# 2019

# USRSB SUPPORTED PROJECTS

# TESTING OUR IDEAS

There are still areas of beef sustainability we need to better understand more fully. That is why the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef supports many external projects, field trials, pilots and resources that further advance, support and communicate continuous improvement in the sustainability of the U.S. beef value chain. The following projects included in this booklet have undergone an application and review process to demonstrate the project's alignment with this mission and have received USRSB support.

For more information, please contact the primary contact listed for a specific project or visit our website at www.USRSB.org for additional details.

Printing of this Booklet Sponsored by:

MERCK
Animal Health

# INTEGRITY BEEF SUSTAINABILITY PILOT

# 01

The Integrity Beef Sustainability Pilot engages the full beef supply chain to test the USRSB metrics and explore scalable solutions that could be applicable for beef producers across the country. The goal is to provide a framework for producers and companies who want to improve the sustainability of the beef supply chain now and into the future.

**Project Partners:** Beef Marketing Group, Golden State Foods, McDonald's Corporation, Noble Research Institute, Tyson Foods Inc.

**Primary Contact:**
Deke Alkire, Noble Research Institute
dekeomar@hotmail.com

# 02 USRSB COW-CALF METRIC VALIDATION PROPOSAL

The University of Tennessee is adapting its Master Beef Program to align with the USRSB cow-calf metrics. Effort is currently being made to secure funding for the final development of materials and program implementation.

**Project Partners:** University of Tennessee Beef and Forage Center

**Primary Contact:**
Gary Bates, University of Tennessee
gbates@utk.edu

# NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS SUSTAINABLE BEEF PILOT 03

The Northern Great Plains (NGP) Sustainable Beef Pilot is a collaborative engagement process between all sectors of the beef supply chain to test the Sustainability Framework and its tools and resources in a way that is viable and practical for cow-calf producers in the NGP. While the pilot will initially involve a small group of stakeholders with traceability back to a select group of ranchers in the NGP, it aims to ensure scalability and sustainable practices, particularly at the ranch-level in the NGP, are recognized and a foundation for further improvement is provided.

**Project Partners:** Costco Wholesale, Hy-Plains Feedyard, JBS USA, Montana Stockgrowers Association, World Wildlife Fund

**Primary Contact:**
Nancy Labbe, World Wildlife Fund
nancy.labbe@wwfus.org

# 04 JBS USA PILOT PROJECT

JBS USA, Five Rivers Cattle Feeding, Texas Beef Producers and 79 feedyard partners tested the applicability of the USRSB feedyard metrics at scale. The pilot project achieved 100 percent completion rate of the metric questions for over 2.9 million head of cattle from more than 90 feedyards - representing 56 percent of JBS USA's fed cattle supply.

**Project Partners:** JBS USA, Five Rivers Cattle Feeding, Texas Beef Producers

**Primary Contact:**
Kim Stackhouse-Lawson, JBS USA
kim.stackhouse@jbssa.com

# GENETIC AND BREEDING FOCUSED PILOT PROJECT 05

This pilot builds the business case for the use of better genetic selection in the beef breeding herd by quantifying the impact of cattle genetics and herd management decisions on both key environmental and business outcomes. The pilot tests data across four USRSB priority indicators for the cow-calf and feedyard sectors to demonstrate that economic and environmental outcomes are not always at odds; rather, to be successful at driving change in the beef industry, they must work in tandem to help ranchers and feedyards demonstrate economic outcomes while improving environmental performance.

**Project Partners:** K·Coe Isom, World Wildlife Fund, Hy-Plains Feedyard

**Primary Contact:**
Zach Pinto, K·Coe Isom
zach.pinto@kcoe.com

# 06 PRODUCER FOCUSED SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION PROGRAM

This project led by University of California Davis explores efforts to improve knowledge of how ranchers adopt new practices within their operation. By learning from the success of the Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA), the project aims to create a producer-focused educational program that ensures the fluid and effective implementation of the USRSB Indicators and Metrics.

**Project Partners:** University of California Davis, National Cattlemen's Beef Association

**Primary Contact:**
Sarah Klopatek, University of California Davis
klopatek@ucdavis.edu

# CONNECTING THE SUPPLY CHAIN THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY 07

This project infuses sustainability education into baccalaureate programs using a case study of beef cattle. This project targets educators and encourages the use of system thinking in animal health, animal science, veterinary colleges, hospitality and restaurant management and textiles curriculum to raise awareness of the impact of business decisions in sustainability. In turn, faculty are better prepared to develop baccalaureate students to support a stronger food and agricultural scientific and professional workforce.

**Project Partners:** Kansas State University, Noble Research Institute

**Primary Contact:**
Patti Dollarhide, Beef Cattle Institute
pjdollar@vet.k-state.edu

# 08 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DAVIS SEAWEED SUPPLEMENT PROJECT

University of California-Davis and Elm Innovations are conducting a study exploring a seaweed supplement shown to dramatically and safely reduce emissions in live dairy cows.

**Project Partners:** University of California Davis, Elm Innovations

**Primary Contact:**
Joan Salwen, Elm Innovations
joansalwen@gmail.com

# IMPROVING ON-RANCH SUSTAINABILITY: A PILOT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR COW-CALF PRODUCERS

# 09

This project will host a Sustainable Ranch Management Workshop designed to assist cattle producers with the development of ranch-specific plans that align to the U.S. Beef Industry Sustainability Framework. The workshop focuses on grazing management plans, record keeping plans, Beef Quality Assurance and antimicrobial stewardship, as well as stockmanship and stewardship practices.

**Project Partners:** California Cattlemen's Association, California State University - Chico, McDonald's Corporation, National Cattlemen's Beef Association

**Primary Contact:**
Mike Williams, California Cattlemen's Association
mbw61@aol.com

# 10 IMPROVING THE FESCUE BELT FORAGE SYSTEM FOR GREATER, MORE PROFITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE COW-CALF PRODUCTION

This project investigates how changing forage diversity impacts animal and agronomic production, pest pressure, soil health parameters, and overall economic profitability and sustainability. Further, this project teaches those practices outlined in the U.S. Beef Industry Sustainability Framework that impact a producer's efficiency and yield.

**Project Partners:** University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

**Primary Contact:**
Gary Bates, University of Tennessee
gbates@utk.edu

# EXPANDING AND TESTING THE UTILITY OF LAND POTENTIAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM (LANDPKS)

# 11

Under a Conservation Innovation Grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Colorado Chapter is working with partners to expand and test the utility of the Land Potential Knowledge System (LandPKS) – an Open Source Grazing Land Evaluation Tool for Ranchers. The project will increase the usefulness of LandPKS for producers in the U.S. by creating tools to assess forage utilization and wildlife habitat conditions on their ranches. The enhanced LandPKS tool will be shared with ranchers via at least 20 workshops held in 5 states and additional outreach to introduce the tool to an even broader community of potential users. The workshops will introduce LandPKS as part of a broader drought and adaptive management curriculum.

**Project Partners:** Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Colorado State University, LandPKS Development Team, The Nature Conservancy Colorado, USDA Agriculture Research Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

**Primary Contact:**
William Burnidge, The Nature Conservancy
wburnidge@tnc.org

# 12 GRASS RUN FARMS PRODUCER SUSTAINABILITY PILOT

JBS USA, through their Grass Run Farms Program, tested the applicability of the USRSB cow-calf and feedyard metrics in a grass-fed system. The pilot project achieved 80 percent completion rate of the metric questions for more than 30,000 head of cattle from three family farm partners, representing 75 percent of Grass Run Farms' supply.

**Project Partners:** JBS USA

**Primary Contact:**
Charlie Bradbury, JBS USA
charles.bradbury@jbssa.com

# MONTANA IMPROVED GRAZING CARBON PROJECT

# 13

This project explores using carbon credits as a lever to bring funding to producers and promote regenerative grazing practices. The project seeks to measure and increase soil carbon over a 30-year project, directly fund regenerative practices on 200,000 acres by 2021, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the beef supply chain, and increase adoption of improved grazing practices on the Northern Great Plains.

**Project Partners:** NativeEnergy, Western Sustainability Exchange, Soils for the Future

**Primary Contact:**
Kirsten McKnight, NativeEnergy
kirsten.mcknight@nativeenergy.com

# 14 RUMINANT METHANE EFFICIENCY TOOL (RMET)

The RMET is a management tool for measuring operational efficiency and represents the environmental footprint of North American cattle operations. It consolidates multiple sources of operational data into a single framework with a common denominator – $CO_2e$ emitted per unit of production building upon the concept that carbon lost is money lost.

**Project Partners:** RuMeth International Ltd.

**Primary Contact:**
Kurt Rockeman, RuMeth International Ltd.
kurtrockeman@hotmail.com

# EXAMINING THE PRACTICAL ON-RANCH APPLICATION AND BENEFITS OF LOW-STRESS HERDING AND STOCKMANSHIP TECHNIQUES

# 15

Diamond W Cattle Co and the University of California Cooperative Extension Service are partnering to document and demonstrate the efficacy and practicality of using stockmanship and low-stress herding in a production setting. Using GPS collaring of cattle and transect monitoring, the project expects to show that low-stress herding can 1) increase ranchers' profitability (by increasing the number of livestock per unit area); 2) improve animal management (reduce the number of bulls needed, increase breeding percentage, etc.); and 3) positively support multiple ecosystem services (protecting water quality and sensitive riparian habitats, improving vegetation for wildlife habitat, and decreasing the risk of catastrophic wildfires).

**Project Partners:** Diamond W Cattle Company, University of California Cooperative Extension Service

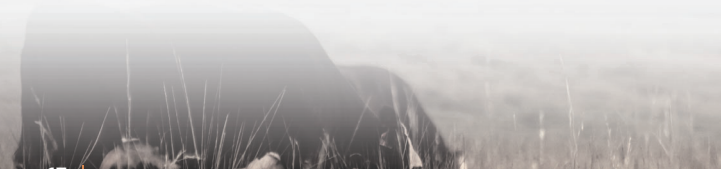
**Primary Contact:**
Matthew Shapero, University of California
mwkshapero@ucanr.edu

# 16 MEAT SUSTAINABILITY CALCULATOR

Merck Animal Health uses published data to give users a feel for how different beef production systems, tools and changes in cattle management can affect water and land usage and greenhouse gas emissions. By using this tool, users can get an estimate prior to making decisions of baseline numbers for guidance toward improving on their water, land, air and efficiency metrics as established in the U.S. Beef Industry Sustainability Framework.

**Project Partners:** Merck Animal Health

**Primary Contact:**
Jessica Finck, Merck Animal Health
jessica.finck@merck.com



# LEARN MORE

If you are interested in learning more, please visit the USRSB Supported Projects Page on the USRSB website. Furthermore, if you or your organization also have a pilot project or field project that furthers the Mission and Vision of the USRSB, and would like a letter of support from USRSB, please contact the USRSB Administrator at usrsb@beef.org for more information.

www.USRSB.org


U.S. ROUNDTABLE FOR
SUSTAINABLE BEEF
®
www.USRSB.org