

Reporting on 2017 – for CCA’s 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 was 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 has worked extensively to renew the Cluster program under AAFC’s Canadian Agricultural Partnership and plan for the third Beef Cattle Industry Science Cluster covering the period April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2023. AAFC launched the program and released application forms in November. Our full application, based on several years of planning and consultation with numerous consultations with experts and stakeholders, as well as economic and practical analyses, was submitted to Ottawa in December.

The proposed third Cluster, which builds upon Cluster I and II, aims to grow beef exports and supply growing global beef demand while enhancing competitiveness and public trust. Proposed activities will work to achieve priority objectives in the Canadian Beef Research and Technology Transfer Strategy that the BCRC is most qualified to deliver and do not duplicate activities already funded by other groups.

The Canadian beef industry has a tremendous opportunity to increase productivity and grow Canadian beef exports to support broader economic growth. Activities proposed in the third Cluster are key to realizing that opportunity. Proposed activities will directly address climate change challenges, growing world population pressures, and knowledge gaps that impede public trust or the strength of regulatory systems. They will advance the science of past Clusters, address current and anticipated threats to Canadian beef production, benefit Canadian farmers and ranchers with access to new, practical knowledge and innovations that can improve their business and end products, and continue to improve the industry's antimicrobial and environmental stewardship.

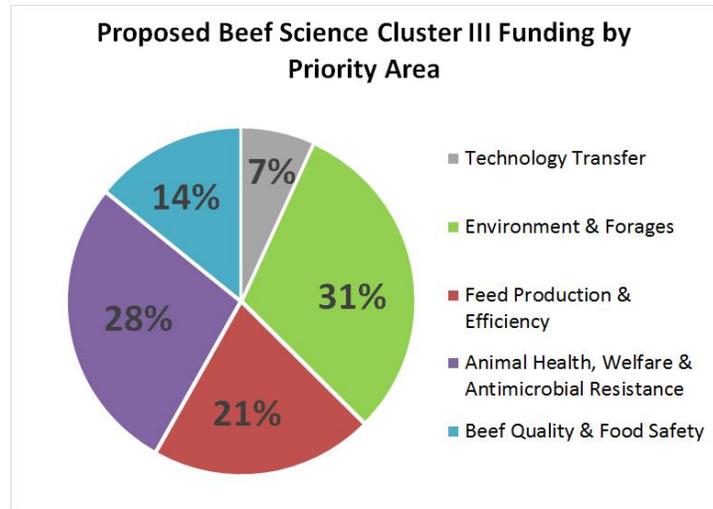
AAFC's funding commitments for the third Cluster are expected to be announced in early 2018. Following AAFC approval, the BCRC will initiate the new Cluster research projects and announce project details on BeefResearch.ca.

The National Beef Strategy

The BCRC will continue to play an integral role in achieving several of the industry goals identified in the National Beef Strategy through strategic investments in research and extension. The proposed increase in Canadian Beef Cattle Check-off will be integral to maintaining existing BCRC research programming to ensure continued improvements are made in:

- Forage and Grassland Productivity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Feed Grains and Feed Efficiency
- Animal Health and Welfare
- Antimicrobial Use, Resistance and Alternatives
- Food Safety
- Beef Quality

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. A domestic and international research liaison would look for practices and technologies from across Canada and around the world that have the potential to benefit more



producers here and find ways to modify them so Canadian producers can use them on their own operations. Additional funding would also enable greater national and regional extension network support and ongoing delivery of the Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) program.

Technology Transfer

The BCRC continues to advance the implementation of its Knowledge Dissemination and Technology Transfer Strategy, which is a core activity of the Beef Science Clusters.

The Beef Researcher Mentorship Program, which launched in 2014, continues to facilitate and encourage new applied beef-related researchers, especially those from non-Canadian agriculture backgrounds, to attend industry events and network with producers and other industry professionals. The program is advancing researchers' appreciation of industry needs and fueling their ambition to share their findings with a practical, solution-based focus.

Another new extension video has been produced. 'What Beef Producers Need to Know about Environmental Footprint' has exceeded 35,000 views on Facebook and YouTube combined.

Bov-Innovation sessions were held at the 2017 Canadian Beef Industry Conference. The sessions focused on economic and reproductive factors of replacement heifer development, using feed analysis to balance rations and manage for mycotoxins, and how producers can leverage genomic technology on their commercial cattle operations.

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 interactive decision making tools.

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+).

VBP+ has worked with industry stakeholders to develop additional modules for animal care, biosecurity and environmental stewardship that are now available to producers. 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.

A new VBP+ website, www.verifiedbeefproductionplus.ca, launched in March 2017. It houses a wealth of information for consumers and retailers and is a great resource for Canadian beef cattle producers. It also includes a Feeder Cattle Listing for those VBP+ Registered operations signed onto the AgriClear platform.

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