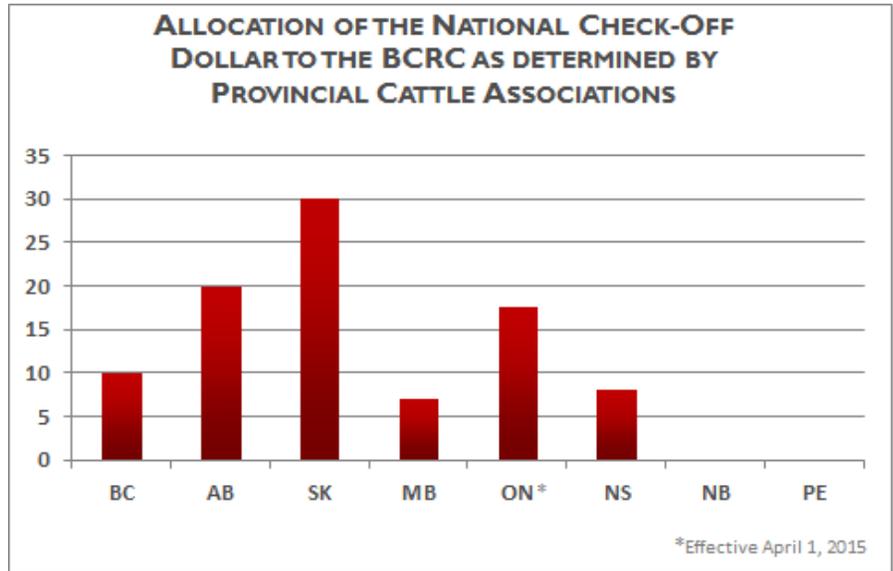


The Beef Cattle Research Council 2015 Annual Report

The Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) is Canada's industry-led funding agency for beef, cattle and forage research. Its mandate is to determine research and development priorities for the Canadian beef cattle industry and to administer National Check-off funds allocated to research. The BCRC is led by a committee of beef producers who proportionally represent each province's research allocation of the National Check-off.

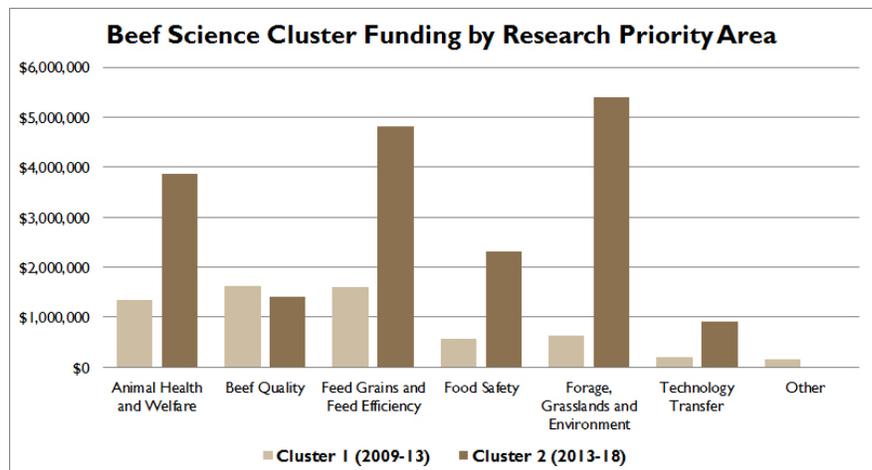


On average nationally, the BCRC receives approximately 18% of the National Check-off, and plays a key role in leveraging additional funding for beef cattle research. Recognizing this, the Council works to ensure the highest return on investment possible for industry contributions to research through ongoing consultation with other provincial and national funding organizations.

Investments in beef research have several benefits, including an improved ability to meet increasing global food demand and supporting responsible production, increased productivity and profitability of Canadian beef cattle producers. Advancements in the industry also positively impact the nation's economy.

Canada's Beef Cattle Industry Science Clusters

The first Beef Cattle Industry Science Cluster directed \$10.5 million to 32 research projects between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2013. It proved to be a very successful step towards improving coordination of beef research funding in Canada while generating meaningful, applicable results.



Joint industry and government commitments to the second Cluster (2013 – March 31, 2018) total \$20 million, including \$14 million in funding from AAFC, \$1 million in provincial government investments, and \$5 million in funding from the research allocation of the National Check-off and provincial beef industry groups. Funding was directed to 26 research projects. A summary of each project can be found by navigating under the Research tab on BeefResearch.ca.

Addressing Critical Capacity Needs

As highlighted in the 2012 National Beef Research Strategy developed by the BCRC and the national Beef Value Chain Roundtable, Canadian beef industry stakeholders strongly identify the need for continued and reinvigorated forage and grassland productivity capacity and research.

Having recognized ongoing cuts by government and other organizations to investments in research related to forage and grassland production, and disappointing impacts including declining tame hay yields, the BCRC substantially increased its proportion of funding to this area.

However, ongoing cuts to necessary expertise and infrastructure continue to erode research programs. The BCRC is working with AAFC and universities to maintain and increase capacity, and encourage the transition of new replacement scientists prior to retiring scientist's departure to ensure research momentum is not lost.

Researcher Mentorship

Launched in 2014, the Beef Researcher Mentorship program provides practical learning and networking opportunities to applied researchers with little or no background in Canadian cattle, forage or beef production. Participants are paired with producers and other industry experts who are valuable resources of information about day-to-day cattle and forage production, industry structure and influences, and perspectives on industry challenges and opportunities at regional and national levels.

Four researchers were selected for the 2015-16 term and include university and AAFC employees with specialities in genomics, food safety or animal disease vectors. The knowledge, connections and experiences gained through the program better enable these scientists to develop effective, industry-focused research and extension programs.

The Canadian Beef Industry Award for Outstanding Research and Innovation

The Canadian Beef Industry Award for Outstanding Research and Innovation was established by the BCRC in 2015. It will be presented annually to recognize a researcher or scientist whose work has contributed to advancements in the competitiveness and sustainability of the Canadian beef industry. The inaugural award will be presented in early 2016, following an industry nomination and committee selection process.



2015-16 Researcher Mentees

Enhanced Collaboration to Maximize Research Investments

The BCRC continues to place significant focus on enhancing collaboration between itself, provincial check-off groups, and other funders (AAFC, ALMA, SADF, OMAFRA, and others) to ensure critical research priorities are addressed, reduce duplication, and reduce administrative burden for researchers and funding agencies.

As a tool to better enable collaboration and efficient use of research funds, the BCRC has taken the lead in developing a database containing research proposals that various funders are considering, as well as projects that have been funded. This allows all funders to determine whether all priority research areas are being addressed, while avoiding over-funding of particular research topics and improving coordination between funders. It also allows the BCRC to measure funder buy-in to the priority research outcomes identified in our 2012 National Beef Research Strategy.

The National Beef Strategy

With a growing global appetite for beef, consumers with questions and concerns about beef production, and a small Canadian beef herd, among other factors, the BCRC joined forces with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, National Cattle Feeders' Association, Canadian Beef Breeds Council and Canada Beef to develop a National Beef Strategy.

The BCRC will play an integral role in achieving several of the industry goals established through strategic investments in research and extension. Consequently, the BCRC has developed a long-term funding plan to identify the necessary funding requirements to achieve these goals.

Technology Transfer & Knowledge Dissemination

The BCRC continues to advance the implementation of its Knowledge Dissemination and Technology Transfer Strategy, which is focused on converting applied research into effective tools that drive industry competitiveness.

The website, www.beefresearch.ca, provides access to general information on research topics, summaries of in-progress and completed projects, and information that helps producers make informed decisions on implementing innovation into their production practices. The website delivers various BCRC-produced and other valuable extension resources including articles, videos, webinars, and calculators.



Communications from the BCRC can also be found through the CCA's Action News, provincial cattle organizations' newsletters, email updates and magazines, and through a regular research column that appears in Canadian Cattlemen magazine.

Verified Beef Production™ program

In addition to sponsoring research and technology development, the BCRC oversees and supports the beef industry's on-farm food safety program, Verified Beef Production™ (VBP).

The VBP program is now working with industry stakeholders to develop additional modules for animal care, biosecurity and environmental stewardship. Pilot projects will be completed to help make each module auditable in 2015-16. The additional modules will be an opportunity for producers to secure further recognition for credible production practices. The resulting program will dovetail in with the work of Canada's Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) and the Beef InfoXchange System (BIXS).

It is recognized that VBP must prepare for a reduced federal/provincial funding structure once modules are fully developed in the years to come. Consequently, moving forward with the development of a strategic plan and business plan that sets out a long-term sustainable funding and delivery model for VBP has been a key priority in 2015.

For More Information

To learn more about BCRC initiatives and take advantage of our extension resources, visit our website at www.beefresearch.ca and join our email list at www.beefresearch.ca/blog/subscribe