

# Canadian Beef Advisors – Industry Goals to 2030

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## Beef Quality and Food Safety

These goals are not presented in any particular order:

- Establish the **inherent quality and value** of Canadian Beef in domestic and export markets which supports comparative equivalency or superiority to alternatives
- Increase the value of **AAA and Prime** carcasses, to be equivalent with the US, by building demand for all cuts on the carcass
- Remove **internal regulatory impediments** to innovation, export and commercial trade and the competitiveness of Canadian beef in domestic and international markets
- Support the development, regulatory approval and adoption of improved food safety interventions and technologies throughout the supply chain

## Context

The vision and mission of the National Beef Strategy is to enable **competitiveness** and **profitability** throughout the Canadian beef value chain. With 45% of our production being exported, Canada's beef industry recognizes the importance of market access and consumer demand to achieve this. Specifically, the National Beef Strategy 2020-24 outlines our ambition to gain equal or preferential access to key export markets, reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers and eliminate remaining BSE market access restrictions. There is also a need for trade agreements to include systems approval and not impose non-tariff barriers or quota restrictions on Canadian beef. As these topics have already been addressed in the National Beef Strategy they are not repeated here.

The Canadian Beef Advantage outlines a number of functional and emotional attributes that are important to consumers but that each carry different significance in different markets. This toolbox provides a consistent national positioning, backed up by science, while supporting the flexibility of unique and competitive branding. Through identifying the market strategy, research priorities can be filled in to provide the proof points needed.

There are consumers for every type of quality grade. However, U.S. research has shown that the top two-thirds Choice/AAA supports consumer demand. Premiums for Canada AAA are smaller than those for USDA Choice. Demand must be built for every cut on the AAA carcass in order to match premiums and send a market signal to producers. Producers have historically responded quickly to price signals to increase production to the level sought by the market. There is a role for genetics to be developing cattle that have both high marbling and are yield grade one or two in order to avoid yield grade discounts. In addition, an underlying genetics potential allows producers to respond quickly to the price signals and increase volumes when consumer demand supports it.

Removing regulatory impediments is critical to maintaining a competitive industry. Ensuring there is dedicated capacity within the competent authority for certifying based on attributes, claims approval, and electronic certification will facilitate marketplace responsiveness to new innovation and reporting demands. Equivalence with the U.S. as our major trading partner is a priority. For example, equivalence at the border to accept one another's food safety test results or reduce the time to acquire test results or more efficient testing regimes that reduce turnaround times for results would reduce food waste and the downgrading of fresh product that results from shipping delays and returned loads.

Food safety is important to maintain domestic and international consumer confidence and beef demand. Canada has a strong reputation around food safety; however, it must be maintained and improved upon. Developing improved food safety interventions and technologies that counteract multiple pathogens and methods to quantify the effectiveness those interventions is an ongoing priority.

## How the goals could be achieved

Achieving these goals will require contributions from all stages of the supply chain and commitment from producers, beef processors through to the retail and foodservice sectors to measure and monitor progress. The table below provides key drivers that can contribute to achieving the various goals.

Indicators to monitor success	Innovation to spur investment	Regulatory Impediments
<p>Refresh the National Beef Quality Audit Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reflect increased further processing</li> <li>To incorporate modern imaging technology and real-time feedback</li> <li>International and domestic quality perceptions audits to demonstrate equivalent or superiority of Canadian beef</li> </ul> <p>Develop a shelf life standard for Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor the development of Best Management Practices related to the proper management of export packaging to ensure shelf life and food safety (domestic and international)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in Quality Assessment Technology</li> <li>Number of new beef quality and food safety innovations tested, approved, introduced and adopted in Canada and the US</li> <li>Technology that can assist in reducing food waste through the supply chain.</li> </ul> <p>See Technology Goal for more details.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage enhanced regulatory capacity to certify product based on attributes in a timely manner</li> <li>Identify regulatory and market barriers to practices that support beef quality and food safety at a commercial scale</li> <li>Harmonization with the U.S. around access to anti-microbial innovation, interventions and testing</li> </ul>

## FAQs

### Q: How do you define superior?

A: The definition of superiority is based on the specific market in question, as the attributes focused on will vary (e.g. cut yield, shelf life, consistency of color, marbling, sustainability or efficiency measures, food waste, etc.). This will be compared to major competitors within that market of high-quality grain-fed beef.

### Q: What attributes are included in the Canadian Beef Advantage?

The Canada Beef marketing strategy has [four pillars](#) that include a mix of functional and emotional attributes.

- The Producer:** Canada's Natural Environment, the tradition of agriculture, and high-quality beef production
- The Product:** Grain-finished beef, high-quality beef grades, 100% Canadian and building recognition of beef as a nutrient dense protein option that is part of a healthy diet.
- World Class Standards:** cattle identification, animal health, [Verified Beef Production plus](#) and other industry led On Farm QA Initiatives, the Canadian beef grading system and food safety system based on HACCP Critical Control Points.
- Sustainability:** as measured and monitored in the [National Beef Sustainability Assessment](#)

### Q: Why was a volume goal for AAA and Prime grading not set?

A: Producers have historically responded quickly to price signals to increase production to the level sought by the market. However, it is recognized that some cattle won't ever grade Prime and are better directed towards feeding programs aimed at markets that prefer less marbling.

In addition, there must be a market signal that makes sense to producers to adjust genetic selection and feeding programs. A market signal is the only way to ensure over-supplying the marketplace and eliminating the premium is avoided. A premium that is comparable to the U.S. should provide the incentive for producers to increase the volume produced. It should be noted that while 95% of U.S. cattle receive a quality grade, only 27% of steers and heifers receive a USDA yield grade (Fiscal Year 2020). In contrast, all Canadian youthful cattle that are graded receive both a quality and yield grade.

### Q: What are the unintended consequences of focusing on AAA and Prime grading?

A: The recent trend towards AAA and prime marbling has come with a greater proportion of yield grade 4 and 5 carcasses that create issues with customers. Undesirable over-finished carcasses tend to be discounted. Those discounts frequently offset the premium received for high marbling. There is an opportunity to send price signals faster and more efficiently to produce more AAA and Prime carcasses that are yield grade 3 or better.

In addition, the focus on marbling has increased carcass weights overtime that require ongoing investment in muscle profiling and the development of cutting techniques to meet retail and foodservice preferences for cut size that provides a consistent and satisfactory eating experience with a range of cooking methods.

For further information, go to: [Beefstrategy.com](http://Beefstrategy.com)