

Year in Review 2024-2025

Highlighting investments by Canadian cattle producers

Advancement Through Science



Advancement Through Science

This report is created for Canadian beef industry stakeholders to highlight recent investments in research and knowledge mobilization by Canada's beef cattle producers. It is a summary of programs and outcomes of the Beef Cattle Research Council's activities between July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, as detailed in the BCRC's 2024-25 Results Report submitted to the Canadian Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency in June 2025.

Scan or click the QR code below for the full Results Report. Additional links can be accessed through the QR codes at the back of this report or by visiting BeefResearch.ca.

Scan for the BCRC's 2024-25 Results Report



Join one or more of the BCRC's email lists





DESCRIPTION BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL

Canada's industry-led funding agency for beef, cattle and forage research and knowledge mobilization

The Beef Cattle Research Council funds leading-edge research and knowledge mobilization activities to advance the competitiveness and sustainability of the Canadian beef cattle industry. All activities are guided by core principles defined by the beef industry in the renewed Five-Year Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Increase producer profitability by increasing productivity or decreasing costs of production and risks.
- Develop, enhance and encourage adoption of beneficial practices and innovations that maximize the environmental benefits industry provides and continue to reduce our environmental footprint, while supporting industry competitiveness.
- Support continuous improvements in Canadian beef demand through advancements in the quality and safety of Canadian beef.
- Generate science to inform decision makers, policy and best management practices and to support consumer confidence and public trust.
- Develop, enhance and encourage adoption of leading-edge technologies that support industry competitiveness, automation and sustainability.
- Ensure the maintenance and rejuvenation of critical research capacity and infrastructure that facilitate proactive inquiry and innovation to support industry advancement.



OUR VISION:

A transparent, competitive, resilient and sustainable Canadian beef industry supported by strategic and effective research, technology transfer and innovation.

OUR MISSION:

To lead the Canadian beef industry as the most prominent supporter of cattle, forage and beef research with a producer-led Council who invest producer funds into research and technology transfer to support growth in beef demand, increase productivity and earn public trust.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Craig Lehr

As I write this in July 2025, we have seen some much-needed moisture across many regions that will help with grass, silage and grain production. However, drought continues to impact some key production regions. This is a key example of the diversity of ecoregions that support beef production across Canada as well as the need for continued investments in beef and forage research and knowledge mobilization that recognizes this diversity.

As we move into the 2025-26 fiscal year we are seeing record-high cattle prices and the potential for lower feed prices. This is creating an environment for beef producers to expand their herds and focus on productivity improvements. The Beef Cattle Research Council will continue to invest in research and resource materials to support producers as they look at making large or small changes to their operations.

The opportunity to expand also encourages beef producers to reflect on the investments they make in their cattle herds. The amount of information out there around genetic improvements can be overwhelming. That's why the BCRC has invested in the development of genetic selection resources that help cow-calf producers navigate breeding and bull procurement decisions.

Feedlots have faced significant challenges over the past couple years, particularly with bovine respiratory disease (BRD). The BCRC continues to make progress with its BRD research and extension strategy. Learn about two related research projects on pages 9 and 12.

Browse through the other project highlights in this report to discover the impact your Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off investments have made for the industry in the past year.



"The BCRC draws heavily on the input of Canadian beef producers when directing National Check-Off dollars towards advancements in feed and forage production, animal health and welfare, and overall productivity for beef operations across the country."



MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Andrea Brocklebank

The Beef Cattle Research Council continues to invest in research, both through the five-year Beef and Forage Science Cluster in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and through regular calls for research proposals. Through the last call for proposals, the BCRC announced funding of \$1.43 million in key areas identified in the five-year Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy.

The BCRC is in the process of reviewing and updating the current five-year strategy by actively engaging beef producers and other industry stakeholders via an online survey and workshops to understand what priorities should be moving forward. The strategy not only informs the BCRC's funding plans, but also influences funding priorities of other industry and government funders.

We continue to work internally, as well as through the Canadian Beef Knowledge Mobilization Network, to identify key opportunities for translating beef and forage research results into practical applications for beef industry stakeholders. Building positive engagement has been a priority over the past two years.

Always at the forefront of our minds is ensuring beef producers can continue to operate and have access to markets for their cattle and, ultimately, for Canadian beef. The BCRC and Animal Health Canada have collaborated in developing biosecurity resources to build awareness about protecting the beef industry from animal diseases, such as Foot & Mouth Disease, that could impact producers and the Canadian beef industry as a whole. Examples are featured on page 17.

In 2024-25, significant time and resources were invested in the advancement of VBP+ quality assurance programming, with an emphasis on linking it more directly to extension. There has been a focused effort toward enhancing VBP+ training programs as well as affirming the value of training to end-users and other key stakeholders along the supply chain. Read more on page 18, and watch for more great things on the horizon for this program!



"The BCRC recognizes that moving research from reports to application is important. We continually strive to take research results and translate them into applicable extension that is accessible to all Canadian beef cattle producers."



MEET THE COUNCIL

Producer-led and Canada-wide

The BCRC is directed by a committee of 16 beef producers from across the country, plus one ex-officio member. It is funded primarily through the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off.



Lehr, AB Dean Manning,









Atlantic - Vice Chair























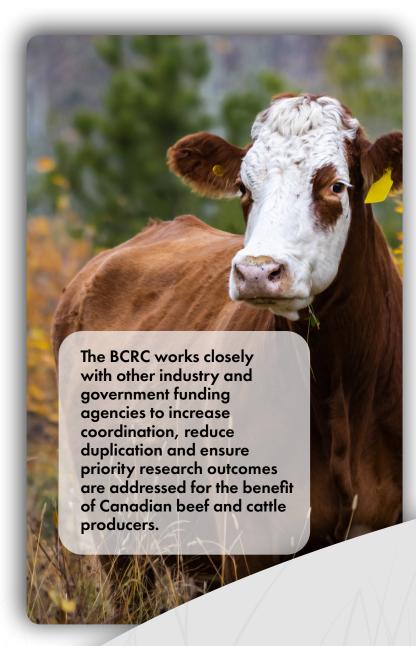
> THE BCRC & ITS PARTNERS

Tackling industry priorities and generating the most value from every research dollar

In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the BCRC received on average \$0.66 (unaudited) of every \$2.50 of the Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off collected by the provincial beef cattle associations. This funding was leveraged under various programs to maximize producer returns on their national check-off investments. Typically, for every \$1 in producer Check-Off invested, the BCRC looks to leverage \$2-3 in other direct funding and in-kind contributions.

When making funding decisions, the BCRC seeks expert advice to ensure proposed projects address industry priorities, are practical and are both scientifically and practically sound. A science advisory body provides relevant advice on the technical merit of any proposed research. As well, independent peer reviewers help ensure new research is original, progressive and uses valid scientific approaches. Before making funding decisions, the BCRC Council members consider this expert advice, priorities in the Five-Year Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy, other scientific and industry feedback, and emerging issues. This process provides a fair, transparent and thorough evaluation of all research activities.

In addition to funding research, the BCRC plays a leading role in increasing industry uptake of relevant technologies through its knowledge mobilization strategies. Information sharing across a broad audience of producers, researchers, funders, government and other industry organizations supports communication networks across the country.



BCRC FUNDING BY PROGRAM AREA

Total Five-Year Funding to All Projects: \$36.2 Million

Percent of total research funding by portfolio*

Animal Health, Welfare & Antimicrobial Resistance & Use



Forage varieties and management strategies to increase yields, nutrition & competitiveness



Cost-effective methods for more efficient cattle, feeds and feeding strategies

Research Capacity

Partnering with key institutions to implement long-term research capacity in priority areas

Environmental Sustainability

Reducing the environmental footprint of Canadian beef

Proof of Concept & Other

Testing the feasibility of pursuing larger or riskier research projects

Food Safety

Sustaining beef safety and consumer confidence

Technology Transfer & Production Economics

Encouraging greater awareness and adoption of new technologies and beneficial practices

Beef Quality

Maintaining domestic and international satisfaction with Canadian beef



















*Full colour portions of the bar graph represent percent of total funding coming from Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off funding.

Shaded portions indicate the percentage of funding per project area from other funding sources, including government, that is managed by the BCRC.



BCRC PROJECT FUNDING BY SOURCE

Total Project Funding for 2024-25: \$13.9 Million





\$5.8 Million



\$2.7 Million





- 24% Animal Health, Welfare & Antimicrobial Resistance & Use
- 22% Forage & Grassland Productivity
- 18% Feed Efficiency & Utilization
- 10% Environmental Sustainability
 - 9% Proof of Concept & Other

- **6**% Food Safety
- 5% Technology Transfer & Production Economics
- 5% Research Capacity
- 1% Beef Quality

BEEF & FORAGE AGRISCIENCE CLUSTER

2024-25 Canadian Check-Off Funding: \$1.99 Million

Canada's Beef and Forage AgriScience Cluster for 2023-28 is a \$21.4 million program, with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada contributing \$12.1 million and industry contributing \$9.3 million over five years. There are a total of 23 Cluster projects – all of which reported activities between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Greg Penner from the
University of Saskatchewan and
others are conducting feedlot
trials exploring if prebiotic and/
or probiotic treatments can
accelerate recovery from bovine
respiratory disease. These costeffective strategies could help the
whole animal recover from health
challenges more quickly, which
could benefit both animal welfare
and antimicrobial stewardship in
the feedlot sector.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Johne's disease is relatively uncommon among Canadian beef cows, but it can be very costly when it does occur. Drs. Philip Griebel and Antonio Facciuolo from VIDO as well as Dr. Jeroen de Buck with the University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine and Dr. Amy Lee with Simon Fraser University are evaluating the efficacy of injectable and oral vaccines for Johne's disease in beef cattle.



BEEF & FORAGE AGRISCIENCE CLUSTER

Driving environmental, economic and social sustainability

Under the Cluster IV framework, every activity aligns with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's key priority areas: climate change and the environment, economic growth and development, and sector resilience and societal challenges. The BCRC was able to ensure that research outcomes identified for the Cluster aligned with these priorities, while building upon research in previous clusters and addressing industry priorities including animal health and welfare, forage and grassland productivity and feed efficiency and utilization.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Bill Biligetu with the University of Saskatchewan and Dr. Annie Claessens with AAFC Quebec are working with researchers from across the country to breed climate-resilient forage germplasm for the Canadian beef industry.

The team will take crucial steps to understand what is required to develop new Canada-specific, climate-resilient varieties. They will also set up a national collaborative forage testing system in which new germplasm can be tested across Canada.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: Drs. Emma McGeough and Yvonne Lawley of the University of Manitoba are working with researchers from across Canada to study the pros and cons of integrating grazing cattle on crop land. The goal is to improve the resiliency of beef cattle production through the use of novel grazing strategies in spring and late summer to early fall, utilizing annual forages and cover crops to better meet animal nutrient requirements and understanding the impact of grazing on the plant-animal-soil interface.

PRIORITY RESEARCH PROJECTS

2024-25 Canadian Check-Off Funding: \$1.73 Million

Priority research includes projects that fall outside of the Cluster program requirement or timeline but are important to the beef industry. A call for letters of intent went out in January 2024 and received 59 letters of intent. Of these, 21 research teams were invited to submit a full proposal and funding was approved for nine projects. All successful applicants are required to secure funding from other government and industry sources, which stretches Check-Off dollars to at least twice its value. In 2024-25, the BCRC managed 70 priority research projects, including the two featured below, with funding made available to researchers through previous open calls for proposals.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Since December 2018, Canada's cattle producers have required a veterinary prescription to obtain antibiotics for their cattle. Dr. Cheryl Waldner and colleagues at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine surveyed approximately 150 cow-calf producers in the Canadian Cow-Calf Surveillance Network about herd and animal-level antimicrobial practices as well as their attitudes about antimicrobial use, resistance and changes to antimicrobial regulations. They found that antimicrobial use remains very low.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Pascal Badiou with Ducks Unlimited is working with university researchers from across the Canadian Prairies to quantify the ecosystem contributions associated with the grassland landscapes and wetlands on pastureland that support livestock production. These wetlands play important roles in carbon cycling and climate regulation, water quality and quantity regulation, and are hotspots for biodiversity. Although many Canadian studies are looking at ecosystem services provided by grazing cattle, few focus specifically on wetlands.



PROOF OF CONCEPT PROJECTS

2024-25 Canadian Check-Off Funding: **\$210,627**

The BCRC managed 16 proof of concept projects in 2024-25, including six new projects. These short-term projects test the feasibility of emerging or higher-risk research areas before investments are made in larger, more defined research. They are funded by Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off dollars leveraged with provincial and federal government and/or industry partner funding. All project summaries are available in the 2024-25 BCRC Results Report.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Do better vaccine practices make healthier calves? Dr. Nilusha Malmuthuge with AAFC Lethbridge and Dr. Gleise Medeiros da Silva with the University of Alberta evaluated the effectiveness of vaccine practices on priming immune responses in calves. They found the use of good vaccine practices, including short mixing time and storing mixed vaccines in a cooler, increased the number of immune-primed calves against BVDV. Essentially, good vaccine practices are vital to generate protective immune responses and increase herd immunity.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

What can the genetics of bovine respiratory disease (BRD) at feedlots tell us about antimicrobial resistance? A team led by Dr. Antonio Ruzzini at the University of Saskatchewan found there are clear differences in the antimicrobial resistance genes in BRD pathogens in Canada compared to other places in the world. And while not directly related to antimicrobial use at feedlots, these could pose a risk of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the future independent of feedlot practices. These findings can all be used to inform surveillance and understand how specific feedlot practices are influencing AMR.



RESEARCH CAPACITY

2024-25 Canadian Check-Off Funding: **\$645,000**

The Beef Cattle Research Council established four research chair positions with key institutions and matching industry and government funding to ensure sustained research capacity in priority areas.

RESEARCH CHAIR SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Flavia van Cleef,_Beef Industry Forage Mangement and Utilization Chair at the University of Saskatchewan

Since beginning this position in March 2025, Dr. van Cleef has been helping develop and evaluate agronomic strategies to optimize forage establishment, yield, quality and stand longevity. She also works to identify feeding and grazing strategies that enhance animal performance while contributing to improved soil health and environmental sustainability. "My goal is to bring together the latest research and practical solutions that work in the real world, ensuring they are locally relevant and aligned with global sustainability demands," said Dr. van Cleef.



Dr. Cheryl Waldner

University of Saskatchewan NSERC/BCRC Industrial Research Chair in One Health & Production-Limiting Diseases This position has been renewed to 2030. Her previous position

was backfilled by Dr. Emily Snyder, who is actively engaged in complimentary research and extension activities.

Dr. Gleise M. Silva

University of Alberta BCRC-Hays Chair in Beef Production Systems - This position has been approved through 2030.

Recruitment will begin soon for a fourth research chair position at the University of Manitoba to advance beef production sustainability.

INDUSTRY SUPPORT TO ACQUIRE KEY RESEARCHERS:

The BCRC supports retention of valuable research capacity in Canadian institutions and has bolstered the establishment of new research programs by providing start-up funding to encourage institutions to create or reinvest in beef positions, attract strong candidates, invite industry to engage in the selection process and enable newly acquired researchers to get underway while they build relationships with funding agencies.

- The Western College of Veterinary Medicine's longest serving beef cattle researcher, Dr. John Campbell, will retire before the end of 2025. The BCRC is providing \$50,000 in start-up funds to help fill his position.
- The University of Saskatchewan's Chair in Beef Cattle and Production Medicine, Dr. Murray Jelinski, will be scaling back hours in a retirement transition over the next two to three years. The BCRC is providing \$200,000 in transition funds to facilitate a training overlap and leverage external money to replenish funding of this Chair.

2024-25 Canadian Check-Off Funding: \$138,851 *

* The BCRC executes knowledge mobilization activities, both within and outside of the Beef & Forage Agriscience Cluster program. The funding amount above reflects knowledge mobilization projects that are outside of the Cluster. The BCRC uses this funding to develop content, tools and resources aligned with key priorities identified by the industry.

NEW RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS:

By leveraging producer-paid Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off dollars with the support of Canada's Beef and Forage AgriScience Cluster, the BCRC developed several new resources over the past year, in English and French.

These activities included 65 timely blog posts, 57 research summary factsheets, 12 monthly e-newsletters, 50 podcast episodes, 12 articles for Canadian Cattlemen—The Beef Magazine, 38 new infographics, six new or updated interactive calculators, two videos, three webinars, 26 staff presentations and a new genetics record-keeping course. New webpages were developed on cow management, bull management and winter management, with 18 topic webpages translated to French.



With funding through the AgriScience Cluster, the BCRC launched its bilingual website BeefResearch.ca/fr in September 2024. Popular content has been translated, and additional relevant content will be translated semi-annually through the duration of the 2023-2028 AgriScience Cluster.

Access French content by toggling between English and French at the top right of BeefResearch.ca.



In 2024-25, the BCRC continued its popular, ongoing #Calf911 initiative with the promotion of its calf management guides and videos. One reel related to proper calf positioning reached more than 2.5 million individuals with 34,374 interactions.

Results from the 2023 Canadian Cow-Calf Survey showed that less calves are dying during the first 24 hours than in the previous several years, which corresponds with the launch of the BCRC's Calf 911 resources for distressed newborn calves.

Reaching more than ever before

The Beef Cattle Research Council's communications strategy is aimed at increasing access and engagement across a variety of platforms. The following numbers reflect the BCRC's reach as of June 2025 and the red arrows show growth since the previous fiscal year.



340,000

visitors per year

1 3%



46,000

followers

170%



10,407

email subscribers

1 28%



9,690

subscribers

177%



11,000 podcast listeners

Launched
January 2024



9,094 followers

1%

@BeefResearchCanada

1,528 followers

1 36%

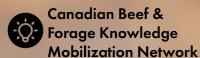
in @BeefResearch

1,441 followers

\$83%

BeefResearch.ca/webinars

1,357 participants



281
members across
organizations and
regions

Estimated Total Reach
Across All Platforms

2 Million



Communication and collaboration across the country

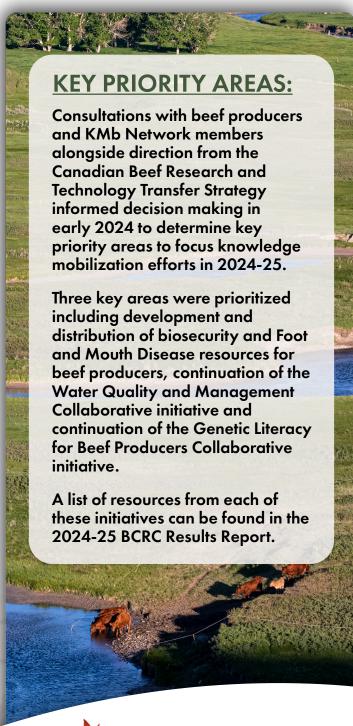
CANADIAN BEEF KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION NETWORK:

Awareness and distribution of resources for beef producers continues to be expanded through the BCRC-led Canadian Beef Knowledge Mobilization Network (KMb Network), which has grown to 281 members across Canada.

The group focuses on identifying opportunities to share and partner on extension initiatives that lead to greater adoption of relevant technologies and beneficial production practices on Canadian beef operations. Members are encouraged to share resources, events and strategies for knowledge transfer through an online Teams platform and continued participation and collaboration through inperson and virtual presentations and workshops.

Network activities in 2024-25 included four issues of The Transfer E-Newsletter and three meetings, two online and one in-person during the Canadian Beef Industry Conference. Through these collaborative channels, resources and expertise continue to be shared and duplication avoided such that resources are developed effectively and in response to regional and industry needs.

Funding for KMb Network projects is allocated to two streams: resource development and distribution in key priority areas and call for proposals for regionally focused extension activities.



Supporting new regional extension activities

The 2024 Regional Knowledge Mobilization Initiatives call for proposals received a high number of applications within the two-week open call. Applicants could apply to receive up to a maximum of \$5,000 in funding per activity. Preference was given to regional knowledge mobilization activities that were new and innovative engagement ideas, CowBytes training sessions and workshops related to water quality and management.

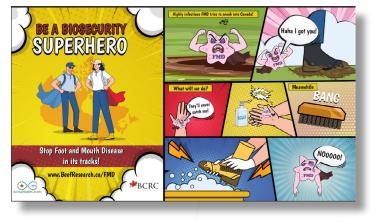
Eighteen activities were funded and completed by July 31, 2025. These activities included extension meetings, field days, workshops, video development, peer group coordination and veterinary student engagement.

One of the BCRC-funded regional activities was hosted by Beef Farmers of Ontario. Two cost of production workshops focused on beneficial management practices such as genetic improvements, bull selection, water and feed testing, body condition scoring, value-added programs such as VBP+ and more.

BCRC COLLABORATION WITH ANIMAL HEALTH CANADA

The BCRC partnered with Animal Health Canada (AHC) to develop and distribute biosecurity resources to Canadian beef producers. The goal of this collaboration is to prevent and mitigate the spread of foreign animal diseases including Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Resources resulting from this initiative included:

- Biosecurity superhero comic series available in English, French and Spanish
- > Travel guidelines for beef cattle producers
- FMD signs and symptoms poster
- Three videos and associated reels
- Two webinars for beef producers and veterinary teams
- Interactive game board on emergency preparedness and response





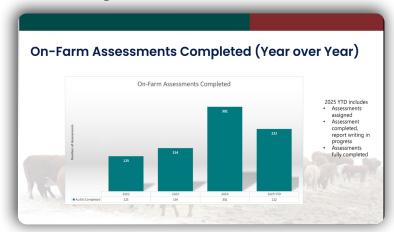
> VERIFIED BEEF PRODUCTION PLUS

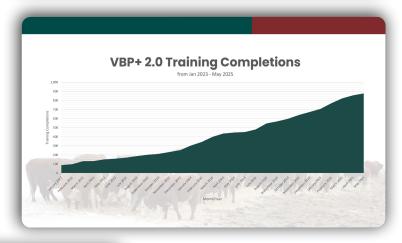
2024-25 Canadian Check-Off Funding: **\$668,625**

Under the umbrella of the Beef Cattle Research Council, Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) and VBP+ Delivery Services Inc. (VBP+ Inc.) strives to fulfill its mission and vision through maintenance and delivery of training and certification to beef producers across Canada.

VBP+ has been busy over the last year keeping up with the demand for onfarm assessments for VBP+, and jointly Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) certification. Compared to 2022, VBP+ saw a 140% increase in onfarm assessments in 2024. The increases have occurred primarily in Alberta and Saskatchewan and can be attributed to producers seeking to apply for incentives through provincial governments.

Since Alberta and Saskatchewan incentives are tiered with a different level of funding for producers who complete VBP+ training, there has been an increased number of producers completing the training.







VBP+ VISION:

Enable Canadian beef producers to realize the value from producing beef in a safe, sustainable and socially responsible manner.

VBP+ MISSION:

Train producers and certify operations to continually improve on-farm practices that contribute to the credibility and viability of Canadian beef operations.

In coming months, VBP+ will implement a new strategy on the value of training and addition of new and improved training courses and structures to enhance adoption of beneficial management practices by Canadian beef producers across all sectors.



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