

Frequently Asked Questions



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What is 'beef on dairy'?

- The producer-led practice includes crossbreeding beef cattle genetics to dairy cows. Through 'beef on dairy' crossbreeding, offspring destined for the fed beef market become more efficient and robust when compared to purebred dairy calves. In addition to providing economic and production efficiencies, 'beef on dairy' can also provide environmental benefits, resulting from feed efficiency, as well as animal health benefits from hybrid vigor.

Why is Cargill partnering with Nestlé USA?

- Nestlé USA and Cargill are collaborating to raise awareness, accelerate learning and support producers in better understanding the opportunities with 'beef on dairy' production, given each of their commitments to supporting innovative, sustainable solutions to meet growing food demands.
- Together, we see this practice as one innovative opportunity where we can help accelerate learning and remove barriers for producers and industry leaders interested in further exploring this promising work.
- Both Nestlé USA's and Cargill's businesses are connecting points between producers and consumers. This project will be informed by a holistic set of data, from the economic, environmental and societal impacts, to show value for the producer and animal well-being.

What are the expected benefits and impacts?

- Initial research on 'beef on dairy' indicates promising benefits for producers, consumers and the environment, including:
- Compared to purebred dairy calves, **'beef on dairy' calves can provide higher-quality beef products without impacting current milk production efficiencies.**
- 'Beef on dairy' calves show **greater feed efficiency** (compared to purebred dairy calves), which lowers the environmental footprint associated with their production.
- **Increased feed efficiency significantly reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.**
- The practice benefits meat quality. **'Beef on dairy' delivers increased volumes of higher-grading beef carcasses,** providing feedyard operators more access to value-based marketing opportunities as well as pass-back; 'beef on dairy' calves are more valuable in the marketplace for dairies than purebred dairy calves.

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How long will the program run?

- The Dairy Beef Accelerator is a three-year effort between Cargill and industry partners to drive understanding of the potential impact of the 'beef on dairy' practice through research, best practices development, and cross-industry collaboration.

How do I get involved? Where can I find more information?

- Over the next three years, Cargill and Nestlé USA will continue to share research findings and opportunities to engage with and explore the 'beef on dairy' crossbreeding practice and impact. Forthcoming information will be made available online.

How does beef on dairy impact animal health?

- Hybrid vigor could potentially increase the overall performance of a crossbred animal, like 'beef on dairy' cattle, and as a result, animals can experience increased health benefits, potentially decreasing medical and labor costs.

How does beef on dairy impact feedyard operators?

- Initial research indicates 'beef on dairy' show greater feed efficiency compared to purebred dairy, requiring less days on feed and, in turn, less feed and fewer resources, like water. Research also suggests the practice benefits meat quality. 'Beef on dairy' delivers increased volumes of higher-grading beef carcasses, providing feedyard operators more access to value-based marketing opportunities.
- Hybrid vigor could potentially increase the overall performance of crossbred cattle, and as a result, animals can experience increased health benefits, potentially decreasing medical and labor costs.

For consumers, does 'beef on dairy' crossbreeding affect the quality of meat?

- Research shows that 'beef on dairy' calves can deliver increased volumes of higher-grading beef cuts.

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What are the anticipated environmental impacts?

- North American beef and dairy producers are already among the most efficient and innovative in the world, providing more high-quality protein with fewer resources. In addition to requiring less feed and water, increased feeding efficiency for ‘beef on dairy’ results in lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- This is one example of the industry’s ability to innovate in order to make the best use of resources, address growing climate concerns, and responding to consumer expectations. As the world population grows, we need innovative producer-led solutions to meet the growing demands for nutritious, high-quality protein choices.

What third party research partners is Cargill working with?

- Science guides everything we do, and research is crucial to confirm the potential benefits of ‘beef on dairy.’ Initial research led by Texas Tech University, as well as perspectives from other organizations will ensure that future decisions on this practice are informed by a holistic set of data on the comprehensive economic, environmental, production and societal impacts.

Is Cargill planning to bring in additional partners as the program progresses?

- Dairy and beef producers are the leading experts on this topic. Together with key industry stakeholders, we will create opportunities for producers to share their experiences with ‘beef on dairy,’ as we know we can learn more together. Nestlé USA is currently a supporting partner of this program.

When will more research be done on this practice?

- Over the course of the next three years, Cargill will conduct and support research, industry collaborations and case studies to drive understanding of the impact of ‘beef on dairy.’ We will be transparent with research findings to help inform producers and the industry.

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How does the Dairy Beef Accelerator support Cargill's broader corporate sustainability goals?

- This initiative contributes to progress against climate goals through Cargill's [BeefUp Sustainability](#) initiative. Cargill is committed to achieving a 30% greenhouse gas intensity reduction across our North American beef supply chain by 2030. Innovation—like 'beef on dairy'—that is better for the environment, the animals and the people raising them is crucial to achieving that goal.

How many producers have adopted this practice already?

- This is a practice that is growing, and we are working to understand the number of 'beef on dairy' hybrids currently on the market.

How will you measure success?

- Cargill will measure success against communications and environmental impacts as well as through increased interest and adoption of the "beef on dairy" practice.

Will this practice impact the end cost to consumers?

- No, 'beef on dairy' crossbreeding is a practice that increases efficiencies for producers while benefitting the environment. This effort advances practices that support the long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability of the industry.

What are the participation requirements for dairy producers and feedyard operators?

- Cargill and Nestlé USA are partnering to raise awareness of the practice as an option for producers to adopt if it makes sense for them. There are no participation requirements, and we will share findings in a way that everyone can access.

Will this create increased competition for cow calf producers / conventional beef supply?

- No, this project is focused on the encouraging opportunity to improve an existing portion of the beef supply (as approximately 12-15 percent is dairy offspring), while providing benefits for beef and dairy producers, the environment, and consumers.