



BIXS BUILDS A PLATFORM FOR PROGRESS

Integrated model designed to harvest opportunity

There's a lesson for Canada's beef industry in the Japanese auto industry according to Hubert Lau. The biggest opportunity is to tackle the world first, each other second.

The CEO of The Beef InfoXchange System (BIXS) says years ago Japanese auto makers, fierce competitors in their domestic market, got together, branded themselves as the Japanese auto maker group and tackled the world.

They grew dramatically to become a global trade force. They still battle it out in those markets, but working together their market went from the island of Japan to the world.

Lau thinks a very similar opportunity exists if the beef industry can get past the notion of scarcity, that if one industry sector wins some other loses. The opportunity is in collaboration.

BIXS MODELS COLLABORATION

BIXS started down this path as a data collector says Lau, who spent several decades in the IT industry. The idea was to do a better job of harvesting and managing carcass data in the system.

It wasn't the smoothest start. "A lot of people were talking about big data, its importance,

how it will make money," says Lau. "But no one was able to show producers how. For BIXS, that meant even though our intentions were sincere there was a lot of skepticism about our model.

"We redesigned BIXS with a goal of being the trusted neutral data platform. Today we focus less on carcass data, more on how to leverage it."

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

There are many data players in the cattle industry. Aside from BIXS, none can quickly integrate multiple data sources from different organizations into a single platform, says Lau.

BIXS melds technology, business processes and strategic agreements together to create a platform for collaboration between competitors, companies and countries often with concerns of protecting competitive advantages, privacy and intellectual property.

The BIXS core is a software platform that enables big data applications to be interoperable with many existing databases. Operational security and ethics provide assur-

ance of privacy and protection of intellectual property and encourages data sharing.

Lau believes without such a system, collaborative opportunities such as genetic improvement, health management, export potential, risk management, product differentiation and many others could be lost or made more difficult.

PILOT PROGRAMS

The simplest and fastest way to reach many thousands of producers across Canada is to demonstrate value using pilot programs with major industry partners says Lau. These are designed to show producers directly the economic benefits of collaboration.

"We don't have all the answers and working with industry leaders on projects allows us to figure things out," he says.

The first example is the Canadian Beef Sustainability Acceleration Pilot with Cargill. Producers with cattle in a fully verified sustainable chain, Registered with Verified Beef Production Plus and who sign on to the pilot with BIXS, receive a payment with support from McDonald's and Swiss Chalet.

FUTURE STRONG

"We have focused on Canada first because we have the progress here already and want Canadian producers and their industry to benefit first," says Lau.

"Based on our first efforts there is interest in our model from other countries and companies. The same model could work for other livestock too."

