



## BeefTalk 688: Marketing Options Are Improved With Verification

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS

**Interested in Enhancing  
Cattle Marketing Options?**

A Good Website to Know:  
USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service  
[www.ams.usda.gov](http://www.ams.usda.gov)

*The list is not long, but there are some very good verifiable marketing claims that producers can look into and may want to add to their marketing programs.*

October was a significant but disappointing milestone for the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association (NDBCIA). The NDBCIA source and age efforts came to a close. The NDBCIA board of directors decided last spring not to renew its source and age verification program that was marketed as CalfAid.

The program renewal date was Oct. 3, 2013, so the program is officially on the shelf rather than actively sourcing and aging calves. Some would say that is OK, while others would say that is too bad. The long and short of it is that obvious price incentives for source and aged calves were lacking. However, the concept of verification has not gone away, although the intensity of the discussion of source and age verification certainly has lessened within the marketing environment.

Those who have been actively engaged in the beef industry for more than a decade realize that most things cycle and never really go away. Trends are just that. They are more prominent at times and hardly noticeable at other times.

If a producer goes to the website for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (<http://www.ams.usda.gov>), several opportunities exist to enhance a producer's marketing options. By selecting the Grading, Certification and Verification tab, several programs are available through the Audit and Accreditation Services.

The NDBCIA CalfAid program was on the official listing of programs approved through the USDA Process Verified Program. Each program that is listed identifies the claims that are to be verified, the scope of the program and how to get in contact with the company that is offering the program.

Source and age are two managerial components of a beef operation that can be verified. The USDA substantiates desired marketing claims by approving third parties to verify claims related to specific products or processes desired. For example, a company may list a claim, such as Never Ever 3. In this case, the claim states that no antibiotics, growth promoters or animal byproducts ever have been available or administered to an animal since its birth. The USDA



Full Color Graphic  
[\[click here\]](#)



Grayscale Graphic  
[\[click here\]](#)



Adobe PDF  
[\[click here\]](#)

audits the company to make sure the verification of the claim is complete and accurate so companies can add that claim to their program.

On Nov. 5, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Grading and Verification Division noted the creation of the GVD 1007 Procedure Quality Systems Verification Program, Never Fed Beta Agonists Program. This program will be available to add as a claim if a company chooses to offer verification within its scope of business. Again, the USDA will audit those companies that choose to add this claim.

The list is not long, but there are some very good verifiable marketing claims that producers can look into and may want to add to their marketing programs. These efforts open up new doors and markets and ultimately more demand that producers hope will lead to more dollars.

The costs are real and good marketing plans need to be developed to assure that the cost benefit to the beef operation is positive. However, if one never checks, then missed opportunities are created.

The NDBCIA was approved to be a third-party verifier for the USDA in 2005. The essential component of the program was to take the data that producers already were sending to NDBCIA through the CHAPS program and allow the data to also serve as a way to source and age the producers' calves. The program worked and was very successful at allowing NDBCIA members to market calves as sourced and aged.

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service was very professional and good to work with. A lot was learned by those involved with the process, particularly at the Dickinson Research Extension Center. The process of validating and certifying calves was thorough and there was no room for error.

Those late-week calls from those involved in the marketing of calves prior to harvest always were challenging, realizing the dollars that were at stake. However, the process worked and producers should not be afraid to review the USDA's process verified programs to document and certify their efforts at marketing a particular product.

Just as the NDBCIA did, if one has a unique product and wants to have the product validated and certified, contact the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (<http://www.ams.usda.gov>). Although having an existing company provide the service is good, do not underestimate the power of new verifiable markets.

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.

Copyright (c) 2010 BeefTalk.com. All rights reserved.