

Roundtable on sustainable American beef created; diverse participant list covers farm-to-fork

Multi-Stakeholder U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef Launched

CENTENNIAL, Colo. (March 3, 2015) – A group of U.S. beef value chain participants including producers, processors, retailers, foodservice operators, packers, allied industry and non-governmental organizations today announced the launch of the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB). The multi-stakeholder roundtable will identify sustainability indicators, establish verification methodologies, and generate field project data to test and confirm sustainability concepts for use throughout the United States. The USRSB adopts an approach whereby social, economic and environmental considerations are balanced to achieve sustainable outcomes.

“Research tells us American consumers are increasingly interested in the social, economic and environmental impacts of the beef they purchase,” said Nicole Johnson-Hoffman, vice president of Cargill Value Added Meats and interim chair of USRSB. “For the first time, the entire U.S. beef value chain, including representatives who raise cattle and produce, market and sell beef, in addition to representatives from the NGO community and allied businesses, are coming together to establish metrics and criteria that will be used to benchmark the present and help measure improvements in the sustainability of American beef going forward.”

USRSB's mission is to advance, support and communicate continuous improvement in U.S. beef sustainability through leadership, innovation, multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Utilizing the definition for sustainable beef recently released by the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB), the USRSB will develop sustainability indicators relevant to the various beef systems in the United States, as well as a means to verify sustainable progress in a transparent manner that can be shared. Similar to GRSB, the USRSB will not mandate standards or verify the performance of individual beef value chain participants.

“Today's announcement from the United States regarding the formation of a U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef is welcome news to GRSB and our membership,” stated Cameron Bruett, head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability at JBS USA and president of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef. “The United States is a world leader in beef production and will play a key role in meeting the global challenge of feeding the world in a sustainable manner that allows future generations to thrive. With the establishments of regional multi-stakeholder beef sustainability roundtables in Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Colombia and now, the United States, it is clear that the international commitment to sustainable beef enjoys tremendous momentum.”

The USRSB is being directed by an interim board of directors that includes representatives from Cargill, Beef Marketing Group, Texas Cattle Feeders Association, Micro Technologies, Merck Animal Health, JBS USA, McDonald's, Walmart, World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Noble Foundation and the King Ranch® Institute for Ranch Management. Participation will be open to individual producers, producer associations, processors, retailers, foodservice operators, allied industry and civil society.

“By 2050, more than 9 billion people will consume twice as much food as we do today,” said Nancy Labbe, senior program officer, World Wildlife Fund. “We are excited to be part of this important step toward balancing social, economic and environmental demands to feed a growing world while conserving natural resources, reducing waste and preserving biodiversity.”

Currently, the USRSB has 43 founding members. They include: Adams Land and Cattle, LLC; AgriBeef Co.; Alabama Cattlemen's Association; Beef Cattle Institute, Kansas State University; Beef Marketing Group; Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation; Certified Angus Beef; Colorado Cattlemen's Association; Costco Wholesale Corporation; Dow AgroSciences LLC; Elanco Animal Health; Florida Cattlemen's Association; FPL Food LLC; Global Food Traceability Center; Golden State Foods; Holistic Management International; JBS USA; Kansas Livestock Association; K-COE ISOM; King Ranch® Institute for Ranch Management; Lopez Foods; McDonald's Corporation; Merck Animal Health; Micro Technologies; Minnesota Cattlemen's Association; Missouri Cattlemen's Association; National Beef Packing Co. LLC; National Cattlemen's Beef Association; National Livestock Producers Association; Nebraska Cattlemen's Association; Oregon Cattlemen's Association; Simplot Livestock Company; Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable; Texas A&M AgriLife Research; Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; The National Grazing Lands Coalition; Texas Cattle Feeders Association; The Nature Conservancy; The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation; Tyson Foods, Inc.; Walmart; World Wildlife Fund; and Zoetis.

Membership will be open to additional founding members until June 1, 2015.

“American cattlemen and women are proud of our efforts to provide safe, affordable and sustainable beef on the plates of millions of American and global consumers every day,” said John Butler, chief executive officer of the Beef Marketing Group, a cattle marketing cooperative located in Kansas and Nebraska. “We stand ready to collaborate in this effort of continuous improvement across the social, economic and environmental aspects of beef production. Working together with members of the U.S. beef value chain, American producers are eager to add the next chapter to our long-standing heritage of stewardship and great-tasting beef.”

Learn more at usrsb.org. For additional information, please contact Nikki Richardson at nrichardson@beef.org or 303-850-3357.

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