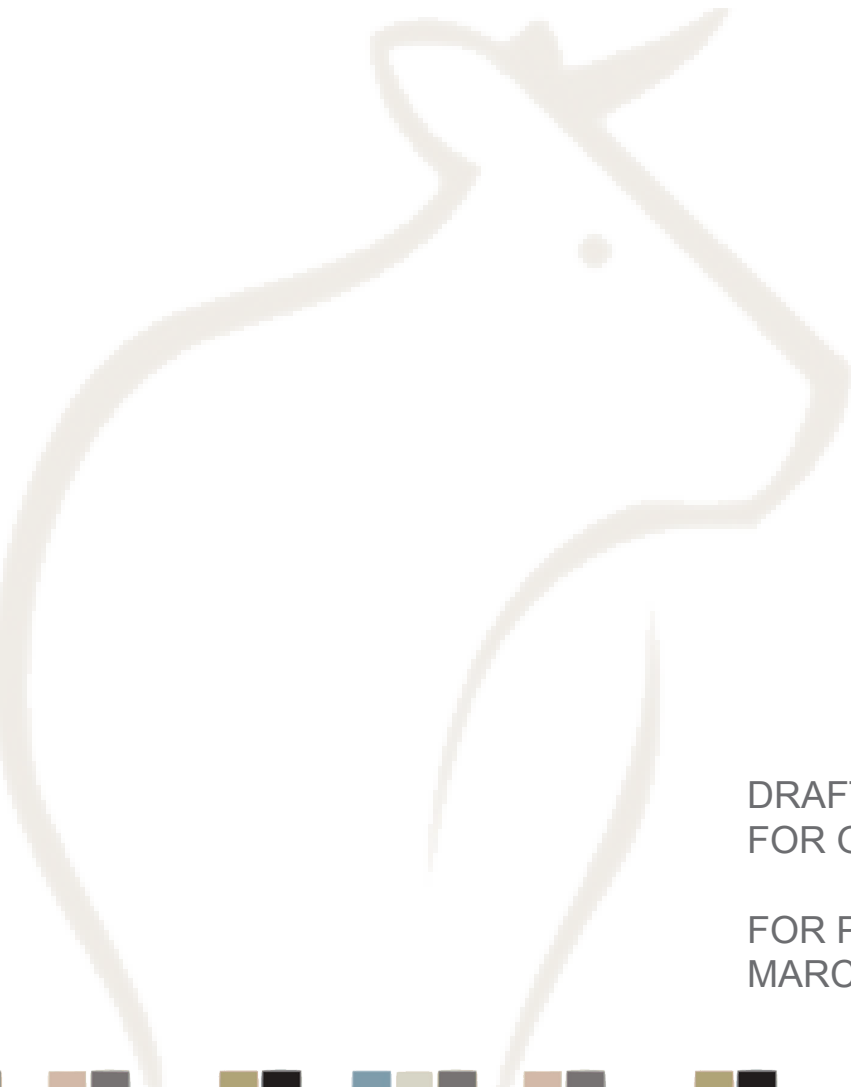


Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef



DRAFT PRINCIPLES & CRITERIA
FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE BEEF

FOR PUBLIC COMMENT & REVIEW
MARCH 17, 2014



Principles & Criteria for Defining Global Sustainable Beef

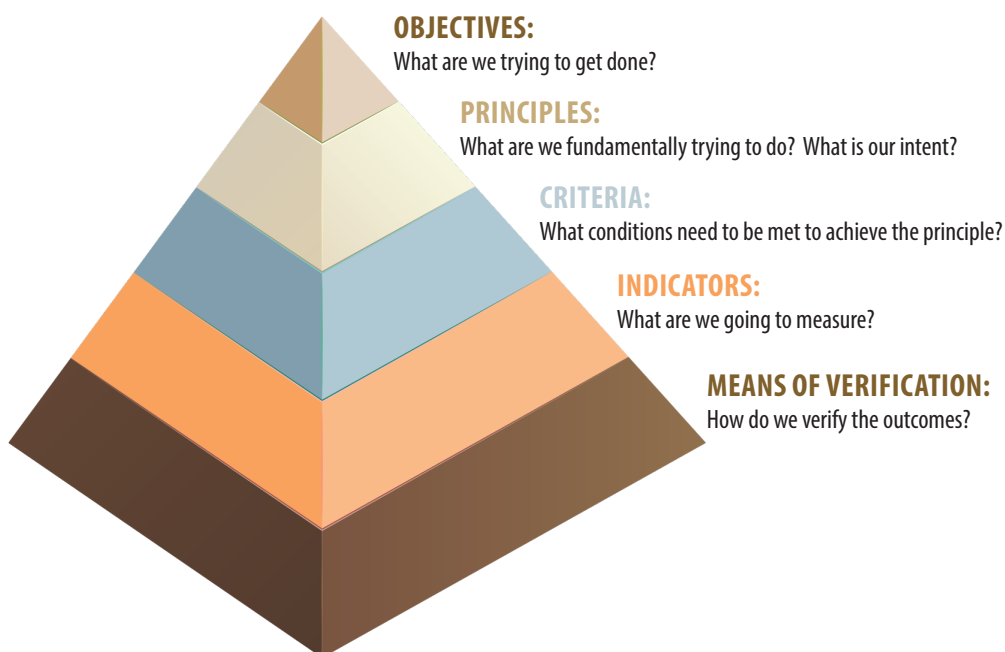
NOTE

This document was created in English, and the English version is authoritative. Translations exist in Spanish and Portuguese for ease of distribution to a wider audience, but in the event of a discrepancy between versions, the English version is regarded as official.

PROCESS

This document represents the collaborative effort of the members of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) to define the **Principles** and **Criteria** that we believe must be addressed in order to achieve sustainable beef production systems and value chains around the globe. The Principles and Criteria build upon our vision and mission and are intended to be high level to allow for multiple regional approaches to achieving sustainable outcomes. This document deliberately avoids the equally important, but more context-specific levels of **Indicators**, **Metrics** or **Practices**, which are commonly found in other sustainability efforts.

The reason for this is that the broad range of ecosystems in which beef can be produced makes a “one-size-fits-all” global standard unrealistic. While a definition of sustainable beef at the global level will have directional validity, it is clear that context-specific elements, including Indicators and Metrics, are only applicable in a narrow range of environments and systems and therefore need to be developed at the regional or local level. Work is under way in several countries and regions to determine how the Principles and Criteria presented here can be applied on a local basis. GRSB will continue to work with national and regional groups to extend this work to promote meaningful on-the-ground improvements throughout the global beef value chain.



PRINCIPLES

Principles are broad statements of objectives, covering essential elements of sustainable beef value chains. They help to elaborate the objectives of GRSB.

CRITERIA

Criteria are achieved to meet principles, or are conditions that need to be met in order to adhere to a principle. A criterion is an element or set of conditions or processes by which a system characteristic is judged. It adds meaning and the ability to add further clarification to a principle, *without itself being a measure of performance*. Each criterion relates to a specific element of sustainability, and clearly to one of the principles.

The process for identifying more context-specific elements for the Principles and Criteria is proposed as follows:

National or Regional groups align with the Principles and Criteria and formulate plans for their region as to more context-specific elements.

- As national policies may cover several of the criteria in many countries, stakeholders will need to determine which elements of the Principles and Criteria are fully or partially covered by existing national, regional or state policies.
- Secondly, existing sustainability efforts may also address some of the issues identified in these Principles and Criteria.
- GRSB welcomes suggestions as to how those directly involved in the beef value chain can best build on the Principles and Criteria to support their own sustainability approaches. Our aim is to harmonize our efforts with existing initiatives and not create duplicative systems.
- Examples of how to harmonize GRSB efforts with other initiatives may include, but are not limited to:
 - The establishment of a process to link locally-relevant indicators to the Principles and Criteria;
 - The creation and support of information-sharing platforms that provide decision-making tools for beef value chain participants;
 - The creation of a centralized database that provides access to relevant information regarding successful regional approaches;
 - The establishment and support of pilot projects that link value chain partners to promote the scaling and widespread adoption of best practices; and
 - The establishment of a global benchmarking program to identify and determine the successful implementation of existing sustainability programmes.

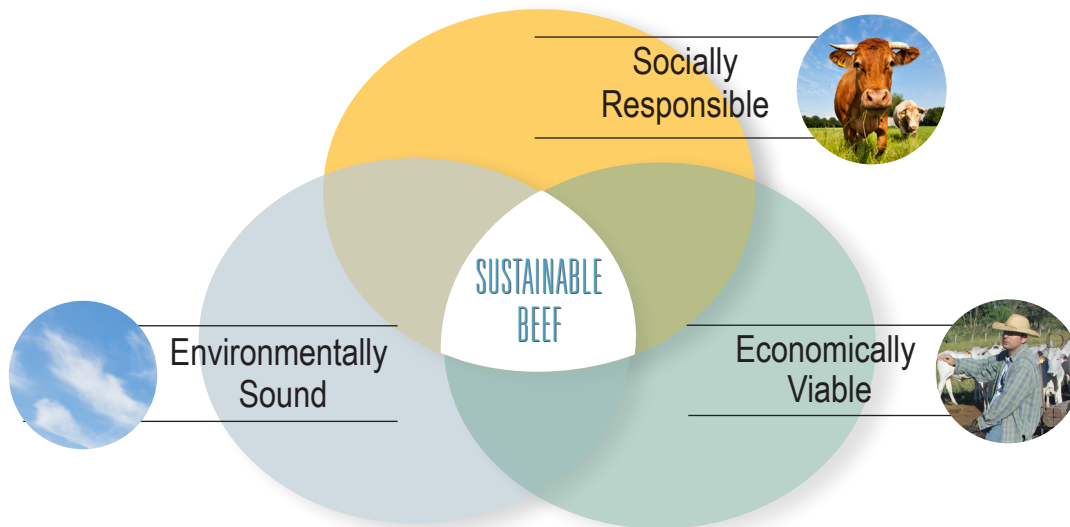


PREAMBLE

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef recognizes that the global beef industry plays an important role in the lives of the people and communities who produce and consume beef; the well-being of the animals under our care; the management of natural resources; and in efficiently meeting the growing global population's demand for animal protein. Importantly, we recognize that a sustainable beef value chain must respect national and international laws that govern the activities of beef value chain participants.

THE TRIPLE-BOTTOM LINE APPROACH

Underpinning our Principles and Criteria is the triple-bottom-line approach that balances environmental, social, and economic considerations. Each of the Principles and Criteria must be scrutinized through this holistic lens to ensure that a sustainable balance is achieved in the application and adoption of measures and in the resultant outcomes. For example, economic viability is a critical element throughout sustainable beef value chains. Each participant in the value chain, from the producer to the ultimate consumer of beef, must enjoy viable economic participation in order to ensure sustainable growth. This holds equally true for the social and environmental pillars of sustainability. The triple-bottom line approach is a hallmark of GRSB.



CORE PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE BEEF PRODUCTION AND DELIVERY

(The order of presentation does not reflect prioritization, as all are of equal importance.)

1. Natural Resources
2. People and the Community
3. Animal Health & Welfare
4. Food
5. Efficiency and Innovation

SUMMARY DEFINITION

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef recognizes that each principle is a critical component of the overall definition for global sustainable beef production, delivery and consumption; however, we are conscious of the need to easily communicate our definition to stakeholders both inside and outside the global beef supply chain. The summary definition is as follows:

We define sustainable beef as a socially responsible, environmentally sound and economically viable product that prioritizes **Planet** (relevant principles: *Natural Resources, Efficiency & Innovation, People and the Community*); **People** (relevant principles: *People and the Community and Food*); **Animals** (relevant principle: *Animal health and welfare*); and **Progress** (relevant principles: *Natural Resources, People and the Community, Animal health and welfare, Food, Efficiency and Innovation*).

{ PLANET, PEOPLE, ANIMALS & PROGRESS }





BACKGROUND

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) is a multi-stakeholder initiative with representation from across the value chain and beef production and consumption regions throughout the world. Through the process of broad-based engagement and various internal and external reviews, the Principles and Criteria contained in this document were developed as a means to define global sustainable beef in the context of the mission and vision of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef.

VISION

We envision a world in which all aspects of the beef value chain are environmentally sound, socially responsible and economically viable.

MISSION

The mission of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef is to advance continuous improvement in global beef value chain sustainability, through leadership, science, and multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

SCOPE

This document does not extend to metrics or prescriptive management practices; however, we recognize that associated *performance outcomes*, rather than *identical systems* by type, e.g. intensive or extensive, are the basis for comparisons and recommendations, and that performance outcomes would therefore form a part of local-level indicator development. Continuous improvement is explicit in our mission, and combined with the high level nature of these Principles and Criteria, precludes the setting of benchmarks.

Realizing that each segment of the global beef value chain has a shared responsibility toward beef sustainability, it is expected that these Principles and Criteria will be applied across the entire supply chain from farm to retail, in a manner that accommodates the unique regional challenges of distinct ecosystems.

Furthermore, criteria are limited in their scope to issues under the direct control of the beef value chain and must be applied in a manner that reflects the broad diversity of beef value chains around the globe.

INTENT

GRSB does not intend to set standards or to create a certification program but to provide a common baseline understanding of sustainable beef that national roundtables and other initiatives can use to meet their needs. GRSB does expect, however, that these Principles and Criteria will be the baseline definition and common foundation of initiatives aligned with the GRSB mission and vision.

We fully recognize that given the diversity of beef production systems around the world that local, national and regional interpretation must take place. GRSB has agreed that the next steps will include the development of more regional-specific indicators, but that we will not develop a seal, certification or comparable standard for sustainable beef.



www.grsbeef.org



PRINCIPLE 1 - NATURAL RESOURCES



Global sustainable beef stakeholders produce beef in a manner that identifies and manages natural resources responsibly and maintains or enhances the health of ecosystems.

CRITERIA

1. Environmental and conservation objectives¹ are achieved and tracked through adaptive outcome-based management² systems, contributing to continuous improvement in natural resource management.
2. Environmental stewardship is enhanced through education and partnerships where appropriate opportunities exist.
3. Practices are implemented that minimize negative impacts on air quality, including dust, odour and particulate matter, and where possible, contribute to improvement.
4. GHG emissions from beef systems, including those from land use conversion, are minimised and carbon sequestration is optimized.
5. Deforestation from cattle expansion is minimised and eventually eliminated throughout all phases of the production system.
6. Water resources are used responsibly and efficiently including management of surface water runoff and maintenance of riparian areas to promote proper ecological function.
7. Land use activities protect and enhance ecosystem health and high value conservation areas throughout all phases of the beef production system. Soil quality is maintained or improved through adoption of appropriate management practices.
8. Where possible, feed is sourced from verified sustainable sources.
9. Wildlife and plant community biodiversity is maintained and enhanced through appropriate grazing, production and integrated pest management practices.
10. Grazing, foraging and cropping management practices are implemented to promote resilience to climate change.

¹ Environmental and conservation objectives include but are not limited to, condition of soil, water, air quality, vegetation, and wildlife habitat and population status.

² Adaptive management is a structured iterative process of decision making, using a systematic approach of measuring, monitoring, evaluation and adjusting management strategies based upon financial, livestock and ecological conditions.



PRINCIPLE 1 - NATURAL RESOURCES



INTENT

This principle is based on the concept that functional ecosystem processes are maintained through adoption of management practices, throughout the beef production system, that are designed to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and provide ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, water conservation, resource use efficiency and ecosystem resilience.

Specifically, sustainable beef production manages natural resources responsibly and maintains or enhances the health of ecosystems; water infiltration; carbon sequestration at the landscape scale; balanced bio-physical and chemical soil conditions; resilience to adverse weather events; and the ability of ecosystems to recover and support continued uses.

The concept of continuous improvement is key. We strongly support using a scientific basis for decisions or recommendations. An underlying assumption is that there is compliance with national and international regulations on natural resource usage.



{ PRINCIPLE 2 - PEOPLE & THE COMMUNITY }

Global sustainable beef stakeholders protect and respect human rights,³ and recognize the critical roles that all participants within the beef value chain play in their community regarding culture, heritage, employment, land rights and health.

CRITERIA

1. Companies and individuals throughout the beef value chain protect human rights in accordance with United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights³ through policies, regulation and due diligence.
2. Business is conducted with integrity, in compliance with applicable laws and regulations throughout the value chain.
3. A safe work environment is provided, supported by training and appropriate equipment to reduce risks.
4. Stable, safe employment for at least the legal minimum wage where applicable, and opportunities for career development when possible are provided throughout the value chain.
5. The cultural heritage and way of life of all parties are recognized and respected throughout the value chain.
6. The land and property rights of landowners, tenants and communities are acknowledged and respected throughout the value chain.



INTENT

This principle and associated criteria are based upon respect for the rights of all human beings and recognition and respect for their rich and diverse cultural heritage. Compliance with applicable laws is an underlying assumption and expectation, and we recognise there may be areas of inconsistency between these criteria and applicable laws. In the absence of law, or where there is a difference between these laws and these criteria, it is expected that the more stringent of the two will be adhered to.

A commitment to continuous improvement throughout the value chain means that performance gaps are identified and addressed, while recognizing that actions taken must maintain a balance between the pillars of social responsibility, environmental sustainability and economic viability.

³ “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework” <http://www.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/ruggie/ruggie-guiding-principles-21-mar-2011.pdf> : the rights included are understood at a minimum as those expressed in the International Bill of Human Rights and the principles concerning fundamental rights set out in the International Labour Organization’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.



PRINCIPLE 3 - ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE



Global sustainable beef stakeholders respect and manage animals to ensure their health and welfare.

CRITERIA

1. Adequate feed and potable water is provided to meet the physiological needs of cattle. Diet composition, including roughage, is balanced to promote good health and proper body condition.
2. Animal caretakers recognise body condition and signs of malnutrition and take appropriate action to maintain condition and correct deficiencies.
3. Animal caretakers provide cattle with preventative health care in addition to identifying health problems and taking appropriate action to control and treat disease.
4. Appropriate action is taken to ensure that all cattle are free of pain, injury and disease, and to address any of these problems when identified. A competent person is made available to make prompt diagnoses to determine whether sick or injured cattle should receive additional care or be humanely euthanized.
5. Animal welfare is ensured, including the freedom for cattle to express normal patterns of behaviour; animal caretakers minimise stress on cattle, and recognise and react appropriately to signs of stress. Improvements or alternatives to routine surgery are sought where possible.
6. Cattle are kept in an environment (including stocking density, air quality and surfaces) that is conducive to good health and normal behaviour and minimizes physical and thermal discomfort.
7. Transport (by land and sea) and handling procedures are consistent with Office International des Épizooties (OIE; the World Organisation for Animal Health) guidelines⁴.
8. Slaughter procedures are in line with the OIE terrestrial animal health code.



INTENT

Animal use confers an ethical responsibility to ensure animal welfare. Improvements in farm animal health and welfare can enhance productivity and food safety, and hence lead to economic benefits. There is an important relationship between animal health and welfare, and the use of animals in agriculture also contributes to human well-being. In line with OIE guidance on animal health and welfare, including the five freedoms⁵, this principle and accompanying criteria set expectations for the treatment of cattle throughout the value chain. The concept of continuous improvement is key, consistent with the fact that some regional guidelines exceed OIE.

We strongly support using a scientific basis for decisions or recommendations. An underlying assumption is that there is compliance with national and international regulations on animal health and welfare.

⁴ See: 2013 © OIE - Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Chapter 7.9, Animal Welfare and Beef Cattle Production Systems

⁵ http://web.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/en_chapitre_1.7.1.htm



PRINCIPLE 4 - FOOD



Global sustainable beef stakeholders ensure the safety and quality⁶ of beef products and utilize information-sharing systems that promote beef sustainability.

CRITERIA

1. Food safety is ensured through the development, adoption, documentation, maintenance and, where applicable, third-party validation of practices by all members of the value chain. This also includes the prompt resolution of all cases of food safety contamination.
2. Beef quality is ensured through the adoption, documentation, maintenance and validation of management systems throughout the value chain. All reasonable efforts are taken to ensure the quality of beef and related co-products to participants further down the value chain.
3. Information is shared through systems implemented throughout the value chain. These systems ensure that consumers are reassured as to the integrity of the beef value chain and risk is managed, while respecting confidentiality.

INTENT

This principle and criteria rely upon integrity and transparency between all members of the value chain to ensure food safety and beef quality; and the ability to share information related to sustainability Principles and Criteria. Related to this is the expectation that continuous improvements will be made in food safety, beef quality and information-sharing systems. Improvements should be scientifically based, and focused on the sustainability impacts most important to the entire value chain to ensure that they meet consumer expectations.



⁶ Ensuring food safety and quality of the beef supply are paramount to consumer perception and demand and thus part of economic viability, one of the pillars of sustainability



PRINCIPLE 5 - EFFICIENCY & INNOVATION



Global sustainable beef stakeholders encourage innovation, optimise production, reduce waste and add to economic viability.

CRITERIA

1. Cattle are selected and managed to optimize available resources and suit their environment, while meeting market conditions and consumer preferences.
2. Non-recyclable waste is reduced and non-recyclable contributions to landfills and the environment are minimized throughout the value chain.
3. Product value and carcass utilization are maximised throughout the value chain.
4. Water and land use are managed throughout the value chain to ensure responsible and efficient resource use.
5. Energy use is optimised for efficiency and productivity and renewable energy is promoted where applicable throughout the value chain.
6. Feed inputs are optimised for production and welfare goals throughout the production chain.
7. Pharmaceutical, nutrient and chemical use is executed responsibly and transparently ensuring efficient productivity throughout the value chain.
8. Beef value chain stakeholders continually innovate and utilize technologies to improve efficiencies and adapt to changing climate and resource conditions.
9. New tools, technologies and practices validated to improve producer profitability and efficiency without undue negative impact are adopted throughout the value chain.

INTENT

The criteria defined under this principle aim to increase the ability of the value chain to profitably and safely produce beef, with a balanced use of natural resources through optimal use of external inputs, efficient management and reduced waste production. Efficiency and Innovation are seen as key to the continuous improvement for each of the other four GRSB principles for sustainable beef. Efficiency improvements should also enhance the ability of the beef industry to adapt to external and internal challenges. Increased efficiency through shared knowledge and experience should be underpinned by scientific evidence that ensures environmental protection and social responsibility, while allowing for viable economic outcomes.

