

In 2018, the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) completed its first consumer research study to assess consumer opinions about beef sustainability, and to evaluate consumer impact and understanding of CRSB Certified logos and claims.

## Background

Launched in 2017, the CRSB's *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* is a voluntary certification scheme designed to recognize sustainable practices in beef production and processing, to assist retail and foodservice companies to meet sustainable sourcing goals and commitments, and to provide consumers assurances about beef sustainability through marketing and product labels.

Consumer research was deemed a critical element of the Framework development to ensure consumer understanding and clarity of the logos and claims consistent with legal and regulatory requirements.

The purpose of the project was to conduct consumer research that informed the selection of logo branding and claims for the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* in an effort to help communicate about beef sustainability with consumers and the public. The goals of the research were twofold:

- 1 to evaluate a series of logo options for preference and how they resonate with respect to sustainability
- 2 to gather insight and opinions about the impact of sustainability claims to be used with the CRSB Certified logo to ensure clear, concise and transparent messaging.

## Methodology

To fulfill the objectives of the research, an external communications firm with expertise in consumer research was contracted. The research was carried out in three stages:

1. Key stakeholder interviews with CRSB partners across the beef value chain;
2. Online consumer survey with a representative sample of Canadians (n=1,544); and
3. Focus groups (n=50)

Key elements addressed by the research included evaluating a series of possible logo options and claim statements aimed at providing consumer assurances regarding sustainable practices. Both the clarity and understanding of the claims was tested, as well as the impact of a Certification Mark on consumer purchasing decisions. Key elements important to the logo design related to sustainability certification were identified, and opportunities for improvement were sought through focus groups. The research results informed the final [Communications, Claims and Labelling Guide](#) that was released in September 2018.

## Key Highlights

The research found that while food safety and quality are still key drivers impacting consumer purchasing decisions, animal health and welfare, country of origin and environmental impact are also of strong importance. Canadians showed a strong preference for the final approved Certification Mark that included a maple leaf and checkmark. A differentiated Mass Balance Certification Mark was also developed to allow for clear communication related to how the beef is sourced through the supply chain. The CRSB adopted recommendations of the research in selecting the final Marks to represent the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework*.

