

## A Review of 2014 for the CRSB

The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) had a busy and productive 2014. Progress was achieved in many areas and new members were welcomed by the CRSB Council. The CRSB secured funding and moved forward with the Sustainability Assessment Project, further developed governing documents, and deployed a number of communications initiatives.

### CRSB Council

The CRSB Council is tasked with setting a strategic direction for the CRSB. The Council's focus for 2014 was to continue to establish the CRSB into a fully functional organization. Highlights for 2014 include attaining new membership (there is now a total of 32 members with 15 scientific advisors and observers on hand), developing governing documents for the CRSB, passing the governance review, and continuing work on the bylaws, operating procedures and role and mandate documents.

The Council also assisted with the development of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) Principles and Criteria document.

### Communications Committee

The communications committee achieved 2.54 million media impressions and 26 written articles in 2014. The CRSB logo was developed along with the website, [www.crsb.ca](http://www.crsb.ca) and a Twitter page, [@CRSB\\_beef](https://twitter.com/CRSB_beef). A couple of highlights include the front page of the Calgary Herald, an article in Walmart's Live Better magazine and a multitude of beef industry articles.

### Sustainability Assessment Committee

The sustainability assessment committee embarked on the Canadian Beef Industry Sustainability Assessment benchmarking study. This large project is now successfully underway thanks to the hard work and funding from many of the CRSB members, the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency and the Saskatchewan Agriculture Development Fund.

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Deloitte Canada was chosen to lead the environmental and social assessment, with support from [Canfax](#) Research Services for the economic portion of the study. The project is progressing well, with the committee guiding the project as a steering committee. Covering topics such as biodiversity, carbon sequestration and animal care, this study will be the first of its kind to assess such a robust spectrum of impacts of the beef industry sustainability at a national scale.

The project is currently at the data collection stage having completed a literature review and developed the scope, scenarios and sensitivities for the project. An expert independent panel has been established to review the sustainability assessment project to ensure robustness of the study. The committee continues to be involved in the process, offering scientific advice, guidance, and expert connections. *(continued on next page)*

## **Sustainability Assessment Committee** *(continued from previous page)*

The engagement of CRSB membership and scientific advisors is a testament to the understood importance of this assessment and the commitment of the Canadian beef industry to be a leader in global beef sustainability.

In 2015, the CRSB will undertake the completion of the sustainability assessment, starting the indicator development process and supporting the further development of existing programs that can be used to support sustainability initiatives.

## **CRSB Welcomes New Members**

The CRSB was pleased to welcome new members in 2014 reaching a total of 32 members plus 15 scientific advisors.

New member, Tim Hortons is excited to join the CRSB. “Sustainability is very important to Tim Hortons, and we believe that the approach that the CRSB is taking - collaborative, multi-stakeholder, national, and focused on the triple bottom line - is the right one,” said Heather Mak, Manager, Sustainability & Responsibility of Tim Hortons Inc. “We look forward to developing solutions with our peers to help ensure a resilient and sustainable Canadian beef industry,” she added.

**There are 32  
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CRSB**

Another new CRSB member, Federated Co-Operatives Limited (FCL), recently introduced their ‘Raised at Home’ initiative, which helps to communicate the sustainability commitment of Western Canadian farmers. This video series, produced in conjunction with Canada Beef, highlights focus areas of sustainability such as animal care, environment and quality through videos with local ranchers. The series, which can be viewed [here](#), fits well with FCL’s commitment to helping contribute to the sustainability initiatives of the CRSB.

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## **GRSB Approves Principles and Criteria**

On November 3, 2014, in São Paulo, Brazil at the Global Conference on Sustainable Beef, the GRSB approved the [Principles and Criteria](#) for defining global sustainable beef. It was developed as a way to define sustainable beef at a high level in the context of the mission and vision of the GRSB.

This was a major milestone in GRSB’s development, and the fact that 96 per cent of members voted in favour of adopting the Principles and Criteria reflects the high level of stakeholder inclusion and consultation in the process. Each of the principles and accompanying criteria were developed by a core Technical Working Group (TWG) that included members and experts in the field identified to assist. Once the initial draft had been approved there were two external consultations, firstly an industry based review, and then a full public comment period, followed by re-editing and a final public review.

The Principles and Criteria [document](#) sets out GRSB’s vision of a sustainable industry and the elements that are involved in attaining that vision. *(Continued on next page)*

## **GRSB Approves Principles and Criteria** *(continued from previous page)*

It is not a detailed prescriptive document, but forms the basis upon which national and regional initiatives can build. The CRSB will be working with stakeholders to define relevant indicators for Canada, as will national groups in other countries. Naturally, priorities differ from place to place and issues that are important in some countries are of much less relevance in others. This is the challenge of the beef industry and the reason why the GRSB knows that while a Global Roundtable could help coordinate and support activities, it would always be essential to have national groups to design systems that work in their own country. This also allows for the fact that legislation varies so much between countries - in some countries national legislation may be more than adequate to meet one of GRSB's principles or criteria, so provided it is generally complied with there would be no need for a national group to develop any further steps on that issue.

This approach has determined GRSB's work plan for 2015. The GRSB will be working closely with the Brazilian Roundtable on Sustainable Livestock (GTPS) in Brazil, CRSB in Canada and others in Mexico, Colombia and the U.S. to design a road map for collaboration and a working relationship. It will also be issuing an explanatory document on the Principles and Criteria and guidance to national roundtables on the development of accompanying indicators.

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## **McDonald's Pilot Project for Sustainable Beef**

In Canada, McDonald's has committed to purchasing a portion of its beef from verified sustainable sources in 2016. Although the project is McDonald's own initiative and not one of the CRSB, constant and collaborative communication between the CRSB and McDonald's has been key in making sure the pilot program is a success.

"We've worked hard to support the Canadian beef industry and we felt that bringing the pilot here would be another demonstration of that commitment. We believed that if the pilot project happened in Canada we would get encouragement, honest collaboration and the insights that only those in the industry could bring. We've received all of that and so much more," said Jeffrey Fitzpatrick-Stilwell, Senior Manager of Sustainability at McDonald's Canada, and Chair of the communications working group of the CRSB.

The pilot will serve as a learning opportunity which will help McDonald's better understand how they can measure, verify and communicate to consumers the sustainability of beef production. One key aspect of the pilot is that it will use the principles and criteria developed by both the CRSB and the GRSB and then work with key stakeholders to develop sustainability indicators that will apply those principles to Canadian beef production.

"2015 will be a critical year for the pilot as we finalize the producers who are going to participate, and begin testing and implementing the systems we'll use for verification," said Fitzpatrick-Stilwell.

McDonald's points out that the pilot is not a certification program of the beef it will purchase, but rather the verification that the beef was sustainably raised based on the criteria developed. The pilot will aim to allow producers to demonstrate how they meet the sustainability indicators, and participating producers and processing facilities will undergo third-party verification.