



BeefTalk 531: The Obvious Is Not Always Obvious

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Can You Verify This Calf?

Z605

2605?	Z60S?	2GoS?
2Go5?	26oS?	Z6oS?
ZG05?	ZG0S?	ZGo5?

While each third-party verifier may have a different approach, the conclusion is the same.

The call came late in the day after most people had left the office. “Do you know who the calf carrying the electronic identification number 123123123123123 is? Would you have the calf in your database?” These questions are asked often and involve the process of verifying a calf and crosschecking the database.

Depending on timing and the third-party verifier asking, questions could come up as the calves are loaded leaving the home ranch, when the calves are loaded following the day’s sale, when the calves arrive at a feed yard, when the calves are worked at a feed yard, when the calves are ready to load out to the point of harvest, when the calves arrive at the point of harvest, when the calves are harvested or even when the calves are on the rail.

The urgency of the question increases as one gets later into the above list. In fact, if asked while the calves are en route or at the harvest facility, the question is asked with an extreme sense of urgency. In a worst-case scenario, if the question is asked once the calves are on the rail, urgency is changed to regret because that is not the time to ask.

Source and age verification processing must be validated with total certainty that the calf number is absolutely correct and verifiable. Generally, another third-party verifier will be contacting the previous third-party verifier to ask or confirm the cattle that are in its database.

The process must follow the guidelines developed by U.S. Department of Agriculture. While each third-party verifier may have a different approach, the conclusion is the same. Similar processes must happen throughout the industry. Third-party verifiers create a chain that follows the calf throughout its lifetime, the harvesting process and subsequent markets.

The third-party verification will appear to be different from one verifier to another. However, the question is the same. “Who is 123123123123123?” Yes, we do know who the calf is should be the answer.

If the chain is working correctly, verifiers can trace the calf all the way back to its home ranch. Frustration occurs when cattle are offered for market with little or no time to validate the cattle.



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The validation process takes time and needs to start at the beginning of the market channel. That way the paperwork on the cattle can be verified at the appropriate steps. The obvious is not always obvious.

The other day a key puncher asked, "Is this a number six, letter g or letter s?"

Handwritten numbers, often in combination with letters, can be hard to decipher. There is the problem of the letter o being used versus the number 0, the letter l versus the number 1, the letter s versus the number 5 or the numbers 6, 0 and 9. All these can create some difficulty in verifying calf numbers back to a calving book.

The electronic numbers are read. What calf did the number go in? Are the records legible enough to be read now or in one, two or three years down the road?

There are few things more frustrating than the late afternoon call and the number cannot be tracked readily. This is especially true if the cattle already are loaded and in transit. Another very frustrating request, as noted earlier with regret, is verification post-slaughter.

While the carcass could be traced and validated correctly, what often is forgotten is that various byproducts from the carcass already have started down different chains. Any backtracking will recall more product than simply the carcass if the numbers are not validated.

Some would say I'm a worrywart. Through the years, I always have been amazed at what one may ask and expect back when little to no effort was made to document a statement.

As producers connect and embed themselves into the source and age process, it is important to make sure the calves arrived safely at their new home and the data and other pertinent information that may be utilized at a future date.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.BeefTalk.com>. For more information, contact the NDBCIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

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