Beef Quality Assurance, the Base of Successful Marketing for Samson LLC

Scott Mueller and his family were once defined by their family farm and feedyard. Today that operation has grown to blend traditional agriculture with a suite of agricultural services with the goal of increasing opportunities through value-added services and networks. This diversified agricultural enterprise, based in Columbus, Neb., is known as Samson, LLC (Samson). Samson’s services include cattle verification programs, notably their Veterinary Quality Assurance (VQA) program, which includes BQA verification.

The Samson VQA program is a combination health and management program for beef cattle that includes four primary components:

- The beef producer must be BQA certified;
- Calves must be handled according to BQA guidelines;
- Calves must be vaccinated and dewormed according to a defined health protocol that is overseen by a veterinarian, and,
- Calves must be age and source verified. Calves that qualify for the Samson VQA program receive unique Samson VQA ear tags, allowing them to be easily identified in the sale ring by cattle buyers.

Calves that qualify for the Samson VQA program receive unique Samson VQA ear tags, allowing them to be easily identified in the sale ring by cattle buyers. This program was developed as a third-party verification with the cooperation of Samson, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, Nebraska Cattlemen, NCBA and local private veterinary clinics.

The ultimate goal of the Samson VQA program is to provide healthy and humanely handled calves that will perform to the cattle’s maximum potential and provide a safe, high quality beef product to consumers.

In 2011 a study was done to determine the effect of the Samson VQA program on calf prices through six West-Central Nebraska auction markets. The resulted showed that Samson VQA calves were worth $13.15 more per head than calves not participating in the program. With an average price premium of $2.63/cwt, the Samson VQA program is proving that incorporating BQA into production and marketing programs not only results in benefits to the consumer but economic incentives for beef producers.

Chase DeCote, associate director of BQA said: “It’s great to see beef producers and marketers, like Samson, integrate BQA into their own production programs. This study is proof that BQA has positive impacts for producers.”

In nominating Scott Mueller and Samson for the BQA Marketer Award, Rob Eirich, director of BQA for the University of Nebraska Extension, had high praise. “Scott Mueller’s commitment to BQA goes beyond his operation,” Eirich said, “and his participation helps Nebraska BQA develop programming to promote, educate and implement BQA practices throughout the Nebraska beef industry.”

The successful integration of BQA into all of their cattle management programs earned Samson the 2016 BQA Marketer Award, which was announced at the 2016 Cattle Industry Convention in San Diego, Calif.

Beef producers, marketers and all segments of the industry are encouraged to participate in BQA. Free online training, courtesy of Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc., is available from Sep. 15 through Nov. 13. It’s easy to get started by visiting www.BQA.org today!