



## **Benchmark Beef 2018**

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There has been considerable interest in expanding the cow calf industry in northern Ontario, as well as fortify the more developed industry in north western Quebec. Beef Farmers of Ontario had stated that the industry needs at least 100000 more cows to remain sustaining in the long term. With land prices rising in southern Ontario, producers are looking north to expand the industry.

There are currently many successful operations in the northern parts of both provinces. The decision was made to study what made beef farms successful or challenged in the north.

A collaboration of Quebec and Ontario provincial governments looked at best management practices of beef cow calf operations in northern areas. There were three segments of the report:

- A questionnaire of nearly 100 questions was sent to the cattle companies in the targeted areas. A total of 179 responses were received with 80 from Ontario and 99 from Québec.
- A best management practices report of actions common to operations was compiled.
- Financial information on 30 farms was compiled to look for key performance indicators.

The questionnaire looked at 10 segments of a farming operation, including production practices, innovation, marketing, human resources, and finances. The study looked for what percentage of farms practiced what different processes, and whether doing one process lead to better results elsewhere.

The consultant then compiled a review of what practices he had observed on the farms that seemed to lead to consistently better results.

Finally, several larger farmers participated in a financial survey, to tease out which practices seemed to provide greater financial benefit.

Once the reporting was completed, a joint conference was held in Rouyn, Quebec, discussing common challenges and themes of the study. As well, both provinces took their results to develop best management practices for their respective cow calf operations.

Going forward, presentations, fact sheets, and articles are being written on the current level of technology adaptation. As well the data has been shared with the Canadian Beef Research Council, to compare to other cow calf studies nationwide.