

Scientific Contributions Cont'd..

The article that follows provides information on the Beef InfoXchange System (BIXS). The BIXS system will utilize Canada's national cattle ID system to create an internet database of production information including grading and potentially other meat quality related attributes.

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The Beef InfoXchange System or BIXS is conceived, designed and delivered by Canadian beef cattle producers through the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Canadian Beef Breeds Council. One of several objectives is to finally capitalize on the mandatory CCIA ear tags in a beneficial way for cattle producers and the entire beef industry value chain. While BIXS can support traceability this is not its primary focus. Instead, BIXS is about the sharing of the individual animal performance, genetic, animal health and detailed carcass data industry sees as valuable to their business, management and product quality. In short, BIXS is the mechanism for the exchange of individual animal and carcass value attributes between each segment of the beef chain from cow-calf through packer/processor.

BIXS is a voluntary, national, web-based individual animal data and information exchange system. Individual animal data in BIXS moves along the beef chain linked to the individual animal's CCIA ear tag number. BIXS participants own the data they upload to BIXS and they dictate how the data is shared amongst BIXS registered participants. BIXS participation requires a minimal amount of required individual animal data along with registration at each segment. Vast amounts of optional production,

performance, genetic and carcass data can be uploaded if desired. At present and for the near term BIXS participation is at no cost.

The primary business rule for BIXS is thus: register the animal's CCIA tag number to your validated BIXS account and you get to see the required animal data/information as well as any optional animal data/information previous or subsequent participants who have registered that CCIA tag number to their validated BIXS account agree to share. If the CCIA tag number is not registered to your validated BIXS account, you cannot see any data/information.

BIXS participants get to fully understand the type of beef their cattle become because individual carcass yield and quality grade data is a required element of packer participation. Within 2 years BIXS may have over 95 percent of federally inspected packer capacity in Canada contributing carcass yield and quality grade. Much more detailed carcass data, beyond grade data, will stream into BIXS as electronic carcass grading and measurements come on-line over across Canada.

Feedlot health and performance data coupled with carcass data will enable

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participants to bolster their management, breeding and marketing strategies to improve efficiencies, cut costs, boost profits, and produce a higher quality beef product tailored for specific market opportunities.

The BIXS program is based on participant consent and producer confidentiality is maintained unless consent to share identity is granted. BIXS houses a query system enabling BIXS participants up the chain from marketers to feedlots to packer/processors to source animals on spec while primary producer confidentiality is maintained. Specific queries can be posted to the BIXS program administrator who, in turn, enables the search specifics to be viewed by cow-calf BIXS participants with animals in their BIXS inventory matching the query spec. Cow-calf participants opt to respond to the query confident their personal information is secure. This function enables BIXS to empower all participants on an individual animal data/information basis across the beef supply chain.

All other production, health management, branded beef, and management protocol cattle (e.g. calf clubs) could be featured in BIXS-oriented cattle sales; this along with near-real time display of BIXS validated cattle data in the sale ring as the cattle move through. In addition, as more geographic (premise ID) data populates the BIXS database BIXS participating auction markets, for instance, could use the query function to communicate with BIXS cow-calf participants within a certain distance of the market regarding a planned sale on BIXS cattle and related protocols or specs.

As data flows back through the chain historical carcass data on a herd basis,

typical feed lot health and performance and health data can support producer's marketing programs. BIXS participants will have the ability to build strong marketing programs based on individual animal data/information. Business opportunities can be built on individual animal data across the beef supply chain.

BIXS participating auction markets, vets, feed companies, IT firms and others will be able to offer third party services for their customers to interface with BIXS. These third parties can provide portfolios of services for their customers related to BIXS data upload, reporting and data analysis as well as marketing advice and options.
