

BCRC welcomes announcement of new forage research chair

For immediate release
June 10, 2013

Calgary, AB - The Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) welcomes today's announcement of federal-provincial Growing Forward 2 funding of \$1.25 million over five years for the creation of a forage research chair at the University of Saskatchewan.

As highlighted in the 2012 National Beef Research Strategy developed by the BCRC and the Beef Value Chain Roundtable, Canadian beef industry stakeholders strongly identify the need for continued and reinvigorated forage and grassland productivity capacity and research. The new research chair position will help address this concern.

Ongoing forage research ensures that Canada fully capitalizes on its natural advantages for beef production, is improving forage yields and nutritional value, and strengthens the beef industry's ongoing commitment to environmental management and sustainability.

"Forages are the foundation of Canada's beef industry," said BCRC Vice-Chair Tim Oleksyn, a cow-calf producer from Shellbrook, Saskatchewan. "Increasing forage productivity is more important than ever with increasing competition for farmland by other agriculture sectors and urban growth."

The forage research chair will play an important role in future programs within Canada's Beef Cattle Industry Science Cluster, a partnership between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the BCRC to ensure that applied beef research funds are allocated to research priorities and projects that have the greatest potential to benefit the competitiveness of the industry.

"It's expected that the new chair will not only develop new forage varieties that could be valuable nation-wide, but also mentor and train new forage experts to sustain Canadian forage research into the future," said Oleksyn.

Maintaining existing professional research capacity in this area will continue to be an industry priority as current forage researchers are set to retire within the next few years.

The BCRC is Canada's industry-led funding agency for beef research. The BCRC is funded through a portion of the producer-paid national levy which leverages government research funding, and is led by a committee of beef producers from across the country. The BCRC's mandate is to determine research and development priorities for the Canadian beef cattle industry and to administer national check-off funds allocated to research. It operates as a division of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association.

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