

Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef



Principles & Criteria





GRSB BACKGROUND



The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) is a multi-stakeholder initiative with representation across the value chain in beef production and consumption regions. 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 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.



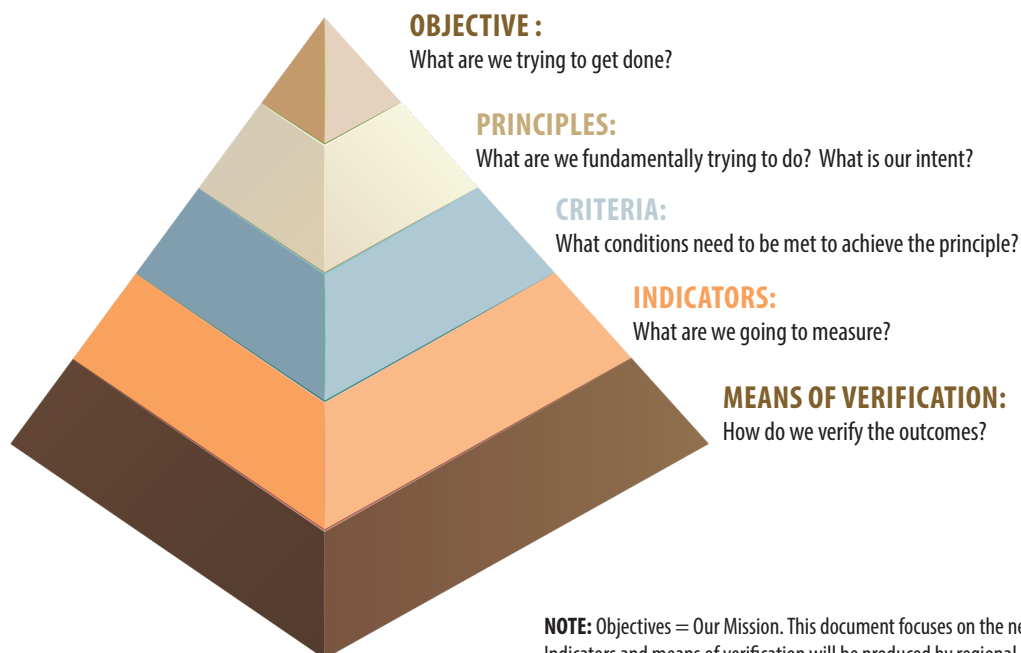
Principles & Criteria for Defining Global Sustainable Beef

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.

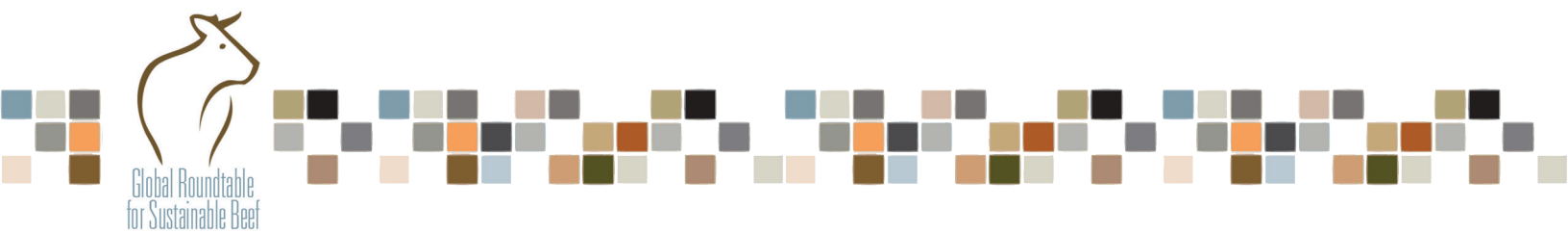
WHAT ARE PRINCIPLES & CRITERIA?

This document defining GRSB's view of sustainable beef is intended to be high-level, and to build upon our vision and mission (our objectives). It therefore addresses the levels of **Principles and Criteria** and deliberately avoids the equally important, but more context-specific levels of **indicators, metrics or practices**.

This is because, while a definition of sustainable beef at this high level may have global validity, it is clear that at the lower level, 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 local level. Work is underway in various countries and regions to determine what is locally relevant to fit under the Principles and Criteria presented here, and GRSB will continue to work with national and regional groups to extend this work.



NOTE: Objectives = Our Mission. This document focuses on the next two (Principles and Criteria). Indicators and means of verification will be produced by regional groups.



OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef is to advance continuous improvement in global beef value chain sustainability.

PRINCIPLES

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

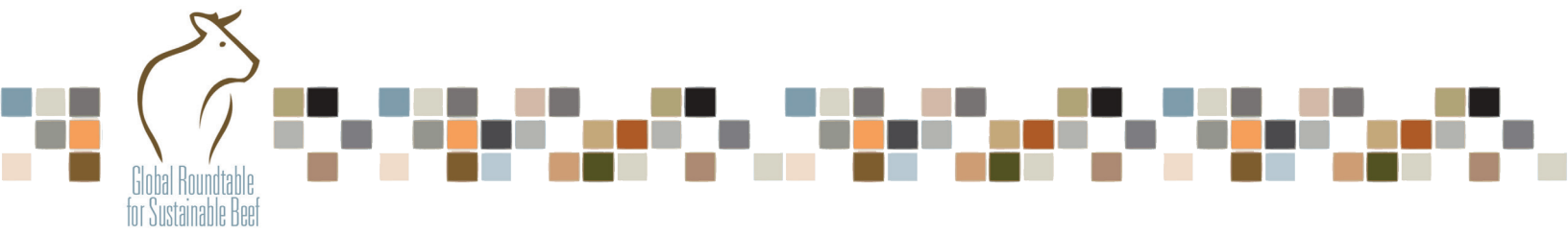
CRITERIA

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 can be evaluated. It adds meaning and the ability to classify 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.

PROCESS FOR REGIONAL GROUPS

The process from here forward with regard to more context-specific elements, is for national or regional groups to align with the Principles and Criteria and formulate plans for their region as to the development of more context-specific elements. This will be fully described in *Guidelines for Development of Regional Indicators*.



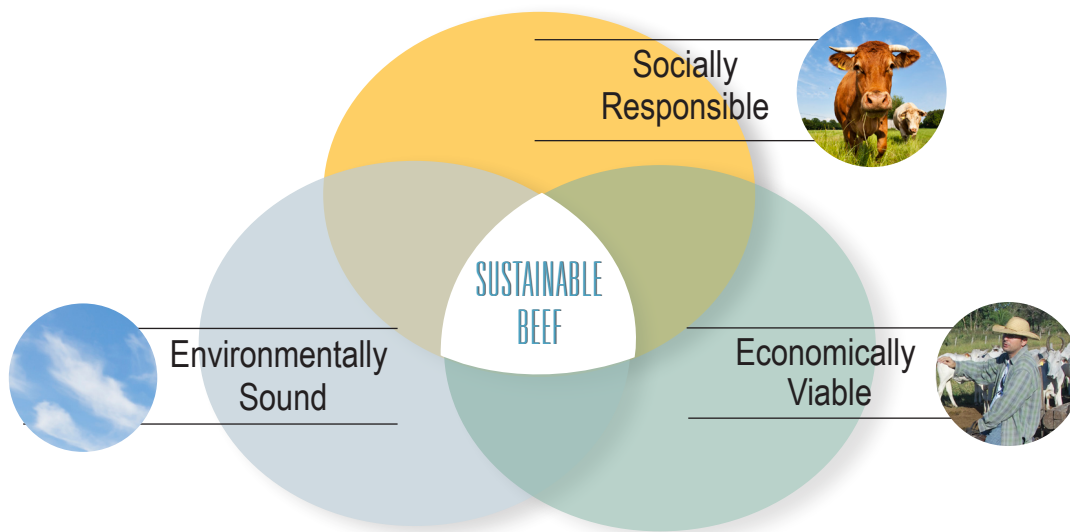


PREAMBLE

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.

Underpinning our principles and criteria is the triple-bottom-line approach that balances environment, social, and economic considerations and the requirement that a sustainable beef value chain respects national and international laws that govern the activities of beef value chain participants.

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



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 & Well-being
4. Food
5. Efficiency and Innovation

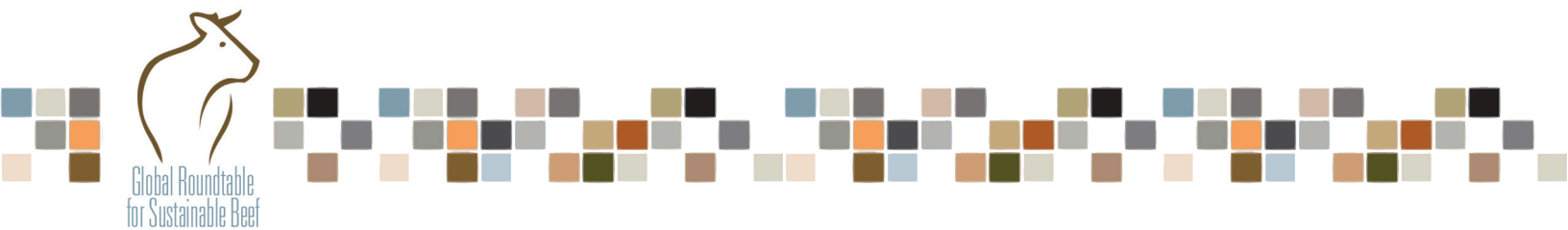
SUMMARY DEFINITION

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef recognizes that each principle is a critical component of the overall definition for global sustainable beef production and delivery; however, we are conscious of the need to easily communicate our definition to stakeholders both inside and outside the global beef value 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 and 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 }





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 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.

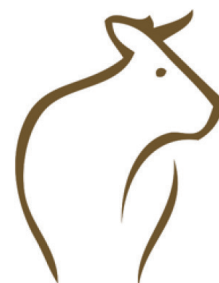
Realizing that each segment of the beef value chain has shared responsibility toward beef sustainability, it is expected that these principles and criteria be applied across the entire beef value chain from farm to retail, including support services such as financiers and legal advisors. However, criteria are limited in their scope to issues under the direct control of the beef value chain.

INTENDED PURPOSE

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.

However, GRSB expects that these principles and criteria will provide the baseline definition and common foundation of such initiatives. We fully recognize that, given the diversity of beef production systems around the world, 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.



Global Roundtable
for Sustainable Beef

www.grsbeef.org





PRINCIPLE 1 - NATURAL RESOURCES



The global beef value chain manages natural resources responsibly and enhances ecosystem health.

INTENT

This principle is based on the concept that ecosystem processes are managed through adoption of practices designed to sustain and restore ecosystem health throughout the beef production system. Such practices enhance biodiversity and provide ecosystem services including carbon sequestration; water recharge, filtration and conservation; resource use efficiency; managing for healthy soil conditions; and contribute to resilience, including the ability of ecosystems to recover from extreme climate and weather events while supporting continued use. This principle is achieved through continuous improvement across all criteria. Compliance with all local, national and international laws applicable to natural resource usage is mandatory.

CRITERIA

1. Environmental stewardship objectives are attained through adaptive management, with activities monitored to achieve continuous improvement of measurable natural resource management outcomes.
2. Practices are implemented to improve air quality.
3. Net greenhouse gas emissions from the beef value chain are minimized on a per unit of product basis.
4. Native forests are protected from deforestation. Grasslands, other native ecosystems, and high conservation value areas are protected from land conversion and degradation.
5. Land management practices conserve and enhance the health of ecosystems and high conservation value areas throughout all sectors of the beef value chain.
6. Water resources (including quality and quantity attributes), are responsibly and efficiently managed to support ecological function and availability.
7. Soil health is maintained or improved through implementation of appropriate management practices.
8. The beef value chain contributes to the maintenance or enhancement of native plant and animal biological diversity.
9. Where available, feed sources are sustainably-produced.





PRINCIPLE 2 - PEOPLE & THE COMMUNITY



Global sustainable beef stakeholders protect and respect human rights, 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.

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.

CRITERIA

1. Companies and individuals throughout the beef value chain respect human rights in accordance with the UNGPBHR¹ through policies, regulation and due diligence.
2. Business is conducted with integrity, in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Businesses throughout the value chain positively engage with and support the local community.
3. A safe and healthy work culture is adopted, supported by training and appropriate equipment to reduce the risks to all in the beef value chain.
4. Employment provides for the legal minimum wage (where applicable), and opportunities for career development, where possible, are made available throughout the value chain.
5. The cultural heritage and way of life of all parties are recognized and respected throughout the value chain.
6. Land and property rights are acknowledged and respected throughout the value chain.



¹ Human Rights Council. 2011. "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>



PRINCIPLE 3 - ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE



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

INTENT

Animal use confers an ethical responsibility to ensure animal welfare; improvements in farm animal health and welfare can improve 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 Office International des Épidémiologies (OIE; the World Organisation for Animal Health) guidance on animal health and welfare, including the five freedoms², this principle and accompanying criteria set expectations for the treatment of cattle throughout the value chain. Continuous improvement is key, consistent with the fact that some regional guidelines exceed OIE. An underlying assumption is that there is compliance with national and international regulations on animal health and welfare.

CRITERIA

1. Adequate feed and water are provided to meet cattle's physiological needs. Diet composition is balanced to promote good health and proper body condition. Animal caretakers recognise signs of malnutrition and take appropriate action to maintain condition and correct deficiencies.
2. Animal caretakers provide cattle with health care, in addition to identifying health problems and taking appropriate action to control and treat disease.
3. All veterinary pharmaceuticals and vaccines are used responsibly and in accordance with labeling.
4. Appropriate action is taken to minimise undue pain, injury and disease, and to address any of these problems when identified. A competent³ person is available to make prompt diagnoses to determine whether sick or injured cattle should receive additional care or be euthanized. In the interests of continuous improvement, alternatives and innovations are investigated and, where practical, are adopted to replace or mitigate painful husbandry procedures.
5. Good animal welfare is ensured, including the freedom for cattle to express normal patterns of behaviour. Animal caretakers should minimise cattle stress, and recognise and react appropriately to signs of stress.
6. Cattle are kept in an environment (including stocking density, air quality and surfaces), which is conducive to good health and normal behaviour and minimizes physical discomfort.
7. Transport (by land, sea or air) and handling procedures are consistent with OIE guidelines.⁴
8. Animal welfare procedures at processing plants, including slaughter procedures, are in line with the OIE terrestrial animal health code⁵.

2 OIE. 2010. "Terrestrial Health Code: Chapter 7.1 Introduction to the Recommendations for Animal Welfare. http://web.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/en_chapitre_1.7.1.htm

3 A stockman with sufficient experience or training, not necessarily a veterinarian.

4 OIE. 2010. "Terrestrial Health Code: Chapter 7.2 Transport of Animals by Sea. http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmlfile=chapitre_aw_sea_transpt.htm

5 OIE. 2010. "Terrestrial Health Code: Chapter 7.5 Slaughter of Animals. http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmlfile=chapitre_aw_slaughter.htm



PRINCIPLE 4 - FOOD



Global sustainable beef stakeholders ensure the safety and quality⁴ of beef products and utilize information-sharing systems that promote beef sustainability.

INTENT

This principle and criteria rely upon integrity and transparency for all members of the value chain. Related to this is the expectation that continuous improvements will be made in food safety, beef quality, information-sharing systems and waste reduction. Improvements and indicators should be scientifically-based, and focused on practicable and impactful areas, while taking consumer expectations and behaviour into consideration.

CRITERIA

1. Food safety is ensured through the development, adoption, documentation, maintenance and, where applicable, third-party validation of practices throughout the value chain. This 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 co-products to participants further down the value chain.
3. Information⁷ should be shared both up and down the value chain to provide opportunities for participants to improve their businesses, while respecting confidentiality.
4. Food waste is reduced throughout the value chain, reusing and recycling wherever practicable.



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.

⁷ Specific information related to sustainability principles and criteria should be determined by the local, national and regional roundtables as they establish their indicators.



PRINCIPLE 5 - EFFICIENCY & INNOVATION



Global Sustainable Beef Stakeholders encourage innovation,
optimise production, reduce waste and add to economic viability

INTENT

The criteria defined under this principle aim to increase the efficiency and innovation, which are seen as key to continuous improvement in the beef value chain. Efficiency improvements should also enhance the ability of the beef industry to adapt to internal and external challenges. Increased efficiency through education, partnerships and shared knowledge and experiences should be underpinned by scientific evidence that ensures environmentally sound and socially responsible beef production, while allowing and improving economic viability.

CRITERIA

1. Cattle are selected and managed to continually optimize available resources and suit their environment, while meeting market demand and consumer preferences.
2. Waste is reduced and opportunities to reuse and recycle are maximised throughout the value chain.
3. Product value and carcase utilization are maximized throughout the value chain.
4. Water and land resources are managed throughout the value chain to ensure responsible and efficient use.
5. Energy use is optimized for efficiency and productivity throughout the value chain.
6. Feed and forage use is optimized for production and welfare goals throughout the production chain.
7. Pharmaceutical, nutrient and chemical use is executed safely and responsibly, optimizing efficiency and productivity throughout the value chain.
8. Beef value chain stakeholders continually innovate, and responsibly use technologies and leading practices to adapt to changes in climate, resource and market conditions.
9. Sustainable beef production is enhanced through education, extension and partnerships where appropriate opportunities exist.

