

The Beef Cattle Research Councils 2016 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 the Canadian Beef Cattle 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 Canadian Beef Cattle Check-off.

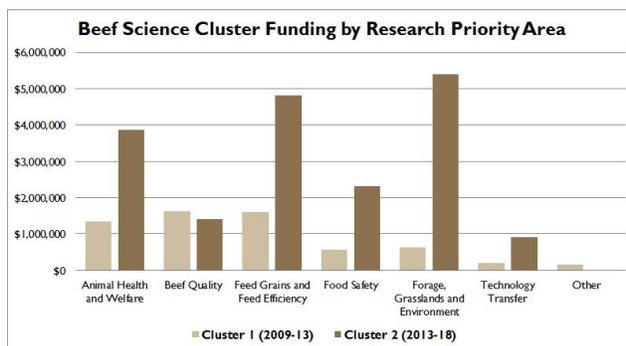
On average nationally, the BCRC receives approximately 18% of the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-off, and plays a key role in leveraging additional funding for beef cattle research. Recognizing this, the Council works to ensure the highest return on investment possible for industry contributions to research 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 efficiencies 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. Joint industry and government commitments to the second Cluster (April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2018) totaled \$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 Canadian Beef Cattle Check-off and provincial beef industry groups. Funding was directed to 26 research projects. A summary of every Cluster-funded project can be found on BeefResearch.ca.

The first and second Clusters have proven to be a very successful step towards improving coordination of beef research funding in Canada including AAFC, BCRC, provincial governments, provincial cattle associations, and other industry funders. The Clusters motivated a growth of industry investment in research and technology transfer. Funding has been focused on a comprehensive outcome-based research program directly aligned with industry’s vision and priorities, including capacity development in critical areas. As a result, Cluster investments are generating meaningful, applicable knowledge and technologies for the industry, as well as extension tools to increase adoption of the innovations.



The BCRC is working to renew this program under AAFC’s next agricultural policy framework and planning for the third Beef Cattle Industry Science Cluster covering the period April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2023. AAFC’s funding commitments for the third Cluster are expected to be announced in 2017. The BCRC will then allocate available funding to research projects aligned with the outcomes in the Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy that have the greatest potential to advance the industry.

Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy

Following a collaborative development process with input from industry stakeholders, grassroots producers, researchers, research institutions, and beef research funding agencies through various means including direct consultation, an online survey, and two workshops, the Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy was released in December 2016. The new Strategy builds upon the success of the 2012-2018 National Beef Research Strategy developed by the BCRC and the national Beef Value Chain Roundtable (BVCRT).

Like the first Strategy, the 2018-2023 Strategy is intended to ensure all of industry's research priorities are adequately addressed, strengthen future funding requests from industry to federal and provincial governments, and maximize the value of all investments in research within the Canadian beef cattle industry.

Having developed specific outcomes under industry-identified priority areas, the Strategy will support the industry's core research objectives of enhancing industry sustainability and improving production efficiencies, improving consumer confidence and beef demand, and improving public confidence in Canadian beef. The new Strategy's research objectives are to be captured by 2023.

The Strategy will guide the industry to achieve high priority beef research objectives that support increasing productivity while remaining environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. It will better enable Canada to seize the opportunity to play a leading role in meeting rising global food production needs responsibly and contribute to the industry's ability to remain globally competitive from a production, regulatory, and trade perspective through investments in agriculture research across a variety of disciplines.

The full Strategy and a 6-page overview can be found on BeefResearch.ca. The Strategy is a dynamic document intended to continue to evolve based on stakeholder feedback and ongoing review as research outcomes are achieved and new outcomes arise. Feedback on the Strategy and its outcomes is welcome and encouraged.



The 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.

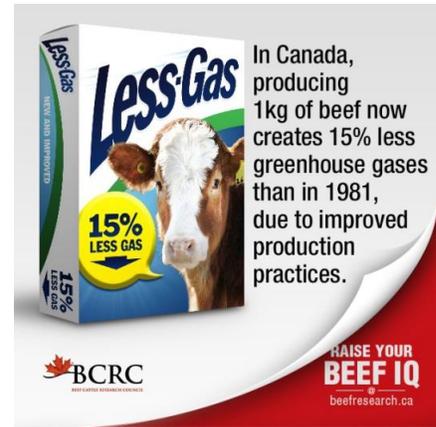
The proposed increase in Canadian Beef Cattle Check-off will be integral to maintaining existing BCRC research programming. Additional funding would enable an expansion of research programming into high priority areas, such as strategic investment in research capacity in meat science and forage utilization, and the expansion of research surveillance networks to monitor antimicrobial resistance, production limiting diseases and other animal health information.

Technology Transfer

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.

Bov-Innovation sessions were introduced at the 2016 Canadian Beef Industry Conference. The sessions featured researcher presentations on particular concepts, followed by producers who explained how they made the innovation work in their situation. The six short, exciting and interactive sessions focused on improving productivity and profitability in cow-calf and cattle feeding operations through advancements in animal health and welfare, forage productivity and genomics.

The BCRC website, www.beefresearch.ca, provides access to general information on research topics, summaries of in-progress and completed research 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 various cattle organizations' publications, and through a regular research column that appears in Canadian Cattlemen magazine.

Advancement of the Verified Beef Production Plus 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 Plus (VBP+).

The VBP program has worked with industry stakeholders to develop additional modules for animal care, biosecurity and environmental stewardship. The additional modules will be available to producers in Summer 2017. These modules are an opportunity for producers to secure further recognition for credible production practices. The program is now working with Canada's Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) in a process to determine equivalency of VBP+ and ProAction (dairy equivalent) with the CRSB's sustainability indicators.

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