

THE CANADIAN BEEF INDUSTRY IS MAKING PROGRESS ON THE 2020-24 NATIONAL STRATEGY

The 2020-24 National Beef Strategy was designed to take advantage of the opportunities facing the industry while simultaneously addressing the challenges. It has been a challenging couple of years, regardless of where you are in the supply chain, dealing with multiple supply and demand shocks. The first two years of the strategy have been dominated by covid restrictions, drought, and feed shortages. Subsequently, following the government support packages that supported consumption, recovery is now dealing with rising energy prices and food inflation reducing consumer purchasing power.

The primary focus during the pandemic was to ensure business continuity by keeping borders open, maintaining inspection services, and having agriculture and the food distribution system deemed as critical infrastructure and an essential service. Industry was able to coordinate

advice to producers to manage sales and transportation needs. "While many things were added to the list over the last two years, we are proud that several files continued to move forward," noted James Bekkering, Chair of the Beef Advisors and National Cattle Feeders. Specifically,



Canada's attainment of BSE negligible risk status from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in May 2021



NCFA succeeded in working with the CFIA to develop a new "Trusted Trader" designation with USDA-APHIS. Allowing Canadian exporters of fed cattle to continue convoy shipments under one certificate.



In March 2021, the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Governments agreed to retroactively remove the reference margin limit in AgriStability increasing coverage by an estimated \$95 million.



A collaborative approach spurred movement on multiple issues including feed shortages, border blockades, front-of-package labelling, and a CP Rail strike.



In June 2022, Health Canada announced an exemption for ground beef from its proposed Front-of-Package labelling regulations. Ground beef and pork were recognized for their value as a nutritious whole food, alongside all beef whole cuts.



Alberta Cattle Feeder Association (ACFA), Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) and the Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) along with the Alberta Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry have engaged in a study focused on the best approach to diversify, build capacity and resiliency for all of Alberta's meat processing sector and address the concern around price discovery and transparency.



The Canadian Beef Improvement Network (CBIN) led by the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC), has numerous Canadian beef breed associations actively collaborating to standardize genetic data collection and improve the resources and communication to commercial beef producers.

On balance many objectives were achieved with a remarkable show of support by Canadians who chose beef as one of their preferred meal choices during these challenging times. Few experts thought that retail and home delivery could pick-up the loss in sales through dine-in food service. "Canada Beef's emphasis on the versatility of value-cuts of beef and enhanced consumer awareness about proper preparation methods was well-timed." Noted Mike Kennedy, Chair of the Canada Beef marketing committee, "In addition, the Canadian Beef Information Gateway is an initiative to ensure beef remains on the dinner table as higher costs for food and fuel weigh on household budgets."

Similarly, many doubted that the packing plants would recover quickly and safely to above pre-covid processing levels. However, that was achieved by July 2020 with weekly slaughter levels averaging above first quarter 2020 for the next 24 months. Moving forward, North American beef supplies are forecast to decline going into 2023. This is expected to shift leverage back to the feedlots and increase cattle prices.

The Canadian Beef Advisors continue to monitor progress on the National Strategy and 2030 goals with the development of goal working groups that are tasked with developing action plans.