

Get to know your beef checkoff

An at-a-glance view of your checkoff investment activity, benefits and value.

“How does my checkoff investment build consumer trust?”

Through state and national Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) programs, beef and dairy producers learn about best practices and how to leverage them to help produce safe, wholesome beef for consumers.

Explore these BQA highlights to learn more about how your checkoff investment helps build consumer trust and confidence and provides more profit opportunities for your operation.

- ▶ Continuous improvement in quality from farm to auction to fork — that’s your BQA program!
- ▶ Stockmanship and stewardship — skills to live by
- ▶ BQA assessment available from seedstock to feedlot
- ▶ Dairy producers are beef producers, too!

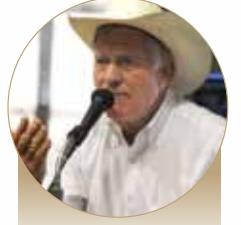


My beef checkoff can help me produce a safe, wholesome product.

- Jim Warren



“On our ranch and at 101 Livestock, we continuously strive for excellence — using the BQA techniques for proper animal care and handling. We ask ourselves, ‘Have we done everything in our power to supply consumers with safe, high-quality beef?’” says Jim Warren.



Jim Warren
101 Livestock Market
Amoras, Calif.

“As cattlemen, we have a responsibility to deliver the best possible beef from the ranch right on up the chain to the consumer.”



MyBeefCheckoff.com

Promoting. Researching. Educating. Safeguarding.

Funded by the Beef Checkoff.

“BQA is a way for us to earn consumer trust — it shows we have the knowledge and commitment to supply a safe, wholesome product.”

Dee Griffin, DVM and Professor, University of Nebraska, GPVEC, Clay Center, Neb.



Phoebe Bitler, Vista Grande Farm in Pennsylvania, is the 2010 National Dairy BQA Award winner for her leadership in developing the DBQA manual.

To learn more about the DBQA program, go to www.dbqa.org.
“Instead of marketing the cows immediately, we keep them on feed for about 60 additional days, which means about \$200 to \$300 per head more in our pockets,” says Bitler. “Learning more about this practice from the market cow audits is just another way that we, as dairy producers, can see the benefit of our beef checkoff investment.”

Adding value

- Dairy beef makes up about 22 percent of all beef production, according to CattleFax
- Dairy beef accounts for about 6 percent to 8 percent of dairy income
- Nearly 50 percent of dairy beef goes to whole-muscle cuts
- An estimated 89 percent of rounds are sold as steak
- An estimated 40 percent of sirloins are sold as steak

Your contribution as a dairy-beef producer:

Dairy beef makes up about 22 percent of all beef production, according to CattleFax. Dairy beef accounts for about 6 percent to 8 percent of dairy income. Nearly 50 percent of dairy beef goes to whole-muscle cuts. An estimated 89 percent of rounds are sold as steak. An estimated 40 percent of sirloins are sold as steak.

Dairy producers are beef producers, too!

“Learning about body condition and feeding practices from the market cow audits is just another way that we, as dairy producers, can see the benefit of our beef checkoff investment.”



Phoebe Bitler, Fleetwood, Pa.

- ▶ One key research project that hits close to producers’ pocketbooks is the market cow and bull audit conducted by the checkoff’s BQA program. As a result of such audits, for example, Pennsylvania dairy producer Phoebe Bitler and her family have implemented a “white cow” program.

- ▶ Contact your state beef council. For your state’s contact information, go to mybeefcheckoff.com and click on ‘State Beef Councils.’
- ▶ Share your ideas or ask questions by calling or writing: Cattleman’s Beef Board, 9000 East Nichols Avenue, Suite 215 Centennial, CO 80112. Phone: 303.220.9890. E-mail: beefboard@beefboard.org

- ▶ Visit the Industry Information section of mybeefcheckoff.com — and while you’re there, sign up for *MyBeefCheckoff News*, a monthly electronic newsletter that will keep you up-to-date on how your checkoff investment helps supply consumers with a safe, wholesome beef-eating experience.

So many ways to learn more...

Continuous improvement in quality from farm to auction to fork — that's your BQA program!

Ensuring beef safety and quality — you do it on your farm or ranch every day. It's also at the heart of the checkoff-funded Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, designed to return more profits to producers and deliver safe, healthy, humanely raised beef to consumers.



“Today's consumers trust that America's beef producers are good people but they don't understand all of our production practices,” explains veterinarian Dee Griffin, a professor at the University of Nebraska's Great Plains Veterinary Education Center (GPVEC) and a BQA pioneer. “That's where BQA can help.”

BQA is a voluntary, national program implemented through state beef organizations to provide standards and practices for high-quality cattle production. These science-based protocols are coupled with day-to-day, common-sense husbandry practices. BQA raises consumer confidence by demonstrating a commitment to quality in every segment of the beef industry — not just at the feedlot or packing plant.

“BQA is a process of figuring out what could go wrong and planning to avoid it — then validating and documenting what you have done. BQA is just good business.”

Dee Griffin, DVM and professor,
University of Nebraska, GPVEC, Clay Center, Neb.



BQA is a significant part of the equation for building consumer trust in beef. BQA certification guarantees that farmers and ranchers have followed a recommended protocol when producing their animals.

Your BQA resources

- ▶ **Audits** — Quality audits are the cornerstone of the BQA program. They began in 1991 with the straightforward goals of identifying, defining and benchmarking quality-related areas in need of improvement. The checkoff's first National Beef Quality Audit (NBQA) focused on fed steers and heifers and was followed by the national market cow and bull quality audit. Generally, audits are conducted every five years. The most recent market cow and bull audit was in 2007; the next NBQA audit is in 2011.
- ▶ **National guidelines and manual** — BQA national guidelines (beef and dairy versions) are continuously fine-tuned as industry experts analyze audit results and provide a consistent framework for BQA programs.
- ▶ **BQA trainings** — Using the national guidelines as a foundation, state beef organizations determine the best training methods, including face-to-face meetings, printed materials, live demonstrations and online training.
- ▶ **BQA certification** — To become BQA-certified, a producer must attend a BQA training session, successfully pass a test covering national BQA guidelines and agree to adhere to BQA protocols.
 - **Online certification** — New for 2011, many state cattle organizations will have the option to offer a nationally organized Web-based BQA certification program.

For more information about BQA resources and to learn how to become BQA-certified in your state, go to mybeefcheckoff.com/bqa.



Benchmark audits are conducted for both fed cattle and market cows and bulls to identify pre-harvest improvement opportunities for producers seeking the highest quality production practices.



As measured by BQA quality audits, the presence of fed cattle injection-site lesions in the top-sirloin butt have been reduced from more than 20 percent to less than 1 percent by moving injection sites to the neck of the animal.

Stockmanship and stewardship — skills to live by



Today, cattlemen from Pennsylvania to Texas are learning how to improve cattle performance through effective stockmanship. Stockmanship and Stewardship is a BQA-sponsored seminar series featuring Ron Gill, PhD, Texas A&M livestock specialist and lifetime rancher, and Curt Pate, world-renowned Montana horseman and stockman — cattlemen who share a passion for animal care and husbandry. The two travel the country spreading the word about their common-sense, practical methods of easy-to-apply cattle-handling skills.

Partially funded by the beef checkoff, the Stockmanship and Stewardship live-cattle demonstrations focus on four basic principles

Stockmanship seminars focus on enhancing cattle-handling skills by instilling a better understanding of an animal's natural behaviors.

to go around you; 3. Cattle want to go to and be around other cattle; and 4. Cattle can only think of one thing at a time.

“On our ranch, we're continuously looking for ways to reduce sickness in high-risk calves,” says Gill. “Using these stockmanship skills helped us improve overall cattle performance. And, an added benefit is we now enjoy working cattle together more.”

To learn more about the Stockmanship and Stewardship seminars, visit www.mybeefcheckoff.com/bqa.

BQA assessment available from seedstock to feedlot

To build confidence in producers' abilities to produce safe, wholesome beef, BQA leaders have developed a series of on-site BQA assessment tools to benchmark key indicators of animal care, as well as the general condition of the operation. The assessments focus on the animals, the operation's records and Best Management Practices, as well as the facilities and equipment. Depending on the operation, either the producer or a third-party may conduct the BQA assessment.

“These assessment tools provide one more layer of assurance to our customers that their beef is raised in a humane manner under the best possible conditions throughout the entire production chain,” says BQA Advisory Board member Ran Smith of Kansas.



Initially, only a BQA feedyard assessment was developed, but due to demand from producers and food chain stakeholders, assessment tools for seedstock, cow-calf and stocker operations will be released in 2011.

To learn more about the BQA assessments, visit www.mybeefcheckoff.com/bqa.