
National Beef Strategy Update

January 31, 2022

The Canadian Beef Advisors consist of elected leaders and staff representation of the seven national beef organizations responsible for policy, marketing, research and sustainability. They are a diverse group of experienced industry representatives who are responsible for advancing the [National Beef Strategy](#), providing recommendations on future direction and reporting results against strategy goals and objectives.

The January meeting shared information on current issues and efforts around feed availability, supply chain disruptions and vaccine mandates for truckers as well as delays in trains. News that South Korea had lifted its ban on Canadian Beef was shared.

The Canadian Beef Advisors meet quarterly to review one pillar of the 2020-24 National Beef Strategy. This allows for updates on activities and identifies opportunities for collaboration between the groups. In January the Productivity Pillar was reviewed with updates from the Beef Cattle Research Council and the Canadian Beef Breeds Council.

Productivity

Andrea Brocklebank with the Beef Cattle Research Council provided an update on the activities and investment that support the priorities set out in the productivity pillar of the National Strategy.

Related to **Research Capacity**, focus has been placed on investing in new research Chairs to fill gaps in current research capacity. In 2020 two Chair positions were created related to Beef Production Systems (University of Alberta) and One Health and Production Limiting Diseases (Western College of Veterinary Medicine) and a third position in Integrated Forage Management & Utilization (University of Saskatchewan) is just going through the hiring process. Industry also continues to work with AAFC Research Branch as they hire new scientists and is continuing to offer the Beef Researcher mentorship program to encourage the early engagement of young scientists with producers and industry to support the future direction and success of their research programs. Current infrastructure for research is fully utilized. Limited access to funding for infrastructure and capacity within the federal and provincial governments is a concern, with most new funding currently focused on projects. The current project portfolio cannot grow though without expanded capacity and infrastructure. Surveillance related to antimicrobial use and resistance and production limiting diseases continues to be a priority for industry with a push to encourage the Public Health Agency of Canada to implement on farm AMU/AMR surveillance for cattle internally like it does with other livestock, as funding from industry and provincial governments has currently covered this gap but it is not consistent or requires significant coordination to ensure continuity.

Related to **Research and Development**, over 75% of BCRC's five-year funding portfolio is allocated to research related to productivity. With approximately 90 projects currently in progress, a broad range of areas is covered that directly aligns with the research and development priorities in the National Strategy. Examples include but are not limited to research:

- On new forage varieties with enhanced yields, bloat resistance, drought resistance, and enhanced longevity of legumes in mixed pastures.

- To improve feed efficiency and determine minimum fibre requirements in feedlot cattle to reduce feed costs while managing rumen PH and associated acidosis/liver abscess issues
- Alternative feed additives and supplements to improve feed supply and utilization
- Examining integrated production systems including corn intercropping for extended winter grazing
- Improved surveillance of production limiting disease and animal welfare through the cow-calf surveillance network and AMU/AMR surveillance
- Treatment strategies for lameness in feedlot cattle and examining long-term delivery options for local anesthetics for painful practices
- Development of new technologies for the detection of vaccine gaps, assessing the risk of BRD, and AMR resistance

Related to **Technology Adoption**, BCRC continues to focus internally on the delivery of extension services as well as provide funding to other extension initiatives across Canada. Key to this delivery is focusing on developing resources encouraging producers to adopt new technologies and practices to drive improvements in productivity. But there is also a focus on maintaining existing productivity gains during challenging periods such as the most recent drought; ensuring producers have access to alternative feed strategies, tools to analyze feed test results and how they inform an individual producers' feeding strategy, resources on determining the value of salvaging crops for feed, and webinars with experts to ask key questions related to animal health, water, feed, and forage management. Internal strategies to encourage adoption continue to focus on the delivery of timely information through BCRC's blog and newsletter, producer testimonials, webinars, producer decision making tools, videos, and other resources. Specific efforts have also been placed on focusing resources in areas where key gains have been identified including expanding awareness and availability of relevant extension materials in eastern Canada, as well as working with veterinary stakeholders, who are viewed as a key influencer with producers, to make sure they have access to information and tools to share with their clientele.

Sandy Russell with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council noted that there is a need to relook at genetic selection and information flow with a focus on return to genetic investment and driving adoption. The Canadian Beef Improvement Network (CBIN) is focused on genetic advancement, not necessarily genetic selection. Some of the outcomes and objectives in the National Strategy are not a short-term priority for CBIN right now. However, the CBBC stakeholders are confident in the CBIN plan. CBIN has four pillars:

1. A national producer-facing genetic data capture system for the Canadian beef industry
2. A broader hub to facilitate the linkages to connect genetics to all metrics of importance throughout the production chain
3. Advanced genetic literacy within the Canadian beef production system
4. Transformational shift in profitability and sustainability for Canadian beef industry

There are four steps to get from idea to operations, including (1) build the data foundation (2) facilitate the linkages (3) translate the data (3) drive adoption. It is recognized that uptake and adoption has been a challenge in this arena. Tools are needed that can really support adoption by producers. CBIN will utilize existing data to drive genetic decisions. CBBC has a small pilot project with BCRC that has had significant learnings to date, with expected completion by March 31, 2023. The guiding principles for Information Flow are critical and also very challenging to address all aspects. CBBC is working with Xerris to learn about data management, intellectual property, etc. Funding from Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) will move the foundational piece forward, expected completion by March 31, 2023.

Labour

Jennifer Wright from the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) presented on their research and initiatives. National data shows the labour shortage continues to be felt and grows with jobs going unfilled throughout the pandemic. CAHRC is providing COVID related support materials for partners. Through their Agri-Diversity initiative they have developed sharing circles with indigenous producers. They have also developed an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion working group, that is just getting underway and will guide future efforts in this area. The National Workforce Strategy for "Agriculture, Food & Beverage Manufacturing" includes research on equity, diversity and inclusion, and perceptions about working in agriculture. Four overarching themes have been identified for the National Workforce Strategy that provide

structure and touch six pillars including (1) perception and awareness, (2) best practices and culture, (3) immigration and foreign workers, (4) skill development, (5) under-represented groups, (6) automation, innovation and technology. CAHRC will be bringing together a large group this spring to further develop the strategy.

Learn more about the National Beef Strategy at www.beefstrategy.com.

The National Beef Strategy is a collaborative effort by Canadian national beef sector organizations including the Beef Cattle Research Council, Canadian Beef Breeds Council, Canada Beef, Canadian Cattlemen's Association (and its provincial member associations), Canadian Meat Council, Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, and the National Cattle Feeders' Association.

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