



PRESENTS

THE BEEF PRODUCTION CYCLE



1 COW-CALF

Raising beef begins with ranchers who maintain a breeding herd of mother cows. When a calf is born it weighs about 80 to 100 lbs. The calves nurse from their mothers before weaning and learning to graze grass pastures. These natural grasslands or traditional pastures are often not suitable for farming grain or vegetable crops. Responsible grazing practices make for healthier grasslands which means more carbon capture and plant biodiversity. At 6 to 8 months of age, calves are weaned.



4 FEEDLOT

Feedlots focus on animal care, nutrition and efficient weight gain. Cattle are provided a safe, low-stress and healthy environment, and have plenty of room to move around in pens with access to feed and water. Cattle will typically spend 4 to 6 months at a feedlot being fed a scientifically balanced diet, and receive daily care. The inclusion of grains in the diet increases the efficiency of beef production and provides the consumer with high quality, flavourful beef. The modern cattle feeding operation is an environmentally sound and responsible method of raising beef cattle. It produces more pounds of beef while occupying less land, consuming less water, and limiting atmospheric emissions.



2 LIVESTOCK AUCTION MARKETS

Between 6 to 12 months of age, many calves leave the farm or ranch and are sold at livestock auction markets. Online auctions are becoming more prevalent. The calves are sold online ahead of time and then delivered straight from the seller to the buyer.



5 BEEF PROCESSING

Once calves reach market weight at 18 - 22 months, they are transported to a packing plant (also called a processing facility). The meat-packing industry handles the processing of the cattle and the harvesting of beef, as well as the packaging and distribution of beef products. Beef processing plants are either federally or provincially regulated and inspected to ensure that meat and meat products are safe, and animals are handled humanely.



6 FOOD SERVICE & RETAIL

The end beef product is sold to the final consumer through grocery stores, other retail outlets and restaurants.



7 EXPORT

Approximately 49% of total beef and cattle produced in Canada is exported to markets such as the USA, Mexico, Asia and Europe.