



# Western Wisconsin Beef Producers

## Fall 2017 Newsletter



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### Pre-Conditioning Records Help Promote Your Calves

With tight profit margins in the cattle finishing sector, many buyers prefer to purchase calves that have been pre-conditioned. They value knowing that a group of calves is at lower risk for sickness and morbidity because they have been well prepared, through a pre-conditioning program. This information may result in higher prices for the calves, but only if it is shared with potential buyers.

A solid pre-conditioning program also helps you build a positive reputation for your calves. So the question becomes...Are you promoting your feeder calves the best that you can?

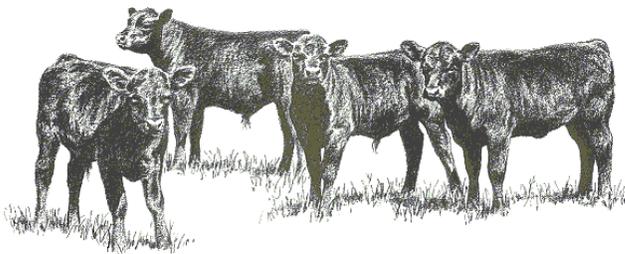
Are you pre-conditioning your calves? If so, are you making sure that potential buyers know that you have invested your time and resources into making sure these calves are ready to transition smoothly to the next phase of beef production? This means sharing what you have done with potential buyers either with/through your marketing partner.

If you are pre-conditioning your calves and not sharing this information, you may be leaving money on the table.

### Western Wisconsin Beef Producers Purple Tag Program

One way to help promote your calves is participating in the Purple Tag Program. The Western Wisconsin Beef Producers Purple Tag program is an example of a solid pre-conditioning program.

Several folks participate in this already, and some of you may already be doing all or doing most of it and not realize it. Producers who use the Purple Tag protocol can use special ear tags at no cost, which can be put on the calves' ears when the last round of treatments is administered. Ear tags and a record keeping form for the program can be picked up at the Equity Cooperative Livestock Sale Barn at Sparta. The Purple Tag Program requirements are included in this newsletter.



*This newsletter is a joint effort of the Western Wisconsin Beef Producers and the UW-Extension Offices in Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties.*



## Quality Assurance is Everyone's Responsibility

In the world of food, consumers purchase what they trust. The news too often carries articles on recalls or other food safety related items. The internet and social media are loaded with all sorts of claims regarding food, where it comes from and how it is produced, many of which are not accurate.

A large part of the beef industry's job involves making sure that beef is safe and wholesome for consumers. Beef Quality Assurance is a proactive way for beef producers to show consumers that we are committed to food safety, quality, and animal care.

Beef Quality Assurance is a national program that raises consumer confidence through offering proper management techniques and a commitment to quality within every segment of the beef industry. It helps beef producers implement a simple program on their farm which includes follow good animal husbandry practices, and following FDA, USDA, and EPA guideline requirements for product use to minimize risk of chemical, physiological, and microbiological defects.

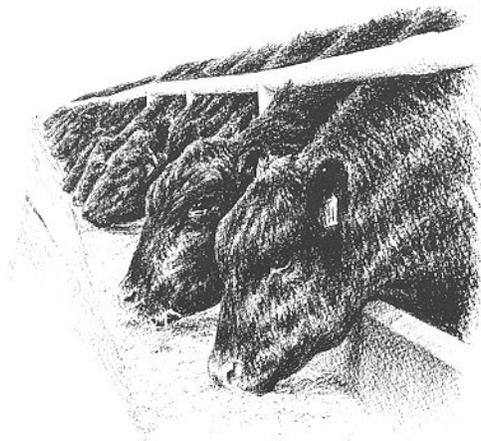
It is important that we all positively represent our industry.

Producers have two options to become Beef Quality Assurance Certified if they are not already certified.

### Options:

- 1) Go through the certification process online at your own pace at the Beef Quality Assurance website, [www.bqa.org](http://www.bqa.org). This process is a series of video clips followed by a test after each section. It is not necessary to complete all sessions in one sitting. There is no charge for this option.
- 2) To attend a live training session conducted by one of the UW Extension certified BQA instructors. At this time there is a \$15 cost for a live training session. Contact the Monroe County Extension Office, phone 608-269-8722, to schedule a live certification training.

Certification is good for 3 years and during that time beef producers can get continuing education credits by attending UW Extension Beef Cattle Workshops. Producers who obtain 3 credits during the 3 years can renew their Beef Quality Assurance Certification by sending in the continuing education credit certificates with their renewal notice.



# Are You Ready to Haul Cattle This Fall?

Fall is a time of the year when we haul a lot of our cattle from one location to another. Hauling may include bringing cow calf pairs, yearling heifers, and bulls home from pasture, hauling feeder calves and culls to the sale barn or their next home, or bringing newly purchased feeders to the feedlot.

No matter what the case may be, it is a good idea and time well spent to get ready for hauling. Preparation should include set up of loading and unloading areas and a pre-inspection of the truck and trailer we will be using prior to hauling.

Safe transportation of cattle starts with proper maintenance of the truck/pickup and trailer. The time to do these maintenance checks is well in advance of when the cattle need to be hauled. Often times if these chores are put off until the last minute they do not get done because we get in a hurry and run out of time. Proper maintenance will minimize the risk of devastating accidents that can damage not only the equipment, but also injure or kill people and cattle. See the included card for a list of routine items to check out:

The stocking density in trailers is important to maintain cattle well-being and minimize injuries. The trailer sticker chart included with this newsletter has loading recommendations for various weights of cattle and various trailer sizes. The Gross Vehicle Ratings should not be exceeded for trucks and trailers to ensure safe hauling. The maximum legal load limit must be followed for each state that cattle are being transported through.

Other considerations related to stocking density and trailer use include determining the appropriate weight distribution of cattle for your specific trailer type (gooseneck versus bumper hitch) and the number of compartments within the trailer. When hauling cow/calf pairs, separate the cows from the calves in the trailer to ensure the safety of the calves. When hauling bulls, separate bulls from each other and separate bulls from cows or calves. Bulls unfamiliar with each other should not be mixed on a trailer because damage to the trailer and animals is likely to occur if they fight to establish a hierarchy. Horned or tipped cattle should be separated from polled, and space allowance should be appropriate for each group with respect to horn status. Balance the weight to get the best towing performance and smoothest ride. Also be considerate of the route taken and how you drive to prevent cattle from jostling or slipping. Avoid sudden accelerations, stops, or turns and pick roads that have minimal sharp turns or stops.

Planning ahead, preparation, attention to detail, and keeping safety in mind can help ensure all of us a safe, successful experience when hauling cattle this season.

