

Lethbridge Public Opinion Studies

City of Lethbridge Residents Opinions on
Agriculture and BSE

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City of Lethbridge



Located in southwestern Alberta, the city of Lethbridge is home to 72,717 residents, 57,674 of which are 18 years of age or older.

The city is divided into six census areas, two each for its South, North and West geographic areas. It is divided north and south by Alberta highway 3, and east west by the Oldman River.

South Lethbridge's 27,941 residents represent 38.4% of the city's total population. West Lethbridge (22,429) and north Lethbridge (22,347) represent 30.8% & 30.7% respectively.

Methodology

This report is based on data collected by students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods at Lethbridge Community College.

The sample sizes are as follows:

Winter	2002	484 respondents	(\pm 4.4%, 19 times out of 20)
Winter	2003	470 respondents	(\pm 4.5%, 19 times out of 20)
Fall	2003	769 respondents	(\pm 3.5%, 19 times out of 20)
Winter	2004	488 respondents	(\pm 4.4%, 19 times out of 20)

Students interviewed City of Lethbridge adult residents by using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory. The margins of error increase when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

The questions were created out of student interest in the local agricultural economy and have been requested by Economic Development Lethbridge. We thank Economic Development Lethbridge for their support of our research efforts.

What follows is a selection of our findings.

Faron Ellis, Ph.D.
Citizen Society Research Lab

- Q.** The federal government should provide more help to farmers affected by the BSE-Mad Cow situation.
- Q.** The federal government should provide more help to the trucking industry affected by the BSE-Mad Cow situation.
- Q.** Now that the US has had a case of BSE-Mad Cow disease, Canada should close its borders to US beef.
- Q.** Canada should develop a program to test all cattle for the BSE-Mad Cow disease.
- Q.** How would you rate Premier Klein's handling of the BSE Mad Cow crisis?
- Q.** How would you rate the federal government's handling of the BSE Mad Cow crisis?
- Q.** Currently only farmers from the Canadian prairies are required to sell their grain through the Canada Wheat board while other Canadian farmers are not. Please tell me whether you think this situation should remain, whether all Canadian farmers should be required to sell their grain through the Wheat Board, or whether all Canadian farmers should be allowed to sell their grain to whomever they want.
- Q.** The provincial government should provide more financial support for farmers to help them get through this current drought.
- Q.** The federal government should provide more financial support for farmers to help them get through this current drought.

Executive Summary (%)

Federal Help For Cattle Farmers (Winter '04)

By a four-to-one margin, Lethbridge residents agree that the federal government should be providing more help for farmers struggling with the BSE crisis.

Federal Help for Cattle Farmers (%)

Agree	80.0
Disagree	20.0

Federal Help for Truckers (Winter '04)

Similarly, the vast majority of Lethbridge residents believe the federal government should also be assisting truckers affected by BSE.

Federal Help for Truckers (%)

Agree	79.1
Disagree	20.9

Close Canadian Border to US Beef (Winter '04)

A clear majority, however, do not believe Canada should close its borders to American beef in retaliation for the closed US borders.

Close Canadian Border to US Beef (%)

Agree	38.0
Disagree	62.0

Universal BSE Test (Winter '04)

Lethbridge residents also believe, by a three-to-one margin, that all beef should be tested for BSE.

Universal BSE Test (%)

Agree	73.1
Disagree	26.9

Premier Klein Performance – BSE (Fall '03)

Alberta premier Ralph Klein is given good performance evaluations by almost half of all Lethbridge residents while just under one-third rate his performance on the BSE file as poor.

Klein Performance - BSE (%)

Good	46.0
Adequate	22.7
Poor	31.3

Federal Gov't Performance on BSE (Fall '03)

Almost two-thirds of Lethbridge residents rate the federal government's performance on the BSE file as poor. Less than 14% rate the federal government positively.

Federal Government Performance - BSE (%)

Good	13.9
Adequate	20.4
Poor	65.7

Wheat Board Monopoly (Winter '03)

The overwhelming majority of city residents believe that farmers should have the choice of whether or not to sell their grain through the Canada Wheat Board.

Wheat Board Monopoly (%)

Status Quo	4.9
All Farmers In	9.1
Farmers Choice In-Out	86.0

Provincial Drought Relief (Winter '02)

Following the drought of 2001, the vast majority of Lethbridge residents supported the provincial government providing farmers with relief.

Provincial Drought Relief (%)

Agree	83.4
Disagree	16.6

Federal Drought Relief (Winter '02)

A similar percentage thought the federal government should also provide relief.

Federal Drought Relief (%)

Agree	82.7
Disagree	17.3

Tabular Data

Federal Government Help For Cattle Farmers (Winter '04)

Q. The federal government should provide more help to farmers affected by the BSE-Mad Cow situation.

Federal Government Help For Cattle Farmers (%)

Strongly Agree	13.0
Agree	67.1
Disagree	19.0
Strongly Disagree	1.0

Federal Government Help For Truckers (Winter '04)

Q. The federal government should provide more help to the trucking industry affected by the BSE-Mad Cow situation.

Federal Government Help For Truckers (%)

Strongly Agree	8.4
Agree	70.7
Disagree	20.2
Strongly Disagree	0.7

Close Canadian Border to US Beef (Winter '04)

Q. Now that the US has had a case of BSE-Mad Cow disease, Canada should close its borders to US beef.

Close Canadian Border To US Beef (%)

Strongly Agree	9.1
Agree	28.9
Disagree	55.7
Strongly Disagree	6.3

Universal BSE Test (Winter '04)

Q. Canada should develop a program to test all cattle for the BSE-Mad Cow disease.

Universal BSE Test (%)

Strongly Agree	8.2
Agree	64.9
Disagree	25.3
Strongly Disagree	1.6

Premier Klein Performance On BSE File (Fall '03)

Q. How would you rate Premier Klein's handling of the BSE Mad Cow crisis?

Klein Performance on BSE (%)

Very Good	13.2
Good	32.7
Adequate	22.7
Poor	20.1
Very Poor	11.2

Federal Government Performance On BSE File (Fall '03)

Q. How would you rate the federal government's handling of the BSE Mad Cow crisis?

Federal Gov't Performance on BSE (%)

Very Good	1.8
Good	12.1
Adequate	20.4
Poor	38.5
Very Poor	27.2

Wheat Board Monopoly (Winter '03)

Q. Currently only farmers from the Canadian prairies are required to sell their grain through the Canada Wheat Board while other Canadian farmers are not. Please tell me whether you think this situation should remain, whether all Canadian farmers should be required to sell their grain through the Wheat Board, or whether all Canadian farmers should be allowed to sell their grain to whomever they want.

Wheat Board Monopoly (%)

Status Quo	4.4
All Farmers In	8.2
Farmers' Choice In-Out	77.0
Other	2.5
Undecided	7.0
Refused	0.9

Provincial Drought Relief (Winter '02)

Q. The provincial government should provide more financial support for farmers to help them get through this current drought.

Provincial Help For Drought (%)

Strongly Agree	28.5
Agree	54.9
Disagree	13.7
Strongly Disagree	2.9

Federal Drought Relief (Winter '02)

Q. The federal government should provide more financial support for farmers to help them get through this current drought.

Federal Help For Drought (%)

Strongly Agree	27.1
Agree	55.6
Disagree	14.3
Strongly Disagree	3.1