

Quality Care Matters

A Column about Beef & Dairy Animal Care



W.B. Saul High School Students That Participated in BQA training

Youth Quality Assurance: Teaching Tomorrow's Producers and Consumers

Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) is traditionally an industry certification program for established beef and dairy producers. In the past few years, however, BQA director Nichole Hockenberry and Dr. David Wolfgang, Penn State, have presented the BQA certification program to a younger audience - high school and college students. In this month's Quality Care Matters, we talk to instructors, and their students, about why they think BQA is a perfect fit for future producers and consumers.

Gail Koskela, large animal science teacher at W.B. Saul High School, Philadelphia, first learned about BQA while chaperoning a student to Penn State's Cow Camp program. Jennifer Beidel, a Philadelphia area attorney, Penn State animal science graduate, and member of the W.B. Saul High School occupational advisory group, later encouraged Gail to talk to the Beef Council about BQA, as the state dictated that career technical educational programs, like W.B. Saul, pursue industry certification programs.

"Our students are really farm kids, out of place," Koskela said, "and BQA certification makes sense because we want our kids to understand animal care."

Presented to large animal science, food science and food processing students, the BQA program "reinforced the procedures and techniques I've been teaching them," said Koskela. "It helped them see the entire picture, from gate to plate, directly from industry professionals. It was a visible demonstration of

how animal handling impacts meat quality."

Joshua Veloz, a senior at W.B. Saul this fall, participated in the spring training and is working at the school's farm this summer, helping manage the Hereford and cross-bred beef cows and showing a steer at local fairs. A northeast Philadelphia native, Veloz hopes to study animal science at Penn State or Cornell.

"I always knew I wanted to be a veterinarian, and a neighbor told me about the school when I was in eighth grade. I am very interested in the beef industry," Veloz said. "I think the biggest surprise for me, and my classmates, was seeing the difference in meat quality, with the difference in injection sites. BQA reminded us about the preferred way to give shots."

Koskela said not all students will pursue traditional animal science paths, such as Veloz. "Some of my students will go into the medical field - nursing, respiratory therapy - and others might follow a career in food processing or hospitality," she explained. "They all can benefit from BQA training, though, because they all end up educating consumers about animal care and welfare."

She knows her students retained information from their BQA training. Recently, when asking her students to help castrate a bull calf, an older student reminded incoming freshman that the procedure needed done promptly "It says in the BQA notebook, you are supposed to castrate by two weeks of

age!" She knew that student took the initiative to read everything in the BQA training manual.

Adam Conover, Assistant Herd Manager at Delaware Valley College, also endorses BQA as part of his students' beef science curriculum. "The most important lesson for our students, from BQA training, is what they do with their animals, impacts consistency and quality of product. I think it's easy to lose sight of that, as a producer, when we are on the farm. BQA helps bridge those gaps and make those connections," he said.

His students agree. Darla Romberger, a senior animal science and dairy science student, remembered that during the calf necropsy she was surprised at the size of drug residues left on the carcass. "I knew bruising occurred, but not to that extent. It really hit home about the amount of meat that needs to be thrown out if an injection is given at a site other than the neck region," Romberger recalled.

Conover hopes to dedicate more time to BQA next semester, expanding the presentation to two lab periods, instead of one. "Our students got a lot from the presentation and I'd like to give Dr. Wolfgang and Nichole more time to spend with our students, explaining and answering questions," he said. "In my mind, QA programs across the country are well accepted and have made a significant difference to our industry."

To learn more about BQA and opportunities for youth, contact Nichole Hockenberry, program director, at 1-888-4BEEFPA, or visit www.pa-bqa.org.

and materials, for local beef promotions. The Beef Council board of directors will review applications and fund promotions that best meet the industry's goals. Previous winners have included Farm City Day events, school education programs and county fair promotions.

To receive an application, or for more information, please contact the PA Beef Council office at 814-623-2698 or kkassimer@pabeef.org.

Beef. It's What's For Winners

Call For Retail And Foodservice Entries In The 2011 Beef Backer Awards Announced

BEDFORD, Pa. — The Beef Checkoff Program has issued the call for entries for the National Retail and Foodservice Beef Backer Awards, two prestigious national awards programs designed to honor retailers and independent restaurants and chains that impressively promote and market beef.

The Pennsylvania Beef Council annually coordinates Retail and Foodservice contests in Pennsylvania. Now through Sept. 19, retailers and foodservice operators can enter to win the Pennsylvania Beef Backer contest. State winners will then be submitted for national judging by Oct. 3.

In its fourth year, the Retail Beef Backer Awards program features four categories, designed to honor retailers who have executed impressive initiatives to market and merchandise beef:

- Independent Retailer (fewer than 11 retail stores)
 - Mid-Size Chain Retailer (11-99 retail stores)
 - Large Chain Retailer (100 or more retail stores)
 - Innovator of the Year (The winner of this category can be a chain or independent retailer)
- The 2010 National Retail Beef Backer winners included: Broulim's Fresh Foods in the "Independent Retailer" category, Sentry Foods in the "Mid-Size Chain Retailer" category, Harris-Teeter as the "Large Chain Retailer" and HAC, Inc., as the "Innovator of the Year."

The 2011 retail entry form and contest details can be found at www.BeefRetail.org, or by contacting the Pennsylvania Beef Council.

The Foodservice Beef Backer Awards honor independent restaurants and chains that creatively promote and menu beef, and for the fifth year foodservice operators can enter to win in one of three categories:

- Chain Operator (10+ units, commercial or noncommercial)
- Independent Operator (commercial or noncommercial)
- Innovator of the Year (chain or independent, commercial or noncommercial)

The 2010 National Foodservice Beef Backer winners included: The Hitching Post I & II in the "Independent Restaurant" category, Home Style Dining LLC, the parent of Ponderosa® Steakhouses and Bonanza® Steakhouses in the "Chain Restaurant" category, and Red The Steakhouse as the "Innovator of the Year."

The 2011 foodservice entry form and contest details can be found by visiting www.Beef-Foodservice.com, or by contacting the PA Beef Council.

An independent judging committee of retail and foodservice industry professionals will select winners based on submission criteria and awards will be presented at the 2012 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Tradeshow in Nashville, Tenn. In addition to industry recognition, winners receive national promotion via a public relations campaign targeting local and national print and online media and national retail trade outlets.

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National Beef Quality Audit: Take Short Survey

Cattle producers are being asked to provide their input to the 2011 National Beef Quality Audit (NBQA) by taking a short survey at www.cattle-survey.com. The survey can be completed in approximately 10 minutes.

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 will be surveyed. According to Field, 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 National Beef Quality Audit has provided important benchmarks for the U.S. beef industry since 1991. According to Tom Field, Executive Director of Producer Education, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), contractor to the Beef Checkoff Program, the audit has been conducted approximately every four years with the historic focus centered on quantifying the performance of beef carcasses for a number of value enhancing characteristics. Field said the previous surveys have assisted in identifying challenges and opportunities for cattle producers.

Take the survey at www.cattlesurvey.com.

Beef Council Offers Matching Grant Program

BEDFORD, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Beef Council is now accepting matching grant applications for beef promotions. Eligible projects strive to increase beef's visibility at consumer events while promoting good stewardship and nutritional messages. Application deadline is Friday, August 12.

With a completed application, county or regional groups can become eligible to receive matching funds up to \$500,