

Focusing on Food Safety and Beef Quality

- In the mid-1980s, the focus of the beef industry turned to food safety and quality issues in beef products.
- These issues had 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.

AgriLife Extension's Response

- In response to the first National Beef Quality Audit, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association initiated the Beef Quality Assurance Program to educate beef producers on management practices to ensure production of safe, high-quality beef products.
- 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.
- Since the BQA program began, more than 20,000 Texas cattle producers have participated in the program.

Economic Impacts

- Economic returns associated with producing BQA-certified calves typically come in the form of improved production efficiencies, cost savings, and/or a price premium, which has been estimated at \$2.69 per hundredweight.
- For approximately 1.3 million head of weaned and stocker calves owned or managed by participants in the Texas BQA Program, the increase in gross returns was estimated at \$19 million for 2019.

