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## Do You Have Your SRMs Managed by the Correct PVP or QSA?

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The target may be set, at least for casual conversation or maybe even outright aggressive purchasing, because countries, such as Japan, have opened up their markets to beef produced in the U.S., which is a good thing.

As producers gear up in anticipation of that market, the essential concept or entry point started last spring during spring calving or some other time, if a producer has a different calving season. The point being, if you go to the USDA Web site at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/ev-japan.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/ev-japan.htm), you specifically will see what is needed. The site lists those companies that are approved and leads you to the particular Quality System Assessment (QSA) or Process Verified Program (PVP) that, as a producer, you will be required to be involved with, if exporting to Japan.

Granted, none of the programs are mandated, so it is purely optional if a producer wants to represent or market this year's calf crop as eligible. However, once the calves leave the point of origin and are commingled within a set of calves, the option is forever closed, at least for the producer.

Carcass criteria may be available to an approved supplier, but at the point of age determination on the rail, little to no value would be traced back to the original producer. Again, as these terms slowly find their way into a producer's vocabulary, the time is now to become street smart about the many overseas and domestic market opportunities.

For instance, although the USDA site has many requirements about the export verification program for Japan, the very first question about the export verification program for Japan discusses the specified product requirements.

The answer on the Web site says; "Specified product requirements are the constraints or qualities that define the product. The specified product requirements for export to Japan are included in the EV Program for Japan (ARC 1030J Procedure). The requirements include age

verification (20 months of age or younger) and removal of designated specified risk materials (SRMs). These requirements are required to be met through a USDA QSA Program. (They may also be met through a USDA Process Verified Program.)"

"Who really cares?" could be a typical reaction to the wandering response to the question from the USDA, but a note of caution certainly is in the air. First off, I think most beef producers probably are glad they are not spinach producers this week. One could make that assumption and simply move on, but the hard, cold reality is we are all in the food business and any food retailer today will not tolerate a reluctance to institute stringent food safety requirements. Just like spinach producers, beef producers are not in the cattle business. We are in the food business and we are all at the same table. When one hollers "Pass the potatoes, carrots, spinach, lettuce, beef" and so on, we are all at the same table.

So the rumblings may be distant or near, depending on what side of the fence one is on, but the bottom-line message is that we may as well get used to the new street talk at the market. The concept of having the neighborhood over for a fall dinner certainly has expanded.

With the advent of the prepackaged, ready-to-serve foods, the concern for safety in the kitchen has spread across the country. It only takes one rotten apple to upset the apple cart.

Anyway, back to beef. Japan is a great option, but the option starts at home with a calving book and a dedication to let the world know just how great this beef is by solid marketing backed by solid data and records, but not by word-of-mouth.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at [www.BeefTalk.com](http://www.BeefTalk.com). For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1041 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to [www.CHAPS2000.com](http://www.CHAPS2000.com) on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0318.

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<http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/arcQA.htm#Japan>