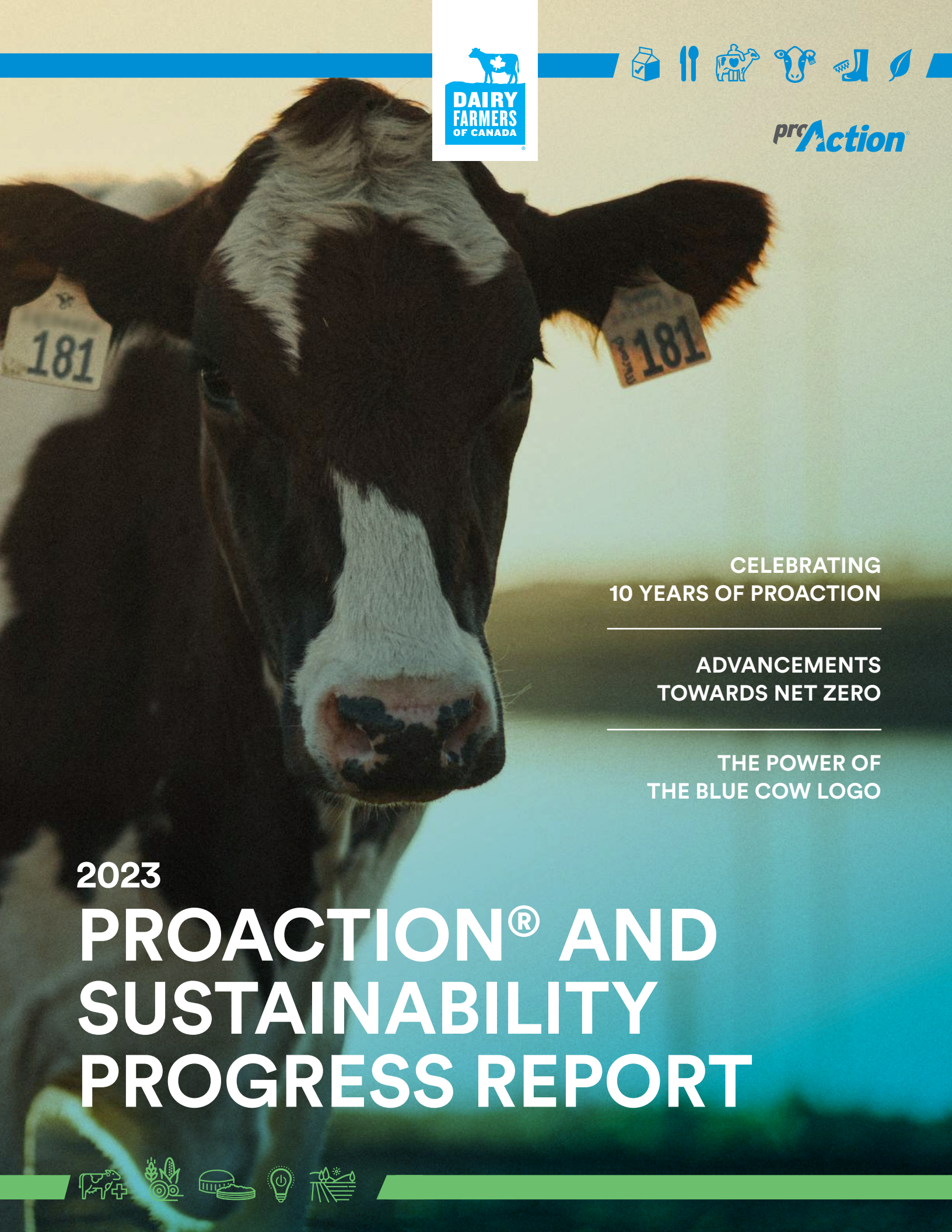




**proAction**



CELEBRATING  
10 YEARS OF PROACTION

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ADVANCEMENTS  
TOWARDS NET ZERO

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THE POWER OF  
THE BLUE COW LOGO

2023

# PROACTION® AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS REPORT





# Message from the President of Dairy Farmers of Canada

On behalf of Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), I am pleased to present our 2023 proAction® and Sustainability Progress Report.

In my role as president of DFC, sitting on dairy industry boards and committees over the years, and as a dairy farmer myself, I have been fortunate to witness firsthand our sector embrace innovation and leadership. This especially includes advances related to sustainability and our commitment to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Dairy farmers have always been stewards of our natural resources because we know effective environmental practices contribute to long-term success on our farms. Careful management of all aspects on the farm helps ensure future generations of dairy farmers will be able to continue producing the milk that Canadians love and enjoy. To help us on the way,

DFC's Best Management Practices Guide works together with the proAction Environment module to provide a path forward. Progress in areas such as enhancing soil health, protecting biodiversity, optimizing land usage, and reducing our carbon footprint enable dairy farmers to build on what we do best with dedication to continuous improvement.

Dairy farmers should be very proud of our position as leaders in environmental stewardship. Through impactful sustainability efforts, we're making steady progress towards our net-zero goal. I look forward to seeing where such innovation will take our farms and our entire sector in the future.

On behalf of the DFC leadership team and my fellow dairy farmers, I would like to thank everyone – including farmers, experts, researchers, and industry partners – for their commitment and contributions to this goal.

**David Wiens**  
President, Dairy Farmers of Canada



## Chair Message

Our national on-farm quality assurance program, proAction®, provides a framework for Canada's high dairy standards. From coast to coast, dairy farmers use proAction to demonstrate and document best practices, proving to the country and the rest of the world that we produce some of the safest, highest-quality milk on the planet.

Under proAction, farmers demonstrate transparency and diligence in six distinct areas: milk quality, food safety, animal care, traceability, biosecurity, and the environment. Each module underpins the confidence Canadians have in our dairy farmers, and altogether, is why consumers continuously look for the Blue Cow logo on their favourite dairy products made with 100% Canadian milk.

As always, Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) is committed to evolve proAction to reflect best practices backed up by the latest science, and seek opportunities to improve, streamline and explore data management optimization. In this way, we demonstrate to everyone how dairy farmers across Canada are applying the highest standards on their farms.

**Vicky Morrison**  
Chair of the proAction Committee

*Funded by the Government of Canada under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.*







# Celebrating 10 Years of proAction

2023 marks the 10th anniversary of proAction, though the concept of an on-farm food safety program was first initiated in 1997. Building on a history of quality production and stewardship, Canada's dairy industry developed its first national on-farm quality assurance program, Canadian Quality Milk (CQM), to strive for and demonstrate excellence in food safety. Throughout the program development, dairy farmers were involved at every step, along with industry specialists, experts and partners.

Over time, DFC and its members realized the need to show how farmers responsibly produce food across other important topics, and initiated the expansion of the CQM program to become the proAction program, growing the focus from Food Safety to encompass five additional areas: Milk Quality, Animal Care, Traceability, Biosecurity and Environment.

*A significant milestone for dairy farmers!*

Today, all six proAction modules have been implemented on Canadian dairy farms.



proAction was built on the CQM platform of assurance, and is designed with checks and balances in place to confirm conformance, transparency and accountability. The high standards of proAction serve to safeguard farmers' interests – within the dairy industry, with government, and at an international level. The program is mandatory for all Canadian dairy farms and was implemented in stages between 2013 and 2023. Today, all six modules have been validated on dairy farms across the country.

The proAction program also supports the **Blue Cow logo**, clearly demonstrating to consumers the great work farmers do every day to produce safe, sustainable milk and milk ingredients.

## What's next? ➡

The proAction program was built on the concept of continuous improvement – at the farm level and the program level. As such, the program will evolve to incorporate new practices that reflect the latest research and technological innovations and will evaluate opportunities to streamline and improve efficiency.

## The evolution of Canadian dairy excellence programs

- 1997** The development of an on-farm food safety program is approved by Canadian dairy farmers
- 2001** Launch of the CQM program
- 2003** The CQM program achieves Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) technical recognition
- 2007** A target date of 2015 is set for all Canadian dairy farmers to be CQM-registered
- 2012** DFC consults dairy farmers about grouping numerous topics under one umbrella group, proAction
- 2013** The proAction program is approved by DFC delegates with a 10-year implementation plan of all six modules
- 2023** Full completion of the 10-year implementation plan



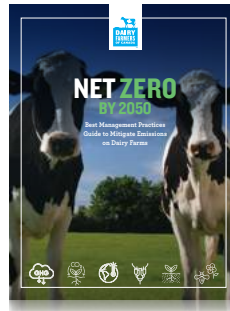
## Elevating Standards for Success

In February 2022, DFC announced a commitment to achieving net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.

Canadian dairy farmers have worked hard to make our carbon footprint one of the lowest in the world. To build on this momentum, DFC released various support materials, including its *Net Zero by 2050: Best Management Practices Guide to Mitigate Emissions on Dairy Farms* in March 2023.

The guide is a key part of DFC's Net Zero by 2050 objective and focuses on five main categories including **livestock management, feed production, manure management, energy, infrastructure and transportation, and land management**. A practical resource for Canadian dairy farms, the guide is designed to help farmers identify on-farm practices that will reduce their GHG emissions to mitigate climate change and lessen the effects of extreme weather events that are impacting dairy farms across Canada.

The 44-page booklet provides an overview of 30 on-farm best management practices (BMPs) identified in current research that outline opportunities for reducing GHG emissions, increasing carbon sequestration, and improving overall environmental sustainability.



## Connecting proAction with Net-Zero Objectives

**DFC's Net Zero by 2050 commitment is separate from proAction, but closely linked. Many Canadian dairy farmers' efforts through proAction support sustainability, from increased milk quality to improved animal health and disease prevention, to all the requirements of the Environment module.**

In particular, Environmental Farm Plans will help farmers be aware of areas of environmental strength on their farms and provide ideas for new practices to adopt. Aggregated answers to the Environmental Questionnaire will enable DFC to better communicate the hard work and progress being made on Canadian dairy farms.

Enhancing or adopting BMPs that are proven to reduce GHG emissions as part of the sector's net-zero commitment also helps drive progress under proAction's standards of excellence. For example, steps taken to improve cattle longevity to drive sustainability could naturally also improve cattle health objectives under proAction's Biosecurity Risk Assessment. Therefore, while the two initiatives are separate, they work hand-in-hand.

# Net Zero by 2050 and proAction

Enhancing or adopting BMPs that are proven to reduce GHG emissions on the path to net zero also helps drive progress under proAction's standards of excellence.



LIVESTOCK  
MANAGEMENT



FEED  
PRODUCTION



MANURE  
MANAGEMENT



ENERGY,  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND TRANSPORTATION



LAND MANAGEMENT

## What's next? >>

- > Canadian dairy farms have the opportunity to **voluntarily implement strategies to reduce emissions and increase environmental benefits that make sense for their operation.** A one-size-fits-all approach would not be practical, that is why it's important farmers continue to run their operations as they see fit. Every change made on individual farms will contribute to the sector's thriving, sustainable future.
- > Working towards net zero **demonstrates that the sector will continue to be part of the solutions to tackle climate change and drive trust to ensure Canadians can continue enjoying dairy products made with 100% Canadian milk for generations to come.**
- > As part of the overall strategy, DFC is **committed to supporting farmers to advance the sustainability and efficiency of their operations** by developing strategic partnerships with leading environmental organizations to increase research, innovation and knowledge transfer. DFC will also continue to support farmers, helping shape beneficial regulatory environments and markets, leverage economic opportunities, and communicate about our farmers' sustainability journey.
- > DFC will soon be completing the 2021 Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) that includes a new biodiversity assessment. **These initiatives, along with collaboration with diverse stakeholders, will inform DFC's Sustainability Strategy and support dairy farmers' continuous sustainability efforts.**





# Environmental Life Cycle Assessment of Canadian Milk Production

Since 2011, DFC has been monitoring environmental progress through a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) that quantifies the environmental performance of Canadian milk production, including its carbon footprint, water consumption, and land use.

Three LCAs have been conducted in 2011, 2016 and 2021 by an independent team of life cycle analysis professionals.

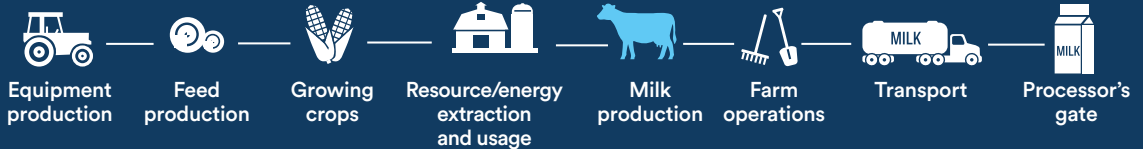
New for 2021, the study included a Biodiversity Assessment which will help the Canadian dairy industry measure environmental progress.

The 2021 LCA results, released in 2024, will be used for monitoring progress across a variety of areas to improve the environmental impact of milk production.

Results of each LCA support farmers and the entire dairy value chain by:

- Helping supply chain partners measure Scope 3 emissions (that include on-farm carbon footprint) and better informing their own GHG measurements.
- Identifying partner opportunities to enhance and improve practices through funding or adoption of select BMPs.
- Inspiring farmers to assess their own practices and identify opportunities for improvement and continued progress.

## Assessing the complete life cycle



## FCC Sustainability Incentive Program

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) expanded its Sustainability Incentive Program to dairy farmers in 2023, in partnership with Lactanet and DFC. The program offers eligible customers incentive payments to encourage the adoption of BMPs that support a sustainable future for agriculture.

The criteria to qualify is a combination of herd sustainability metrics and proAction environmental questionnaire results. Incentive payments are calculated as a portion of a farmer's lending with FCC, and farmers can receive one payment per year at a maximum of \$2,000 and can reapply annually throughout the life of the program.

The 2023 program was a success! FCC, Lactanet and DFC are now planning improvements before re-opening the program in mid-2024. This unique industry collaboration demonstrates how Canada's dairy industry is working together to take action on DFC's net-zero strategy by encouraging farmers to implement sustainable practices.

For more information, visit [fcc-fac.ca/en/financing/agriculture/sustainability-incentive-program](https://fcc-fac.ca/en/financing/agriculture/sustainability-incentive-program).

## Stay tuned for 2021 LCA results

- 2022** 2021 data available for the third LCA of Canadian milk production
- 2022-2023** Evaluation of data and generation of LCA results
- 2024** Release of LCA benchmarking results and development of recommendations
- 2027** Next LCA to be started using 2026 data
- 2028-2029** 2026 LCA results published

New genetic tool can reduce methane emissions by

**20-30%** by 2050

*New innovation to reduce methane emissions*

# Methane Efficiency Indicator

## Canada's novel approach to reduce methane emissions

A global leader in the dairy industry, Canada is reducing methane emissions on dairy farms with a novel genetic tool that can reduce methane emissions by 20-30% by 2050.

In April 2023, Lactanet published the first official methane efficiency genetic evaluations for Holsteins that demonstrate the accuracy of predicting individual animal methane emissions. This new tool enables farmers to breed for cows that produce less methane without impacting milk production.

This collaborative initiative with Semex Alliance makes Canada the first country globally to deliver evaluations aimed at reducing methane emissions in dairy cattle. The new Methane Efficiency Indicator was developed as a result of pivotal research led by University of Guelph researchers and funded through the collaboration of numerous partners, including DFC. In October 2023, Lactanet and Semex Alliance won the prestigious "Innovation in Climate Action" award at the International Dairy Federation World Dairy Summit in Chicago, Illinois, for developing Canada's Methane Efficiency genetic evaluation.

## Making a difference

The Canadian dairy sector is committed to its Net Zero by 2050 goal, and methane efficiency is a powerful tool to help achieve this objective. By selecting animals that produce less methane, the dairy sector will see permanent and cumulative reductions in GHG emissions with each generation of cows, resulting in improved long-term sustainability.

## What's next? >>

Everyone will benefit from this new genetic tool – from Canadian dairy farmers who opt to use it to the entire dairy value chain, including processors and consumers:

- By adopting the new Methane Efficiency Indicator, **Canadian dairy herds will contribute less methane to the global carbon footprint.**
- Overall, the **national herd can decrease their enteric methane emissions by 1.5% per year**, and a 20-30% reduction by 2050 is achievable depending on the intensity of selection.

## An Introduction to Navigating Carbon Markets

Carbon markets offer offset and inset economic opportunities for Canadian dairy farmers and potential collaboration and partnerships throughout the dairy supply chain. In 2023, DFC undertook an analysis of carbon markets, studying the opportunities and challenges associated with carbon offsets, insets, biogas and renewable natural gas for Canadian dairy farmers. A consultant was hired to analyze the market and develop an in-depth report.

As a result, DFC has developed a reference document for farmers, *Navigating Carbon Markets: an Introduction*. This handout provides farmers with foundational information about carbon markets, as well as key items that should be considered when evaluating participation in them.

Discover more farmer resources by visiting: [dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/farmer-resources/tools/navigating-carbon-markets](https://dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/farmer-resources/tools/navigating-carbon-markets)





# Environmental Stewardship

As long-time stewards of natural resources, dairy farmers are invested in constantly improving environmental practices that ensure the continued, long-term success of their farms, as well as surrounding landscapes and communities. That is why careful management of soil, water, pastures, wetlands and woodlands is essential to the future of the Canadian dairy industry.

The Environment module of proAction fosters the ongoing expansion of sustainability initiatives while allowing farmers to continue to produce high-quality milk safely and sustainably.

## Valuable information

The Environment module's five requirements aim to mitigate risks and promote positive action. As a foundational element of the module, the **Environmental Questionnaire** focuses on BMPs currently implemented on farms. The process helps farmers review and evaluate the impact their practices have on their surrounding environment, while inspiring and motivating farmers to adopt more best practices to enhance stewardship.

When it comes to meeting and measuring environmental, climate and sustainability goals, the Environmental Questionnaire is a key resource for the Canadian dairy industry. Not only does this information illustrate the sustainable and progressive practices being conducted every day on farms across the country, but the aggregated results can also help industry partners understand how milk is produced and inform climate goals on farms and in the dairy value chain.

*Completed on every  
Canadian dairy farm*

## Environmental Questionnaire

2023 marked the completion of the first round of Environment module validations across all Canadian dairy farms, a significant achievement for the industry and an investment in environmental stewardship across the country. As part of the module, farmers are required to complete the Environmental Questionnaire every two years, so every dairy farm has now completed at least one.

## Did you know?

The information collected in the Environmental Questionnaire allows DFC to convey accurate information when sharing stories about positive actions Canadian dairy farmers take for the environment.






# Enhancing Environmental Sustainability

## Top three Environmental Questionnaire conclusions

1. Most Canadian farms are practicing many BMPs for:
  - soil health
  - soil erosion
  - building soil carbon
2. While soil health is the most common area where Canada's dairy farms have implemented BMPs, other areas being focused on include:
  - assessing and reducing energy use
  - reducing greenhouse gases
  - managing and protecting biodiversity
  - pollinator habitat and health
  - production and runoff of silage seepage
3. BMP adoption differs significantly by province, which demonstrates that one size does not fit all because:
  - some sustainability practices are regionally specific
  - farmers across the country are implementing what works best on their farms and the options available to them

## Results of DFC's Environmental Questionnaire

Here's a look at some of the key results and BMPs Canadian dairy farmers have implemented

- **Soil health** 
  - 99%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP for **soil compaction** – that's almost every dairy farm in the country!
  - 99%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP to build **soil carbon**
  - 98%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP for **soil erosion**
- **Greenhouse gases: assessing and reducing energy use and reducing emissions** 
  - 96%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP for **energy use**
  - 85%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP for **emissions reduction**
- **Wetlands and watercourses, and managing and protecting biodiversity** 
  - 92%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP for **wetlands and watercourses**
  - 77%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP for **biodiversity**
- **Production and runoff of silage seepage, chemical container disposal and other plastic waste disposal**
  - 80%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP to **manage silage seepage**
  - 94%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP to **manage chemical container disposal**
  - 89%** of respondents have implemented at least one BMP to **manage on-farm plastic waste**



# Effectiveness of Traceability

As of September 2023, calves born on a dairy farm destined for purposes other than dairy must be identified with approved white dairy tags (i.e. single button RFID tag or dual tag set), as the exception allowing these animals to have a yellow button tag applied at birth was phased out. The new proAction Reference Manual and Workbook published in July 2023 reflected this change, which was planned and announced back in September 2020.

There was no change for the province of Quebec, as dual tagging of all dairy animals remains a provincial requirement.

Using approved dairy tags results in more complete traceability data for the dairy sector in DairyTrace, which makes effective and rapid traceback possible in an animal health emergency, protecting farms and the dairy industry. It also means DairyTrace can follow dairy cattle as they move through the value chain, from birth to end of life, leading to a better understanding of these animals and laying a foundation for potential future value-added opportunities for dairy farmers.

Dairy farmers across Canada have embraced the use of DairyTrace tags for identifying all calves born on a dairy farm. As of December 2023, 89% of dairy farmers located outside the province of Quebec exclusively use the white DairyTrace tags, with 11% still having some use of yellow beef tags.

The DairyTrace customer services team handled more than 10,000 phone calls and 6,000 emails to respond to dairy farmer needs related to reporting traceability events and ordering DairyTrace tags. As a result, nearly 55,000 events were submitted to DairyTrace on behalf of dairy farmers by the customer service team.



2023 marks three full years with Canada's dairy cattle traceability program, DairyTrace. While Lactanet Canada is the national administrator for dairy cattle, as approved by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the delivery of DairyTrace involves multiple industry partners. The close synergy between the proAction Traceability module and DairyTrace is assured by DFC and Lactanet, while customer services and tag sales are delivered through Attestra in Quebec and Holstein Canada for the rest of Canada. Attestra also provides services to Lactanet for managing, hosting and developing the DairyTrace database with the associated tools and solutions.

Looking at DairyTrace activities during 2023, it was clearly a successful year for advancing the quality and completeness of Canada's dairy cattle traceability system. Over 1.3 million traceability events (i.e. births, movements and tag retirements) were reported to DairyTrace. Including similar events reported in the province of Quebec more than doubles the total volume of traceability information collected during the year.

## Highlights of DairyTrace reporting during 2023 include:

Of note:  
**54%**  
of reported events were tag activations for animals born on dairy farms.

Nearly  
**200,000**  
move-out events were voluntarily reported by farmers as best practice.

A record-setting number of  
**564,466**  
dairy tags were sold, of which 52% were dual tag sets.

A total of  
**269,461**  
single button RFID tags were sold, which is a 44% increase over 2022 and reflects the high adoption rate by Canadian dairy farmers.





# Animal Care

## Updated Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle

Canadian dairy farmers are committed to the quality of care of their animals. They are also progressive, continuously looking for ways to stay ahead of the curve and improve their practices to reflect the most recent science.

The updated *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle* was released on March 30, 2023, and is publicly available here: [nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle](https://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle). DFC led the Code of Practice update with the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), and the process involved extensive industry collaboration, public consultation, and committee involvement.

## What's next? >>

DFC is evaluating the new Code of Practice requirements and working to integrate them into the Animal Care module of proAction. DFC is also evaluating the cattle assessment requirement to determine if improvements are needed. The proAction committees are working diligently to integrate changes when appropriate.



## proAction and the Code of Practice

Based on the Code of Practice standards, proAction enables Canadian dairy farmers to demonstrate their commitment to animal care. Through proAction, animal care is evaluated as part of the monitoring and evaluation process, so Canadians can be confident that the milk they enjoy was produced in a socially responsible way by farmers who are dedicated to the well-being of their cattle.

## What you need to know about the new Code of Practice

The existing 2009 Code of Practice for dairy cattle remains in effect until March 31, 2024. As of April 1, 2024, the new Code of Practice takes effect and will be the reference in provinces that refer to it in regulations.

Some individual Code of Practice requirements have a later phase-in date, including:

- Regular opportunity for freedom of movement for lactating and dry cows (April 1, 2027)
- Calving areas must be loose housing (April 1, 2029)
- For calves housed indoors, pair or group housing by four weeks of age (April 1, 2031)
- Stocking density in free stall systems decreases to 1.1 cow per stall and then 1 cow per stall (April 1, 2027 and April 1, 2031)

The most impactful changes in the 2023 Code of Practice, compared to 2009, are the requirements to provide more opportunities for social contact for calves, and more opportunities for movement for lactating cows and dry cows. Both are supported by science in promoting overall good welfare.





## Standards of Excellence

The robust requirements of proAction reflect the values dairy farmers share with consumers, demonstrating that milk produced on Canadian dairy farms and used in Canadian dairy products is made in a socially responsible way.

### 2023 validation statistics

**5,198**

on-farm  
validations

**4,654**

Canadian dairy farmers  
conducted their own proAction  
review and provided the  
information through a self-  
declaration process

**9,267**

farmers  
registered

**99.4%\***

of Canadian dairy farms are  
registered with proAction

\* The 0.6% is attributed to new farm operations in the process of implementing the proAction requirements, or existing farm operations in the process of updating their practices and showing their corrective actions to comply with the proAction requirements.

### 2023 proAction statistics

#### Validators

**3** courses  
provided

**6** validators  
trained

**38** active  
validators

#### Cattle assessors

**3** courses  
provided

**6** assessors  
trained

**34** active  
assessors







## proAction Module Highlights

Excellence never stops. That is why DFC is continuously working to review, update and enhance the proAction program. Here is a look at the latest proAction module updates and what is coming next.

### › Food Safety

- Draft of DFC's Antimicrobial Use (AMU) Action Plan started – *ongoing*

### › Animal Care

- New *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle* published – *March 2023*
- Cattle handling requirements review completed and changes made to how validators evaluate requirements on farm
- Incorporation of the revised Code of Practice – *ongoing*
- Review of the Cattle Assessment requirement – *ongoing*

### › Biosecurity

- Revision of the Biosecurity Risk Assessment Questionnaire completed
- Draft of DFC's AMU Action Plan started – *ongoing*

### › Traceability

- Module review completed – *early 2023*
- Canada Gazette Part I – DFC responded to proposed new traceability regulations from the CFIA
- Yellow button tag phase-out – farmers required to use approved DairyTrace or Attestra tags – *September 2023*

### › Environment

- The first round of module validations across all farms completed – *ongoing*
- Module review completed – *early 2023*
- New fact sheet developed to help farmers meet module requirements [dairyfarmers.ca/proaction/resources/environment](https://dairyfarmers.ca/proaction/resources/environment)
- Podcasts available for farmers [podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/dfc-plc-paths-to-on-farm-excellence/id1653170069](https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/dfc-plc-paths-to-on-farm-excellence/id1653170069)
- Collaboration with DFC Sustainability team on the sustainability strategy – *ongoing*

*Every Canadian dairy farm is now validated*



## proAction: the Power Behind the Blue Cow Logo

When nine out of 10 Canadians recognize DFC's Blue Cow logo as a certification of dairy excellence, it demonstrates a job well-done. The proAction program's rigorous standards are valuable proof points of the high standards and dedication of all dairy farmers in Canada.

### Building trust in the Canadian dairy brand

proAction remains one of DFC's most important assets for building trust with Canadians. The merit it creates in the eyes of consumers and partners alike helps move the industry forward and ensure dairy farming in Canada continues to thrive. By celebrating proAction's standards in marketing campaigns, more and more Canadians associate the Blue Cow logo with farmers' commitments to sustainability, animal care, food safety, and milk quality.

### DFC consumer marketing in action

Almost one in four Canadians are aware of DFC's commitment to reach net zero by 2050, clear evidence that our overarching sustainability efforts and continual messaging are effective. *Net Zero by 2050 – We're In*, DFC's award-winning campaign, launched in summer 2022 and shone a light on sustainable strategies many Canadian dairy farmers are undertaking through proAction.

While DFC's marketing campaigns do not explicitly name proAction, sealing the ads with the Blue Cow logo ensures the program has backed up the hard-hitting statements, breaking down myths of the value of dairy and demonstrating the truth of farm practices through compelling evidence of our industry progress.

**Featured on over 8,700 products from more than 500 brands, DFC's Blue Cow logo is emblematic of the dairy industry's commitment to excellence and reinforces its high standards.**


*9 out of 10 Canadians recognize the Blue Cow logo!*








# On-Farm Excellence Continues

Here is a look at some of the projects and highlights the overall proAction program achieved throughout 2023 to ensure the continuous improvement of the program.

 **Third-party audit:** DFC successfully completed year two of a three-year system-wide audit. The third-party audit process provides reassurance that proAction is rigorous, allows proAction to be leveraged in marketing and other DFC files, and meets industry partners' expectations for program credibility.

 **Value of proAction communications project:** DFC is providing proAction ambassadors with key communication tools to highlight how the program brings value to individual farmers and the industry. The project advanced in 2023 and will be ready for delivery in 2024.

 **proAction review project:** DFC conducted an extensive program review in 2022 and implemented half of the recommendations in 2023. The rest are planned to be addressed in 2024.

 **proAction Reference Manual and Workbook revision:** DFC published a new version of the proAction Reference Manual and Workbook in July 2023, with three significant changes and other minor improvements or clarifications.

## Program recognitions maintained from:

- ▶ Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for the Food Safety module and proAction implementation
- ▶ National Farm Animal Care Council for the Animal Care module
- ▶ Unilever as Canadian milk is declared in accordance with Unilever's Sustainable Agriculture Code

# Research and Innovation

## Canada's dairy industry is driven by continuous research and innovation

DFC invests in research to support continuous improvement of BMPs in animal care and health, milk quality, food safety, and environmental sustainability, following its five-year (2022-2027) National Dairy Research Strategy. Research outcomes contribute science-based information that underpins fact-based communications, on-farm programs like proAction, policy and regulation, as well as knowledge transfer activities that translate research results into improved on-farm production and management practices.

### Research outcomes

Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) has been at the heart of many DFC research activities in 2023 thanks to the conclusion of Dairy Research Cluster 3 projects on March 31, 2023.

The results from dairy production research across Canada were showcased in a series of activities that engaged 1,000 dairy farmers, technical advisors, and other interested parties. The research was presented through a 12-part webinar series and six in-person events in four provinces.

A new suite of informational resources about research findings have been developed and are now released under the Dairy Research section of the DFC website. These new resources include research project summaries, educational infographics, a 14-episode podcast series, animated and live-action videos, recorded webinars presented by researchers, trade publications, and a 40-page research highlights magazine.

In July 2023, the federal government announced a Dairy Research Cluster 4 for a sustainable dairy sector, running from April 2023 through March 2028. This five-year, \$13 million public-private partnership with DairyGen partners (including Semex, Holstein Canada and Lactanet), Novalait, DFC and the federal government, supports research projects to improve the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the Canadian dairy sector. Cluster 4 projects primarily target GHG reduction and carbon sequestration, along with antimicrobial use and resistance, animal health, and genetic improvement. This next phase of dairy research will play an integral role in contributing to the dairy industry's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and targeting the 2022-2027 National Dairy Research Strategy priorities.

For more information, visit [dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/dairy-research](https://dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/dairy-research).



proAction®

2023

# PROACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS REPORT

[dairyfarmers.ca/proaction](https://dairyfarmers.ca/proaction)  
[dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/sustainability](https://dairyfarmersofcanada.ca/en/sustainability)

