

Beef Checkoff Chatter

The MBA — Masters of Beef Advocacy Program



BEDFORD, Pa. — It doesn't require you to pass the SAT, ACT or even the LSAT to earn this MBA, but beef producers will benefit just the same. It's the MBA — the Masters of Beef Advocacy Program — launched last fall by the beef checkoff program. The MBA program is an e-learning opportunity developed to assist producers across the country in becoming effective spokespersons for the industry.

The program consists of six, 1-hour core courses: beef safety, beef nutrition, animal care, environmental stewardship, modern beef production and the beef checkoff.

"The MBA program is a voluntary, self-directed online learning environment designed for beef pro-

ducers. It will provide them with facts about their industry and their product, beef. Producers who participate in the MBA program will be equipped to communicate those facts to fellow producers and consumers," said Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) member Daryl Berlier Owen, cow/calf producer and feeder from Amarillo, Texas, and vice chair of the Joint Public Relations Subcommittee. "This checkoff-funded program will help producers get involved and active in promoting their industry by telling the story about beef."

The complete program consists of a reading exercise, followed by a short "your story in your own words" essay assignment, and concludes with an open-book quiz. At the end of the MBA program, producers are given a homework assignment to complete one of three exercises — with media, online or public speaking.

Pennsylvania is planning an MBA graduation ceremony this March, in conjunction with the Beef Expo. Producers wanting more information should contact Daren Williams at dwilliams@beef.org, (303) 850-3346 or contact their state beef council to become enrolled.

For more information about checkoff-funded programs, visit www.MyBeefCheckoff.com.

This Year, Get Lean With Protein

BEDFORD, Pa. — Retailers in Pennsylvania, and the Northeast corridor, will encourage their customers to "Get Lean with Protein" this January, just in time for New Year's weight loss resolutions. Funded by The Beef Checkoff, the "Get Lean With Protein" program features a colorful lean beef recipe brochure and a dedicated website for shoppers to enter to win contest prizes. The leanbeefsweepstakes.com website also includes additional nutrition and fitness tips.

"We know that beef is an excellent source of zinc, iron and protein," said Carrie Bomgardner, PA Beef Council marketing director. "We also know that protein helps fuel active bodies and helps curb hunger, by making us feel fuller, longer. January is a good time to remind consumers that lean beef can be an important part of a healthy diet all year long," she said.

The 350 participating retailers have agreed to advertise the new promotion in their circulars and include beef "A" features. Following the six week promotion, retailers also will share sales data to measure return on investment.

Visit the Beef and Veal Learning Station in the North Hall (dairy barns) to pick up your copy of the "Get Lean with Protein" recipe brochure at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, Jan. 9-16.



Stop at the Beef and Veal Learning Station at the Pennsylvania Farm Show for this beef recipe brochure.



Quality Care Matters

A Column about Dairy Animal Care provided by the Pennsylvania Beef Council and the Center for Dairy Excellence.



REBECCA LONG CHENEY

In today's market, beef quality is receiving more attention from anxious consumers. Consumers want to know that farmers and ranchers are making every effort to supply the safest and most nutritious product possible.

In response to those consumer demands, numerous groups and organizations around the country have implemented new programs and practices to assure quality beef. While the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has been proactive in this arena for years with their Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, dairy groups are now following suit, recognizing the fact that dairy cows are beef animals too.

Pennsylvania dairy producer Logan Bower of Blain, Perry County, knows firsthand the successes and challenges of influencing dairy producers to accept the new Dairy Animal Care and Quality Assurance (DACQA) program.

The DACQA program was the brainchild of the Pennsylvania Beef Council's (PBC) Executive Director Paul Slayton, Bower and the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP) Executive Officer Alan Novak.

"Paul explained that the Beef Council had a Dairy Beef Quality Assurance (DBQA) program for about five years; however, it wasn't really taking off with dairy farmers," Bower said. "Between the three of us, we decided it was a simple idea to take a good program, such as DBQA, and refine it to meet the guidelines proposed by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative (NDAWBI). There was a committee formed with numerous dairy stakeholders and things happened."

As a board member of the PDMP, Bower was asked to serve on the NDAWBI committee even before he started making an impact on Pennsylvania's quality assurance program development.

According to Bower, the NDAWBI is a producer-led coalition that includes members from every sector of the dairy industry. Their goal is to protect consumer trust and confidence in the dairy



Rebecca Long Cheney

industry by demonstrating dairy producers' commitment to animal well-being.

As a dairy producer, managing 500 dairy cows, Bower was instrumental in Pennsylvania's DACQA initiative and the program was introduced at his dairy farm in the fall of 2008. He believes that the "dairy industry needs to be proactive instead of reactive."

"The program is currently voluntary and most producers have cold shouldered it," Bower explained. "One of the big hang-ups for producers is signing the "contract" agreement."

In Bower's opinion, most producers are not willing to promise that all injections will be given in the animal's neck. "Until milk co-ops or Wal-Mart get serious about this, a voluntary program is going to have trouble getting off of the ground," he said.

Bower knows that with training, dairy producers are becoming much more aware of proper injection procedures, both from the effectiveness of the injection and the potential damage to the market cuts down the road. In addition with body condition scores and lameness incidence in market cows at a high level of concern, producers are becoming more aware of the work that needs to be done to fix these animal care and well being issues.

Like Bower, Glenda Flora of Kansas has been passionate about her role as a director of the Cattlemen's

Beef Board (CBB). She is in her second year as chair of the CBB/NCBA Joint Advertising Committee. At a fall 2008 international dairy conference, she gave a presentation entitled, "Dairy Beef Quality: Are We Really Beef Producers?" Flora and her family raise both dairy and beef cattle and they know the importance of supporting and promoting quality care of all their animals.

"With the extreme downturns we've all endured in the dairy industry recently, it is evident now more than ever that we must be vigilant in not only maintaining our herd's optimum health but also capitalize on the sometimes under-utilized profit of our cull cows," Flora said. "In my opinion, the only real challenge of the program is simply overcoming the perception that Quality Assurance is difficult to integrate into the dairy industry. It's a mind set and habit change that is most challenging."

Flora agrees that the implementation of the DBQA program will only have a positive outcome. "Anytime you educate yourself and adopt practices that are not only socially responsible but also financially beneficial, you cannot help but be pleased with the outcome," she said. "The DBQA program offers this educational opportunity. The assurance of a nutrient rich, delicious and safe product impacts every beef consumer."

The CBB member sees a tremendous opportunity for dairy producers to optimize profit on their operations. "In the dairy industry, specifically, I see the untapped potential of fed cull cows as an area of improvement," Flora said. "We need to start seeing the dairy animal in terms other than just pounds of milk production."

The Beef Checkoff, through funding of BQA and DBQA programs, continues to forge relationships with partners across the nation to bring DBQA guidelines to all dairy producers. "Every animal that is produced and marketed under the DBQA guidelines puts us that much closer to the ultimate goal of 100 percent consumer confidence and satisfaction in our product," Flora concluded.

For more information on the DBQA program, visit either www.pa-bqa.org or www.centerfordairy-excellence.org.

Ambassadors Sought

BEDFORD, Pa. — Interested in becoming a local beef industry celebrity? Do you like to speak-up and promote beef to friends, family, and even strangers? Have we got a job for you!

The Pennsylvania Beef Council (PBC) and the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association (PCA) are seeking young adults, ages 17-20, who are interested in becoming the 2010 Pennsylvania Beef Ambassador. The 2010 competition will be held in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Beef Expo in March at the Snider Agricultural Arena. The winner will be announced at the PCA Awards Banquet. The deadline for applicants to enter the contest is Monday, March 15.

The Pennsylvania Beef Ambassador will represent the PBC, PCA and affiliate cattlemen's organizations at agricultural and consumer events across the state as Pennsylvania's beef spokesperson. At the end of his or her one-year reign, the winner of the state competition will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. The Beef Ambassador contest is designed to identify an individual who will fulfill the role of educating consumers and students about beef nutrition, food safety and beef industry stewardship practices.

For more information regarding program guidelines and the application, contact Nichole Hockenberry, Pennsylvania Beef Council at (888) 423-3372 or via email, nhockenberry@pabeef.org, for further information.

BQA Award Seeks Applicants

BEDFORD, Pa. — The PA Beef Council announces a new award to recognize outstanding producers who excel at following, and promoting, beef or dairy quality assurance guidelines. Any Pennsylvania Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) or Dairy Animal Care Quality Assurance (DACQA) certified producer that raises or feeds cattle, is eligible to win the first PA BQA Award. There will be two categories — beef and dairy.

Interested producers should contact Nichole Hockenberry by e-mail at nhockenberry@pabeef.org or (888) 4BEEFPA for an application. Applications are due on Feb. 1.

The PA BQA Award Committee will select the winner in February 2010. Winners will be recognized at industry meetings this spring, at the winners' discretion.

