



Western Canadian Cow-Calf Survey

This survey was first conducted in Alberta in the late 1980s. It is now being expanded to western Canada through a combined effort involving representatives from the Provincial Producer Associations, Provincial Ministry of Agriculture specialists, the Beef Cattle Research Council, Canfax and the Western Beef Development Centre.

The survey asks questions about your operation and your management and marketing practices as they relate to your 2014 calf crop, starting with breeding in 2013 and ending with weaning of your 2014-born calves.

The results of this survey will be used in a number of ways:

- Offer historical comparison with previous study findings to determine how the industry has changed given that the last time this survey was conducted was 16 years ago in 1998;
- Guide extension and research efforts;
- Validate anecdotal evidence on production matters;
- Identify which management practices are linked to strong production performance;
- Generate an updated set of production benchmarks for the cow-calf industry.

Information is being collected for the purpose of monitoring the productive efficiency and management practices of Western Canadian cow-calf herds under the authority of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. It is subject to the provisions of this Act. Results from this survey will be published in aggregate so as to protect the identity and information of survey participants. Individual results will remain under the strictest of confidence.

The last day to participate in this survey is February 28, 2015.

The aggregated survey results will be widely shared starting Spring 2015.

To receive a complimentary report summarizing your performance indicators in comparison with regional, provincial and/or herdsize benchmarks, please provide your contact information at the end of this survey.

The survey is 58 QUESTIONS in length and is estimated to take between 30 to 45 MINUTES TO COMPLETE.

If at any time you do not wish to answer a question, you can leave it unanswered.

For more information on this survey and what the results are being used for, please contact:

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SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU & YOUR OPERATION

In this section you are being asked to provide a few details about yourself as well your operation. Both postal code and municipality/county are being requested in order to summarize results by region, soil type or province.

"You" pertains to the primary decision maker for the operation which may or may not be the same person completing the survey. The primary decision maker is the person responsible for making day-to-day management decisions for the operation.

1. The age (in years) of the primary decision maker for the operation : _____ years of age
2. The gender of primary decision maker: Male Female
3. The primary decision maker has been raising cattle since (YYYY): _____
4. Postal Code: _____
5. Municipality or County Number: _____
6. Of your 2014 farm sales, approximately what percentage fell into each of the following categories?
The percentages should add up to 100%.

Farm Category	Percentage of 2014 Farm Sales
Beef Cattle	%
Grain, Oilseeds, Pulses	%
Forage	%
Other	%
Total	100%

7. In 2014, which of the following livestock enterprises were part of your operation? *Check all that apply.*
 Cow-Calf Replacements Backgrounders Grasser/Stocker Finisher/Feedlot
8. What percentage of your herd is: Commercial: _____% Purebred _____%
9. In 2014, how many people worked on your operation?
Do not include temporary or casual workers (i.e., silage crew, branding crew, etc), but do include seasonal workers. Include both paid and unpaid help.
Family _____ Non-family _____

SECTION 2: IMPORTANT DATES AND COUNTS RELATED TO YOUR 2014 CALF CROP

In this section you are being asked to provide dates and head counts for your 2014 calf crop which commenced with the 2013 breeding season and ends with weaning the 2014-born calves. If your operation has both a spring and fall calving herd, only use one of the groups when answering the questions in this survey. Please answer separately for COWS and HEIFERS. Heifers refers to 2012-born females being exposed to their first breeding.

10. For the 2013 breeding season, please answer the following:

Answer separately for COWS and HEIFERS. Heifers refers to females born in 2012 being exposed to their first breeding in 2013.

	COWS	HEIFERS
Number of BULL(S) used for NATURAL SERVICE	_____	_____
Number of FEMALES EXPOSED to NATURAL SERVICE	_____	_____
Number of FEMALES BRED using ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION (AI)	_____	_____

11. For the 2013 breeding season, please provide the following DATES:

Date format: MMM-DD, e.g., JAN-01. Please provide dates for both COWS and HEIFERS.

	COWS	HEIFERS
Breeding season START date	_____	_____
Breeding season END date	_____	_____

12. For the time period from Fall 2013 to just prior to Calving Start in 2014, please provide head counts for each of the following: Please answer separately for COWS and HEIFERS.

	COWS	HEIFERS
# OPEN females SOLD	_____	_____
# OPEN females KEPT to be re-bred	_____	_____
# BRED females SOLD	_____	_____
# BRED females PURCHASED	_____	_____

SECTION 3.1: ABOUT YOUR 2014 CALVING SEASON

If your operation has both a spring and fall calving herd, use the same group used to answer the previous section.

13. What DATE was the FIRST calf BORN in your 2014 Calving Season?

Please answer separately for COWS and HEIFERS. (Date format: MMM-DD, e.g., JAN-01)

	COWS	HEIFERS
DATE FIRST calf BORN in 2014	_____	_____

14. For your 2014 calving season, how many females calved in each 21 d timeframe as indicated below?
If you are not confident with your birth date records, you can skip this question and proceed to Q15.

	COWS	HEIFERS
# Females that calved from Day 1-21	_____	_____
# Females that calved from Day 22-42	_____	_____
# Females that calved from Day 43-63	_____	_____
# Females that calved from Day 64+	_____	_____

15. What DATE was the LAST calf BORN in your 2014 Calving Season?
Please answer separately for COWS and HEIFERS. (Date format: MMM-DD, e.g., JAN-01)

	COWS	HEIFERS
DATE LAST calf BORN	_____	_____

16. For your 2014 Calving Season, provide the number of head for each statement below:

	COWS	HEIFERS
Number of FEMALES that CALVED	_____	_____
Number of SETS of TWINS	_____	_____
Number of BABY CALVES BOUGHT	_____	_____
Number of COW-CALF PAIRS BOUGHT	_____	_____
Number of BABY CALVES SOLD	_____	_____
Number of COW-CALF PAIRS SOLD	_____	_____
Number of calves BORN DEAD or DIED WITHIN 24H	_____	_____

17. For calves that DIED MORE THAN 24H after birth, how many died for each reason below:

	COWS	HEIFERS
Scours, Pneumonia, Other Disease	_____	_____
Accident, Predator	_____	_____
Weather	_____	_____
Other or Unknown	_____	_____

18. For the 2014 calving season, provide either the total number or percentage of total births for each calving ease category.

I am providing: Number counts OR Percentages

	COWS	HEIFERS
Unassisted	_____	_____
Assisted	_____	_____
Caesarean	_____	_____

SECTION 3.2: ABOUT YOUR 2014 WEANING

In this section you are being asked to provide information on weaning your 2014-born calves. If your operation has both a spring and fall calving herd, provide details for the same group used for questions in Section 3.1 above.

19. What DATE will you or did you WEAN your 2014-born calves?

*Please answer separately for COWS and HEIFERS. (Date format: MMM-DD, e.g., JAN-01)
For operations with multiple wean dates, please provide an average wean date.*

	COWS	HEIFERS
WEAN DATE	_____	_____

20. What was the TOTAL number of 2014-born calves WEANED?

Please answer separately for COWS and HEIFERS.

	COWS	HEIFERS
# WEANED CALVES	_____	_____

21. Please provide the COUNT and WEAN WEIGHT for your 2014-born WEANED calves.

*Please answer separately for STEERS/BULLS and HEIFERS.
The weaning weight should be at or shortly after weaning. Do not use pre-conditioned weights.*

	STEERS/BULLS	HEIFERS
# CALVES WEANED	_____	_____
AVG WEANING WEIGHT (in lbs)	_____	_____

22. Are the weaning weights you provided:

Actual scale weights Estimates Sale Weights (if so, provide Shrink _____%)

23. What percentage of your 2014 calf crop did you OR will you market and/or price in the following ways:
Provide percentages that sum to 100%.

- Priced and sold calves at weaning
 - Locked in price before weaning and sold at weaning
 - Locked in price before weaning then sold after 30-60 d preconditioning
 - Pre-conditioned calves 30-60 d then priced at time of sale
 - Retain ownership and sell as yearlings
 - Retain ownership and sell as fed cattle
 - Retained for replacement (heifer or bull)
 - Other (describe) _____
- 100% TOTAL**

24. Of your 2014-born calves that are sold off the operation, at or shortly after weaning, how were they marketed? *Provide percentages that sum to 100%.*

- Live auction
 - Satellite/Electronic/Video auction
 - Sold through an order buyer
 - Sold direct to feedlot
 - Custom fed in feedlot
 - Other (describe) _____
- 100% TOTAL**

SECTION 4: CULLING AND DEATH LOSS

25. How many of your BREEDING FEMALES were CULLED in Fall 2013 (post-breeding) and Spring 2014 (post-calving) for reasons related to:

I am providing: Number counts OR Percentages

	FALL 2013	SPRING 2014
Reproduction (e.g., open, late calving, aborted)	_____	_____
Physical Soundness (e.g., lame, bad udder, cancer eye)	_____	_____
Calf Performance	_____	_____
Temperament	_____	_____
Age	_____	_____
Economics (e.g., drought, prices)	_____	_____
Other, please specify: _____	_____	_____

26. How many of your BREEDING BULLS were CULLED from Spring 2013 (pre-breeding) to Fall 2013 (post-breeding) for reasons related to:

I am providing: Number counts OR Percentages

	# HD or %
Reproduction (e.g., failed semen test, broken penis)	_____
Physical Soundness (e.g., lame, conformation)	_____
Progeny Performance	_____
Temperament	_____
Age	_____
Economics (e.g., drought, prices)	_____
Other, please specify: _____	_____

27. a) How many of your breeding females died in 2014? _____

I am providing a: Number count OR Percentage

b) How many of your breeding bulls died in 2014? _____

I am providing a: Number count OR Percentage

SECTION 5: REPRODUCTIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

In this section you are being asked to provide details related to reproductive management practices.

28. For the 2013 breeding season, did you use:

- Artificial Insemination? YES NO
Estrus Synchronization? YES NO

29. Following the 2013 breeding season, did you pregnancy check SOME OR ALL of your COWS?

- YES NO

30. Following the 2013 breeding season, did you pregnancy check SOME OR ALL of your HEIFERS?

- YES NO

31. For the 2013 breeding season, did a veterinarian give your BREEDING BULL(S) a:

- a. Breeding Soundness Evaluation? YES NO
b. Trichomoniasis Test? YES NO
c. Vibrio Test? YES NO

32. From the provided list of nine selection criteria, which are your TOP 3 SELECTION CRITERIA when choosing BREEDING BULLS?

Place a "1", "2" and "3" beside your first, second and third choice picks from the list of 9 criteria listed below.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| _____ Conformation | _____ EPDs | _____ Breed |
| _____ Pedigree | _____ Genetic Tests | _____ Price |
| _____ Performance Tests | _____ Birth weight | _____ Polled |

SECTION 6: CALF MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

33. What percentage of your 2014-born calves were born polled? _____ %

If 100% of your calves are polled, please proceed to Q38.

34. Did you dehorn any of your 2014-born calves? YES NO, proceed to Q38.

35. If "YES", when did you dehorn the majority of your 2014-born calves?

Check only one.

- Shortly after birth Spring processing
 At weaning Other, please specify: _____

36. What is your typical method used to dehorn calves? *Check only one.*

- Debudder Spoons, cut, gouge Wire
 Dehorning paste Keystone, guillotine Saw
 Other, please specify: _____

37. Did you use pain control when dehorning your calves? YES NO

38. When do you typically castrate your bull calves? *Check only one.*

- Shortly after birth Spring processing
 At weaning Other, please specify: _____

39. Do you use pain control when castrating your bull calves? YES NO

40. What is your typical method used to castrate bull calves? *Check only one.*

- Rubber band when <3 mos old Blade, scalpel Clamp, burdizzo
 Rubber band when >3 mos old Other, please specify: _____

41. a) Did you implant any of your 2014-born calves? YES NO, *proceed to Q42*

b) If "YES", when did you implant your 2014-born calves?

	ALL Calves	ONLY calves NOT INTENDED for replacement
Prior to weaning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At weaning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

42. Did you creep feed or supplement any of your 2014-born calves on pasture?

- YES NO

43. Which weaning method do you typically use on your operation? *Check only one.*

- Traditional separation Nose paddle/Two-stage
 Natural (e.g., *Leave on cow*) Fence line separation
 Other, please specify: _____

SECTION 7: GRAZING AND FEEDING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

In this section you are being asked to provide details on your grazing and winter feeding practices.

44. In 2014, what percentage of your grazing land base was:

Owned
 Rented
 Crown Lease
 Grazing Co-op/
 Association

45. In 2014, how many grazing days did you (or do you expect to) obtain from the following:

Provide the approximate number of days grazing achieved for each grazing type listed below.

Do not include days bale grazing if the bales were brought in from another field, only count bale grazing days if bales were made in the field they were being grazed in.

Native pasture
 Swathgrazing
 Crop residue
 Tame pasture
 Bale grazing
 Standing corn
 Grazing annuals
 Other, please specify: _____

46. What type of grazing management do you typically use on your operation?

Check only one per pasture type. Intensive refers to small paddocks grazed for short durations.

	Continuous	Rotational	Intensive
Native Pasture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tame Pasture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

47. In general, how often are your tame pastures reseeded or rejuvenated? Check only one.

Every 1-5 years
 Every 6-10 years
 Every +11 years
 Never

48. When and in what format do you typically provide trace mineral supplementation to your cowherd?

Check all that apply.

	Summer	Winter
Trace mineralized salt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mineral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

49. Do you limit any or all of your cattle from direct access to their drinking water source?

For example, is water from dugout or creek provided through the use of water pumps, troughs, or gravity fed system.

YES
 NO

50. a) In 2014, did you lab test any of your feed for quality? YES NO, proceed to Q51.

b) If "YES", did you use the results of the feed test to balance rations?

YES
 NO

51. a) Do you typically sort your breeding females for winter feeding? YES NO, proceed to Q52.

b) If "YES", how are they sorted? Check all that apply.

by age (e.g., 1st calvers, mature cows)

by condition (e.g., Main herd, thin cows)

by stage (e.g., due to calve, calved)

other, please specify: _____

52. Do you regularly perform and record the results of body condition scoring for your breeding females?
Body condition scoring is a hands on measurement of an animal's fat reserves using a 1-5 or 1-9 point scale.

YES NO

53. Average mature cow weight for your operation: _____ lbs

Check box if the weight you provided is an actual scale weight.

54. During the cold season do you use any of the following feeding methods? Check all that apply.

Swath graze

Standing corn

Rolled forage

Bale graze

Crop residue

Bale feeder

Stock pile graze

Bale processor

Other, please specify: _____

SECTION 8: ANIMAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

55. In 2014, did you treat your cattle for any of the following parasites? Check all that apply.

Lice

Flies

Internal worms

Ticks

Liver fluke

Other, please specify: _____

56. a) Do you typically vaccinate your cattle? YES NO

b) Do you typically vaccinate your females pre-breeding? YES NO

57. How do you typically treat cattle on pasture? Check only one.

Restrained (e.g., in-pasture corrals, horse and lariat)

At large (e.g., stock dart)

58. Where on your cattle do you typically inject vaccines or drugs? Check only one.

Neck

Shoulder

Top hip (rump)

Hind quarter

Other, please specify: _____

Thank you for your participation in the Western Canadian Cow-Calf Survey!

Your individual information will be amalgamated with other survey responses to generate production performance benchmarks for cow-calf operations across Western Canada. The benchmarks will be made available through Provincial Producer Associations, Provincial Government extension personnel, the Beef Cattle Research Council, Canfax and the Western Beef Development Centre starting Spring 2015.

If you are interested in receiving a complimentary summary report showing your operation's performance measures compared with local, regional and provincial benchmarks, please provide your contact details below so that the report can be sent to you.

- YES, I would like to receive a complimentary report of my production benchmarks based on my survey responses.**
- YES, I would like to be notified to participate in future surveys on beef cattle production and related subject matters.**

IF YOU CHECKED either of the two boxes above YOU MUST provide your contact information below. Otherwise leave blank.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Town _____ **Province** _____ **Postal Code:** _____

OR

Email _____

Submit your completed survey in one of the following ways:

Hard Copy (Paper) Surveys – Place your completed survey in the pre-addressed postage paid envelope that was provided with the survey. Mail through Canada Post.

Online Survey – Surveys can also be completed and submitted online. The link to the online survey is: https://fluidsurveys.usask.ca/s/WesternCdnCow_Calf_Survey/

THANK-YOU!
END OF SURVEY