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LETHBRIDGE HERALD

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Ottawa may squeeze U.S. to resolve beef crisis

OTTAWA (CP) — An increasingly frustrated Ottawa is considering giving the United States a taste of its own medicine in an effort to pry open the border for Canadian beef exports.

Cabinet ministers discussed ways Wednesday to pressure Washington to reopen the Canada-U.S. border, closed since a single case of mad cow disease was discovered in Alberta in the spring.

Sources say ministers considered such tactics as shining a harsh spotlight on flaws and inconsistencies in the way some U.S. beef exports leave that country.

A decision has been delayed to give Washington a little more time to reopen the border, sources said.

The United States has repeatedly suggested it will imminently allow Canadian beef back onto American store shelves. Those reassurances have yet to be turned into concrete action.

Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief had little to say on the discussions as he left Wednesday's cabinet meeting. But he did say Canada is taking a hard look at the way U.S. and Japanese beef is handled for export.

"We are continuously reviewing the systems in all of the countries, including Japan and the United States," said Vanclief.

He acknowledged Ottawa is considering ways to cope if the situation — which has cost the



HERALD PHOTO BY DAVID ROSSITER

Next stop, Coutts

Terry McKinney, left, and Brenda Winder ride down Highway 25 south of Picture Butte, Wednesday, during their 150-kilometre ride from Picture Butte to Coutts, in support of the Canadian beef industry. Six horses are being used on the ride along with a support trailer. See story page A5