Beef Industry Initiatives

USAHA National Johne’s Working Group

Elizabeth Parker
Chief Veterinarian
National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
November 14, 2010
● Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Program
● Dairy BQA Program (DACQA)
● Current Discussions
Beef Quality Assurance (BQA)

- BQA Program Overview
  - National voluntary program that provides guidelines for beef cattle production, offering proper management techniques and a commitment to quality within every segment of the beef industry.
  - This successful program has helped to proactively identify and eliminate areas of needed improvement in beef production.
  - Underlying philosophy: “It’s a process of figuring out what could go wrong, planning to avoid it – then validating and documenting what you have done.”
BQA was designed by producers and experts from all relevant sectors.

Broad in scope, providing guidelines for all aspects of modern cattle production including livestock care and handling, nutrition and health management.

BQA is not a static program and is constantly evaluated and updated.

Designed to provide flexibility to meet the diversity of the U.S. beef industry, including geographical needs, every producer sector/business model and all producer sizes.

Diverse outreach: Online training modules, hands on training, videos, educational and assessment materials.

http://www.bqa.org
DISEASE PREVENTION PRACTICES AND HEALTH CARE

● Like other species, cattle are susceptible to infectious diseases, metabolic disorders, toxins, parasites, neoplasia and injury.

● Control programs should be based on risk assessment and efficacy of available products.

● Economic losses are reduced by early intervention through health management programs. The producer should work with a veterinarian and/or nutritionist to determine the risk of infectious, metabolic and toxic diseases and to develop effective management programs when designing a herd health plan.

● Producers and their employees should have the ability to recognize common health problems and know how to properly utilize animal health products and other control measures.
Dairy Animal Care Quality Assurance (DACQA)

- DACQA is a voluntary program, designed for dairy producers who derive their primary income from the production and sale of milk, but also make a significant contribution to the beef supply (between 15 and 20% of total U.S. beef sales; in dairy states, this percentage is even higher).

- The DACQA Certification Manual - a producer resource which represents the program’s core elements. It lists the program’s guidelines, describes Best Management Practices, and offers Critical Management Point checklists for self-evaluation.

- Currently use NIAA’s Johne’s Brochure

- [http://www.bqa.org/dairybqa](http://www.bqa.org/dairybqa)
About Biosecurity:

- A system of management procedures designed to prevent or greatly reduce the risk for the introduction of new diseases to a dairy operation.

- Affects food safety and quality directly in the case of diseases that pose a risk to public health.

- Biosecurity is also a positive step for animal health, well-being and performance, which can indirectly affect milk and meat quality by reducing the potential impact of a disease or its treatment.

- A biosecurity program is like an insurance policy for the health and productivity of the herd.
Producers, with the help of a qualified veterinarian, must make decisions about the risk tolerance level they will accept, based on the chances of a disease occurring and the expected economic losses from the disease. When the risk tolerance level is determined, then appropriate risk management measures can be initiated.

Biosecurity levels and concerns will differ with production and marketing strategies: a dairy replacement heifer grower’s plan may be different than a plan used by milking operations.

Many diseases of cattle cause decreased production and reproduction, sickness and death, and loss of marketing options. For example, our increased understanding of Johnes is leading to greater liability in selling animals. The result can range from altered or reduced cash flow to large loss of equity.
New diseases can be introduced to your dairy operation in a number of ways, including:

- Other cattle, including replacements from other herds, bulls, fence-line contact with neighboring herds, shows and fairs, and stray cattle.
- Feed, especially feed which could be contaminated with feces, urine, molds, or ruminant byproducts.
- Water, including pools of standing water, which animals may have access to.
- Humans, particularly those moving between herds, but also consider intentional acts against you.
- Non-livestock, including pets, birds, deer, coyotes, rodents, ticks, and other insects.
- Equipment and vehicles.
- Manure handling.
Typical ways to practice Biosecurity

- The goal is to prevent disease from ever entering the operation, and to minimize the risk of infection if it does occur. You cannot exclude all wildlife and may not wish to exclude visitors, but you can take steps to greatly reduce the risk of them introducing a new disease.

- **Animals new to your herd**
  - Know the herd health status of herds supplying replacements.
  - Isolate and observe new animals for a period of time (3-4 weeks) before introducing to the herd.

- **Animals within your herd**

- **Animals returning from shows or fairs**
Biosecurity Summary:

- An effective biosecurity plan will involve your employees, veterinarian, and other specialists.
- Provide reasonable protocols, which are more likely to be followed, to minimize introduction of new diseases.
- Requires education of farm visitors and may include physical barriers. Must be periodically reviewed, with adjustments made as needed.
- Unfortunately, intentional acts against you and your animals are a possibility. The most important piece of advice is to be alert. Be aware of who is visiting your operation, what their activities are, and whether they might pose a potential risk. In other words, know what is happening at your operation at all times.
- Biosecurity is a food safety related issue; it is a portion of DACQA that benefits dairy producers and consumers alike.
Comprehensive Approach Needed

Current Discussions:

- Herd Security
- Producer Education
- Research