

ADVOCACY TIPS



January 3, 2013

Ag Advocates compete in online contest



The Animal Agriculture Alliance is excited announce its fourth annual College Aggies Online (CAO) competition! As you know, it is important that stakeholders involved in production agriculture take proactive steps to tell the industry's true story. Today's farmers and ranchers make it possible for Americans to enjoy the safest, most affordable and most abundant food supply in the world.

CAO equips college students with a vested interest in agriculture with the tools to be confident advocates using social media and connects them with other young people who are active in agricultural organizations around the country. Students who participate in CAO compete to earn points for themselves and for their respective clubs or ag-related organizations by taking part in activities on CAO's private online forum, accessible at www.collegeaggiesonline.com. Participants create personalized member profiles and receive points for uploading agriculture-related blogs, photos, videos, and by participating in discussion forums and other outreach activities.

This year, the scholarships are bigger than ever before, thanks to our sponsors, and there are more opportunities to win cash throughout the competition. The club earning the most points

this year will win a \$5,000 grant, national recognition, and a trip for one representative to travel to Washington, D.C. for the Animal Agriculture Alliance's annual Stakeholders Summit. The individual participant with the most points will win a \$2,500 scholarship! The second place club and second and third place individuals will also receive scholarship awards.

Last year, 750 CAO participants from more than 50 universities across the U.S. promoted agriculture's true story by sharing approximately 5,000 photos on the network and authoring nearly 300 blog posts. Members also advocated for agriculture in their communities with outreach events on campus and letters to the editor.

We need your help! The competition is set to begin in January 2013. Please pass along information about CAO to student leaders who have a keen interest in communicating about agriculture to the public. The website is www.collegeaggiesonline.com. You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter.

Please contact Krissa Welshans at kthom@animalagriculture.org or by calling (703) 562-5160 for additional information about CAO.

ADVOCACY TIPS



January 31, 2013

Dr. Temple Grandin: Cattle Behavior and Handling



Watch this YouTube video of Dr. Temple Grandin as she discusses cattle behavior and proper handling techniques. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9ZM9DaMv-w>

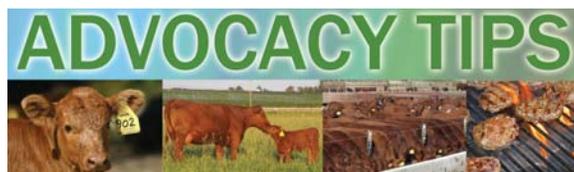
February 7, 2013

So God made a farmer



One of the most touching commercials from Super Bowl Sunday was the Dodge ad based on the “So God made a farmer” speech by Paul Harvey. Harvey delivered the speech at the 1978 Future Farmers of America convention.

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/02/03/paul-harvey-talking-about-farmers-in-dodge-ad-wow-was-that-amazing/>



February 14, 2013

Beef or Cattle – What’s your business?

The following story features Red Angus Association of America Board of Director and First Vice President Tom Woodward.

By Burt Rutherford, BEEF Magazine

In its vision statement, Broseco Ranch, Decatur, TX, says it wants to produce a wholesome, healthy product that has great eating quality. “We are,” says Tom Woodward, “in the beef production business.”

Woodward is general manager of the 10,000-acre operation that’s home to around 2,700 crossbred commercial cows and a 200-head registered Red Angus herd. He says that, not that long ago and even still today, if you asked a rancher what business he or she was in, the answer might be, “I’m in the cattle business.” That answer is changing, Woodward says, as cattlemen’s perception of the business changes. “I think a lot of ranchers now are saying ‘I’m actually in the food business.’”

That’s why, when Woodward equates the beef business to a relay race for the consumer, he says, “I’m the first man out of the gate with the baton. If I do not run my first quarter-mile lap properly, the other three are at a real disadvantage. So I need to get out of the gate good, and that gate is using the right kind of genetics.”

Of course, the perception of “quality” varies, but to Woodward, quality is tenderness, juiciness and flavor. “So I’ve got to do the job (right) to get the right kind of cattle that meet the specs these other people in the process say they want.”

However, he says a good start is just part of running a good race. “I’m only going to touch these calves a couple of times in their lifetime before I send them down the road. And it’s like you’re heading into that last turn and getting ready to make the handoff with the baton.”

He’s done everything right so far – he’s got good genetics and the calves are heading into weaning. “I come in for the handoff and I drop the baton. Well, I’ve just ruined the race for the rest of these guys. So what I do with that calf in terms of its immune system, how I handle it in the weaning process, all has an impact on what happens down the line.”

Woodward can remember back when the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) concept first began to take hold and cattlemen changed injection sites from the top butt to the neck and implemented many of the other BQA recommendations. And he’s proud of what cattlemen have done in the ensuing years to ensure their calves get a fast start out of the blocks.

“I’m proud of the fact that each day, I can go to work and say we’re doing the best job we can in producing good product. And that’s a culture I think we need to keep fostering. The challenge is never over at the ranch level, but I think we’ve made some tremendous progress,” he says.



February 21, 2013

Sorting fact, half truths and fiction of antibiotics

By Don "Doc" Sanders

Antibiotic resistance continues to be a major topic of discussion in the press. Unfortunately, accurate information is hard to come by, thanks to do-gooder activists who cloud the issue with their agenda. Here, I offer you my take on antibiotic resistance and the implications of antibiotic use for livestock.

First, please understand that there are two major categories of antibiotics for food animals: therapeutic antibiotics and sub-therapeutic antibiotics.

Therapeutic antibiotics

Used to treat sick animals, some of these drugs also are used to treat humans. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) mandates withdrawal times to help prevent therapeutic antibiotics from entering the food chain. The U.S. has one of the most regulated food systems in the world. Milk and meat from treated animals must be tested multiple times to ensure no residue is present when these food products enter the market. The FDA also tightly regulates the classes of antibiotics designated to fight major diseases in humans. The FDA prohibits these antibiotics from being used to promote health and optimize growth in animals, as described in the next paragraph.

Sub-therapeutic antibiotics

These low-level antibiotics are fed to animals to enhance their health and well-being and are not used to treat illnesses. However, they can prevent diseases as they boost food quality and increase growth rate and feed efficiency by 10% or more. Fed at recommended low levels, sub-therapeutic antibiotics do not contaminate meat. An agent with no antibiotic activity fed to dairy cows has yet another benefit: by increasing dairy production, it enables dairies to reduce the size of their

herds and the methane burped into the environment, thus reducing their carbon footprint. Antibiotic resistance isn't only an issue for food animals. Human medicine also plays a significant factor:

- Teenagers often are prescribed low, sub-therapeutic levels of tetracycline to prevent acne
- Parents often pressure physicians to put their children on an antibiotic for a cold or ear infection
- Humans prescribed antibiotics for a legitimate infection often stop taking the medicine as soon as they feel better, before they've completed the full prescription. This allows surviving bacteria to develop antibiotic resistance. Physicians tell me that non-compliance by patients is a widespread problem.

Sub-therapeutic antibiotics fed to food-producing livestock have stirred controversy for a few reasons:

- Despite antibiotics' positive effects on growth and performance, pathogenic bacteria may develop antibiotic resistance;
- This resistance becomes part of the bacteria's genetic system and can be passed to other bacteria;
- Antibiotic resistance poses many unknown issues;
- Sub-therapeutic antibiotics approved by the FDA, though regulated through feed mill licensure and usage records, do not require a prescription from a veterinarian.

I believe that in spite of added cost and inconvenience for the producer, sub-therapeutic antibiotic prescriptions by a veterinarian should



Continued on next page

be the rule. Food animal veterinarians have the technical knowledge to recommend the most strategic use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics and make recommendations for management changes that may resolve the issue for the necessity of an antibiotic.

Remember that sub-therapeutic antibiotic dosages are lower than those required to treat sick animals and humans. However, some government representatives and special interest groups are calling for a ban on all antibiotic feeding in livestock.

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D) of New York has an ongoing battle to re-introduce her bill for the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA). She wants tougher animal antibiotic standards and to restrict antibiotics to treatment of illness.

She argues that 80% of all antibiotics are used for food animals rather than humans and alleges that most of these animals are healthy. Her statistics and allegations are correct, except for one major fallacy. The average cow outweighs the average adult human 10:1. While she accurately quotes the total pounds of antibiotics used for animals versus humans, she doesn't take into account that dosages are calculated per pound of body weight. Taking this factor into account, humans receive significantly more doses than animals.

Congresswoman Slaughter claims that habitual use of antibiotics has been conclusively linked to the growing risk of antimicrobial resistant infections in humans. Well, Congresswoman Slaughter, almost. You may have a Ph.D. in microbiology, but please report the full story.

Antibiotic resistance genes have been discovered in bacteria in the 4,000-year-old tombs of Egyptian pharaohs — well before Alexander Fleming discovered, the world's first antibiotic, penicillin, in 1928.

Also on the warpath against sub-therapeutic antibiotics for animals: the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCMR). This group's name implies a bastion of clear-thinking. However, physicians if they are the clear-thinkers, account for less than 20% of the membership. The rest come from all segments of society — informed and uninformed.

PCMR was formed to promote a vegan lifestyle. You can learn a lot about people and organizations by the company they keep. PCMR commonly develops strategies with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

Throw Consumer Reports in the mix with their reports of junk science in the sheep's clothing of legitimate research. Consumer Reports should stick to things they know something about, like which toaster makes the best toast or which sweeper sucks up the most dirt, rather than reporting erroneous dirt about food production and safety.

Much to-do is made of methicillin-resistant staph aureus (MRSA), bacteria that resists one of the most powerful antibiotics on the planet. MRSA is a life-threatening infection that is found widely in hospitals around the world, as well as many other places, including pigs, horses, cattle, dogs, cats and the nasal passages of healthy people who work on swine farms.

The Louise Slaughters of the world point to sub-therapeutic antibiotic use in animals as a major reason for the prevalence of MRSA. But consider this: Denmark has more cases of MRSA in humans than ever, even though sub-therapeutic antibiotics were banned in Danish livestock more than 10 years ago.

In the meantime, the FDA continues to stall the release of new antibiotics, technologies and vaccine concepts.



February 28, 2013

No Bull - What a farmer wants you to know about how beef gets to your plate

By Ryan Goodman

How does our beef travel from pasture to plate? Can you describe this process from the time a calf is born to the moment your knife slices a steak?

In this country, we are blessed with a great group of farmers who care for their animals and a food safety system to ensure things work properly. There are farmers who do things various ways for good reasons for both their customers and their farms. A good balance of science and communication can go a long way in sustaining this process.

Let me go ahead and put it out there: modern farming has been under scrutiny of late from animal rights organizations, mainstream media journalism, and consumer groups. There is a gap of understanding between what happens on the farm and how the customer perceives it. Farmers make up less than two percent of this country's population and we are partly to blame for not keeping you, the customer, informed on how our food is grown, what the impacts are on food and the environment, and why it is grown that way.

I come from a family farm in Arkansas. I was raised with cattle in lush, green pastures. Fresh eggs were collected from the barn, vegetables came from the garden, and I fed a few pigs and calves to have meat for my family's table. This may sound like a historical account of farming, but in reality, this describes most modern farms. According to the Cattlemen's Beef Board, 97 percent of cattle farms in this country are family owned and operated.

It would have been easy for me to stay in my own little corner of the world and assume raising cattle was only the way I was taught. I did not



Ryan Goodman is a generational rancher from Arkansas with a degree in Animal Science from Oklahoma State University in Animal Science, and is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the University of Tennessee, studying beef cattle management. He is one of many farmers utilizing social media to bridge the gap between farmers and urban customers. Follow his story daily at www.AgricultureProud.com or follow on Twitter (@AR_ranchhand) and Facebook.

know it when I left home for college, but I was on my journey to learn how cattle are raised across the country. I worked for a ranch in Wyoming where cattle were marketed for natural beef programs, and for a variety of farmers in Oklahoma and Arkansas where farming is not their primary occupation. While in Texas, I worked for two of the largest cattle feedlots in the country. There is a multitude of different places out there, all with different ways of managing cattle. With my experience has come a great deal of learning.

First: raising cattle is a lifestyle for all of these folks, a family affair in most cases. Farming takes hard work, dedication, and a passion for that work. Raising cattle can be far from the romantic image of cowboys on the range huddled around the campfire or grandmother's farm with a red



barn and chickens in the yard. We still have the same goals and values of raising animals and producing food, but there are many tools that allow farmers to do their job more efficiently. It is because of the modern farmer's work today that most Americans can pursue their own ambitions and many choose them off the farm and outside of the home, make many advances in a modern lifestyle and not have to worry about hunting and gathering food for the family.

Second: raising cattle must be economically sustainable. Large or small, farming is a business, as well as the lifestyle for most of us. Farmers have families to feed too. Some get wealthy in agriculture, but most do it because they are passionate about rural America, producing food for their communities and working alongside family. We choose to provide food on the table, provide proper care for our animals, and improve our environments.

We lose thousands of farmland acres each year to competition from urban development. Farmers have learned to become more efficient by embracing technology and better management tools to produce more beef on fewer acres. In doing this, we have also improved our environment by reducing our carbon footprint by 16 percent since 1977.

My journey has also taught me that farmers are not perfect. Most all the people I have met are genuinely good people, but we make mistakes.

A good farmer learns from those mistakes and improves upon them. There are bad apples out there, as there are in any way of life. Farmers do not accept cruel treatment to animals. We should not allow cases of animal cruelty or journalism's portrayal of such acts reflect on the entire farming community.

Many people in America today trust farmers, but not necessarily modern farming practices. I am here to encourage you to get to know a farmer, not just one, but farmers from a variety of places. We are people who do our grocery shopping in town and take our kids to ball practice just like many of you. The future of food and agriculture relies on a new generation of farmers. Will you shun them and tell them what they are doing wrong or join a discussion to learn about how food is grown and what we can do to make things better? If you do not know how to find them, I would be glad to help through the social media networks I have built. There are lots of us willing to have conversations about how this works.

Farmers need to do a better job of reaching out and listening to your concerns, our customer, because your opinion matters. Get to know where your food comes from. Do not tell farmers what they are doing wrong; rather ask what it is farmers do, let farmers ask questions, and in the course of conversation there will be better understanding on both sides.



Where does beef come from?

By Nevil Speer

www.wherefoodcomesfrom.com/

The United States is home to the most dynamic beef production system in the world. While the U.S. ranks 4th in terms of total cattle inventory (behind India, Brazil and China, respectively), total production ranks it as the world's leader in terms of overall production (nearly 25 billion lb annually). Moreover, the United States also serves as one of the world's leading beef exporters (behind India, Brazil and Australia from a tonnage perspective) but also holds the distinction as being the primary source of high-quality beef for many of the world's key export markets. Key export markets for the U.S. beef industry include NAFTA partners Mexico and Canada along with Japan and South Korea. Aside from beef products, variety meats and hides also serve as important sources of revenue derived from the export market.

The United States is also a primary destination for the world's beef trade being the globe's largest importer of beef and/or beef products (on a tonnage basis). Russia, Japan and South Korea follow behind the United States when discussing beef imports.

The United States supports approximately 30 million beef cows located in all fifty states, involving over 700,000 individual producers at the farm or ranch level. Management practices vary widely across the United States depending upon geographical location and type of overall farming or ranching operation. That is, a rancher in New Mexico likely manages his/her cowherd very differently compared to an operation in Iowa versus a ranch in Florida. States with the largest cow populations include Texas, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma and South Dakota, respectively. Simultaneously, the United States also facilities the

world's most sophisticated feeding production system – the majority of which occurs in the High Plains states of Texas, Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado; significant cattle feeding also occurs in Iowa.

Per capita beef consumption in the United States is approximately 55 lb. with annual expenditures equivalent to approximately \$275 per person (compared to \$155 and \$145 for pork and broilers, respectively). Beef products source from various primal cuts of the beef carcass with four key primal wholesale cuts comprising approximately 90% of the beef carcass including the round, loin, rib and chuck – in aggregate the four comprise approximately 90% of the beef carcass. The round and chuck are typically referred to as “end meats” while the loin and rib are referred to as “middle meats”.

Beef products in the United States are also classified according to USDA Quality Grades that include Prime, Choice, Select and Standard and serve as well-established indicators of eating satisfaction and consistency. USDA Quality Grades are based upon maturity and intramuscular fat deposition (typically referred to as “marbling”). Increased marbling in a beef carcass equates to a higher quality grade ranking (e.g. Prime) versus less marbling (e.g. Select). The market subsequently prices products accordingly. Other designations in the marketplace may also occur around various market-based programs (though also fall under USDA regulation).

Beef is a primary source of high-quality protein, iron and zinc. A lean, 3-oz serving of beef contains less than 200 calories while also providing over 20 g of protein.



Dealing With Technology Vs. Perception

by Troy Marshall in My View From The Country

Our industry is realizing it must be better about identifying problematic issues and dealing proactively with them before they become PR nightmares. The examples are numerous.

First, there are the technology issues troubling our industry. We have always had a strong predilection to stand on good science, but the wide spectrum of potential threats we face today are so nuanced that all seem to require difference approaches.

For instance, lean finely textured beef (LFTB) improved food safety and lowered costs for consumers, while actually increasing revenue for the industry at the same time. Few anticipated LFTB being a problem; after all, it was a triumph of technology and a win:win situation for both industry and consumers.

Then, wham, LFTB was suddenly transformed into “pink slime,” and the value of every single head of cattle was reduced, as well as our industry’s competitiveness and efficiency. In the end, the product line was so damaged perception-wise that it’s difficult to foresee it regaining acceptance.

A Closer Look: LFTB – “Too Valuable To Waste”

Another issue concerns growth promotants, which carry no health risks and improve efficiency. These products improve producer economics, reduce feed costs, increase production per animal, and create a leaner/healthier product. Environmentalists should love such products for their effectiveness in lowering the industry’s environmental impact, and the health community should applaud the responsible use of these FDA-approved products. After all, we’ve all heard the stories about the use of illegal products and unapproved protocols being used in countries where these products have been banned.

The whole beta-agonist debate is another. Europe utilized it as a non-tariff trade barrier, as a way to protect domestic industries that aren’t competitive with the U.S. The result has been almost a global public relations campaign against sound science.

Here in the U.S., opportunistic marketers saw a similar opportunity, and the natural/organic market has taken the lead in playing off the concerns created by the international community. Today, the science is still clear cut, and perhaps even more so because the earlier studies indicating potential problems have been refuted and found to be false. Yet, consumer perception continues to move in the other direction.

The bottom line is that this technology could be lost. The great irony would be that it was never about the science, but rather trade barriers and marketing schemes. That, however, doesn’t make the issue any less real.

Then there are antibiotics, an issue that is even more complicated. The truth is that antibiotic resistance is growing and it’s a real problem. The use of antibiotics has often been misstated and misinterpreted by opponents of animal agriculture, but not entirely. No one would recommend the elimination of antibiotics, but the political winds are such that we will see a reduction in availability of certain compounds and more restrictive guidelines in use.

A Closer Look: The Future Use Of Antibiotics Will Be More Limited

The challenge here is to get involved in public policy, not only to counter the rampant misinformation from opponents, but also with the acknowledgement that the course has been set. Changes are going to occur, but how do we make sure that the changes are appropriate and, if not



totally sound scientifically, at least reasonable from our perspective?

Other issues, such as the environment, endangered species, open space, etc., are more complicated and dynamic. Increasingly, we're finding that traditional enemies may be allies and vice versa. Who would have thought a few years ago that we would be working today with groups like the Sierra Club to ensure open space and reasonable protection of species?

The biggest hit came from traditional ally

Meanwhile, who would have dared think that our industry's traditional allies would end up posing the greatest threat? As an industry, we still haven't come to grips with the fact that the greatest frontal attack ever successfully launched against this industry was implemented not by the Humane Society of the U.S. (HSUS) or Greenpeace, or even a media-generated public hysteria. It was our by our traditional allies and fellow agriculturists within the corn industry.

The corn industry's goal wasn't to reduce the size of our industry by 10% or more, even though that's been the result. Plus, many of us are diversified operators; thus, while the cattle industry was permanently altered, the benefits of ethanol subsidies may have exceeded the costs for some.

Perhaps it's because we have historically been allies, and that we still are a major customer of the corn industry. Whatever the reason, the most damaging external event with the longest-lasting impact has happened with little more than a whimper from our industry. Ranchers should have been staging cattle drives on Pennsylvania Avenue to counter the most damaging public policy ever directed at our industry. Yet, for whatever reason, we failed to mobilize.

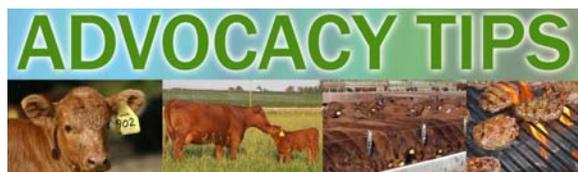
Sadly, the policy is now so engrained that it will likely never be reversed; perhaps the wisest thing is to focus on adjusting to the new realities. But it also makes sense to dissect how such a bad policy – one that will forever make our industry smaller and less competitive – was enacted. This is a battle we lost, and the corn lobby did their job in transferring fortunes from consumers and the cattle industry to their industry.

Our recourse is to adjust and find the new balance, and we are well on our way. Cow numbers and cow-calf operators have declined; feedlots are being mothballed; production is moving to areas that have better access to distillers byproducts; and packing plants are closing. The industry will shrink, but it will once again find equilibrium.

Yes, our industry lost the battle over ethanol; we were overwhelmed and outmaneuvered politically. Ironically, we should have had consumers, environmentalists and energy companies on our side. Most of them did eventually align against the policy (consumers and environmentalists belatedly so), but none face losing what we have lost.

Perhaps no one wants to admit failure, but our industry has had little discussion or self-reflection about how we can prevent a recurrence of something similar. The billions being transferred annually out of this industry are now permanent. Assigning blame is probably pointless, but analyzing how we ultimately were unable to do anything but watch as 10% or more of our industry was eliminated by a pen stroke might be worth more than a passing conversation.

Another failure or two of this magnitude in the public debate, and we'll need to consult with the sheep industry for direction as how to proceed.



Share the beef story –Become and 'Ag-vocate'

The Youtube video links below can be effective additions to your Facebook pages or even something to Tweet about - to share the positive story of agriculture. There is no one better than YOU to defend agriculture and improve awareness!

Farmers Fight - Stand Up

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFoGib8AfZo>

Farm Voices - It's Our Turn

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TsQs40EoIk>
Check out FarmOn.com

Water and Poo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAUw9GO6tgE>

We hope you enjoy learning a little bit more about how our farm uses captured manure and gray water as fertilizer. Gilmer Dairy.

I'm Farming and I Grow It

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48H7zOQrX3U>

A parody music video by the Peterson Farm Bros (Greg, Nathan, and Kendal) promoting agriculture! If you like it, feel free to share it with your friends!

So God Made A Farmer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvm4zCsO0Jw>
Paul Harvey presentation to National FFA Convention



A guide to udder and teat scoring beef cows

Resource: Dr. Rick Rasby, University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Introduction

The conformation of a beef cow's teats and udder are important in a profitable cow/calf enterprise. Females with poor udder and teat conformation are a management challenge for commercial cow-calf producers.

Cattle producers do not have the time or labor to manage around cows that need intervention at calving to physically 'milk-out' a quarter(s) so that the calf can suckle or to save the quarter from infection.

Research findings in two experiments indicates that the occurrence of clinical mastitis in beef cow herds was 17.5% and 11.9% resulting in a reduction in weaning weights of 12.5% and 7.3%, respectively.

Poor udder and teat conformation can potentially lead to increased calf sickness as teats may be contaminated with mud and debris from a dirt pen or calving area before the calf suckles.

Although selecting and culling based on conformation of teats and udders may be considered convenience-trait selection, selecting against poor teats and udders increases profit potential by

- increasing calf performance,
- reducing calf sickness,
- increasing longevity of the cow, and
- reducing labor inputs.

Udder and teat conformation is moderately heritable (h^2 of udder attachment = 0.2 to 0.3; h^2 of teat size = 0.5), so enhancing teat and udder quality can be accomplished by not selecting replacement heifers from dams that have marginal teat and udder conformation.

Read the entire story at:

http://beef.unl.edu/learning/udder_score.shtml

Or read the "RAAA Guide to Udder Scoring" at:

<http://redangus.org/genetics/udder-scoring/guide>



Technology pays in beef production

Earth Day is Monday, April 22, and what a great opportunity to tell the beef story!

Jude Capper, adjunct professor at Washington State University and a livestock sustainability

consultant, looks at what would happen if U.S. beef producers stopped using productivity-enhancing technologies. The answers are revealing. View the YouTube video.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahq4cOrn5gY>



Three Brave Thinkers Who Transformed Livestock

By: *Top Producer Editors*

The livestock handling and meat processing industries have transformed because of the work and commitment to the industry of these three leaders.

To say that agriculture has experienced change since the inception of Top Producer is a gross understatement. The 30 brave thinkers we have chosen to represent the dramatic changes during the past three decades have all left big footprints on production agriculture.

Paul Engler

Founder of Cactus Feeders in Dumas, Texas, Engler created the first large-scale commercial feedlot and owns the world's largest cattle feeding company. Engler is credited as the creator of formula pricing, a method that provides incentives to feeders to consistently produce beef that meets consumer health and quality standards.

Temple Grandin

A professor and researcher of animal science at Colorado State University, Grandin has changed livestock handling facilities to reduce stress on animals. She has designed facilities in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand and other countries. Her designs are now used to handle half the cattle in the U.S., and she has been hired as a consultant to firms such as Burger King, Swift and McDonald's. Additionally, her writings on the flight zone and other principles of grazing animal behavior have helped many people reduce stress on their animals during handling. Grandin is also known for developing an objective scoring system for assessing the handling of cattle and hogs at meat plants. This scoring system is used by many large corporations to improve animal welfare.

Ken Monfort

As an executive of Monfort Inc., Monfort is responsible for first selling beef cuts, instead of the whole carcass, to markets and grocery stores in the 1970s. This practice revolutionized the meat processing industry, and through the years has become the industry standard, displacing butchers and meat counters. Today, no Wal-Mart in America, according to the North American Meat Association, has a meat counter. All cuts come prepared and packaged for the consumer to pick up off the shelf.

We know agriculture's advancements in all its myriad forms have not been accomplished by just 30 people. Read the complete list: Brave Thinkers: 30 Leaders Who Made a Difference

http://www.agweb.com/topproducer/article/brave_thinkers_30_leaders_who_made_a_difference/



Earth Day is Every Day

by BLAKE BIRDWELL

These days everyone from celebrities to journalists to politicians has an opinion about the “right” way to raise food. Too often their criticism of ranchers like me and my family relates to the environment and the crazy and misguided notion that raising cows for food is bad.

I can't ever remember a time when my family wasn't in the cattle business. After all, our goal is and has always been to keep our business around for as long as possible. For four generations now we've done that. We've worked this land, conserved and preserved it, so that our children and grandchildren can continue on with the family business.

This wouldn't be possible if we didn't take care of what we have, which leads me to my point. A lot of people may talk about minimizing impacts on the environment, but Texas ranchers actually get up and do it every day.

If you're unfamiliar with the beef industry, or maybe confused about what it is my family does, let me help clear up some of the misinformation that's out there. For starters, today's American rancher feeds about 144 people worldwide, compared to 26 people in 1960. This number will only increase in the future. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization projects that in 50 years the world population will need 70 percent more food than what we have now.

How will we increase our supply? We can't tear down cities to make room for increased grazing lands, so we must make more beef using fewer resources. Texas ranchers are doing this now, and we will continue to do this even as grazing lands become more scarce while the population continues to boom.

We are constantly creating new, innovative practices that help us do more with less, and it's working. Today's rancher produces 13 percent more beef from 30 percent fewer animals, minimizing resources like land and water. The carbon footprint of beef has been reduced by more than 16 percent, and the overall environmental impact of producing

beef continues to shrink—even though we continue to feed more and more people. Each pound of grain-finished beef today requires 45 percent less land, 76 percent less water, 49 percent less feed, generates 51 percent less manure and 42 percent less carbon emissions. We're proud of our environmental track record, and rightfully so.

And while celebrities and politicians alike try to encourage Americans from eating beef because it's “bad for the environment”, the facts simply tell a different story. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, all of U.S. agriculture in total accounts for only 6 percent of our country's greenhouse gas emissions. More specifically, the entire livestock sector accounts for only 3.4 percent. You certainly don't hear or read about those statistics very often.

When you consider that you're getting a safe and high-quality product that provides 10 essential nutrients necessary for a healthy, active lifestyle, a 3.4 percent impact seems pretty minimal.

I want people to know that the U.S. beef supply is the safest, healthiest and most abundant in the world. It's produced with the utmost care for the animals and the environment. They should know that they just don't have to take my word for it, but that many experts agree that U.S. beef production serves as a model for the rest of the world.

Maybe you celebrate Earth Day on a specific day or throughout the entire month of April. As you do so, keep in mind that Texas ranchers protect the earth every day, and have been doing so long before there was a designated holiday. We take great pride in providing safe and healthy food for our family and yours.

Please know that you can feel good about choosing beef because it's not only good for you and your family, but also good for the environment.

Blake Birdwell is a fourth generation rancher. He lives in Muleshoe, Texas, with his wife Elaine and young son Beau. He and his dad, Clay Birdwell, are partners in the Hip O Cattle Co. They run a cow-calf operation and raise horses.



Beef Checkoff asks, “What’s Your Dinner Made Of?”

The new “Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.” consumer advertising campaign is premiering this month, bringing the recognizable tagline to older millennials and Gen-Xers. The new campaign, funded by the beef checkoff, will feature sizzling beef recipes, juicy details about essential nutrients and the voice of one of Hollywood’s most promising new talents.

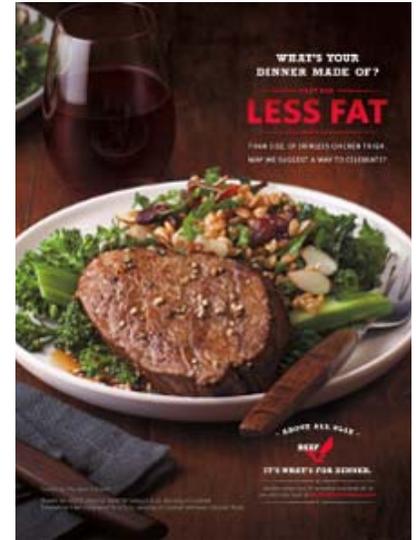
“This campaign builds upon the core benefits that only beef offers -- its great taste and 10 essential nutrients. While most folks just look at beef for its sizzle or great flavor, it’s made up of more than that. Its nutrients are what make it the most powerful protein and what makes beef above all else,” said Michele Murray, consumer marketing executive director, for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, which contracts to manage advertising for the beef checkoff. “It doesn’t hurt that the voice delivering the message on the other side of the radio epitomizes health and sizzle too.”

The new “Above All Else” campaign aims to reach the next generation of beef eaters – the older millennial and Gen-Xer, aged 25 to 44 – who care about food and nutrition.

While keeping many brand mainstays, such as Aaron Copeland’s “Rodeo” music, the new beef campaign will switch up the voice behind the famous words, “Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.” Sparking a new interest for the older millennial and Gen-X target, Garrett Hedlund’s voice will take a starring role in the campaign’s radio spots. Garrett personally represents healthful living, and his strong, warm voice is perfect for provoking new understanding about beef. “I’m proud to represent America’s farmers and ranchers,” noted Hedlund. “I grew up on my father’s cattle operation, so I’m right at home as the new voice of beef.”

Born in Roseau, Minn., Garrett spent his early years on a cattle operation. He was just 18 when he landed a role in the epic film Troy

(2004) playing opposite Brad Pitt. Following his debut in Troy, Garrett went on to Friday Night Lights (2004) and Tron Legacy (2010). His latest roles include Country Strong (2011), in which he plays a rising young country star opposite Gwyneth Paltrow, as well as On the Road, in theaters now.



That’s the question each “Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner” print advertisement asks. It’s answered with bold copy highlighting the nutritional benefits of beef along with tantalizing food photography reminding the consumer that delicious can, and does, go right alongside nutritious. Each advertisement calls out an individual essential nutrient, like protein: “The Strip steak has lots of protein...and your appetite’s attention.” Another ad reminds you that a dinner with beef “has iron. The most lean, delicious and tender iron known to man.”

The print advertisements will appear in monthly national magazines with an emphasis on food, health/fitness, parenting, lifestyle and men’s sports. In addition to traditional print placements, the campaign will appear across a wide range of digital platforms, such as tablets, online radio stations (e.g., Pandora), video websites (e.g., Hulu), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) and popular recipe websites (e.g., AllRecipes.com). State Beef Councils will extend the campaign through print, radio, digital, in-person promotions, sporting events, outdoor advertising and more. Public relations, health professional outreach, social media and other promotional efforts round out this integrated effort.

Source: The Beef Checkoff

