



# VBP+ CONNECTS BIG GROWTH FROM DATA

New VBP database part of new era for beef connectivity

**T**his year more Canadian beef will be marketed with a tag of some aspect of sustainability than at any time in our history.

Thanks in part to a new Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) database, the players will soon be able to prove that.

For years Canadian agriculture has collected all sorts of data on farm and food production and the beef industry is no exception. But the track record shows that data simply has not been used as effectively as it should.

That is changing across all of agriculture with a new era of data connectivity. Beef is a big part of that growing potential. Today there are more brands involved and more industry interest in serving a consumer more interested than ever before in how their food is produced.

## MORE ROBUST OPTIONS

“VBP has always internally tracked registered cattle operation participation,” says Andrea Brocklebank, executive director of the Beef Cattle Research Council, the body that oversees the VBP+ program. “But this secure database has been updated as part of the move to Verified Beef Production Plus.”

VBP+ added new modules for biosecurity, animal care and the environment to the original mandate of on-farm food safety. The goal was to give the industry a much more robust definition of sustainability.



Andrea Brocklebank: New era for data in sustainable beef.

Correspondingly, the information from this expansion now has more value.

## TARGET BEEF STREAM

This is all about leveraging the data in the marketplace, says Brocklebank. The target is the verified sustainable beef stream.

The new world of data connectivity brings together more players. In a manner that respects producer privacy the end-users will not know the names of the cattle operations, just if cattle are supplied from a registered VBP+ operation.

As cattle are marketed, RFID numbers can be linked at the carcass level in the packing plant. Those cattle can be identified as to whether or not they came from a VBP+ registered operation. That information can then be used by a food company to prove that a cer-

tain percentage of their purchase on a net basis comes from a verified sustainable beef production program.

In addition BIXS has the potential to work in partnership with various players in the value chain to produce custom production and marketing programming around that data.

“It’s important for VBP participants to know that all of this is completely under the producer’s control,” says Brocklebank. “The VBP-status in the VBP database belongs to them and is only used with their permission.”

## KEY PRODUCER INTEREST

One question comes up perhaps most often in the VBP+ growth. If producers are looking after ensuring their beef is produced sustainably, who is looking after whether they will get credit for that effort?

“Nothing happens without effort and capturing the alluring potential of data connectivity in the beef chain is still a work in progress,” says Brocklebank. “But producers should take careful note of the progress that is taking place today, the market interest, the development of the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, and new activity that supports this.”

“Momentum is growing. Never before has participation in VBP+ had more potential to drive a difference in the market and back home on the farm.”

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