

# *Behind the Beef*

## Consumer Education & Research Program

*To provide the average consumer with easy access to accurate information regarding all aspects of beef*

The Behind the Beef program is supported by the Canada-BC Ranching Task Force Funding Initiative; delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC with funding from the federal and provincial governments. Visit [www.ranchingtaskforce.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ranchingtaskforce.gov.bc.ca) for more information.



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*Funding provided by:*



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Provide **educational forums** on the beef industry and beef products, delivered by **knowledgeable and trained Beef Educators** to the **public** in **convenient locations**, as well as **collect valuable feedback** from consumers.



## PURPOSE

The majority of consumers today are disconnected from agriculture and, while they are unaware of how the beef cattle industry operates, they are very interested in knowing more about food production.

Additionally, the public is presented with multiple, diverse views and opinions on food, from nutritional to ethical aspects. It can be difficult for consumers to decipher fact from fiction in the media.

By providing consumers with direct interactions with knowledgeable industry specialists we are able to correct any misunderstandings and answer any questions they may have about ranching practices and beef products.

With more knowledge and resources, consumers are able to make more informed purchasing decisions for themselves and their families.

# PROGRAM CONTENT

- Answer and address public questions/concerns
- Improve awareness of ranching and beef industry
- Educate consumers on industry practices regarding
  - Environment
  - Animal Health
  - Food Safety
- Assist consumers with beef products
  - Selection
  - Preparation/Cooking
  - Nutrition
- Conduct consumer research

# PROGRAM BENEFITS

- ✓ Develop relationships between consumers and beef
  - Gain public support for industry
  
- ✓ Give consumers tools to make product selections that meet their needs
  - Add value to production traits and programs
  
- ✓ Aid consumers in becoming confident in purchasing beef products
  - Rise in demand for quality, safe product
  
- ✓ Gather feedback from consumers on what they value
  - Give direction to industry developments

# PROGRAM DELIVERY

## BEEF EDUCATORS

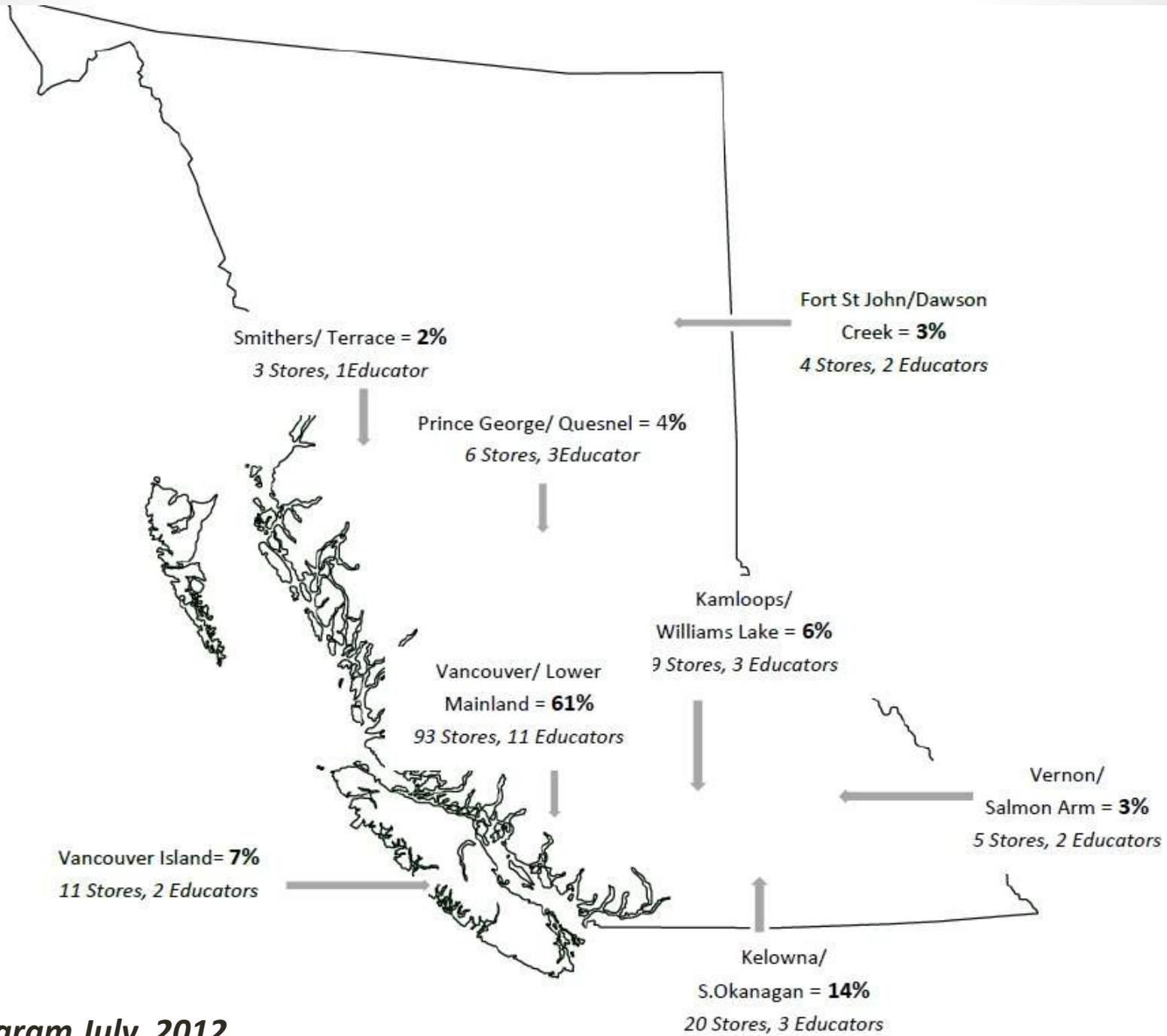
Beef Educators are hired throughout the province to deliver the program. Educators participate in mandatory Beef 101 training and gain the knowledge and resources needed to aptly assist consumers. The number of Educators on staff fluctuate between 15-25.

## LOCATIONS

Forums are delivered at convenient, populated venues such as:

- Grocery Retailers
  - Overwaitea Food Group
  - Safeway
  - IGA
  - Nesters & Buy Low
- Fairs & Exhibitions
  - PNE
  - IPE
  - Abbotsford AgriFair
  - PGX







# FAST FACTS

## Number of Events

Initial, *Behind the Beef* projected to conduct a total of 400 events during its first year. The actual total number of events was 864. Most events take place in participating grocery retail stores, however the program has also attended numerous fairs, exhibitions and other community events.

<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Western Canada Summer Games	Agassiz Community Nutrition Day
Food Safety Symposium	BC Beef Day
Pacific National Exhibition	BCCA AGM
Interior Provincial Exhibition	Abbotsford AgriFair
	Prince George Exhibition
	Pacific National Exhibition

## Resources

*Behind the Beef* developed four industry related fact sheets as well as a condensed version of the Canada Beef Merchandising Guide (cut chart) which is the most popular resource with consumers. The website [www.behindthebeef.ca](http://www.behindthebeef.ca) was launched in April, 2012.

# CONSUMER INTERACTIONS

Beef Educators interact with an average of **28** consumers per store visit.

## Frequently Asked Questions/Comments (*not in order*):

- Safety of added hormones/antibiotics
- Differences between organic vs. conventional beef
- Differences between grass finished vs. grain finished beef
- Definitions of cuts and their uses ex: *“What roast cut is best for crock pot?”*
- Increasing price of beef
- Origin of beef ex: *“Where is this beef cut from?”*
- Preparation, cooking and recipe tips
- Treatment of cattle

## BEEF IN THE NEWS

*Behind the Beef* has also been instrumental in providing accurate information to the public regarding industry issues that have been extensively highlighted by the media such as:

- “Pink Slime”
- Harvard Red Meat Study
- E. coli Recall

# TESTIMONIALS

Ken Clark, Save On Foods Head Office, Fresh Manager: “All of our stores continue to be excited about the Beef Educator program to the point where they are all taking it to the next level by planning exciting over and above activities.”

Glen Genereux, Buy Low Foods Head Office, Meat Merchandising: “I would estimate that we see an increase in beef sales on the day *Behind the Beef* is in stores of at least 3-4%.”

Dave, Safeway Meat Manager , Kamloops: “Customers really seem to appreciate being able to ask questions. We are sometimes so busy behind the door that it is hard for us to keep that contact.”

Michelle, Save On Foods customer, Kelowna: "I never knew beef was actually good for me!"

Janet W, Save On Foods customer, Saanich: “I'm a terrible cook and usually only eat beef when I go to a restaurant. These recipes will be helpful.”

# NEXT STEPS

## School Visits

*Behind the Beef* is working with Take A Bite of BC, an Agriculture in the Classroom program, to deliver a lesson plan to culinary arts high school classes. Four schools in the Lower Mainland have been identified for the initial trial visits which are scheduled for April & May, 2013.

## Fairs & Exhibitions

The program will look at attending more fairs and exhibitions in the second year. Educators reported that public interactions at these venues tend to be more in depth, there is a higher traffic volume, and questions relating to industry practices were more common.

## Video Messaging

*Behind the Beef* is hoping to be able to utilize video clips of the industry during retailer events, fairs and school visits. This tool would help people to quickly gain information about the beef industry in a way that is visual, convenient and memorable.

