



Frequently Asked Questions

Is my information confidential?

The focus groups will include 5-6 producers, the provincial coordinator, a note taker, and potentially a researcher. The focus group setting is an inclusive forum where producers are invited to openly and respectfully share their thoughts. Group discussions will be captured in writing by the note taker however no individual participant names or identifying characteristics will be recorded with the discussion. Data collected from the group discussions will be compiled and used in developing the benchmark farm and future farm scenario. The data collected will be managed on secured servers by select staff.

What COVID-19 measures are being taken?

The group will be small enough to meet provincial guidelines and spacing of 6 feet between participants will be maintained throughout the meeting. If you have any concerns about COVID-19 protective measures being used please inform your provincial coordinator.

What should I expect at a focus group?

The focus group is scheduled for 8 hours from 8am to 5pm; a one-hour lunch and two fifteen-minute breaks will be included in the agenda. The lunch will be catered, and refreshments will be available. Please inform your provincial coordinator of any dietary restrictions at least one week in advance. The day will consist of developing benchmarks in the morning for both cost of production and greenhouse gas emissions. Then a future farm scenario will be developed in the afternoon.

We ask that producers come ready to share and ready to learn. The purpose of the network is to connect operations with their similarities. Note that there will be differences with the other operations as the Canadian cow-calf sector is extremely diverse.

Do I need my cost of production calculated to participate?

It is not necessary to have your current cost of production calculated. Rough numbers will be sufficient for this exercise as we develop a benchmark for a specific type of production system that all participants can identify with to a degree. However, it is helpful to have an idea of general numbers used in calculating cost of production as well as typical allocations suitable for your operation.

What information do I need to bring?

You can find a list of topics that will be discussed at the focus group [here](#).

How accurate is focus group data?

Focus groups enable in-depth understanding of topic areas that other research tools like surveys or questionnaires might miss. Focus groups allow researchers to look beyond 'the facts' to understand the rich context, history and meaning behind production systems in a particular area. Focus group data collection methods are typically used to cast a wide data collection net, meaning they scope in information that emerges during discussion to give us quality data.

This research uses a relatively small sample of 5-6 producers to develop a benchmark, a recommendation from earlier economic work in farm management. After sampling, the integrity of focus group data is protected by the success of the facilitator and how they achieve open and focused discussion. One risk for the facilitator to manage is group think, which occurs when all participants dwell on one idea, preventing creativity and new ideas from emerging. The accuracy of information collected is tested throughout the session as the facilitator confirms the meaning behind participants words. This supports the accuracy of the data: researchers have opportunity to review and confirm information on-site, ask questions to follow-up. Specific themes will emerge from the discussions. The consistency and prevalence in which these themes emerge naturally point researchers to answers that are reliable and valid.

How can we produce accurate data relevant nation-wide? By investigating parameters of production systems rather than production regions and by holding focus groups in different regions throughout the country, for a better picture, nation-wide.

How does this compare to the CowProfit\$ or AgriProfit\$ approach?

Both CowProfit\$ and AgriProfit\$ used individual farm data that was then averaged for an ecoregion or province to develop a benchmark. This approach uses a much smaller sample of 5-6 producers to develop a benchmark, but will be likely to uncover a more in depth understanding about production systems



Are there any future commitments?

Data collection from farms occurs every five years. We would be looking to update these focus groups at that time and would look for permission at the end of the focus group session to contact you again.

