

NEWS RELEASE

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Beef Researcher Mentorship Program launches

The Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) is pleased to announce the Beef Researcher Mentorship Program, a new initiative that will facilitate greater engagement of upcoming and new applied researchers with Canada's beef industry.

Currently in the pilot phase, the Beef Researcher Mentorship Program intends to provide researchers with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the needs of the beef industry in a practical and meaningful way.

“When scientists have a better understanding our of industry’s needs, and are motivated to produce applicable, solution-based research results and see them through to adoption, that’s extremely valuable to our industry”, said Tim Oleksyn, Chair of the BCRC and a producer from Shellbrook, Saskatchewan. “This is an excellent experience for researchers with little background in Canadian beef production or opportunity to connect with industry stakeholders in order to increase their knowledge of the industry.”

The BCRC's new Beef Researcher Mentorship Program is designed to:

- align research interests with those that are practical and beneficial to Canada's beef industry,
- build the skills, network and confidence necessary to participate in or lead applied research and technology transfer efforts that enhance and accelerate innovation in Canada's beef industry, and
- facilitate collaborations that help new Canadian beef researchers establish effective applied research and extension programs.

Following an invitation process, three of the applicants were selected to participate in the pilot phase. As inaugural recipients, they will provide valuable feedback to help develop a successful experience that the BCRC intends to offer to applied researchers for years to come. In future years, the program will have a more public application process in which all eligible individuals may compete.

The three recipients selected for a 2014-15 mentorship are:

Emma McGeough, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Manitoba. She is currently a co-investigator on a number of research projects ranging from forage evaluation to the environmental footprint of the Canadian beef industry.

Bill Biliget, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Forage Crop Breeding with the Crop Development Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. His research is focused on developing improved forage species for livestock feed, as well as breeding forage crops that are adapted to the prairie region of western Canada.

Raquel Rodriguez Doce, Ph.D., Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research centre in Lacombe, Alberta. Her research is focused on the development and management of cereal-forage crops for improved utilization in cow-calf, backgrounding and feedlot operations.

The program will match these participants with innovative cattle producers and other industry professionals for a one year mentorship, and provide opportunities to expand their networks and attend insightful meetings and events.

“We look forward to discovering how their experiences in the program impact their future in beef-related research and extension”, added Oleksyn.

The BCRC’s Beef Researcher Mentorship Program will complement similar programs in existence but for which some researchers may not be eligible. The BCRC also supports the participation of young researchers in the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association youth mentorship program, the Cattlemen’s Young Leaders (CYL). Funding for the Beef Researcher Mentorship Program is made available through the technology transfer initiative within the second Beef Cattle Industry Science Cluster.

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For further information, contact:

Andrea Brocklebank
Executive Director
Beef Cattle Research Council
403-275-8558 | brocklebanka@beefresearch.ca
www.beefresearch.ca