

## North American Meat Institute

AR# 2430-II

AR Title: Veal Quality Assurance

### AR Purpose and Description:

Today more than ever, interest in food goes beyond taste, nutrition, convenience and price. Today's consumers desire to know how and where their food is produced and who is producing it. The 18th annual Power of Meat report published by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and the North American Meat Institute (NAMI) indicates 58% of shoppers think it would be helpful to have some kind of animal welfare ratings or certifications for the meat they buy.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the Veal Quality Assurance (VQA) program helps address that desire.

VQA also ensures the welfare needs of the animals raised are met as assessed through a framework and certification process and validated by a veterinarian.

The goal of the VQA program is to provide a foundation and framework of high standards to ensure formula-fed veal calves raised in the U.S. receive excellent animal care and that those raising calves, in collaboration with licensed veterinarians and animal nutritionists, follow science-based best practices and regulatory requirements to prioritize animal welfare throughout the production system resulting in consistent, safe, quality veal.

The formula-fed veal industry has made extraordinary advancements since the practice of raising formula-fed veal was first introduced by Europe to the U.S. nearly 100 years ago. The most noticeable advancements are the voluntary commitment to shift housing practices to group pens and no tethers, and the dedication to decreasing veterinary drug residues. This commitment to continuous improvement is vital to the long-term success of the U.S. veal industry.

As consumer perceptions and demand for animal-based proteins evolve and new husbandry practices are researched, the formula-fed veal industry must continue to demonstrate they are holding itself accountable to the highest standards of animal care. The VQA program provides both industry and the consuming public with those standards.

Participation in the VQA program is estimated at 95% of all formula-fed (calves also receive grain) veal comes from VQA-certified farms. The VQA program historically is rated as one of the most valuable programs to the industry as measured annually through the Veal Industry Summit. Stakeholders surveyed during the 2023 Veal Industry Summit reconfirmed the significance of VQA to the industry by scoring the program an 8 out of 10 with 10 as "extremely important."

No other organization has a program to serve and support the unique aspects of the veal industry in the U.S. with a quality assurance program. The VQA program has been ongoing since its inception in 1990. It is funded through Beef Checkoff investments made by veal farmers each time a calf is sold. Every veal calf through its lifecycle typically contributes \$2 to the Beef Checkoff.

The Veal Industry Information Authorization Request (AR) for Veal Quality Assurance (VQA) continues to align with the Beef Industry Long Range Plan and it also supports the veal industry's long-range plan. The Veal Promotion AR focuses on increasing the discovery of and access to veal in the marketplace, and VQA specifically reinforces consumer confidence in veal as a protein choice.

### What is VQA?

Developed with input from farmers, veterinarians, feed and nutrition consultants, academia and other animal health care experts, the VQA program provides a framework of educational resources and best management practices necessary to ensure that those who care for veal calves meet their ethical obligation to the health and well-being of the animals through responsible, ethical practices and protocols.

**To be VQA certified, each farm and its owner/farm manager producing formula-fed veal is expected to:**

1. Maintain a Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship
2. Meet the Expected Outcomes outlined in each section of the VQA manual.
3. Have a licensed veterinarian (preferably the one identified in their VCPR) assess and provide documentation confirming that best management practices are being followed and “Expected Outcomes” are achieved.

Licensed veterinarians who maintain a Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship serve a critical role in the VQA certification process to assess that best management practices are followed and desired outcomes are achieved on farms raising formula-fed veal. Certification is required at least once every three years.

In 2023, VQA was reviewed and updated by a Technical Advisory Group to ensure the program reflects current science and evidence-based outcomes to achieve optimal animal welfare. Technical reviews and updates are recommended every five years.

Participants of the 2023 Technical Review Group include:

- Greg Habing, DVM, Ph.D., College of Veterinary Medicine, The Ohio State University
- Robert Supancik, Formula One Feed
- Miriam Weber Nielsen, Ph.D. Michigan State University
- Jennifer Kauf, VMD, Food Animal Private Practice, Pennsylvania
- Sonia Arnold, Ph.D., Marcho Farms
- Annie Dubuc, M.Sc., Delimax / Catelli Foods
- Steve Anderson, Midwest Livestock, Strauss Dairy Ingredients
- Marty Masterson, DVM, College of Veterinary Medicine, The Ohio State University
- Jessica Pempek, Ph.D., USDA Research Scientist

## **BACKGROUND ABOUT VEAL**

Uniquely positioned between both the dairy and beef industries, veal is a meat derived primarily from young Holstein bull calves. Bull calves are typically sold shortly after birth through local auction markets or purchased directly by others who will raise them for beef or veal. Most Holstein bull calves are raised for beef and a small percentage are raised for veal.

While USDA categorizes four different types of veal calves, most of the veal meat (nearly 70%) in the market comes from milk-fed veal calves.

The 2022 USDA harvest data is as follows:

- **Bob veal calves:** Dairy bull calves marketed 3-5 days after birth, 195,851 head
- **Formula-fed:** Dairy bull calves that are raised for about six months and harvested at approximately 500 pounds (also known as special-fed or milk-fed, these animals also receive grain and are ruminating animals at the time of harvest), 133,360 head

Two other categories tracked by USDA include:

- **Non-milk Fed Veal:** 8,388
- **Heavy Calves:** 24,772

Veal is primarily raised in the Northeast including the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana. Raising veal is very much a family affair. While the industry’s story about production practices is shared through consumer and channel marketing efforts deployed in the Veal Promotion AR, this AR for Veal Quality Assurance enables a credible and meaningful story to be communicated.

## **Citations:**

<sup>1</sup> Anne-Marie Roerink, Principal, 210 Analytics LLC, *The Power of Meat 2023: An In-Depth Look at Meat Through the Shopper’s Eyes*, Report sponsored by Sealed Air Food Care Division/Cryovac®

**CBB Budget Category:** Industry Information

**Start Date:**10/1/2023

**End Date:**9/30/2024

FY24 CBB/BPOC Funding Request		
Direct Costs	Implementation	Total
\$49,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$55,000.00

**Beef Industry Long Range Plan (LRP) Core Strategies Addressed by this AR:**

- Grow Consumer Trust in Beef Production

AR Tactic(s)

Tactic A | 2430-II  
Veal Quality Assurance  
North American Meat Institute

**Tactic Description:**

Veal Quality Assurance (VQA) is the program that certifies and verifies production practices for raising formula-fed veal. The program provides the framework for this certification supported by educational resources to convey best management practices and desired outcomes to ensure calves receive optimal care for their health and well-being.

The FY24 VQA AR continues program management to ensure all independent and company-owned formula-fed veal calves are raised on farms with farmers/managers that are VQA certified. This includes communication outreach to veal farmers, veterinarians, calf procurement managers and veal packer/processors involved in veal production as well as dairy industry partners who supply calves to veal growers/farmers. This AR includes activities to support, verify and record certification initiatives and updates which are necessary for the integrity of the program.

In FY23, a technical advisory group reviewed the content of the VQA program and recommended updates to the program reflecting the most current animal welfare science. The group also provided input to enhance the VQA manual strengthening the overall program. A key focus of the FY24 AR will be communication outreach to market the updated program to industry stakeholders and farmers. This effort will include an educational webinar, a mailing, email marketing and other resources relevant to the target market as needed.

**Measurable Objectives**

**Measurable Objective #1:**

Provide ongoing program management to ensure 95% of all domestically produced U.S formula-fed veal calves are derived from VQA- certified farms as confirmed by licensed veterinarians. (Ongoing)

**Measurable Objective #2:**

Present a VQA program update and solicit input from a minimum of 20 stakeholders at the 2024 Veal Summit held in the Spring. (Q2) This engagement from industry stakeholders is valuable to ensure the program is providing relevant and meaningful program resources which in turn helps with education and certification efforts.

**Measurable Objective #3:**

Develop one educational resource of the updated VQA program content (Q1) and promote the new program manual to industry stakeholders and farmers through an educational webinar, media release and email marketing. (Q2) Creating awareness of the updated program and technical review that was completed is important to the program credibility and ensure all veal farmers and industry stakeholders are aware of the program updates and any changes to the best management practices to implement.

## Performance Efficiency Measures

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### *General Target Audience:*

Veal farmers/growers Reach Goal: 225  
Veal farmers/growers Engagement Goal: 115

### *Key Opinion Leaders:*

Industry Stakeholders Reach Goal: 40  
Industry Stakeholders Engagement Goal: 20

## LRP Initiatives Addressed by this Tactic

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### **Grow Consumer Trust in Beef Production**

- Align and collaborate with traditional and nontraditional partners to tell the positive story of beef cattle production
- Intensify efforts in educating consumers as well as supply chain decision makers about the benefits of animal care programs like BQA and their impacts on animal well-being

## Checkoff Program Committee(s) to Score This Tactic

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**Committee(s) to Score This Tactic:** Consumer Trust

## Supplemental Information for This AR

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### **1. Please explain changes from the FY23 approved AR:**

The FY23 AR focused on engaging a Technical Advisory Group to provide updates to the program. The focus of the FY 24 AR is to create educational resources and communicate and implement the program updates that were made in FY23. Additionally, the AR will continue to support and administer the VQA program as in previous years.

### **2. List any proposed vendors/agencies that will be used to complete the work in this AR.**

Look East has multi-years of managing VQA as well as experience and relationships in the veal industry to ensure participation and certification.

### **3. Will all work with vendors/agencies be competitively bid?**

Look East staff has knowledge and experience (multiple years) in managing the VQA program and collaborating with industry stakeholders. Knowledge and production experience within the formula-fed veal industry are not easily found with other agencies. Their expertise and experience will deliver meaningful results for the beef/veal industry.

### **4. Please list any relationships between this AR and projects previously funded by the Beef Promotion Operating Committee (BPOC).**

This AR is a continuation of past Veal ARs funded by the BPOC with some updates for FY24 as explained in Question 1 above. The "veal formula" provides guidance for the checkoff dollars specifically contributed by veal producers through the sale of veal calves.

### **5. If applicable, explain how this AR can be extended by State Beef Councils or other contractors.**

Due to the size and unique aspects of the milk-fed veal industry, there is no direct role for State Beef Councils to implement the VQA program. Veal farmers historically work directly with a feed supplier and oftentimes are fully integrated with that feed company and/or a packer/processors for harvesting their animals. VQA works directly with these industry stakeholders including feed company representatives, procurement managers and veterinarians to ensure VQA resources are available and certification is accountable to the expectations of the VQA program.

State Beef Councils can play a role in consumer awareness and help extend the on-farm veal production story including VQA through their communication and education efforts.

## Potential Partnerships

Please list all potential partners/collaborators for this AR, and include any partnership and/or collaborations with a third party by identifying the third party, the nature of the collaboration, and extent of the collaboration.

### Potential Partnership List:

N/A

## Detailed Budget Summary

The tables in the following three sections report program budget information from the following funding sources:

1. Cattlemen's Beef Board/Beef Promotion Operating Committee (CBB/BPOC) Funding
2. "Other Funding" sources such as:
  - Federation of State Beef Councils (FSBC) Funds
  - Individual Qualified State Beef Council (QSBC) Funds
  - Government Funds (e.g., Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development) Grain/Oilseed Funds (e.g., National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association)
  - Corporate Funds (e.g., tech and pharma companies)
  - Other

## Section 1 - Funding Requested by Tactic

### CBB/BPOC Funding Requested by Tactic

The following table outlines the amount of CBB/BPOC funding that is being requested for each tactic within this AR, and the committee(s) that has been selected to score each tactic.

CBB/BPOC Funding Requested by Tactic					
Committee Name	Tactic	Tactic Name	Direct Costs	Implementation	Total
Consumer Trust	Tactic A	Veal Quality Assurance	\$49,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$55,000.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$49,000.00</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>	<b>\$55,000.00</b>

### Other Funding Sources Requested by Tactic

The following table reports the amount of proposed and/or anticipated "Other Funding" sources that would be applied to this AR's tactics. The funding information in this table is for informational purposes only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

Other Funding Sources Requested by Tactic (Informational Only)			
Funding Source	Tactic	Tactic Name	Total
Other: N/A	Tactic A	Veal Quality Assurance	
<b>Other Funding Total</b>			

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the FY24 CBB/BPOC or Other Funding amounts that are being requested for this AR's tactic(s).

N/A

Section 2 - Summary of FY23 AR Budgets and Expenses

**Classification:**

This AR is a continuation of, or builds upon, program work from last year. CBB will report information in the "FY23 CBB/BPOC Funding" table and we will provide information for the "FY23 Other Funding Sources" table.

**FY23 CBB/BPOC Funding**

This table reports the amount of awarded and expended CBB/BPOC funding for this Authorization Request in FY23.

<b>FY23 CBB/BPOC Funding</b>			
<i>Note: The Cattlemen's Beef Board will complete the fields in this table.</i>			
	<b>AR# 2330-II</b>		
	<b>Direct Costs</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Funds Awarded</b>	\$48,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$60,000.00
<b>Actual Expenses</b> <i>(October 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)</i>	\$41,924.00	\$3,942.00	\$45,866.00

**FY23 Other Funding Sources**

The following table reports the amount of committed and expended "Other Funding" sources for this AR in FY23. The funding information in this table is for informational purposes only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

<b>FY23 Other Funding Sources (Informational Only)</b>			
	<b>AR# 2310-R</b>		
	<b>Other Funding Source</b>	<b>Funds Committed</b>	<b>Funds Expended</b> <i>(October 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)</i>
<b>A</b>	Other: N/A		

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the FY23 CBB/BPOC or Other Funding budget and expense summaries.

N/A

## Section 3 - Historical Summary of AR Budgets and Expenses

**Classification:**

This AR is a continuation of, or builds upon, program work from the last two years (or longer). CBB will report information in the "CBB/BPOC Historical" table, and we will provide information for the "Other Funding Sources Historical" table.

**CBB/BPOC Funding – Historical Summary**

The following table reports the amount of awarded and expended CBB/BPOC funding for this AR in FY20, FY21, and FY22.

<b>CBB/BPOC Funding - Historical Summary</b>				
<i>Note: The Cattlemen's Beef Board will complete the fields in this table.</i>				
		<b>FY22 AR# 2230-II</b>	<b>FY21 AR# 2130-II</b>	<b>FY20 AR# 2030-II</b>
<b>AR Period<sup>1</sup></b>	<i>Start Date:</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2021</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2020</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2019</i>
	<i>End Date:</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2022</i>	<i>Sep. 30, 2021</i>	<i>Sep. 30, 2020</i>
<b>Funds Awarded</b>		\$74,210.00	\$99,407.00	\$157,716.00
<b>Actual Expenses<sup>2</sup></b>		\$60,374.00	\$95,225.00	\$153,113.00

<sup>1</sup>For multiyear ARs, the "End Date" reflects the date that the AR is scheduled to be completed.

<sup>2</sup>If the AR "End Date" has not year occurred, actual expenses will be reflective of the following time period:  
AR Start Date - June 30, 2023

**Other Funding - Historical Summary**

The following table reports the amount of "Other Funding" source expenditures for this AR in FY20, FY21, and FY22. The funding information in this table is for informational purposes only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

<b>Other Funding Sources – Historical Summary (Informational Only)</b>						
	<b>FY22 AR# 2230-II</b>		<b>FY21 AR# 2130-II</b>		<b>FY20 AR# 2030-II</b>	
	<b>Other Funding Source</b>	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>Other Funding Source</b>	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>Other Funding Source</b>	<b>Total Expenditures</b>
<b>A</b>	Other: N/A		Other: N/A		Other: N/A	

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the historical CBB/BPOC or Other Funding budget and expense summaries.

N/A