Focusing on Food Safety and Beef Quality

♦ In the mid-1980s, the focus of the beef industry was on addressing food safety and quality issues in beef products.

♦ These issues led to a decline in consumer confidence and established the need for the first National Beef Quality Audit (1991), which identified quality defects that impaired beef’s competitiveness with other meat products.

Extension’s Response

♦ In response to the first National Beef Quality Audit, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association initiated the BQA Program to educate beef producers on management practices to ensure production of a safe, high-quality beef product.

♦ In partnership with the Texas Beef Council and the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service began educating Texas producers on BQA principles.

♦ Participants can become BQA-certified through the program.

♦ The mission of the BQA Program is to promote management practices that enable cattle producers to improve beef quality and strengthen consumer confidence in beef as a safe, nutritious, wholesome food product.

♦ Program participants receive education and hands-on training to learn about animal health products, feedstuffs, feed additives and medications, care and husbandry practices, and other core practices.

♦ The BQA Program also provides systematic information to cattle producers nationwide on production methods and practices for improving beef quality and safety under a wide variety of management and environmental conditions.

Economic Impact

♦ BQA-certified calves receive an estimated $1.59 per hundred weight price premium (Montana State University estimate).

♦ For approximately 790,000 head of weaned and stocker calves owned or managed by participants in the Texas BQA Program, the increase in gross returns was estimated at $7.2 million for 2011.

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