

gross revenue for both beef and dairy operations. Cattle industry concerns over the years have evolved to include food safety, sustainability, animal well-being and the growing disconnect between producers and consumers. As a result, over the past 25 years NBQA researchers have made significant changes to their research, leading to increasingly meaningful sets of results.

There were several major elements to the 2016 Steer and Heifer and Market Cow and Bull National Beef Quality Audits: Face-to-Face Interviews provided understanding of what quality means to the various industry sectors, and the value of the quality attributes. This research will help the industry make modifications necessary to increase the value of its products. In plant assessments included evaluation of fed steers and heifers as well as cows and bulls in holding pens, on the kill floor and in the cooler for characteristics related to transportation, mobility, bruises, condemnations and quality and yield grade characteristics, and many other traits. In the Strategy Session industry representatives met to review results of the research and discuss industry implications for both the steer and heifer and cow and bull NBQAs. Outcomes from that meeting provide quality guidance to the industry for the next five years. Lastly, lost opportunities are calculated for each audit to give perspective to the value of the quality defects identified during in-plant assessments.

The National Beef Quality Audit is funded by the Beef Checkoff program and managed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor for the Beef Checkoff. Authors VanOverbeke, Belk, and Savell are the principal investigators for the project and would like to thank the other institutions and subcontractors that helped collect data for Phase II of the project.

**Key Words:** beef quality audit, NBQA, beef checkoff

---

## 69 Challenges and Opportunities in Marketing

**Dairy Beef.** T. E. Lawrence\*, *West Texas A&M University, Canyon, TX*

Dairy cattle comprise approximately 10% of the U.S. cattle population. A co-product of milk production is the bull calf. Dairy calves are commonly removed from their dam at birth and sold to a business that specializes in management of newborn calves. Calves are fed milk-replacer from birth to approximately 5 weeks of age, at which point they are transitioned to a forage and concentrate grower ration. Once calves reach approximately 300 pounds, they are marketed to traditional feedlots and fed a concentrate ration until they attain market readiness.

Cattle feeders realize multiple challenges when marketing dairy steers to beef processors including:

excessive height/length, greater proportion of carcass bruises, greater proportion of intact testicles present, excess proportion of liver abscesses, small LM area, and lower muscle:bone ratios.

Dairy cattle are primarily selected for milk yield. Milk yield is highly related to intake, which is highly related to frame size. Thus, a larger cow eats more and yields more milk. The consequence of that indirect selection is increasingly larger steer calves year over year. These calves are often too tall/long for beef processors that were built 10 to 50 years ago. Excess height also leads to greater frequency of loin bruises during transit. Because dairy steers are often castrated during the first week of life, the testicles are small and are easily missed during the banding process, leading to a greater frequency of intact testicles. Because dairy steers were transitioned from milk to finisher ration at a young age and because they are typically fed an aggressive ration for an extended period, they are prone to greater rates of liver abscesses. Liver abscesses are often of prevalence and severity to cause the processor to minimize slaughter groups to as few as 10 animals. Dairy steers also suffer from smaller muscle size and a lower proportion of muscle when compared to beef-type animals.

However, dairy steers readily qualify for age and source verification programs, have a greater frequency of unbranded hides, exhibit greater levels of marbling, and require less trimming of waste fat during fabrication.

Dairy steers that are age and source verified are ready made for demanding export markets. The greater frequency of native hides improves by-product values. Greater proportion of Choice and Prime grades improves palatability, and lower proportion of fat improves fabrication yields.

**Key Words:** beef, dairy, marketing

---

## 70 Ensuring Beef's Domestic Market. J. Butler\*, *U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Denver, CO* AQ4

Since its 2015 inception, the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB) has sought to ensure the U.S. beef value chain is the trusted global leader in environmentally sound, socially responsible and economically viable beef. The multi-stakeholder initiative is representative of all sectors of the beef community including cow-calf producers, auction markets, feed-yard producers, packers, processors, restaurant owners, food service providers, civil societies, and many other allied industries. The USRSB focuses on advancing, supporting, and communicating continuous improvement of beef sustainability through developed tools: USRSB High Priority Indicators, USRSB Sustainability Metrics, and USRSB Sustainability Assessment Guides.

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.