



Trust Insurance

BQA helps ease consumer minds about how cattle are raised

by Morgan Marley, Certified Angus Beef LLC

As consumers glean more information about where their food comes from, producers need to focus on how they manage their farm or ranch. Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certification is a good place to start, said Josh White at the Angus convention in November.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) executive director of producer education and sustainability said, "BQA positively impacts consumer confidence, and we see more and more supply chain interest as well. Buyers of cattle and beef are interested in knowing producers are taking the time and initiative to get certified."

Most cattlemen today are familiar with the program and more than 85% of beef comes from BQA-certified producers, White said. It covers common topics such as animal handling, herd health and recordkeeping, working in tandem with the National Beef Quality Audit conducted every five years. All of that helped reduce injection-site lesions and bruising since the 1990s, adding more value to each carcass.

"I would encourage producers to be certified, not only because it's

great for your operation," White said. "Consumers have more confidence about how we raise cattle when they know cattlemen are certified."

As raising cattle becomes more advanced, topics have expanded to biosecurity, transportation and worker safety. The latest science and research go into program material, with information being constantly updated.

The latest example is transportation training, especially critical for anyone shipping cattle directly

to a packer. Starting the first day of 2020, many packers will require BQA transportation certification for anyone hauling cattle to plants. At the time of Convention, that wasn't yet an issue for transporting cattle to auction markets and feedyards, White said.

It ties back to consumer interests.

"Consumers are really interested in knowing where their food comes from," White said. "We found through our consumer market research that BQA

is proof that cattlemen really care about how they raise their animals."

Because of the consumer market research results, leveraging BQA to consumers has been a focus of Beef Checkoff. BQA was introduced to non-producer audiences through digital marketing and communication efforts, including a new video and audio ads from *Beef. It's What's for Dinner*. These efforts hope to bring awareness to how farmers and ranchers across the country raise cattle under BQA guidelines.

The first round of digital ads launched in mid-October across national platforms like YouTube, Hulu, Spotify, iHeart Radio, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Since launching, the ads have more



Josh White



Josh White presented alongside J.J. Goicoechea, State Veterinarian for the Nevada Department of Agriculture.

than 11 million video views, 10.5 million audio listens and nearly four million social media engagements. These ad results delivered more than 58.6 million media impressions — a significant value for producer Checkoff investments.

Consumer earned media was also a focus of the campaign. The press release was published in 146 outlets nationally, reaching an audience of more than 78 million. A week later, White participated in 16 back-to-back radio interviews. Those interviews aired more than 700 times and reached more than 22 million consumers. To view the consumer facing content, visit www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com.

While the consumer marketing campaign is exciting, it doesn't work if producers don't continue to "walk the walk" by engaging in BQA training and certification. New online material will be live in 2020 for BQA certification, making it a great time to recertify since certifications are only active for three years.

If it's been two or more years since you were certified, mark your calendars and get it done this winter or spring, White said. Training is available online and in person. Visit www.bqa.org to find an in-person training near you.



Jill Scofield, director of producer relations for the California Beef Council.

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