



Are You a Quality Assurance Operator?

Quality as defined by Philip B. Crosby, is conformance to requirements.

As evidenced by educational topics of discussion during the National Cattle-men's Association (NCA) meetings in late January, the beef industry has moved into a quality era.

At the beginning of the beef production line, purebred and cow-calf producers have a long list of management requirements that must be met. If these requirements are not met at the starting point, how can our beef product be expected to meet the requirements of the consumer?

Cattle producers face a challenging job. You must be the engineer of the quality beef product provided to consumers. The design of the product starts with genetics, and the assembly is a continuous process throughout each segment of the beef industry.

Cattle producers need to know how their product conforms to requirements at each segment. Does the product meet the needs of the feedlot, packer, distributor and consumer?

While determining this information requires tremendous effort and tracking by producers, it is essential because you cannot change what you cannot measure. Knowledge of your product's performance at each production stage provides you power — the power to change, the power to improve, the power to compete.

Many cattle producers believe they don't need to know what happens to the product after it leaves their operations and question if they will be paid for producing a quality product.

Parallel this to buying a car. If the car conforms to your requirements, you'll probably buy the same kind, and possibly even purchase it from the same dealership, when it's time to buy another.

If the car did not conform to your requirements, will you buy the same kind? If the dealership did not suit your needs, will you return?

Jerry Litton, a former Charolais



Kelly Elkins

breeder from Missouri, was fond of saying, "You don't have to do a thing to improve the quality of your cattle, but you'll have to compete with those who do."

Angus producers are taking the role as product engineer seriously and are beginning to study the genetics of their cattle and how it relates to the quality of the end product. This was indicated by the tremendous growth in the amount of carcass data collected through the Certified Angus Beef Carcass Data Program in 1992.

Table 1 illustrates the total number of cattle evaluated increased by 3,233 head from 1991 to 1992. There was no substantial changes in average hot carcass weight, ribeye area, yield grade and quality grade when comparing the two years.

When comparing the distribution percentages within yield grades and quality grades between the two years, you will note an increase in the percentage of average/high Choice and Prime cattle, and an increase in the percentage of yield grade 1 and 2 cattle.

These results are contrary to the theory that increasing marbling (quality grade) will also increase the percentage of yield grade 4 cattle. In fact, Doyle Wilson, Iowa State University, says "the genetic correlation between marbling score and external backfat at the 12-13 ribs is nearly zero."

Comparing the two years, the percentage of yield grade 4 cattle decreased by 1 percent and the percentage of yield grade 3 cattle decreased by 7 percent while the percentage of higher quality grades increased.

Congratulations Angus producers, your engineering efforts are starting to pay off!

—**Kelly Elkins, Director,
Carcass Data Services,
Supply Development Division,
Certified Angus Beef Program**

LE 1 Carcass Data Program Statistics

	1991	1992
Total Number Evaluated	2,516 head	5,749 head
Total Number Meeting Certified Angus Beef Carcass Specification	498 head	1,295 head
Certification Rate	20%	25%
Average Age	15 months	16 months
Hot Carcass Weight (HCW)	767 lb.	765lb.
Ribeye Area (REA)	12.5 sq. in.	12.5 sq. in.
Average Backfat Thickness	.57 in.	.54 in.
Yield Grade Average	3.3	3.2
Yield Grade 1	2%	3%
Yield Grade 2	26%	33%
Yield Grade 3	59%	52%
Yield Grade 4	12%	11%
Yield Grade	51%	49%
bling Score Average	SMALL 52	SMALL 54
Quality Grade		
Prime	1%	2%
Choice 0/+	23%	27%
Choice -	51%	49%
Select	24%	22%

CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF COLUMN

Feeder Cattle Directory Forms Available

The Angus Feeder Cattle Directory is a service provided by the Certified Angus Beef Program to help the industry locate Angus-sired feeder cattle. It is a great support to Angus seedstock and commercial cattle producers in marketing their cattle.

The directory is printed annually and mailed in early August to approximately 5,000 feedlot operators and cattle buyers nationwide. A minimal \$20 fee is charged to list cattle for one year and gain this widespread exposure.

A recent survey of feedlots who receive the directory indicated buyers would like to see increased numbers of cattle listed from a wider variety of states. To help meet this demand, producers are encouraged to obtain listing forms by May 1.

Contact Larry Dorsey, PO. Box 36, Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730; (406) 763-4366, to obtain listing forms.

CAB Value Discovery Project Symposium August 2-3

The 1993 CAB Value Discovery Project will conclude with a special symposium and awards ceremony August 2-3 in Denver, prior to the National Cattlemen's Association mid-year meeting.

The symposium will provide producers with a unique opportunity to learn about the effects of live animal and beef carcass characteristics on the value of the end product.

An information-packed agenda will include a tour of the EXCEL beef packing plant located in Ft. Morgan, Colo.; an educational seminar at the Colorado State University campus, featuring Bill Mies, Texas A&M University, Gary Smith and Daryl Tatum, both with Colorado State University; a panel discussion including individuals from each production segment and an awards breakfast honoring the 1993 Value Discovery Project top achievers.

A detailed schedule and registration information will be included next month in the *Angus Journal*

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