



SUSTAINABLE BEEF PROCESSING STANDARD



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Versions Published

Version Number	Publication Date	Description
1.0	December 7, 2017	First published final version
1.1	August 18, 2020	Updated objective and scope
2.0	December 21, 2023	Five-year review and update

Validity and Transition

The CRSB Sustainable Beef Production Standard version 2.0 will come into effect from December 21, 2023, and replaces all previous versions.

The transition period is one year. By the end of the transition period, all certificate holders shall have been evaluated against this standard version.

Translation Disclaimer

The official language of this Standard is English. For any question related to the precise meaning of the information between copies, versions or translations, please refer to the official English version for clarification.

Any discrepancies or differences in meaning due to translation are not binding and have no effect for auditing or certification purposes.

More Information

For more information about the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef visit the website crsb.ca.

For more information about the CRSB Certified Sustainable Beef Framework visit the website crsbcertified.ca.

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Introduction

The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) is a collaborative multi-stakeholder organization focused on advancing sustainability in the Canadian beef value chain. It provides a national forum dedicated to connecting a network of leaders and stakeholders committed to beef sustainability.

Vision: that the Canadian beef value chain is a global leader in environmental, social and economic sustainability and part of a trusted and thriving food system.

Mission: advance, measure and communicate continuous improvement in sustainability of the Canadian beef value chain.

The CRSB is a member of and is aligned with the principles and criteria established by the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB). The five guiding principles of beef sustainability (i.e. natural resources, people and the community, animal health and welfare, food, and efficiency and innovation), as defined by the GRSB, establish the foundation for the CRSB and its members.

From these guiding principles, the CRSB has defined sustainable beef as a socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sound product that prioritizes the planet, people, animals and progress.

CRSB Certified Sustainable Beef Framework

The *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* (the Framework) is a voluntary, operation-level, third-party audited certification program for the beef supply chain to demonstrate responsible practices.

The four key components of the Framework are:

1. The outcome-based Sustainable Beef Production Standard and Sustainable Beef Processing Standard,
2. Assurance Protocols providing guidance and requirements for the certification process,
3. Chain of Custody Requirements outlining the technical and administrative requirements for tracking cattle, beef and claims about beef sourced through Certified Operations, and
4. Sustainability claims that providing guidance on how to communicate about the Framework.



Sustainable Beef Processing Standard

This Sustainable Beef Processing Standard identifies the indicators, goal(s) and requirements for the assessment, audit and certification for beef processors in the context of sustainability. Developed through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach, the Standard is written to be outcome-based, measurable, based on science and expert opinion, and address key concerns around the sustainability of beef processing in Canada. The CRSB maintains guidance and implementation support in separate documents.

Initially written by the CRSB Indicator Committee, the CRSB Certified Sustainable Beef Framework Committee is currently responsible for the ongoing review, revision and interpretation of the Standard.

Eligible Operations

The Sustainable Beef Production Standard is aimed at all primary processors in Canada; these are the operations currently in scope for voluntary certification to the Processing Standard.

Laws and Regulations

The indicators are built on the assumption that participants are complying with all applicable laws and regulations; they are not intended to verify legal compliance or to endorse any activity as meeting any legal requirement that may apply to an individual operation. Participants are responsible for ensuring that they are compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

If a participant is found by the applicable regulator to be in contravention of any laws or regulations, the participant's status in the program will be reviewed and may result in suspension or removal from the program. The CRSB and Certification Bodies may only consider contravention of laws or regulations which fall strictly within the scope of the Standard. The CRSB and Certification Bodies will not take any action or assess any complaints or appeals related to legal non-compliance until a decision has been made by an applicable regulator or authority. This includes, where relevant, instituting any trigger audits or other actions taken in support of the complaint or appeal. Even if a regulatory authority makes such a final decision, the CRSB reserves the right to take no action if it deems necessary.

Prior to an audit, a self-declaration on compliance with applicable laws or regulations will be required from the beef processor.

The Processing Standard also refers to a number of internal policies and procedures which Certified Operations are expected to maintain. It is beyond the scope of the Standard and the authority of the CRSB and its Certification Bodies to assess the legal or regulatory implications of such policies and procedures.

Certification Requirements for Beef Processors

Each of the five principles of sustainable beef (i.e. natural resources, people and the community, animal health and welfare, food, and efficiency and innovation) contain indicators, goal(s) and requirements for certification.

Indicators include a three-level scoring system: Achievement, Innovation and Excellence levels. Certification requires operations meet, at a minimum, all of the requirements of the Achievement Level on every indicator. Innovation and Excellence levels are included to encourage continuous improvement over time but are not required to be met for certification. An Entry Threshold is included for some indicators, which reflects unacceptable practices or outcomes that require improvement before certification can be achieved.

Some requirements in the Standard are for information collection purposes only and do not influence audit results. When a requirement in the Standard is not assessed in the audit this is indicated by a note on the indicator.

The audit will be conducted based on the frequency defined in the Assurance Protocols and must be performed by an independent CRSB-approved Certification Body.

Indicators, Goals and Requirements

The Sustainable Beef Processing Standard requirements are built on the CRSB's five principles of beef sustainability – natural resources, people and the community, animal health and welfare, food, and efficiency and innovation – underpinned by the need for economic viability and resiliency across the beef supply chain.

The Standard uses an outcome-based approach, meaning that practices used to meet the individual indicators in the Standard are what is measured, without prescribing specific ways to achieve them. The outcome-based model allows for the diverse ways beef processors demonstrate sustainable practices based on their individual operation.

Economic Viability

Privacy and confidentiality concerns prevent the inclusion of financial management indicators in the Standard against which individual operations are assessed and audited, but integrated planning and management is essential for a sustainable operation to achieve certification. Therefore, the Standard assumes that economic viability influences behaviour, decision making and the potential for adoption of beneficial practices across each of the five principles of sustainability. A CRSB Certified Operation is an economically viable operation on a journey of continuous improvement.

Natural Resources

Intent: Responsibly-managed natural resources to maintain and enhance ecosystem health.

All aspects of agriculture and agri-food production are dependent on the use and management of, or interaction with, natural resources. As climate change and environmental sustainability become increasingly prominent topics amongst governments, industries and the public, beef production is being discussed as both a contributor to and part of the solutions.

Beef processors are responsible for managing a broad suite of natural resources. For example, they require adequate quantities of good quality water to operate their facilities in a way that maintains the safety of beef products, and the wastewater must be appropriately managed to limit impacts to ecosystems and watersheds. These operations also have potential to impact air quality and produce emission that contribute to climate change.



**NATURAL
RESOURCES**

NATURAL RESOURCES

NR 1	Water resources are responsibly managed.		
Goal:	Incoming and outgoing water shall be managed in both its quantity and quality. Water shall be used responsibly and recycled where possible.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
Discharge of untreated effluent or unacceptable chemicals in water bodies.	Operation shall manage water in a manner that maintains water quality and optimizes water use efficiency.	Water use is calculated or otherwise measured (e.g. gallons per head, litres per kilogram of beef).	Operation has a documented water management plan that is reviewed at least annually and water use improvements are tracked over time.

NATURAL RESOURCES

NR 2	Air emissions (e.g. greenhouse gases, air quality) are responsibly managed.		
Goal:	Efforts shall be made to reduce the operation's impact on air quality.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
Lack of awareness of the operation's impact on air quality.	<p>Operation shall take actions to manage air quality.</p> <p>Operation shall have a process in place to receive and mediate odour-related complaints.</p>	Air quality is documented.	Air quality is documented and improvements tracked over time.

NATURAL RESOURCES

NR 3	Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are responsibly managed.		
Goal:	Efforts shall be made to reduce the operation's carbon footprint.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
Lack of awareness of the operation's impact on carbon footprint.	Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions are tracked.	Scope 1 and 2 GHG reduction targets are set at the individual facility and/ or for the company as a whole.	Plans are in place to achieve reduction targets.

NATURAL RESOURCES

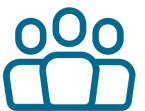
NR 4	Land resources and ecosystem health are maintained or enhanced.		
Goal:	Efforts shall be made to reduce negative environmental impacts to, and minimize contamination and pollution of land, soil and ecosystems.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
No emergency/disaster management plan that addresses spills and hazardous materials.	Operation shall have an emergency response or disaster management plan that addresses chemical spills and hazardous materials. The plan includes worker training.	<p>The number and magnitude of chemical spills as well as mitigation efforts are documented.</p> <p>The operation has policies to mitigate land impacts and protect biodiversity (e.g. for new facility developments), where applicable.</p>	Operation has a documented emergency response or disaster management plan that addresses chemical spills and hazardous materials. Plan is reviewed at least annually and the review is documented.

People and the Community

Intent: Human rights and well-being are respected and protected through healthy and safe work environments. The critical role that all participants within the beef value chain play in their communities regarding culture, heritage, employment, land rights and health is recognized.

The processing sector plays an important role in the Canadian economy and in the lives of people and the communities in which they operate. The CRSB recognizes the importance of a healthy and safe work environment for all workers, which includes treating people with equity and respect on all occasions. Mental health, diversity, fairness and other social and governance criteria are addressed by the requirements of this principle.

Assessment for certification looks beyond adherence to all applicable laws and regulations, including without limitation, workplace health and safety legislation, and human rights legislation. Incorporating career development and growth opportunities, and community involvement into a processor's assessment against the Standard recognizes the bigger story of their operation and how they connect with their community.



**PEOPLE & THE
COMMUNITY**

PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY

PC 1	A healthy and safe work environment is provided.		
Goal:	Steps shall be taken to reduce the risk of injury and illness to workers.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
No health and safety program.	<p>Operation shall identify the risks to health and safety for its business and workers, and shall have protocols in place to mitigate these risks</p> <p>Operation shall monitor health and safety and adjusts as necessary to provide safe working conditions.</p> <p>Workers shall be trained and follow health and safety protocols.</p>	Reportable Frequency or Incident Rate, or other injury/fatality-related measure, is calculated.	Operation has a documented health and safety plan that is reviewed at least annually.

PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY

<p>PC 2</p>	<p>All workers are treated with equity and respect.</p>		
<p>Goal:</p>	<p>Workers shall be treated fairly and impartially.</p>		
<p>Entry Threshold (Score: 0)</p>	<p>Achievement (Score: 1)</p>	<p>Innovation (Score: 2)</p>	<p>Excellence (Score: 3)</p>
<p>No process to document/validate and address complaints of discrimination.</p>	<p>There shall be an absence of discrimination in the workplace (e.g. impartially in the interview process and employee management; workers are free to express concerns about their treatment without repercussions).</p>	<p>Operation has a code of ethics, code of conduct or non-discrimination policy that is implemented by management and understood by workers.</p> <p>Workers complaints are logged and resolved in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Operation has a documented code of ethics, code of conduct or non-discrimination policy that is reviewed at least annually.</p>

PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY

PC 3	Career development opportunities are provided.		
Goal:	Workers shall be given training and other career-related opportunities to develop their skills and expertise.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
	Workers shall be trained and competent to complete their assigned tasks.	Employee performance reviews (whether formally or informally) are conducted at least on a yearly basis.	Mentorship or learning opportunities (e.g. career development program) are provided to all workers who wish to participate. Participation is tracked and documented.

PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY

PC 4	Operation is involved in its community (community is defined by each individual).*
Goal:	To recognize beef processors for their contributions to their community. Community is defined by each individual operation.

*This indicator is binary (assessed as 'yes' or 'not applicable'). It is for information collection purposes only and will not be scored in the audit.

Animal Health and Welfare

Intent: Animals are respected and managed in a way that keeps pain and distress to a minimum while maintaining their overall health and welfare.

Animal health and welfare is a significant discussion and focus point for both the industry and the general public. Ensuring that animals are healthy and cared for in the best manner is essential for a sustainable system, especially for the economic viability of an operation.

Cattle spend limited time at processing facilities but regular monitoring, prompt identification and management of sick or compromised animals, and the provision of feed and water when necessary are essential practices when caring for an animal.

Ensuring an animal's lifetime pain is kept to a minimum is extremely important, however there are times when painful procedures are completed. Pain mitigation and management during handling, movement through facilities, loading and unloading, and transport is an important and evolving area of focus for the industry.



**ANIMAL HEALTH
& WELFARE**

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

AHW 1	Cattle are regularly monitored and have sufficient quantity and quality of water and feed, when required, to meet their physical needs.		
Goal:	Cattle shall be checked regularly for health and welfare, and provided with feed and water when required.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
<p>Cattle are not monitored and may be in distress or not able to access feed/water.</p> <p>Cattle are not provided water and/or feed when required in emergency or unusual conditions (e.g. hot weather, when held for longer-than normal periods of time).</p>	<p>Operation shall undertake regular monitoring of live cattle so basic needs are met.</p> <p>Operation shall have a plan to address cattle needs while waiting for slaughter (e.g. workers know what to do when cattle are in distress; when feed and water is required; and what to do if power goes out/access to feed and water is cut off).</p>	<p>Some review and documentation on cattle monitoring and/or actions taken to address animal comfort prior to slaughter.</p>	<p>Documented monitoring includes emergency response plan, and animal monitoring/correction plan, which are reviewed at least annually.</p>

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

AHW 2	Operation takes actions to minimize animal pain and distress.		
Goal:	The operation shall minimize pain and distress to animals pre-slaughter and during the slaughter process. This includes facilities; holding pens with adequate ventilation and space; handling; loading; transport and unloading when it is under the control of the processor; and slaughter.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
<p>Inappropriate transport or off-loading procedures that cause unnecessary pain or distress to animals and there is not plan for improvement.</p> <p>Consistent animal pain and distress from a source and there is no plan for improvement.</p> <p>Use of electric prods on sensitive parts of the animal, when cattle have nowhere to move, or to non-ambulatory or disabled cattle.</p> <p>Willful acts of abuse are not remedied.</p>	<p>Operation shall undertake humane animal handling that includes safe loading and unloading conditions, transport, low stress handling, considerations for extreme weather, and understanding of unacceptable procedures. Actions shall be monitored and adjusted when necessary.</p> <p>Electric prods shall be used sparingly as last resort and people understand how to deal with difficult, injured or compromised cattle.</p> <p>Optimize the welfare of animals during pre-slaughter and slaughter processes, until they are dead, in accordance with applicable provincial and/or federal regulations. Workers shall understand what to check for and how to remedy inadvertent errors.</p> <p>Facilities shall have adequate lighting and ventilation, are in good repair and monitored to prevent injuries, bruising and falls.</p> <p>Efforts shall be made to minimize processing wait times.</p>	<p>Workers who handle live cattle are trained on low stress animal handling techniques. Training is monitored and re-training provided when necessary.</p> <p>A documented policy exists and is followed regarding willful acts of abuse.</p>	<p>Operation has a documented protocol to minimize animal pain and distress associated with the movement of live cattle through the facility; transport; handling prior to slaughter; and during slaughter. Protocol is reviewed at least annually and changes made when necessary.</p>

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

AHW 3	Compromised and sick animals are managed appropriately.		
Goal:	Compromised and sick animals shall be identified in a timely manner, and a course of action shall be taken that is appropriate to the situation and reduces animal pain and distress.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
Compromised and/or sick animals are not promptly identified and/or not treated humanely. There is no plan for improvement.	Operation shall address cattle that are injured, sick or otherwise compromised in an expedient manner. These animals shall be promptly identified and treated or euthanized. Euthanization shall be done with appropriate equipment and competent, trained personnel in an acceptable manner.	Non-ambulatory policy exists. Workers follow a formal policy to promptly manage compromised or sick cattle. Training documentation exists.	The policy for compromised and injured/sick animals is documented, and reviewed at least annually.

Food

Intent: The safety and quality of beef products is ensured.

In response to what has been called an ongoing global food crisis, conversations about food security and sustainable food systems have become commonplace. Food systems must be able to provide affordable healthy diets produced in a sustainable and resilient way.

Food safety is of utmost importance for the Canadian beef industry, the public and consumers alike. A food safety program is imperative to identifying and mitigating risks. Effective food safety plans, traceability and government oversight by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are factors that contribute to safe beef production across Canada. A Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points approach to food safety is required for all federally inspected processing plants and is strongly recommended by the CRSB for all operations seeking certification to the Standard.

Beef processors have a variety of customer requirements and specifications, which are important to meet for their overall sustainability, particularly in the economic context. For this Standard, the CRSB defines quality beef as consistently meeting their customers requirements for beef and other co-products, with the goal of working towards a reduction in the number of product rejections.

Each stage of the value chain has a responsibility to help reduce the approximate one-third of all human food production lost and wasted each year. The Standard promotes developing strategies for reducing food waste at the processing and packing level, followed by redistribution and recycling, and then effective disposal to help meet this goal.





Fd 1	A food safety program is followed.	
Goal:	Operation shall meet federal or provincial standards and takes all reasonable actions to support food safety.	
	Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)
No food safety program.		Operation must have a valid license to operate, including a documented food safety program.

FOOD

Fd 2	Responsible efforts are made to ensure the quality of beef and co-products to customers further down the supply chain.		
Goal:	Quality beef and co-products shall be provided to customers in the supply chain and rejected product that does not meet customer specifications minimized.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
There are no efforts made to address customer complaints.	<p>Customer specifications shall be known.</p> <p>There shall be a process in place to receive and resolve customer complaints.</p>	Customer complaints are logged and resolved in a timely manner.	The number of rejections from customers in the supply chain is tracked and remains the same or is reduced over time.

FOOD

Fd 3	Efforts are made to reduce food waste.		
Goal:	The operation shall make efforts to reduce food waste and loss that can be avoided, and recognize that the optimal use of products is for human consumption first (1. reduce; 2. divert - prevent, redistribute and recycle; and 3. dispose).		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
Operation does not seek to reduce landfill waste and has no plan for improvement.	Operation shall identify food waste and loss in their business and implement practices to reduce landfill waste.	Operation has conducted a food waste and loss assessment, optimization assessment, or similar.	Operation tracks food waste and loss over time.

Efficiency and Innovation

Intent: Encourage the adoption of innovation and technological advances to optimize production, improve efficiency and reduce waste, adding to the economic resiliency of individual operations and the industry.

Sustainability is broadly recognized as a journey of continuous improvement not a fixed destination. Many operations are already highly efficient due to modern agricultural research and technological innovation, but processors are still seeking to increase the efficiency of their operations. It is important to note that the use of new technology and innovation should be done responsibly and not at the expense of other principles (e.g. animal care should not be compromised for efficiency gains), and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. This principle does not ban or require the use of any technology or innovation but rather stresses its responsible use.

The scalability of innovation to operations of varied sizes needs to be practical and efficiency improvements available at a realistic cost.



**EFFICIENCY &
INNOVATION**

EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION

EI 1	Operation reduces, reuses and recycles.		
Goal:	Operation shall reduce, reuse and recycle wherever feasible.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
<p>Operation does not make efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle, and has no plan for improvement.</p>	<p>Operation shall take actions to reduce, reuse and recycle non-food materials (e.g. packaging) used in the facility.</p>	<p>Operation has a program in place to reduce, reuse and recycle non-food (e.g. packaging) materials.</p>	<p>Operation has a documented program to reduce, reuse and recycle, and can show evidence that it is diverting materials (non-food) from the landfill.</p>

EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION

EI 2	Energy is used efficiently and innovative options are considered.		
Goal:	Energy shall be used as efficiently as possible and options for enhancing energy use efficiency shall be considered.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
No practices for energy use efficiency have been considered.	Practices shall be implemented to increase energy use efficiency.	Energy use is calculated (e.g. kilowatt hour per kilogram of beef produced).	<p>Innovative options to increase energy use efficiency are considered, and where not cost prohibitive, are utilized.</p> <p>Energy use is tracked over time and positive progress of energy use is demonstrated.</p>

EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION

EI 3	Innovation and technology are used in a responsible manner.
Goal:	New technologies and innovations are explored and utilized to continuously improve the sustainability of the product (e.g. food safety, efficiency, productivity).

*This indicator is binary (assessed as 'yes' or 'not applicable'). It is for information collection purposes only and will not be scored in the audit.

EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION

EI 4	Continuous learning and collaboration in the beef industry is pursued.		
Goal:	Continuous learning about sustainability shall be undertaken and efforts made to collaborate with other stakeholders in the supply chain.		
Entry Threshold (Score: 0)	Achievement (Score: 1)	Innovation (Score: 2)	Excellence (Score: 3)
	<p>Within the last 5 years, operation has proof of learning in one of the five principles of sustainable beef (natural resources, people and the community, animal health and welfare, food, and efficiency and innovation.</p>	<p>Within the last 5 years, operation has proof of learning in three of the five principles of sustainable beef (natural resources, people and the community, animal health and welfare, food, and efficiency and innovation.</p>	<p>Within the last 5 years, operation has proof of learning in all five principles of sustainable beef (natural resources, people and the community, animal health and welfare, food, and efficiency and innovation.</p>

Challenges to Implementation

The CRSB recognizes that there may be challenges associated with implementing the Standard. Some of these challenges broadly include:

- increased costs and time,
- balancing efficiency and quality (e.g. increasing water use efficiency while maintaining food safety),
- balancing employment, labour risks and automation of processes at the plant (e.g. leads to loss of jobs, reduced community linkages),
- driving improvement while at the same time maintaining economic sustainability (e.g. having expectations that are not feasible),
- shortage of labour and trained personnel,
- trade-offs between implementation of some indicators and economic sustainability, and
- potential conflicts between implementation of indicators.

The CRSB continues efforts to address some of these challenges through its four pillars of work.