press release

For Immediate Release

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Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Brings New Beef Cow Technologies to Western Canadian Producers

FORT COLLINS, COLO. (April 24, 2006) – Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has contracted with Optibrand Ltd., LLC to engage in a series of implementation projects that will evaluate technology that demonstrates an improved security and reliability when documenting individual cattle age, provide a means to audit ID systems, and securely identify animals for lending or insurance purposes.

Optibrand Ltd., LLC has developed a system that obtains a digital image of the retinal vascular pattern of individual animals and then electronically stores the image in a database. By linking the Global Positioning System (GPS) to the retinal image, the time, date and location of the animal can be captured when the eye is scanned. This information can then be combined with the retinal image in a secure, encrypted, electronic form, proving beyond doubt that "*this animal was at this place at this time.*" The Optibrand system identifies the animal, not the identifier. Dan Baker, vice president of sales and marketing says, "We look forward to the opportunity to work with the provincial government and cattle producers. Our technology will offer them a cost savings in meeting verification requirements and a more secure as well as auditable information database on individual beef cattle." There are a number of unique applications of the Optibrand technology in the Canadian production chain. "We are impressed with the multiple benefits that the Optibrand technology can offer the Canadian Cattle Industry and look forward to its implementation", says Jim Hansen, Business Development Officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

Initially, the agreement calls for **investigation of a system** to establish a maximum age for individual animals of unknown birth date using dentition. With the Optibrand system, cattle dentition status as determined by a veterinarian can be documented in an objective and auditable format and linked to secure tamper resistant individual animal identification. This allows producers at all levels within the production chain (particularly feedlot producers) an opportunity to provide age records for domestic and export trade for animals that are not enrolled in age verification programs.

The Optibrand technology will also be used for auditing cattle identification systems. By collecting retinal images, individuals and regulatory agencies can audit the accuracy of tag-based systems. With large-scale implementations, these same groups can go so far as to guarantee that individual animal identity is never lost. Traditional tag-based ID information will be collected from several groups of animals for use in

verifying identity. This can include visual tags, bar coded ear tags and RFID tags. At the same time, a pair of retinal images will be collected and linked to the ear tag information. Animals will be scanned again at a later date and the integrity of the tag-based identifier will be tested by comparing the subsequent retinal image with the original image on record for animals that have their ear tag identifier(s) intact. In this application, the Optibrand system may also be used to re-establish identity of animals that have lost their original ear tags. The Optibrand database will then be used to link the new tag number with the original tag number by matching the corresponding retinal images.

A survey of lending institutions involved in loans where livestock are used as collateral indicates there is a need for a **secure collateral inventory system**. Such a system would be used to prevent "phantom" inventory, to track animals through slaughter to determine specific value, and to securely identify the animals designated as collateral. Optibrand's technology can be used to manage lending institution inventory information by securely verifying collateral. Optibrand's Secure Source Verification ^{TM} System captures an image of an animal's retinal vascular pattern, coupled with Global Positioning System (GPS) time and location information to create an encrypted record of positive identity. Lending institutions will be able to obtain a priority position as a creditor and investigate duplicate loans on animals which are suspected of being used as collateral with another lender.

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Founded in 1998, Optibrand Ltd., LLC is based in Fort Collins, Colorado and is the originator of the world's only retinal imaging system for livestock identification. While tamper-resistant retinal image identification satisfies the most demanding customers, producers can use any identifier including retinal vascular patterns, RFID tags, bar-coded tags, or visual tags. The GPS integration into Optibrand technology establishes a time, date and location stamp for all information collected. Producers can enter, recall and edit critical production data from thousands of animals. Critical production information is also easily entered and managed with Optibrand's Data Management Software. More information and downloadable images of Optibrand's Secure Source Verification^{TM} system can be viewed at www.optibrand.com.