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PRODUCER UPDATE

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

BRYAN NAGEL



I'm Bryan Nagel, elected in January to serve as the chairman of the SD Beef Quality Assurance/Critical Management Plan (BQA/CMP) Steering Committee. I operate a feedyard with my wife Angela in Avon, SD (in southeast SD). I'm an SDSU alumni ('81) and am a past president of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association. I have been BQA certified since its inception here in SD.

The future for the beef industry has never looked brighter than it has this spring of 2011! Every phase of production is experiencing levels we have never seen before and optimism is running high. We can attribute these prices to a lot of fundamental factors, but without a doubt, the BQA programs implemented in the last decade have been a key component to the price increase. By working together with all producers to ensure beef consumers have an enjoyable eating experience every time they purchase beef, we've been able to build customer loyalty and beef demand – not only here in the US, but around the world. However, we don't have time to pat ourselves on the back. With the current economy and competition from other protein sources, high gas prices, and other economic difficulties, we need to keep improving our product and its safety.

I look forward to the upcoming year with SD BQA/CMP. We'll continue to provide opportunities for producers to be trained and become BQA certified, but we're also working to expand the influence of the BQA/CMP pro-

gram. Animal handling techniques and transportation BQA are just two areas we'll be working on this summer. There are excellent programs developed through the national BQA and I encourage everyone to log on to their website at www.bqa.org to see the latest tools available. You can also learn more about the SD BQA/CMP program on our website at www.sdbqa.com.

The guiding principles of BQA are based on these core beliefs, and they still hold true:

We believe production practices affect consumer acceptance of beef.

We believe the BQA program has and must continue to empower beef producers to improve the safety and wholesomeness of beef.

We believe these fundamental principles are the fabric of the BQA program:

Empowering people

– because producers can make a difference

Taking responsibility

– because it's our job, not someone else's

Working together

– because product safety and wholesomeness is everyone's business.

And, regardless of what Oprah says, I still believe "SEVEN DAYS WITHOUT BEEF MAKES ONE WEAK." Have a prosperous 2011!

ATTENTION BQA TRAINERS -- Educational Modules on DVD:

Now available in limited supply, these modules focus on the philosophy that underpins all BQA programs -- the procedures and protocols that are foundations of effective implementation, and the use of stockmanship in support of BQA.

View the DVDs online at www.bqa.org/videos.aspx and order from this site, too.

UPDATE FROM THE STATE COORDINATOR



These many years following the inception of the SD BQA/CMP program in the 1990s, I'm often asked, "Why is BQA certification important?" Most cattlemen who ask this observe the original purpose of BQA, to reduce injection-site blemishes, has largely been accomplished as most

producers adhere to BQA protocols for the administration of medications and vaccines.

My response usually goes something like this, "While BQA programs have effectively addressed concerns relative to injection sites, BQA has continued to evolve to meet the challenges that cattlemen face, including today's consumer concerns regarding animal care." Think of BQA as a self-help, gate-to-plate program for cattlemen to provide consumers with assurance our animals are treated humanely while we produce a safe, wholesome food.

"So," you might ask, "if we're adhering to BQA protocols, why is acquiring and maintaining my BQA certification important?" To this I respond, "Accountability. How can our industry verify for consumers that BQA protocols are being adhered to unless we can document the involvement of producers through certification?" I know, I know. We're all busy and finding time to attend training then complete and submit the paperwork can be difficult...not to mention the certification renewal that comes around every 3 years. However, I urge you to consider it a small price to pay if even one consumer remains a beef lover as a result of our efforts to document our production practices.

As I hope you'll appreciate from the information included in this newsletter, we have a busy year ahead of us for the South Dakota Beef Quality Assurance/Critical Management Plan (BQA/CMP) program. Last summer, we sought and received funding approval from the SD Beef Industry

JODIE HICKMAN

Council to provide check-off funded programs focused on BQA this spring and summer. First is the production of this newsletter to provide all BQA-certified producers an update regarding BQA happenings. In addition, we'll be working with the SD Trucking Association to discuss transportation BQA at their annual Ag Commodities Conference in Oacoma on June 10. We'll also be working with SDSU and NCBA to bring renown stockmanship expert, Curt Pate, to DakotaFest for Stockmanship and Stewardship workshops which will also include BQA training for producers. (More information on these events is included in this newsletter.)

As you will have undoubtedly heard, SDSU's Cooperative Extension Service (CES) will be undergoing substantial changes in the coming months as a result of budget cuts both here in SD and at the federal level. Since CES has been a key partner in conducting BQA/CMP training for producers, I want you to be aware we're unsure how BQA will be impacted as of this writing. However, we'll be working closely with CES and other organizations represented on the BQA/CMP Steering Committee to ensure as seamless a transition as possible. I encourage you to check our website at www.sdbqa.com for periodic updates as CES the transition gets underway.

Last, but certainly not least – we are currently discussing the possibility of sharing the BQA Coordinator's responsibilities with the SD Beef Industry Council. I encourage you to stay updated on the status of this transition by visiting the BQA website. I hope you'll be able to join us for one or more of the BQA activities we have planned this summer. I also hope you'll encourage your neighbors and family members to consider becoming BQA certified, if they haven't already. For more information regarding BQA training in your area, contact your local Extension agent or contact us at 605.945.2333 or bqa@sd cattlemen.org. Have a safe and productive summer!

TRANSPORTER BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE

With the increase in consumer awareness and concern regarding food safety and production practices, it's now more essential than ever for cattlemen, veterinarians and transporters to utilize all relevant tools available to assure consumers of the safe, healthy and humane beef production practices. South Dakota's Beef Quality Assurance/Critical Management Plan (SD BQA/CMP) program is dedicated to being a viable tool for South Dakotans.

Transporters play a critical role in the health and welfare of cattle throughout the beef production system. The proper handling and transport of cattle can reduce sickness in calves, prevent bruises and improve the quality of meat from these animals. In order to address consumer concerns, many producers are BQA certified and, eventually, certification of proper handling may even be required of cattle transporters, as is often the case today in the pork industry.

With this in mind, SD BQA/CMP program is interested in getting transporter input regarding a possible statewide voluntary program in which transporters would be able to complete training and become BQA certified. We encourage interested livestock haulers to join us at the SDTA Agricultural Commodities Conference, at Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma on June 10th at 1pm (CDT), to discuss possible elements of a transportation certification program and how it might be implemented. If you are unable to attend the conference, we ask you to provide input via email to bqa@sd cattlemen.org.

For more information about the SD Beef Quality Assurance/Critical Management Plan program, please visit our website at www.bqa.com.

SOUTH DAKOTA CERTIFIED ENROLLED CATTLE™ PROGRAM IS MAKING CHANGES

In a response to current industry demands the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) has just started the process of making some changes to the South Dakota Certified Enrolled Cattle™ (SDCEC) program. The SDDA is currently taking participant comment as they are looking at making these changes to the program.

The SDDA is continually looking for ways to enhance the program for current and future participants. Some of the significant proposed changes to the program include the removal of the USDA Premise registration requirement, streamlining the cattle enrollment and transfer process, and making some fee changes in an effort to make the program more self-sustaining. These fee changes will keep the program competitive with the other Age and Source Verification programs on the market. “The SDDA took under consideration the goals of the program, past performance, future direction desired, and sustainability when drafting these changes” said Bryce Baker, Ag Development Specialist.

The SDCEC program will continue to keep the South Dakota Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program as a

requirement. The BQA program requirement is a significant difference from SDCEC to the other Age and Source Verification programs on the market. Secretary of Ag, Walt Bones offered these comments, “The BQA program is a great opportunity for the cattle producers of this State to show our consumers that we are taking the responsibility of safe, wholesome, and humanely raised food very seriously. Participation in this industry regulated program is important for cattle producers, and it only makes sense to keep it part of the South Dakota Certified Enrolled Cattle™ program.”

If you are interested in participating in the producer survey about the proposed rule changes contact the SDDA.

For more information contact Bryce Baker at the South Dakota Department of Agriculture at:
523 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501
605-773-5436
800-228-5254

BQA PRESENTS STOCKMANSHIP & STEWARDSHIP AT DAKOTAFEST

DakotaFest has been, and continues to be, one of the largest agricultural events in South Dakota. Every year numerous companies, and even more farmers and ranchers, attend this event. This summer the SD BQA/CMP (Beef Quality Assurance/Critical Management Plan) program is providing a new opportunity to those in attendance. Cattle handling expert Curt Pate will be conducting demonstrations on low-stress cattle management and cattlemen will have the opportunity to receive BQA training.

For more than a decade, Curt has conducted demonstrations and clinics on stockmanship, colt starting, horsemanship and safety. His horsemanship and stockmanship abilities, combined with his ability as an effective communicator, make him one of the most sought after clinicians on both the national and international scene. His personal experience incorporating effective stockmanship principles supports a “for profit” mindset and he fully understands the increased economic benefits of handling stock correctly. Just as important, as livestock production comes under increased scrutiny, is the understanding Curt has of

the impact that improved handling practices create for the sustainability of the cattle industry.

The Stockman & Stewardship sessions teach handling methods that improve gathering, penning, chute work, and hauling. Much emphasis is placed on ways to increase cattle performance by reducing handling stress, and interactive discussions show how cattlemen can actually shape consumer’s perception of beef. Other topics include how the principles presented actually have a significant economic — as well as “quality of life” — benefit when applied in a cattle enterprise.

Curt will be at DakotaFest in Mitchell, SD on August 16 & 17. His demonstrations will be at 9:30 am and 2:00 pm. Following each demonstration there will be an opportunity for anyone interested, to complete BQA training. Please contact the SD BQA/CMP Program at 605-945-2333 or bqa@sd cattlemen.org with any questions.



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BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM INCREASES FEES TO REMAIN RELEVANT TOOL FOR CATTLE PRODUCERS

Beef producers have a great responsibility...to produce high-quality beef at an affordable cost. Most producers are dedicated to doing this in the safest, most humane way possible. However, with ever-increasing concerns about animal care and food safety, the South Dakota Beef Quality Assurance/Critical Management Plan (SD BQA/CMP) program is more important than ever.

In today's environment of consumer awareness and readily accessible media, it doesn't take much to make a sensation. That's why it's critically important for producers and veterinarians to be proactive in learning and adhering to BQA/CMP protocols. BQA is also a great tool for educating beef consumers about the safe, healthy, and humane practices undertaken on farms and ranches every day "Cattlemen created the SD BQA/CMP as a self-help tool designed to make certain all beef consumers can take pride in what they purchase and can trust and have confidence in the entire beef industry," said Bryan Nagel, Chairman of the SD BQA/CMP Steering Committee and cattle feeder from Avon.

Fee Increase will Ensure Program Viability

After more than 15 years serving South Dakota's cattlemen, the SD BQA/CMP Steering Committee voted in early January to increase both certification and renewal fees. The fee for a new three-year certification increased from \$25 to \$50. Likewise, the fee for a three-year BQA/CMP certification renewal increased from \$10 to \$30. "As we consider the future that will surely bring escalating food safety concerns and enhanced scrutiny of animal care practices, it's more important than ever for BQA/CMP to remain a viable tool for cattlemen. Raising the certification and renewal fees is the responsible thing to do for the benefit of the program and our state's beef producers," commented Nagel.

For more information about the SD BQA/CMP program, including online certification opportunities, visit our website at www.sdbqa.com or e-mail bqa@sd cattlemen.org.