

Producer Input Sought for 2011 Beef Quality Audit

by **Melissa Slagle**, Cattlemen's Beef Board

Cattle producers are being asked to provide input to the 2011 National Beef Quality Audit (NBQA) by taking a short, 10-minute survey at www.cattlesurvey.com.

The 2011 NBQA, led by scientists from Colorado State University and Texas A&M University, is designed to collect and analyze information from cooler audits in the packing sector; face-to-face interviews with beef supply chain partners; and, for the first time, cattle producers — including feeders, stockers, cow-calf operators and seedstock producers.

According to Tom Field, who manages the BQA program for the Beef Checkoff Program, producer input is being sought to

strengthen the measurement of quality-based practices implemented on farms and ranches that support consumer confidence in beef products and production systems.

The checkoff-funded NBQA has provided important benchmarks for the U.S. beef industry since 1991. According to Field, the audit has been conducted about every four years, with the historic focus centered on quantifying the performance of beef carcasses for a number of value enhancing characteristics. Field said previous surveys have assisted in identifying challenges and opportunities for cattle producers.

“We hope to quantify the current adoption level of quality-driven management

practices by the industry and develop a benchmark against which to measure future performance,” says Field. “Our goal is to provide a foundation from which to direct future educational initiatives to improve the competitiveness of beef and beef byproducts. By collecting input from cattle producers, we will help consumers and decision influencers better understand beef production and the commitment of cattlemen to produce safe and wholesome beef products.”

Cattlemen can find the survey online at www.cattlesurvey.com. It also will be available to beef producers at a variety of state, regional and national industry meetings and conventions. 