Introduction

The New Mexico Beef Quality Assurance Program

Today, more than ever, consumers are concerned about the quality of the food they eat. The perception of safety and wholesomeness plays a major role in the buying decisions of a health- and diet-conscious America. By assuring the consumer that beef is safe and wholesome from the cow-calf producer to the dinner plate, and by increasing the efficiency of production, the New Mexico beef industry can become more competitive in the market place.

The beef industry continues to progress toward a value based marketing system, and a system in which the beef product can be traced all the way through the marketing process back to the producer. Therefore, it becomes more and more important for the beef producer to accept responsibility for producing a product that is free of blemishes and residues and that is a safe and quality product of which the entire industry can be proud. The New Mexico Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA) asks producers, veterinarians, and all others involved in the production of beef to use common sense, reasonable management skills and accepted scientific knowledge to avoid defects in the product we deliver to the consumer.

In response to that opportunity, the New Mexico Beef Quality Assurance Program was developed. This program provides guidance in educating beef and dairy producers in the importance of management practices used in beef production. The New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service provides leadership to this program. A Beef Quality Assurance Task Force provides guidance and advice to the program, in conjunction with the New Mexico Cattle Growers’ Association, Dairy Producers of New Mexico, the New Mexico Livestock Board, the New Mexico Beef Council, and other related organizations and allied industries.