

Setting Animal Welfare Research Priorities for the Canadian Beef Cattle Industry National Farmed Animal Health & Welfare Council Forum

November 23, 2015



Past (pre-2009)

- **Small industry funder, limited budget**
- **Formal priority setting session every 5 years**
 - Researchers invited
- **Priorities reviewed and refined annually by the council**



Limitations

- **Producers comfortable with production, but reluctant to tell researchers what they should research**
- **A highly engaging presentation could really influence the priority list**
- **Health vs. welfare vs. efficiency vs. environment vs. quality vs. safety vs. forage**



Limitations

- **Welfare research was viewed as public good:**
 - The government's job to do
 - The taxpayer's job to fund
- **With limited funding, welfare rarely (never) made the cut**
- **Increased funding and mandate of the Cluster program allowed us to fund a broader portfolio of research projects, and set priorities more strategically as well.**



National Beef Research Workshop

- **Two-day session held in early 2012**
- **Brought in 75 respected researchers, funders, producers and industry stakeholders from across Canada**
- **Participants grouped according to expertise:**
 - **Food safety / beef quality,**
 - **Feed efficiency,**
 - **Forage & environment,**
 - **Animal health & welfare**



Workshop

- Breakout groups allowed more focused, separate discussions, i.e.
 - both animal health & welfare and feed efficiency, rather than
 - animal health & welfare or feed efficiency
- Breakout groups began with a nation-wide review of all animal health & welfare research that had been funded in Canada from 2007-2012



Workshop

- **Once that context was provided, discussion focused on what research was needed to advance beef cattle health & welfare**
- **This feedback was then formed into very specific short (3 year), medium (5 year) and long- (10 year) term research outcomes**



Priorities vs. Outcomes

- **Priority:**
 - e.g. animal welfare
- **Outcome:**

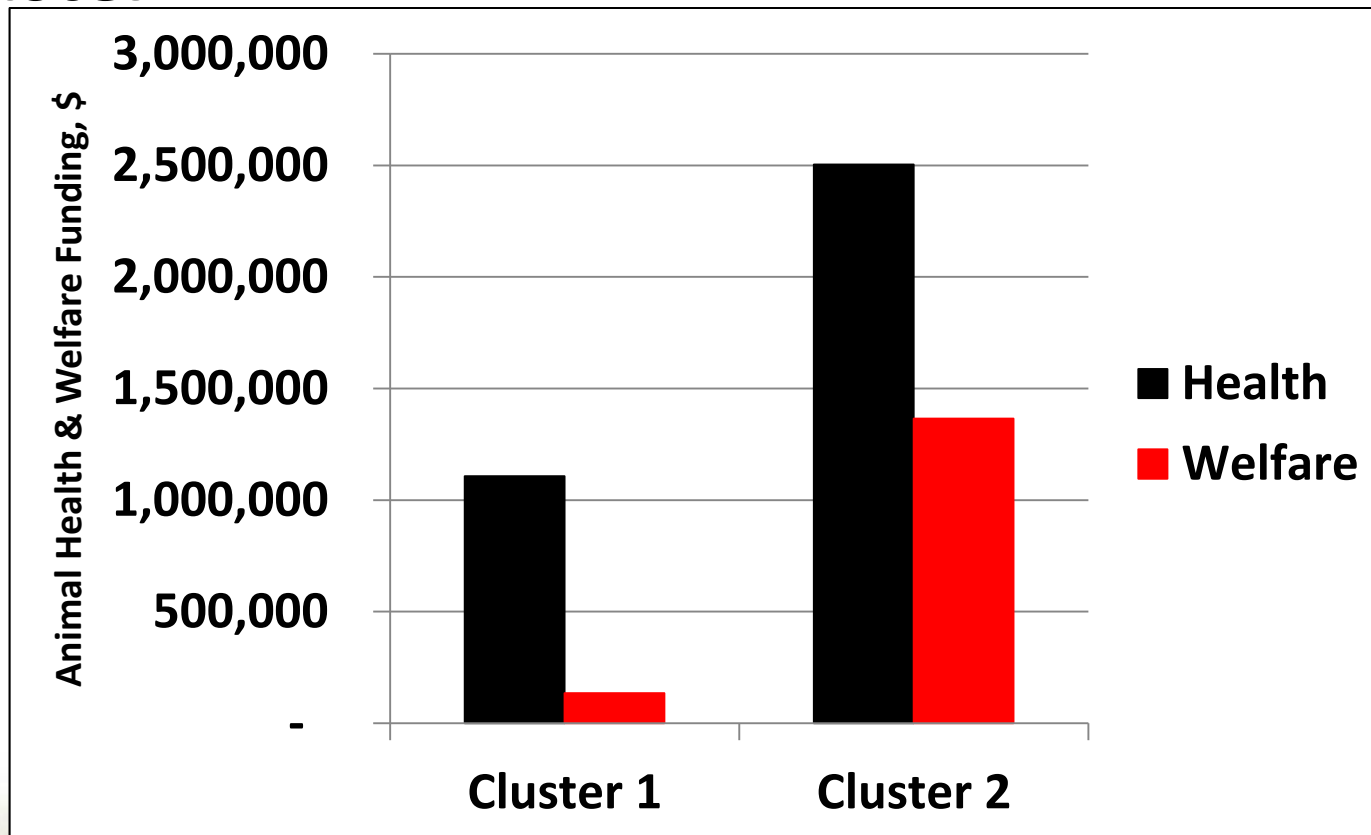


e.g. develop practical, cost-effective methods of objectively quantifying and mitigating pain and stress in beef cattle under production conditions developed (e.g. diet, castration, dehorning, branding, weaning, transport) by 2016.



Implementing Priority Outcomes

- This formed the basis of our research programming under the second Beef Science cluster



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