

## Researchers find way to cut cattle methane, threat to environment, by 25 percent

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Beef farmers can breathe easier thanks to University of Alberta researchers who have developed a formula to reduce methane gas in cattle.

By developing equations that balance starch, sugar, cellulose, ash, fat and other elements of feed, a Canada-wide team of scientists has given beef producers the tools to lessen the [methane](#) gas their cattle produce by as much as 25 per cent.

"That's good news for the environment," said Stephen Moore, a professor of agricultural, food and nutritional science at the University of Alberta in Canada. "Methane is a [greenhouse gas](#), and in Canada, cattle account for 72 per cent of the total emissions. By identifying factors such as diet or genetics that can reduce emissions, we hope to give beef farmers a way to lessen the environmental footprint of their cattle production and methane reductions in the order of 25 per cent are certainly achievable."

Using information from previous studies, the researchers compiled an extensive database of methane production values measured on cattle and were able to formulate equations to predict how much methane a cow would produce based on diet.

The study was jointly conducted with the universities of Guelph and Manitoba, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the International Atomic Energy Agency in Austria. It published recently in the *Journal*

*of Animal Science.*

The findings build on previous work by Moore and his research team on genetically selecting [cattle](#) that inherently produce less methane. While further studies are needed before bringing the research into general use, the work "promises significant improvements in environmental stewardship on the farm," Moore noted.

Source: University of Alberta ([news](#) : [web](#))

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