

## Getting together a game plan to address Animal Welfare questions

I would like to make a couple of suggestions of where we (as a group and an industry) can start to tackle the challenges that we have before us on an Animal Care level.

1. Each individual on this list needs to make sure that they spread the message of Beef Quality Assurance and Quality Animal Care to all that they come in contact with. Each individual on this list needs to make sure that they are educated to speak on BQA (which means a certification if you come from a state that certifies). We need a GRASS ROOTS movement in BQA to ensure that our beef producers are educated and "doing the right thing". This starts with the folks that are on this list. Veterinarians should talk with their clients about the program; educators should talk to their students about the program; staff at NCBA and local cattlemen organizations need to get their members involved in BQA; beef producers need to talk to their neighbors about BQA; animal health companies need to certify and educate their field staff so that they can talk about BQA in the country; agricultural media companies need to get educated on BQA and help our organization "get the word out" with local broadcasts and written messages. As a UNITED Beef Industry, we need to "Cowboy up and Get R Done" in terms of Beef Quality Assurance. The BQA program gives our industry CREDIBILITY on the Animal Care/Welfare/Stewardship (whatever you want to call it) front. If we empower producers to get involved with BQA, then we can move forward "Putting a Face on our Industry" to the consumer. If you need more information on the BQA program, contact Ryan Ruppert at NCBA.

2. While we are educating producers at the grass roots level on BQA, we need to make sure that they know who Wayne Pacelle and the HSUS is and what they stand for. Most producers that I talk to have no idea who either one is. If we are going to "mobilize the troops" we have to communicate to them what war we are fighting and who the players are.

3. We need to identify producers that are educated and willing to talk to people outside of the beef industry on what we are doing to care for our animals. The Masters of Beef Advocacy program is a great place to start. Each person on this list should identify three producers that could help the industry to "put a face on animal care" and participate in the MBA program. Information on the MBA program can be obtained by contacting any Denver based NCBA staff.

4. Each person on this list should pay attention to local media clips so that we can track the movement of HSUS into rural America. If they try to infiltrate your home town---write an editorial article on the HSUS and what they really stand for and how it will affect your town and post it in the local paper (I have included an editorial letter that will run in Central Nebraska this week that I wrote). Talk to local radio/TV stations and keep them understanding how important Agriculture is to the community.

It is easy to get bogged down by the enormous task that we have ahead of us, but if you break it down into manageable pieces then we can conquer it. I will write the BQA mission statement here and I challenge you all to figure out how you can do your part: everyday. "The BQA Mission Statement: To maximize consumer confidence and acceptance of beef by focusing the producers' attention to the daily production practices that influence the safety, wholesomeness, and quality of beef and beef products."

Together we can make a difference and have something to hand down to our children. This isn't just a "business" to most beef producers---it is a calling---it is a tradition---it is something that we all take a tremendous amount of pride in---it is something that is worth saving. I don't want to live in a world where I can't eat beef every night---Do you?



Anne Burkholder  
President Will Feed, Inc.  
Cozad, NE