



# CEDAR GROVE VETERINARY SERVICE NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 2019

## BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE (BQA): WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DAIRY FARMERS?

When dairy farmers hear the words "Beef Quality Assurance" they may think it does not apply to them. However, in 2016, the dairy sector contributed 5.7 billion pounds (22.7%) of beef through cull cows and finished dairy steers and heifers to the U.S. beef supply chain. The percent contributed by the dairy industry has grown since 2002 when beef from dairy cattle contributed 17.9% of the U.S. beef supply. Simply put, dairy cattle are a part of the beef industry and a good argument can be made for many dairy producers becoming BQA certified.

If the simple fact of knowing that many dairy cows will end up being beef doesn't motivate dairy farmers to investigate a BQA training program, then the changes in the Equity Livestock Market may change their minds. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Equity received word from at least one livestock buyer that they would only purchase animals from farms that are certified under the BQA program. Any producer that has completed the training can file

certification with Equity and this will be announced prior to the sale of any of his/her animals at the market. Additionally, more livestock buyers at Equity will also begin purchasing cattle from BQA certified farms starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. This may not be news to some that received a letter from the Equity Market; however, it may be news to others. Finally, it needs to be clear that by no means is the BQA certification something that is being made mandatory to continue to ship cattle to any of the Equity markets. Farmers just need to be aware that lacking the certification may keep certain buyers from purchasing their cattle at the sales. This article is designed to shed a light about BQA certification and to list opportunities where this specific training can be obtained.

Beef Quality Assurance is a nationally coordinated, state implemented program that provides information to US beef producers and consumers of how common-sense husbandry techniques can be coupled with accepted scientific knowledge to

## TEST YOUR DAIRY FARMING KNOWLEDGE

- 1) A2 Milk Company has recently reported record financial sales with a 160% rise in the past year. What was the net sales in the US?
  - a) \$10.8 million
  - b) \$23.2 million
  - c) \$35.7 million
  - d) \$42.9 million
- 2) After a straw of semen is thawed, how long does a breeder have to use it before loss of fertility will occur?
  - a) 5 minutes
  - b) 10 minutes
  - c) 15 minutes
  - d) 20 minutes
- 3) New research indicates that it is possible to genetically select for lower methane production in cattle. However, this trait appears to be linked to another important cattle trait and selecting for lower methane production may lead to a decrease in this valuable trait. What trait is it?
  - a) Milk Yield
  - b) Longevity
  - c) Butterfat Production
  - d) Protein Production

*Answers on back*

raise cattle under optimum management and environmental conditions. BQA has six main points that it aims to accomplish:

1. *Demonstrate a commitment to food safety and quality*
2. *Safeguard the public image of the dairy industry*
3. *Uphold consumer confidence in valuable beef products*
4. *Protect the beef industry from additional and burdensome government regulations*
5. *Improve safe value of marketed beef cattle*
6. *Enhance herd profitability through better management.*

BQA is designed to make certain all beef consumers can take pride in what they purchase and have confidence in the entire beef industry. Therefore, certification for a farmer is a way of projecting a positive public image of the beef industry in addition to aiding them in capturing more value from their market cattle.

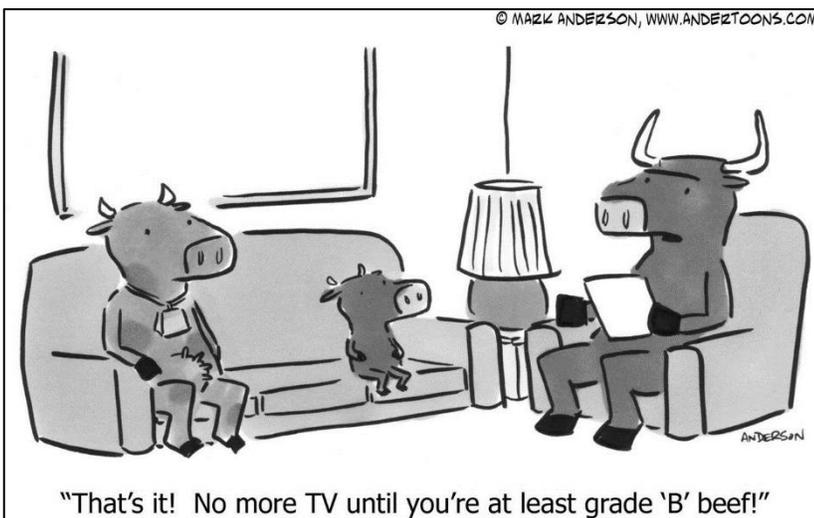
Becoming BQA certified requires either online or classroom training. The training is either through BQA approved modules or conducted by a BQA certified teacher. The courses offered can be tailored to the specific producer depending on their operation type including cow/calf, stocker/backgrounder, and feedyard. Additionally, there is a training session that is aimed at dairy producers and provides more dairy specific BQA training. The Dairy Animal Care and Quality Assurance training covers topics such as nutritional management, marketing and transportation, animal handling, treatment protocols, and proper record keeping.

BQA certification can be achieved by logging in on the BQA website at [www.bqa.org](http://www.bqa.org). The courses are free and should take around 2 hours to complete. Certification is valid for 3 years after completion. Producers just need to register and complete

one of the courses that best fits their particular operation. For those that ship cattle to Equity Livestock Market, after completion of the certification the farmer should provide their name and the name of any entity they sell under, as well as their certification number and expiration date to the Equity Livestock Market. That way, Equity can make the proper announcement at the time of sale.

Finally, those that prefer classroom training, the University of Wisconsin-Extension does offer a number of training classes to assist farmers in BQA certification. Most classroom training sessions do have a fee associated with them to cover the cost of instructors and materials. Cedar Grove Veterinary Services will try to provide information about classes available in the area for local farmers to attend. Currently there are none planned in the near future, but that may change. Farmers can also view the list of training sessions available from the UW-Extension, at <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/wbic/calendar/>. The calendar is updated as new classes are added.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact Cedar Grove Veterinary Clinic, Equity Livestock Market, or the UW-Extension office.



Dairy Farming Knowledge Answers  
 1) B      2) C      3) A

