

Canada: The World's Perfect Place for Raising Beef


Canada Beef Strategic Storyline
August 2015



CANADA BEEF



NOTE TO READER: This Strategic Storyline represents the most comprehensive articulation of the Canadian Beef brand story. It is the product of extensive work among the Canada Beef marketing group, interviews with Canada Beef leadership, input from all regional teams, and research conducted among partners, stakeholders, producers, and consumers across key global markets. It is intended to complement the Strategic Guide published earlier this year, enriching and deepening the strategies outlined in it. Where that Strategic Guide established the need for a brand strategy and brand story for Canadian Beef, this document addresses the nature and content of that brand story and how it will guide, support and energize Canada Beef's marketing efforts worldwide. Please note that this is a document intended for internal reference, though it can also serve as a resource and guide for the production of externally-focused communication materials.




What is a LOGO? *What is a* BRAND STORY?

The practice of “branding” actually comes from ranching, when cattle were branded to show ownership and distinguish one rancher’s herd from another. So at their most basic, brands were and still are a way to identify a particular product. But that visual identifier on its own does not make a brand. A brand is much more than just a mark or a logo.

At a deeper level, a brand is the promise and reputation that is associated with a person, product or organization over time. While a branded cow may be the property of Canada Beef’s stakeholders, our true Canadian beef brand—in the sense of our reputation and promise of quality—is not something we can own. It resides in the hearts and minds of others: our partners, stakeholders, beef consumers and the broader public. And it resides, not so much in the form of a visual identity (that is our logo) but in the story that is inspired by that identity: a brand story that is a combination of fact and feeling.

A brand story is a way of telling the truth about who we are, why we exist and how we go about doing things. Marketing strategies must always flow from these deep truths. They are specific ways of connecting with others from the core of our values.

We are not making this story up. Instead we’re looking to evoke and enhance what already exists in fact and perception. This is how a brand story lifts a product from a commodity to a differentiated experience that garners greater loyalty and can ultimately command a premium price, generating greater profit and returns to the industry we serve.






Organizational Vision & Mission

In taking up our job on behalf of Canadian beef producers we dedicate ourselves to a vision of a world in which Canadian beef and all those who participate in bringing it to market are recognized, appreciated and rewarded as among the world's best. We dedicate ourselves to increasing global demand and loyalty to the beef that is raised and produced in Canada.

In service to this vision, our mission is to strategically position the Canadian beef Advantage to stimulate and sustain global awareness, desire and demand for Canadian beef, positioning it as a premium brand and sought-after experience.






The Nature of our Business

Canada Beef is the organization. Canadian beef is the brand that Canada Beef as an organization globally positions, markets and creates demand for. Our organization is not the same as the entire Canadian beef industry, but our work benefits that industry, helping it succeed and generate greater profits for their efforts.

The Canadian beef industry is a widespread, diverse and complex network of ranching and farming families, feedlots, packers, government agencies, business partners, provincial associations, distributors, restaurant chains, retailers and beef consumers. Where is Canada Beef in this value chain? In truth we are not actually part of it. We reside somewhere above it. All the members of this complex value chain are doing their best to advance their particular part in the whole. It is only our organization, Canada Beef, who is tasked with translating the inherent value of the product into emotional connections, marketplace demand and consumer loyalty. As we succeed, the Canadian beef industry thrives.



What Canada Beef IS NOT...

- **Canada Beef does not raise cattle.** It has no influence over who raises cattle or how they are raised. It has no control over how they are fed, finished, slaughtered, butchered or prepared for market. The nature and quality of Canadian beef can change over time. These changes are outside of our reach.
- **Canada Beef cannot certify or set standards for Canadian beef.** Canada Beef does not grade beef. Standards are upheld by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and grading resides with the Canadian Beef Grading Agency, and both have a reputation for performing these responsibilities well. In addition, Canada Beef has no control over varieties or differences in beef produced in different provinces in Canada; our scope is national.
- **Canada Beef does not sell beef.** It has no control over how, where, or to whom it is sold. Packers do this. And still, it has been tempting in the past to act as though we were selling beef, offering inducements and incentives for restaurants, distributors and retailers to purchase Canadian beef from others. But to be clear; that's not our job.



**“We consider ourselves a catalyst
for the entire Canadian beef value chain.”**

**Rob Meijer
President & VP Global Brand Marketing
& Business Development
Canada Beef**


We have **ONE** job..

Canada Beef is responsible for developing business, marketing and branding the entire beef and veal industry in Canada. In support of those who do produce and sell the product, We don't "sell" beef, and we don't seek to "close" high volume beef purchasers who purchase at low prices; rather we work to create desire for Canadian beef and maintain its reputation as a sought-after, safe, nutritious, delicious premium brand. In a world of rising beef prices, our job is to support a perception of value that exceeds price.

How do we accomplish this? By deepening the marketplace's appreciation of and desire for Canadian beef, promoting it as a premium product and as a special experience rooted in the emotions consumers associate with Canada, with cooking and great food, and with the science based facts that surround our product. Our most important job is to elevate a great product by giving it a great story.

We do our job well by embedding Canadian beef's brand story and our marketing strategies in those enduring, overarching qualities and perceptions of Canada, as a country. These are the attributes that influence—and can be seen by our target audiences as influencing—the uniqueness of beef produced in Canada.

The one thing that will absolutely never change about Canadian beef is Canada. Our job is to help people make a greater connection between Canada and Canadian beef. We do our job by talking more strategically about Canada, infusing it into our communications. We also do our job by living the Canadian values that are intrinsic to our brand story.



**"We are millions upon millions of voices shouting
'keep exploring...we are more.'
We are the surprise the world has in store for you.
It's true.
Canada is the 'what' in 'What's new?'"**

**Shane L. Koyczan
From "We are More," performed at the Opening
Ceremonies for the 2010 Winter Olympics**

Branding means living these three organizing initiatives...

The following three strategic initiatives indicate how we as a company organize to achieve our vision and mission. This is how we live our brand, how we put our brand into play, how we create our Canada Beef culture and how we engage the world with that culture:

CONNECT


Connections are valuable. Connecting to a global network of opportunities allows us to join forces and become stronger together, collaborate and share our stories.

At Canada Beef, creating connections is what we do best. **Finding common ground, creating open discussions and connecting with others around the world is something that defines being Canadian.** We reach out, communicate, share and collaborate openly with people, groups and prospective partners who not only share our values, but who's actions reflect them. On this common ideological ground, we can work together to share Canadian beef stories with consumers and other stakeholders.

INNOVATE

Innovation is growth, problem solving, creativity and opportunity seeking. Innovative ideas fuel the fire, and can lead and change the conversation about Canadian beef around the world, leading to sustained value.

We draw upon the deep experience and bold creativity of our team to leverage the resources, channels and programs of our partners to raise Canadian beef brand awareness and desire in the marketplace. Our strategy is not simply to convince our partners to promote our brand by any means in any venue; **it is to show them how consumers' appreciation of our brand and desire for our product will**



help them achieve their own goals and strengthen their own brand story in the process. Innovation here is not limited to just finding ways to co-advertise. Rather, it extends to every possible way to make a positive impact on the consumer; for example, developing programs through the Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence. Leadership in the beef industry will stem from our own creativity in how we drive continuous improvement and innovation.

INSPIRE

Inspiration is ignition. With the freedom to create and lead, we can connect with the hearts and minds of those who will tell and hear our story, driving the passion within our industry and for our product.

Inspiration triggers the emotional elements of our brand and the feelings people have about our beef. We inspire with stories, and that inspiration starts within our own team: with how we speak and work with one another. We never forget the technical details of what makes our product premium, but we always remember to elevate the conversations with imagery, symbolism and emotional connections to the reasons why our beef is great. **When we inspire people, we give them an opportunity to act: to taste, to sign up, to talk to others, to share, and to explore further, etc.** This is how we turn consumers into fans and fans into a community.

These are three distinct initiatives but they flow together into a powerful whole. It's essential that we incorporate these organizing ideas into everything we do. It isn't just the story, it's also the storyteller and the act of storytelling, especially as relates to our marketing and communications efforts around the world. We live our brand story not only with what we say, but in what we do, how we behave with one another, and how we connect, innovate and inspire.

What is so great about **CANADIAN BEEF?**

It is Canada.

It is a land that stretches across seven and a half time zones, three seas and 2.5 million lakes and rivers. It is a place as lofty as the Rocky Mountains, as vast and fertile as the Prairies and as ancient and enduring as the Canadian Shield. It is an environment perfectly suited for grazing cattle.

It is also a country of individuals who celebrate their interdependence with the land and the animals they raise. It is a hard-working people who have been continually inspired by the challenges of such vast open spaces to develop technological innovations and expertise over great distance and across great diversity and, in doing so, becoming an example to the world. It is a nation that understands the role of humans and animals in nature, and works at home and abroad for peace, order, and good government.

For those of us who raise, produce and market beef, Canada itself is what shapes our values and inspires our work. For those around the world to whom we market, their positive feelings about Canada make them incredibly receptive to what we say about our brand and our product. We know this, because our research asked and they told us. The world is ready for us to make a stronger connection between our country, our people and the beef we produce.

It's a story that in many ways already resides within our global retail and restaurant partners and the consumers they serve. We just need to ignite it by reaffirming that what makes Canadian beef so great is Canada itself: Canada is the world's perfect place for raising beef.






Canada: The world's perfect *place for* **RAISING BEEF.**

CHECKLIST FOR CANADA'S BEEF ADVANTAGE

- Wide open spaces for cattle to graze: an environment conducive to grazing herds since time began
- Fresh air, clean water, and fertile soil
- High-latitude summers with long days of sunlight for growing nutritious grass and grains and just the right amount of precipitation
- Cooler climates (even in summer) that are like a natural meat locker: much less stressful on cows than any hot-weather ranchland
- Cold winters that are ideal for the very best genetics for breeding beef cattle
- A heritage of hardworking ranching and farming families that is part of the nation's culture
- A society with a deep appreciation for agriculture, animals, nature and sustainability
- A caring and effective government capable of ensuring the highest standards of quality and safety, and with sophisticated and enlightened trade policies
- People who are caring, ethical, hardworking and always open to innovation
- A country that doesn't settle for the bare minimum in terms of regulations, but always does what's right, leading this respect
- A technologically advanced country capable of maintaining the very highest standards at every stage of a complex supply chain.
- A globally savvy, multicultural people who understand the different roles and meaning of beef in different cultures and nationalities.




Note that we are not proclaiming that Canadian beef is the best in the world. First of all, it wouldn't be Canadian to make such a claim against another country's product. Secondly, there is always variation in any agricultural industry, making it difficult if not impossible for any one country to claim outright superiority.

As marketers of Canadian beef, our task is not to sell, but to position and differentiate through our brand, using it to extend beyond just making technical claims about our product. In branding Canadian beef we have a higher purpose and a greater opportunity: to remind the world of all they admire about Canada and to show how those admirable qualities make Canadian beef a delicious, nutritious product, and a special experience.

Said simply, Canada + Beef = The Canadian Beef Brand.

In other words, Canada provides the reason to believe for the product we're differentiating and brand story we're telling. We can back up all the reasons our beef is different and preferable by shining a spotlight on the different aspects of Canada itself that contribute to that difference. Our brand partners and Canadian and international consumers will embrace our brand story willingly and readily share it because they already believe these things about our country. Over time, this will strengthen loyalty and create an increased demand for Canadian beef.



“It is wonderful to feel the grandness of Canada in the raw, not because she is Canada but because she’s something sublime that you were born into, some great rugged power that you are a part of.”

**Emily Carr
Canadian Artist**

What makes CANADIAN BEEF?

Canadian beef is a premium product. Whether Canadian beef is technically superior to beef from elsewhere is not the point. The point is that Canadian beef is raised under ideal conditions for high quality. It is a premium product and should be presented as such. The fact that beef prices are rising supports a strategy of presenting Canadian beef as special, as high quality, as well worth the investment, even as an everyday menu item.

Canadian beef is Canadian. Within Canada, every Canadian naturally prefers Canadian beef in her grocery store, in her restaurants, and on her table. We know Canadian beef to be of high quality, and we are confident in its safety simply because it is Canadian. We don't need to worry about it. Preferring Canadian Beef domestically is comfortable, natural, and provides a feeling of security. Choosing Canadian beef internationally is to acknowledge that Canada is a great place to be admired, and that Canadians know what they're doing.

Canadian beef is "priceless". While price is always a consideration with a commodity, from the standpoint of Canada Beef's branding efforts, the point of the product story is never its price point. To position Canadian beef as low cost would be to lock ourselves into a position that is very difficult to recover from: a race to the bottom. We choose to occupy the premium neighborhood of consumers' mind share. Whatever we and our partners may be aware of concerning the price of beef, the impression of the product must always rise above its price.

**"Canada is the lynchpin of the
English-speaking world."**

Sir Winston Churchill



Canadian beef is National. While the products produced in Canada have regional and varietal characteristics based on the genetics of the animals, grass and grain feeding, provincial differences, etc., our product is the national product. There are many teams in our League; and Canada Beef works for the benefit of the League as a whole. As catalysts and advocates for the entire value chain our focus is on the qualities all the products from all the regions share, not how they are different.

Canadian beef is the company it keeps. In seeking partners to market our product we seek those who align with our values and don't try to fit into any and every position. We will not compromise on our brand story just to work with a potential partner who has lots of volume. We are a premium product and we have a reputation to uphold.

Canadian beef is hand crafted. Rarely does it take the amount of time it does to raise a single animal for food, assisting that animal in making its way through our seasonal changes, caring for its individual needs, feeding it in such a way that it goes to market with such an incredible degree of consistency. Later, the beef is further graded to refine those consistencies. So much individual effort goes in to creating this artisanal product. Beef is an art form within agriculture.

Canadian beef is the "True North." This northern attribute identifies a competitive advantage in terms of climate and genetics that goes to the quality of the product. It is because of where Canada is geographically that we are able to raise great quality beef.



There are four brand pillars that were introduced in the 3 Year Strategy Document, which were created through staff and stakeholder input and verified by research. They stand in a pivotal place in our brand story, in that they refer not only to the attributes of Canadian beef but also to our values as an organization. Moreover they are crucially Canadian both as attributes and as values. Other countries that market beef can boast in various ways about their producers, product, world-class standards and sustainability efforts. It is the distinctly Canadian quality of these pillars, and the strength of our commitment to them, that make the difference and distinguish the Canadian beef brand.

The Canadian Beef **BRAND PILLARS**

PRODUCER

“Canadian beef has a strong foundation that is built around the producer, reflecting a legacy with a rich and proud heritage. Canadian farmers and ranchers produce Canadian beef with integrity, and personify the brand.”

Research confirms that both stakeholders and consumers in all our major markets think of Canadian beef producers, much as Canadians in general: as active, hardworking, dedicated, honest, careful, kind, friendly and diligent. This established reputation of Canadians has prepared the ground for us to speak about our producers. People are primed and ready to listen. This allows us to confidently tell our stories knowing that our audiences will appreciate the commitment, passion and good reputation of Canadian beef producers.

PRODUCT

“Canadian beef is well marbled, flavourful and tender. Packed with essential nutrients, Canadian beef is a powerful protein and anchor to healthy eating with a taste that people crave.”

People in all our markets associate our beef with quality, pleasure, taste, health and nutritiousness. This is closely correlated with their associations of Canada as a clean, prosperous and healthy place: an abundant land rich in natural nutrients and free of pollution, providing the assurance that Canadian beef would also be rich and pure and tasty. What's more, the awareness of our northern climate and positive perceptions associated with it allow us to tell additional stories of what makes Canadian beef so great. We know that our beef is a premium product. Others are prepared to know this too. So making the connection for them should not be difficult.



“By choosing Canadian beef, you are supporting your rural neighbours and Canada’s economy. There are beef farmers and ranchers in every province in Canada, striving to bring good food to your table and working to be good stewards of the land and animals in their care.”

<http://beefinfo.org>



WORLD CLASS


“Canadian beef is produced according to world class standards for quality and safety. The Canadian beef grading system and our interlocking controls for animal health and food safety are key contributors to an exceptional eating experience.”

People worldwide associate Canada with honesty, ethical behavior, a deep respect for rules and regulations, and a high level of scientific and technological achievement. Canada and Canadians are known to be upright, fair-minded, ethical, and caring. Canada always does what’s right with care and precision. We might expect any of our competitors to speak of their standards, but their audiences might not be as ready to believe them as they are to believe in Canadian beef’s claims. In fact, Canada’s reputation for high standards and technological expertise is so strong that it can even help overcome individual or isolated setbacks in our industry.

SUSTAINABILITY

“Canadian beef is produced through the efficient use of pasture land, water management and environmental conservation practices, Canadian farmers and ranchers work towards economic viability, a sound environment and social responsibility.”

In all our markets, audiences associate Canada with a pristine, clean environment, rich in natural resources, not crowded, polluted, or ecologically challenged. Because our natural resources are so ingrained in our reputation and national psyche, it is understandable that people feel we take care of them. In addition, they know Canada as economically prudent and prosperous, and they recognize our society as a caring one. These impressions of Canada as clean and honest, plus the reputation of Canadians as financially and socially responsible, gives people confidence in our commitment to protect and preserve economic, environmental and social sustainability.





What success looks like MOVING FORWARD.

As we become more branded we become more strategic. But our evolution to a “storied” organization calls upon us to re-evaluate our approach in the light of our strategies. The following realizations help us adapt our operations to make best use of the power of our Canadian beef brand:

- **Our strategy is primarily a “pull” strategy.** Rather than “push” our product on partners, we work to encourage the end consumer to seek out, desire, expect, and ask for Canadian beef. This gives partners the incentive to use and feature it. It becomes obvious that our goals and values are aligned with their own.
- **Marketing is assertive, not defensive.** It’s not about comparing ourselves to others’ beef, or overcoming doubt. It’s about evoking the grander story of Canada and its beef and allowing others to share in what inspires us. We tell our story rather than react to others’.
- **Our marketing efforts are strategic, not opportunistic.** We don’t take every deal, but only those that align with our organizational and brand values. We seek that alignment before anything else, identifying those whose presence in the market makes them excellent ambassadors for Canadian beef. There are perhaps many high-volume purchasers of Canadian beef who are nevertheless not ideal partners for our brand. Still, we remain diligent in identifying the difference between carrying our beef and representing it.



- **As we market our brand we always connect our technical information with the Canadian “why” that explains it.** Technical details alone are not sufficient to help build a brand. That may be suitable for commodity sales, but not for Canadian beef. It’s appropriate to talk about the technical qualities of the product as long as these qualities are continually provided within the context of Canada as the explanation and reason to believe in them.
- **In marketing within Canada we foster the notion that good beef is our beef.** We work with partners to support the natural preference all consumers have for their own beef, and which Canadians in particular have about Canadian beef. Why would we Canadians get their beef from anywhere else?
- **Our international marketing efforts are both global and local.** Our strategies are coordinated under the central brand story while our tactics are interpreted (not just translated) for regional and global audiences. Canada is always the halo that accompanies our storytelling, but how we evoke Canadian-ness must be carefully calibrated to be relevant to local cultures, culinary tastes and customs. And there must be an efficient two-way communication to enable experiences of the global team and partners in the field to inform our core brand story and, in doing so, uncover and suggest new practices.

What's on OUR PLATE?

We serve Canada. In fact, we are Canada. Through the deeply satisfying experience of Canadian beef, tens of thousands of producers and millions of consumers connect with one another and with the spirit of our country, our nation and our people.

We draw upon hundreds of years of human history, millions of years of Mother Nature, an enduring relationship between ourselves as humans and the animals we look after and the beef we consume. In this profound and necessary pact we represent something vital to our very existence. Canadian beef is not only a product, but it is emblematic of a truly Canadian way of life and a way of living.

It is our good fortune to represent Canadian beef. Our beef is great because of Canada. The world appreciates what we stand for. They admire Canada. They respect Canadians. They recognize goodness. The world is already on our side. All we have to do is remind them.

“I am a Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship in my own way, free to stand for what I think right.... This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.”

John G. Diefenbaker
Prime Minister of Canada, 1957-1963



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