



April 26, 2023

Guy Shane
President, Prescott County Cattlemen's Association

Dear Guy,

The following resolution was passed at the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) annual general meeting in February and was recently discussed by the BFO Board of Directors:

WHEREAS, there is evidence that the agriculture industry and more specifically the cattle industry is under extreme pressure from government environmental regulations and risks being decimated,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT BFO take the lead with the other agriculture and livestock organizations to be proactive on getting the message out to the Federal Government, of all the benefits agriculture provides to carbon sequestering, and more specifically the advantages of cattle that require pasture lands, hay, cover crops, and year-round green cover on land which has such positive effects on the environment and positive carbon sequestering.

We know grazing cattle are an integral part of the grassland ecosystem and play an important role in ensuring grasslands do not disappear from the Canadian landscape. Telling the story of Ontario's beef sector and the positive environmental impacts provided by beef farmers and cattle is a key priority for BFO. Federally, BFO Board members and staff work closely with the Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) to advance issues that are national in scope. The work put into sharing information on beef farming and the environment is done on all fronts from our policy and advocacy efforts, consumer engagement, and in working with other organizations, particularly CCA and its Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE) team, and the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB).

Most recently, BFO Board and staff members along with CCA staff held meetings with Members of Parliament and Senators in Ottawa about the sustainability of cattle production in Ontario. Board and staff communicated that federal policies need to resonate with Canadian farmers as much as they do with the Government and the public, and such policies need to include experienced voices from Canadian farmers; the importance of cattle producers being able to feed the world while contributing to environmental, social and economic sustainability; the need for strategic investments in science-based practices and sector-led initiatives to encourage soil-based carbon storage; and to encourage technology, innovations and management approaches that reduce overall emissions and the intensity of emissions.

To combat the narrative that livestock agriculture is negatively impacting the environment, we are continuously highlighting the realities of beef farming in Ontario and in Canada, and the environmental benefits provided by the beef sector. This involves regularly communicating to governments and consumers that Canada's beef sector is a leader in global sustainable beef efforts, that the sector maintains one of the lowest greenhouse gas (GHG) footprints of all beef systems in the world, the value of agricultural grasslands and the integral role beef farmers play in preserving these declining landscapes. As you will likely note from the below information, advocacy and engagement work on this front is a multifaceted approach.

We also acknowledge the beef sector is committed to further improving production practices that benefit the environment and continue to invest in research and extension to advance the sector, work to increase the number of producers trained and audited through beef quality assurance programming, further implement environmental stewardship practices on-farm and continue to identify production efficiencies.

The Canadian beef sector developed the Canada Beef Industry Goals 2030 to further show our commitment to progress and provide the sector concrete targets to work towards. A number of the Industry Goals deal with the environment. These include:

- Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Sequestration Goals
 - Safeguard the existing 1.5 billion tonnes of carbon stored on lands managed with beef cattle
 - Sequester an additional 3.4 million tonnes of carbon every year
 - Reduce primary production GHG emission intensity by 33 per cent by 2030
 - Reduce food loss and waste (from secondary processing to consumer) by 50 per cent by 2030
- Land Use and Biodiversity Goals
 - Maintain the 35 million acres of native grassland in the care of beef producers:
 - by focusing on economic viability of producers and
 - by supporting programs that incentivize conservation
 - in collaboration with Canadian crop groups (e.g. Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops)
 - Maintain a network of natural landscapes and healthy functioning ecosystems through well-managed grazing systems that maintain sustainable plant communities and healthy rangelands
 - Maintain and enhance the 68 per cent of wildlife habitat capacity within agricultural lands being supported by beef production
 - Enhance the ecosystem services (e.g. carbon sequestration, etc.) provided on the 9 million acres of seeded grassland in the care of beef producers
 - Encourage practices that build soil organic matter and enhance soil biodiversity resulting in both carbon sequestration and water infiltration
- Water and Soil Quality Goals
 - Promote practices that maximize water quality and retention, to deliver healthier landscapes, resilience to drought and flood events, and groundwater recharge as appropriate to the region's precipitation
 - Improve water use efficiency in the beef value chain
 - Build recognition by the public and policy-makers of the benefits provided by grassland ecosystems, including: Protection of wetlands; The role of wetlands as important carbon sinks; Filtration of nutrients that protect water quality and

reduce non-point source pollution; Resilience to drought and flood events; and support groundwater recharge and future water supplies

To review the Industry Goals in more depth, visit <https://www.cattle.ca/sustainability/canadian-beef-industry-goals>.

In regards to BFO's consumer engagement efforts, a key pillar is talking with consumers about the environmental benefits provided by Ontario's beef farmers. To get a sense of what is communicated, visit the Ontario Beef website to read about our messaging around the environmental value of Ontario beef (<https://www.ontbeef.ca/blog/>). BFO's consumer engagement efforts have continued to grow and in 2022 there were a number of campaigns and advertisements focused on the environmental sustainability of the Ontario beef sector. This included:

- Extending the 2021 environmental public relations campaign through to March 2022, which aimed to build on the campaign efforts in 2021 and increase good news content around beef and the environment.
- A high-profile influencer campaign where three influencers were invited to tour a beef farm and learn more about beef farming and how the farmers are stewarding the land. They each created social media content about their experience on the farm to share with their collective 4.4 million followers.
- Expanded our podcast advertising, which aired on the Ongoing History of New Music with Alan Cross as well as other podcasts across the Corus network. The ads ran from June 1 to August 31 and focused on reiterating the environmental value of Ontario beef.
- Continued our working relationship with AgScape. Throughout 2022, our beef resource, An Exploration of Beef Farming in Ontario, was the most requested resource at AgScape.

Within CCA, the Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE) team also handles consumer-facing issues related to beef production in Canada and aims to maintain public trust in the Canadian beef industry. The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) is another important partner in the promotion of the environmental benefits of cattle production, advancing the environmental, social and economic sustainability of Canada's beef sector throughout the supply chain. This includes overseeing the CRSB quality assurance certification program for producers, processors and those sourcing beef for their stores or restaurants. In Ontario, producers can become CRSB certified by completing training and an audit through Verified Beef Production Plus or the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program. CRSB also plays a key role in benchmarking and assessing our environmental, social and economic sustainability progress.

Another way our sector highlights the beneficial environmental services provided by beef cattle production and our commitment to improving our environmental impact is through research. A component of BFO's Research Committee is funding research on environmental sustainability that will reduce the sector's environmental footprint by developing solutions and systems that benefit beef production and the environment. The Beef Cattle Research Council, a division of CCA, is our national industry-led funding agency for beef and forage research. BCRC supports a number of environment related research projects to do with forage and grassland productivity, feed efficiency, and environmental sustainability, and develop resources for producers to better understand research results.

BFO has also developed relationships with other organizations to promote the environmental benefits of cattle production and our commitment to further improvements. This includes the

University of Guelph, Bird Ecology and Conservation Ontario, Ontario Forage Council, Greenbelt Foundation, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Ontario Farmland Trust, Cleanfarms and the other livestock and general farm organizations, to name a few. Nationally, CCA, PSE, BCRC and CRSB also work closely with many organizations, including: Duck Unlimited Canada, Birds Canada, Nature Conservancy Canada, Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association, etc.

With the help of our industry's advocacy and voluntary efforts, the role of Canada's agriculture sector as a solution to address climate change and to reduce GHG emissions is not lost on the federal government. The federal government has released a number of plans and strategies over the past couple of years to protect the environment and address climate change, and the role of agriculture, including Canada's beef sector and the management of grasslands, is explicitly recognized. For example:

- Released in 2021, the "A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy" plan states farmers are on the frontlines of climate change and are key partners in the fight against it. The plan also states improvements made by the sector, such as how feeding and breeding improvements have lowered emissions by 15 per cent per kilogram of beef over the past 30 years, reducing pressure on land and water. The plan also describes agricultural lands, grasslands and wetlands as natural climate solutions, and the ability to capture and store more carbon through improving management of agricultural lands and by restoring grasslands and wetlands.
- The federal 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan (2022) acknowledges agricultural soils are a significant carbon sink and offset approximately six per cent of total annual agricultural emissions, and the sector has the potential to sequester even more carbon through the use of cover cropping, rotational grazing and improved manure management.
- The Federal Greenhouse Gas Carbon Offset System is developing an initial set of protocols that will include protocols on "Enhanced Soil Organic Carbon" and "Livestock Feed Management". These protocols will allow for farmers to generate credits in the carbon market for a number of environmental practices they provide on-farm and create a financial incentive to reduce emissions.
- Canada's Methane Strategy (2022) aims to reduce methane emissions in Canada by 30 per cent below 2020 levels by 2030. The Strategy recognizes the oil and gas, agriculture and landfill sectors as Canada's main sources of methane emissions. Despite oil and gas contributing 38 per cent, agriculture 30 per cent and landfills 28 per cent of methane emissions, the government's 2030 methane reduction targets expect the oil and gas sector to reduce methane emissions by 65 per cent, landfills by 45 per cent and agriculture by one per cent. This target for agriculture is due in part to the government acknowledging the role grazing cattle has in preserving and improving native grasslands, the benefits of raising beef cattle on grasslands such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity and water quality, and the voluntary actions of Canada's beef sector to preserve grasslands and reduce emissions produced by the sector through the Canada Beef Industry 2030 Goals. The report also notes the reductions in Canada's cattle herd correlates with reduced grasslands, pastures and forages acres, and how native grasslands can be conserved and improved with grazing livestock and managed grazing to sequester carbon.
- The Sustainable Agriculture Strategy consultation (2023) closed for public comment on March 31, 2023 and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is planning to publish the final Strategy at the end of 2023. This Strategy is meant to create long-term plan that will help bring together action on priority environment and climate issues in the agriculture sector and outlines a number of recommendations, such as protecting grasslands to support biodiversity. The draft Strategy notes agriculture accounts for 10 per cent of

Canada's GHG emissions (35 per cent of which is associated with enteric fermentation), and that emissions from livestock production decreased by 20 per cent between 2005-2020 compared to 102 per cent increase in crop production emissions within the same time frame. The Strategy acknowledges the 10 per cent of emissions from the agriculture sector does not account for the carbon sequestered within agricultural lands, which would offset a portion of the agricultural sector's emissions. It also acknowledges the work being done by industry groups to promote stewardship and track sustainability goals, and references the CRSB as evidence of such efforts. It further highlights concerns with the conversion of grasslands to annual crop land and the importance of grasslands in regulating water quality, protecting soil, cycling of nutrients, sequestering carbon and providing habitat for wildlife.

The need to promote the environmental benefits provided by beef production in Canada to governments, elected officials and consumers, and pushback on a narrative that believes beef farming negatively impacts our environment is an on-going effort, and remains a key priority for BFO. We encourage local associations to connect with their elected officials from their ridings to raise this topic as well and to reach out to BFO for information on this matter in order to make the meetings productive. We thank you for bringing this resolution forward and appreciate any feedback or questions from members on this subject.

Sincerely,



Jack Chaffe
President

cc: Rene Harnisch (Mover)
Geordie MacLaren (Seconder and Advisory Councillor)
Gordon Wylie (Secretary)