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Paul G. Jefferson

Western Beef Development Centre, Canada

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Western beef development centre : a model for research and demonstration in western Canada

Paul G . Jefferson

Western Beef Development Centre , P .O . Box 1150 , Humboldt Saskatchewan S0K 2A0 Canada

E-mail : pjefferson .wbdc@pami .ca

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Introduction The Western Beef Development Centre (WBDC) plays a unique and vital role in the development of the Western Canadian cattle industry and was re-organized in 2006 as a division of the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) . PAMI is an applied research , development , and testing organization serving manufacturers and farmers with the resources needed to compete in markets at home and around the world . The mandate of WBDC is to conduct applied research , demonstration , and extension activities to improve the profitability of the beef cow/calf and backgrounding (stocker) industry in the prairie region of Western Canada . As an intermediary , the WBDC communicates directly with both the research community and the cattle industry . Practical and applicable research is used to provide technologies that enable producers to become increasingly competitive in today's marketplace . As a division of PAMI , the WBDC has access to management and technical staff as well as a wide range of facilities and equipment . The Termuende Research Ranch at Lanigan Saskatchewan is leased from the University of Saskatchewan by WBDC to conduct beef production and forage crop research and demonstration . A new 300 head purebred beef cow research herd is being purchased in stages from 2007 to 2009 to replace an existing cross bred herd to permit more genetic research and demonstration activities with the herd .

Results One unique feature of the WBDC is the composition and role of its Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) as shown in the figure . The members of the SAC represent the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture , Agriculture & AgriFood Canada , faculty from University of Saskatchewan , and beef producer organizations . These members provide key advice on strategic directions , priorities for research and demonstration projects and feedback on current and proposed research and extension activities by WBDC staff . The direction provided by the SAC results in research and extension information that is both timely and directly applicable to current beef industry needs . Another unique feature of the WBDC is the collaborative funding arrangements and project management system . Three research scientists and two technical positions are funded by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Development Fund (ADF) . Capital funding is provided by ADF and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada . Project funding for technical staff and graduate students is provided by the beef industry through the Cattle Marketing Deduction Fund , Horned Cattle Penalty Fund , Beef Cattle Research Council , feed companies and veterinary medicine manufacturers . Many projects are collaborative with the University of Saskatchewan , College of Agriculture and Bioresources and Western College of Veterinary Medicine and involve training of graduate students . The results of projects are presented to ranchers in presentations , fact-sheet bulletins or via the WBDC website (www .wbdc .sk .ca) . Due to the large number and diversity of funding partners for WBDC , fiscal management is supervised by the administration unit of PAMI under its contract research system . The fiscal management capabilities of the parent PAMI organization has increased the confidence of funding agencies in the accountability of WBDC for strategic and project funding .

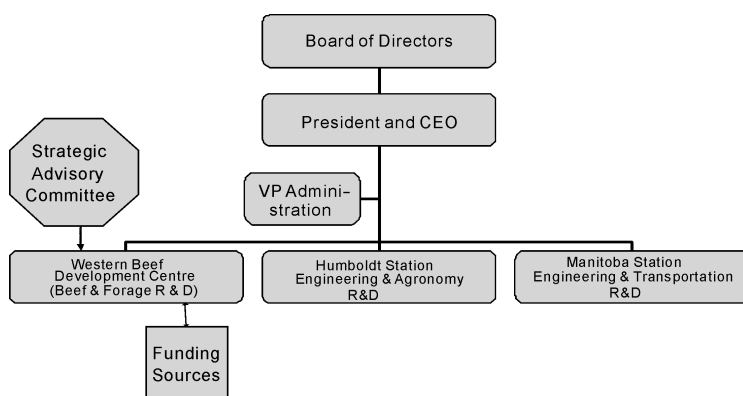


Figure 1 Organizational structure of WBDC and PAMI .

References

2007 Western Beef Development Centre website : [www .wbdc .sk .ca](http://www.wbdc.sk.ca) .