



## Addressing Consumer Concerns and Building Public Trust through **Issues Management**

### Part of the Connectivity and Demand goals of the National Beef Strategy

*The purpose of the National Beef Strategy is to position the Canadian beef industry for greater profitability, growth and continued production of a high-quality beef product of choice in the world. Demand for high quality protein is expected to continue to grow in most developing nations. The majority of market access once impacted by BSE is now normalized, and significant new trade agreements are coming into effect, providing new opportunities for Canada's beef industry to seize upon. The National Check-off is scheduled to increase to \$2.50/head in most provinces in the spring of 2018 to support the National Beef Strategy.*

#### **The goals of the Issues Management program are:**

- To increase public confidence, and enhance the credibility, reputation, and trust in the Canadian beef industry, thereby increasing overall demand for beef in Canada and long term sustainability for beef producers, and
- To develop stronger relationships and connectivity among industry partners and organizations to manage issues more efficiently and effectively.

The following is an overview of a fully funded issues management program:

#### **Greater industry and partner collaboration (Expanded)**

By increasing internal industry communication and creating a forum to easily share consumer issue response information among industry groups, we will be more efficient when answering consumer questions or addressing negative stories in the media. The newly created "Issue Response Team" will help develop issue specific response plans to be proactive in addressing issues with appropriate lead and support organizations as per the issue at hand. This will not only reduce duplication of efforts and resources when embarking on public communications but will also create stronger cohesion among industry groups. Increased effort will be placed on increasing internal collaborations, and with other agricultural partners, stakeholders, media, and academia.

#### **Training industry spokespeople (Expanded)**

Credible, authentic spokespeople who can communicate effectively are essential in building relationships with our consumers and the public. Training industry staff and producers in traditional and social media communications and other areas will enable industry to reconnect with consumers on a personal, transparent, and authentic level. This training will also involve enhancement of the Beef Advocacy Canada program to include new training modules and the key message information repository (mentioned below).



### **Support industry partners in telling the beef production story (New)**

Other organizations and industry experts will be able to amplify our messages and provide objective comment on production practices, which will provide a valid “second opinion” for the public to hear and trust. Organizations like Ag in the Classroom and the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef can help in telling our story to build trust with the public.

This will also involve supporting public engagement initiatives such as public forum participation, building consumer communication tools with partners and other public communication initiatives.

### **Develop a key message information repository (Expanded)**

Having information and communication materials (written fact sheets, research, print marketing materials, videos, etc) as well as potential spokesperson contact information (producer, staff, government, academic, other) in a central place online for our industry organizations to access easily will be essential in sharing information among our industry groups, as well as providing timely response material when needed.

In addition, we will work with industry partners to develop webpages dedicated to answering consumer and public questions about beef production as part of existing industry websites like Beef Advocacy Canada and Canada Beef.

### **Invest in consumer behaviour and perception research (New)**

This will help us understand our consumers and how we can better communicate with them to build trust in our product. It will guide developing new ways of communicating as well as prioritize methods of communication that have the greatest impact in creating positive consumer perceptions of our industry. This will also include tracking changes in public perceptions to see if or where we are having an impact.

### **Save for a major issue or crisis (New)**

A small percentage of the Issues Management budget will be saved for major issue or crisis management, when extra resources are needed.

**For more information about the Issues Management Program please contact:**

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