

Quality Care Matters

A Column about Dairy Animal Care provided by the Pennsylvania Beef Council



Animal Disease Traceability

New Program Poses Industry Challenges, Opportunities

Animal identification, specifically the previously proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS), is a controversial topic for many dairy and beef producers. Negative stakeholder comments about NAIS prompted USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to shelve that program and instead, introduce National Animal Disease Traceability this past February. In this edition of Quality Care Matters, we learn about this new initiative from Dr. Craig Shultz, state veterinarian and director of The Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services. Shultz serves on the Traceability Regulation Working Group (TRWG) and shared his first-hand insights with the Mid-Atlantic Beef Quality Assurance Commission in November.

Shultz explained that this new federal traceability program focuses on the following basic principles:

- While the program is for all animals, the first priority is cattle.
- Identification, and Interstate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (ICVI), will be required for interstate cattle movement.
- Single form of approved animal identification, with a few exceptions including commuter herds in the West; cattle moving directly to slaughter; cattle moving between two states/tribes with non-official agreements; sexually intact cattle that are less than 18 months of age; and steers/spayed heifers except if involved in rodeos, shows or recreation.
- Inexpensive "brite" nine character tag is acceptable identification.
- An RFID (radio frequency identification) tag can supersede the brite tag, becoming the primary form of identification.
- A brite tag also can be paired with an RFID tag
- Traceability performance standards for states.

While the basic program components are straight forward, Shultz realizes implementation will be complicated. "We know that to get one form of identification, on every animal single animal over 18 months of age is a huge challenge," Shultz said. He anticipates that APHIS's (Animal Plant Health Inspection Service) proposed animal traceability rule will be published in April, with a stakeholder comment period. That timeline suggests a final rule will be published 12-15 months later, with a phased in implementation that Shultz thinks "could take years."

Although official identification tags can be allocated to anyone — producer, sale barn, etc. — those same people must maintain the records and keep them for five years. As written, the proposed program will require collection of identification tags at slaughter plants. In addition, all approved livestock facilities, that exchange animals, must keep the ICVI on file for five years after interstate movement.

Performance Standards

This new system proposes national standards for all states, that are outcome based, to determine compatibility with four traceability standards, Shultz said. As states develop their individual systems to meet performance standards,

Shultz is sure many will initially try paper and pencil and "it will be a killer." The standards, detailed as followed, allow for better response rates, over time.

• **First Performance Standard:** How long will it take the receiving state or tribe to notify the state or tribe of which the animals were officially identified? The working group recommendation is that this should be accomplished 95 percent of the time in one day.

• **Second Performance Standard:** Measures the ability of a state or tribe, in which animals are officially identified, to determine the traceability unit in which reference animals were identified. With records of tags in mostly paper-based systems, the working group thinks this standard will take time to research. In the beginning, the goal is accomplishing this activity 75 percent of the time within five business days. As technology improves, this activity should be accomplished 95 percent of the time within two business days.

• **Third Performance Standard:** Measures the state or tribe's ability to notify the state or tribe from which the reference animals were shipped. The standard also will take time to achieve and the working group recommends accomplishing this standard 95 percent of the time within seven business days. Over time, the goal is increased to 95 percent of the time in three business days.

• **Fourth Performance Standard:** Measures the ability of states or tribes to identify the traceability unit from which the reference animals were shipped. Initial expectations are 75 percent of the time within five business days and in the future, 95 percent of the time in two days.

Following assessment of standards, states can be classified into one of three tiers:

- Tier I - States meet all standards
- Tier II - State does not meet all standards for species but performance is within defined acceptable range. Corrective action with re-evaluation on request of state animal health officials. State will have three years to meet all standards.
- Tier III - State does not meet Tier I or Tier II.

Future

USDA designed the traceability program to keep the door open for more RFID implementation. "There are challenges to conventional identification, and ultimately, it will come back to a higher technology system," Shultz said. "Even though there is tremendous resistance today, if RFID becomes more available, traceability is open. Speed of commerce will push it. A food borne outbreak will push it." Shultz hopes that the industry can keep making progress because he thinks it's a very difficult, but necessary, task. "Our trading partners have an identification system, including the Canadians and Australians, and they all are benefiting from it," he said. "We have the potential to eventually get to where we need to be in the future."

To learn more about the proposed traceability program, visit <http://www.animaldiseasetraceability.com>.

Pa. Beef Council Tells Philadelphia Runners: Fuel Up With Beef

Team Beef Debuts at Philadelphia Marathon

PHILADELPHIA — A partnership with the Philadelphia Dietetic Association helped the Pennsylvania Beef Council share beef's nutrition message with runners, and their families, at the Philadelphia Marathon Health and Fitness Expo, Nov. 19-20 at the Philadelphia Convention Center. More than 40,000 people attended one of the nation's premier race weekends.

Philadelphia area registered dietitians, Beef Council staff, and Pennsylvania Beef Ambassador Kristen Stuft answered questions about beef's role in training and competing in endurance events, such as marathons, and distributed brochures promoting the 29 lean beef cuts. They also encouraged marathon participants to enter to win a running gift basket, with 226 people signing up for the Beef So Simple e-newsletter. In addition to the expo booth, nine inaugural Beef Team runners completed the race, wearing a sizzling steak jersey as they crossed the finish line.



Team BEEF runners at the 2010 Philadelphia Marathon.

During the show, people were overheard saying, "I love beef; I eat it after every run" and "I want to wear a Team Beef running jersey. How do I get one?" Many people also grabbed "Go Team Beef" cheer cards to encourage

their favorite runner on race day.

For more information on Team Beef, and to download a running application, visit www.pabeef.org. To view more pictures of Team Beef at the Philadelphia Marathon, visit the Beef Council's Facebook page.

Beef Promotion Reminds D.C. Consumers To Entertain With Beef This Holiday Season

BEDFORD, Pa. — The Beef Checkoff, through the Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative (NEBPI), promoted beef at the Metropolitan Cooking and Entertaining Show, Nov. 13-14, at the Washington D.C. Convention Center. More than 25,000 people attended the weekend show to watch celebrity chefs and learn about the latest trends in the home entertaining industry.

The Beef Team, including Beef Council staff members Lisa Jones, Tiffany Cessna, and Nichole Hockenberry, along with National Beef Ambassadors, and Roseda Beef, a local Maryland beef farm and retailer, served 8,000 grilled salsa steak holiday appetizer samples, exceeding expectations and doubling sample numbers from last year.

Show attendees were overheard saying "I love beef; you don't have to sell me on it" and "This is the first time that I have eaten meat in over three years, and that sirloin is amazing."

During the show, 400 volunteers wore BEEF logo aprons as they took tickets, helped chefs and answered questions. Chef Dave Zino from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) headlined three educational workshops, teaching beef tailgating lessons



Starting left, Beef Council members Nichole Hockenberry, Tiffany Cessna, and Lisa Jones meet with celebrity chef Rachael Ray.

to more than 200 people.

Through a holiday beef basket raffle, 750 new consumers subscribed to The Beef Checkoff's Beef So Simple weekly e-recipe. The team also had a "meat and greet" with celebrity chef Rachael Ray who signed their shirts, writing "Got Meat!" and said, "Cheeseburger!" for a beef team photo opportunity.

Was the Most Valuable Protein at Your Tailgating Party This Fall?

Northeast shoppers have a passion for tailgating and thanks to a fall checkoff promotion; they also have a passion for beef. The beef checkoff, through the Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative (NEBPI), coordinated a 2010 Fall Tailgating retail beef promotion and reminded consumers to "Invite the MVP (Most Valuable Protein) to their tailgating party and enjoy the value of protein-packed beef."

The NEBPI partnered with 114 re-

tail locations throughout the Northeast to launch the promotion from Sept. 13 through Oct. 31. Point-of-sale materials displayed in the retail meat case included shelf wobblers and brochures featuring middle meat and beef value cuts recipes, and information about beef's nutritional benefits. Retailers featured the promotion in their weekly ad circulars and encouraged shoppers to enter-to-win the grand prize by visiting www.TailgateWithBeef.com.

The grand prize winner was awarded

to a shopper from Mars Super Markets, located in Baltimore, Md. Carol Henry won a 32" LCD HDTV and \$250 in free groceries to Mars. Runner-up prizes included a \$50 gift card provided by each participating retailer.

Henry was elated to learn she was the contest's grand prize winner. Henry and her daughter shop at Mars because, "We love the fresh, red meat offered at Mars, the meat department is clean, the prices are nice, and they are terrific folks at a very friendly store."

Henry and her family tailgate frequently, both in and outside the house, and she said it is a great way to keep their family together.

John Nudelman, meat and seafood director of Mars Super Markets, liked participating in the seasonal beef promotion offered through the beef check-off. "It drives traffic to the Mars website and the BeefRetail.org website, plus it provides shoppers with more useful recipes," said Nudelman.

Christie Molinaro, NEBPI Director of Retail and Foodservice said, "This was our first full-sized fall tailgating beef promotion offered to retail partners, and it was exciting to have such strong retail participation. The www.TailgateWithBeef.com website received 10,602 site visitors and 7,874 consumers entered to win the sweepstakes."



From left: John Nudelman, meat and seafood director at Mars Super Markets Inc.; Carol Henry, grand prize winner of the 2010 Fall Tailgating Beef Promotion; Tony Waite, Mars store manager, and Steve Wood, Mars meat manager.