine spongiform encephalopathy, commonly referred to as mad cow disease—was confirmed to be present in one cow in Alberta. The United States immediately announced a ban on Canadian beef, and several other countries followed suit. The disease was eradicated in Alberta and Canadian beef was pronounced to be safe. However, at the time of this survey, the importing countries had not lifted the bans placed on beef, causing our province and country to suffer economically. For this month's *Poll Station*, we asked Edmontonians to give us their opinions on the situation, including the safety of Canadian beef and how it is being handled by the government.

HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE MAD COW SITUATION?

Out of the 100 survey respondents, 100 percent were aware of the current situation in Alberta regarding mad cow disease. When asked to rate the level of concern surrounding the mad cow situation on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all concerned and 5 is extremely concerned, respondents voiced a moderate amount of concern toward the situation. Respondents provided an overall mean rating of 3 out of 5.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU EAT BEEF?



Albertans consume large amounts of beef, with 67 percent of respondents eating beef more than once per week. There are 17 percent of respondents who eat beef only once per week, while the remainder consumes beef once every few weeks or less. The vast majority of respondents (86%) stated their beef consumption has remained the same since mad cow was discovered. Out of the 12 percent of respondents who increased their beef consumption, the most popular reason (83%) was to show support for the cattle industry. Other responses included the low price of beef, as well as the fact that it is barbecue season.

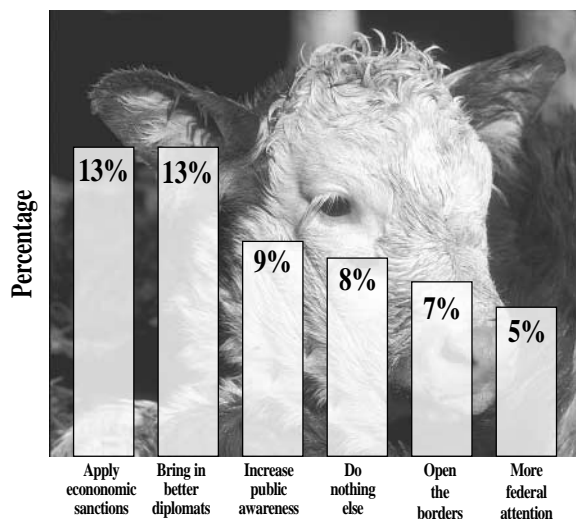
HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE MAD COW SITUATION?

When respondents were asked on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent, how they

would rate the Canadian government's handling of the mad cow situation, more than half (54%) rated the actions of the federal government from 1 to 3. Thirty percent of respondents rated its actions from 4 to 7, with the remaining seven percent scoring its efforts from 8 to 10.

The respondents were decidedly more satisfied with the actions taken by our Alberta government with the majority of respondents (44%) rating it from 4 to 7. The provincial government was rated from 8 to 10 by 28 percent of respondents, and from 1 to 3 by 21 percent of the respondents.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE TO RECTIFY THE MAD COW SITUATION IN ALBERTA?



Respondents had many different opinions when asked what they feel needs to be done to rectify the situation in Alberta. The two most popular answers, each representing 13 percent of the respondents, were to apply economic sanctions on countries who don't import our beef, and to bring in more diplomatic people to deal with the other countries. Other responses included increasing public awareness of issues (9%), doing nothing else (8%), opening the borders (7%), and giving the situation more federal attention (5%).

The *Poll Station* surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking. ✓



Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research & Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. If you have a question you would like included in the Edmontonians Poll, contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at research@banister.ab.ca. For further information on the firm visit www.banister.ab.ca.