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Incorporating Beef Quality Assurance into Practice

85% of U.S. fed beef is sourced from BQA-certified operations

For nearly 40 years, the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, funded by the beef checkoff and managed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), has provided producer education resources to the cattle industry. With a multimedia approach to in-person trainings, this program guides the cattle industry toward continuous improvement using science-based production practices that assure cattle well-being, beef quality and safety. Veterinarians have been steady leaders and partners with BQA since its inception.

When industry groups recognized where beef was falling short of the final customer's expectations, they took initiative in developing voluntary safety and quality assurance programs for preharvest segments of the industry. The National Beef Quality Audit (NBQA) was the result and is now conducted approximately every five years.

Results from this comprehensive survey guides the beef industry's efforts to improve beef quality through educational efforts like BQA. The 2022 NBQA results are available and can be found at bqa.org.

The BQA program is nationally coordinated and state implemented, partnering

with state BQA programs across the country who organize and execute BQA training and certification opportunities in their state. Consumer research has shown consumers are more interested than ever about how and where their food is raised. As a result, being BQA certified has become increasingly important to all members of the supply chain.



RESOURCES AVAILABLE

BQA is the bridge between the quality care provided by cattle producers and veterinarians, and what consumers want

to know about how their food is raised. With an estimated 85% of the U.S. fed beef supply now sourced from operations with BQA-certified management, veterinarians are important to enacting, teaching and sharing these principles with their clients.

These educational efforts affect the entire cattle industry, from owners to workers to veterinary teams. The National BQA team continues to develop new learning resources that can be integrated into farm training, veterinary open houses or community outreach opportunities (Table 1). Veterinarians can use these resources to build on new or existing

DID YOU KNOW?

BQA recognizes programs as equivalencies, including:

- National Dairy FARM evaluated farms
- Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) producers in Canada
- Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) producers
- Calf Care & Quality Assurance (CCQA) certification.



producer relationships to enhance the care and productivity of the operation. These opportunities add value to the practice and reinforce livestock veterinarians' dedication to healthy animals and a safe food supply. It is important to producers, veterinarians and the industry, that cattle are responsibly handled and transported, and welfare of the animal is always a priority.

Veterinarians serve as key advisers for producers on many aspects of the operation such as animal health and welfare, nutrition, biosecurity and general consulting questions. These BQA resources can serve as a template for evaluating the operation's activities and discovering potential areas of improvement. While improved beef quality and safety through minimizing injection site lesions and meat residues was the initial goal of BQA, the program has evolved into a total quality management system that values all aspects of raising cattle.

Translation of BQA materials into Spanish will be occurring over the next few years. Veterinarians, producers and anyone involved with worker training recognize the value of material provided in a language that the employee understands and multiple ways of accessing that information, such as written, oral communication or video. This is a major goal of the BQA program as educational resources expand.

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE (BQA) RESOURCES AVAILABLE BY SECTOR

ALL SECTORS

**Available in English and Spanish*

- National BQA Manual
- BQA online certification modules (Cow/Calf, Stocker/Backgrounder, Feedyard)*
- BQA Field Guide
- Continuing Education modules on Biosecurity, Foundations of Herd Health, Herd Health Management, and Stockmanship
- Daily Biosecurity Plan for Disease Prevention
- Antibiotic Stewardship for Beef Producers
- Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)
- Cattle Care Agreement
- Cattle Care Tool Kit
- Animal Health Product Inventory Log
- Animal Health Product Temperature Log
- Loading Density Charts – mature cattle and calves

COW/CALF

- Cow/Calf Assessment

STOCKER/BACKGROUNDER

- Stocker and Backgrounding Assessment

FEEDYARD

- Feedyard Assessment

CALF RAISER

- Calf Care & Quality Assurance online certification module*, manual, and sample protocols

LIVESTOCK HAULER/TRANSPORTER

- BQA Transportation manual and online certification modules



Scan to learn more about the National BQA program, its producer friendly educational resources, and the National Beef Quality Audit.

With the cattle industry continuously looking to improve everyday practices, it is important producers have the most current information

and resources. Veterinarians are a key information and training resource who can use BQA in their practice. **BV**

