

Residue Avoidance Symposium

“AABP Initiative: To Be Proactive in Residue Avoidance Issues”

Moderator: **Keith Sterner**

Beef Quality Assurance

Dee Griffin, DVM, MS
Guymon, OK 73942

Eight years ago the fed beef industry started work on a quality assurance program that joined the efforts of the professional cattle feeder, professional beef cattle consulting veterinarian and the U.S.D.A-F.S.I.S.. Five states (Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) and the National Cattlemen's Asso. were involved. The first “verified control program” for cattle production was certified in Oklahoma at Hitch Enterprises three years later. From these beginnings the back bone of what now seems to be a nationally accepted program for quality assurance has been developed. These guide lines have now been accepted by cattlemen in three states. These are voluntary guide lines that are business based, that means practices that are considered part of normal good business practice in accounting, inventory control, and efficient production.

I will review the Texas Cattle Feeders Association's beef quality assurance handbook published in 1989, first listing the signed contract entered into by the feedyard and the TCFA. This contract was last revised in 1988. I will then review the highlights of each procedure. For more information I would refer you to the T.C.F.A. 5501 West 140., Amarillo, Texas 79106 (806-358-3681).

Beef Quality Assurance Program

Objective: To ensure that all cattle shipped from this feedyard are healthy, wholesome and meet FDA, USDA and EPA standards. This assurance applies to procedures by the feedyard. The program is a cooperative effort between this feedyard and government agencies and is monitored by periodic sampling of carcasses at packing plants by FSIS.

Procedures

1. Feed Sources.
 - 1.1 Feedyard maintains a quality control program for incoming feed ingredients.
 - 1.2 Any ingredients suspected of contamination are analyzed by a qual-

ified laboratory at the feedyard's expense.

2. Feed Medications
 - 2.1 Feedyard assures that only FDA approved additives are used in rations fed to the cattle.
 - 2.2 Feedyard assures that all additives are withdrawn so as to avoid violative residues.
3. Individual Treatments.
 - 3.1 Medication of individual animals in the feedyard has followed treatment schedules developed by a licensed veterinarian. Medication of each animal has been recorded by the feedyard showing the pen and lot number. The record includes the date that the medication is administered as well as the medication and the amount of the dose.
 - 3.2 All animals scheduled for slaughter have been checked by feedyard personnel to assure that all animals in the pen have met withdrawal times recommended to prevent violative residue.
 - 3.3 Feedyard will randomly test animals that have received extra label drug use, when prescribed by a licensed veterinarian, using the LAST test.
 - 3.4 FSIS will randomly sample carcasses at the packing plant using the STOP test or other in-plant tests to check for potential residues.
4. Pesticides.
 - 4.1 Feedyard assures that only EPA-approved pesticides for cattle treatment have been used in compliance with label directions.
5. Maintenance of Records.
 - 5.1 All records of rations fed, feed additives added to specific rations and individual treatments are maintained by the feedyard for a period of 90 days after slaughter.
 - 5.2 Should unacceptable levels of residues be found in any of the cattle shipped for slaughter, feedyard will make applicable records available to FSIS personnel to aid in determining the source and cause of the residue.
6. Action in Case of Potential or Actual Violation
 - 6.1 Any unacceptable residues found by FSIS will be reported by telephone to the feedyard.
 - 6.2 When an unacceptable residue is found, a joint assessment (by feedyard and appropriate agency) of source and cause will be made and corrective action taken.

Manager

Feedyard

Date

[The original of this form will be maintained by the feedyard and a copy in the TCFA office.]

Feed Sources:

The feed yard is to maintain a quality control program for incoming ingredients. A quality control program not only aids in preventing chemical residues, but insures a high quality commodity to feed cattle. It takes high quality feed to get maximal performance from cattle. One suggestion is to use a grain or commodity buying premium and discount scale such as the southwest scale for premiums and discounts. Some characteristics would include:

- Color -- Typical and uniform
- Odor -- Clean and characteristic for material
- Moisture -- Free flowing and no wet spots
- Temperature -- No evidence of heating
- Texture -- Reasonable and uniform
- Absence of foreign material
- No evidence of bird, rodent or insect contamination.
- No evidence of inappropriate chemical treatment or having been hauled in a contaminated cargo bin.

You should be familiar with the herbicides and pesticides used in your commodity buying area.

Feed fats and other by-products pose a potential risk. Blended fats should be avoided. And it maybe appropriate to buy the commodities only from a bonded broker. The broker should be asked to supply test results for PCB, CHC, etc.

Feed Additives:

Only FDA approved feed additives should be used in accordance with product labeling. Perform three random assays of medicated feed each year and file the results. Keep accurate feeding and feed additive use records. These items insure the most effective use of the products and encourage good communication between the feedlot operator and his nutritionist. Should a performance problem ever exist with the cattle these records will be required to get at the bottom of the problem.

Individual Treatments:

Every veterinarian should be expert in this area. The corner stone is strict adherence to the extra label drug use policy of the F.D.A.. In addition, "high risk" cattle should be screened for antibiotic residues before the animal is released for slaughter. Should any questions remain about an individual animal or group of animals the USDA-FSIS plant veterinarian should be notified before the animals are sent to the packing house.

Livestock Pesticides:

Only E.P.A. approved pesticides should be used in compliance with label directions. This is extremely important not only for beef quality assurance but for employee safety.

Other Considerations:

Antibiotic resistance is a hot topic nationally. Proper antibiotic usage is a must and is best supervised by a veterinarian. The veterinarian should use only F.D.A. products. "Bloody Mary's" seem very inappropriate. Product use should consider tissue trim and carcass damage. Injected products should not be used in carcass cuts that would not be routinely examined at the packing house. These would include the loin, rump and round.

Feed contamination with machinery fluids, leakage for electrical transformers, and/or heavy metal contamination should be watched for.

The water supply for the cattle should be monitored and tested at regular intervals. The specific test might vary and the veterinarian or nutritionist would be the person to visit with. Metals and chemicals should be included in the test.

Included in the quality assurance handbook are lists of laboratories that can help with testing and product withdrawals.

The Bottom Line:

This program will make the cattlemen money. It is the variability in cattle performance that often destroy a cattlemen's bank account. Every item mentioned addresses this end. It is part of good management, good nutrition, good herd health, good people management, in short it is good business. As Dr. Don Williams, one of the most respected professional cattlemen and veterinarians I have ever known put it, "It is not the loss of performance I see that worries me, it is what I don't that will put us out of business."

A more detailed discussion can be obtained from:
National Cattlemen's Assc., 303-694-0305
Neb. Cattlemen's Asso., 402-492-1434
Texas Cattle Feeders Asso., 806-358-3681
USDA-FSIS, 202-447-2807

Other papers presented in this section will be published in the 1990 *Bovine Practitioner*.