

# Westmoreland Co. Cattlemen Are Bullish On Beef Promotion

BY MARGIE FUSCO

Cambria Co. Correspondent

Beef producers in Westmoreland County are taking the bull by the horns.

"A group of cattlemen in the association got together to think of activities," explains Terry Stockdale, president of the Westmoreland County Cattlemen's Association. Concerned over low beef prices and lack of consumer awareness about beef, the producers decided a grassroots

campaign was the best way to begin.

Several months later, they have held a half-dozen store promotions and produced a professional videotape they hope will be used in other counties as well.

Their promotion began in early August with a beef roast, attended by grocery store managers and beef producers. The managers met state Cattlemen's Queen Becky Painter and Cattlemen's Princess Marcy Jones who gave cooking

demonstrations using popular methods such as stir frying and microwave cooking. They also circulated brochures and recipes featuring meals under 300 calories requiring less than 30 minutes to prepare.

The beef roast also introduced the store owners to the Nutri-Facts program on beef nutrition. The program was explained by Bill Henning, Pennsylvania State University's red meat specialist. Grocery managers in attendance were invited to place Nutri-Fact stickers on their meat packages to identify low-calorie, high-nutrition cuts.

Late in August, the county Cattlemen's Association also hosted a booth at the Westmoreland County Fair. The booth marked the first showing of the association's videotape.

The videotape, which runs for 13 minutes, begins with a consumer

talking to a grocery retailer about meat. The grocer takes her to see the advantages of beef first-hand, beginning with a farm visit and following the meat through the packing house and into the store. The tape concludes with the consumer fixing a nutritious beef meal at home for her family.

The videotape was produced by Video Specialists, a professional production company from Irwin, Pa. The tape was produced through the Cattlemen's Association, in cooperation with the Westmoreland County office of the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service.

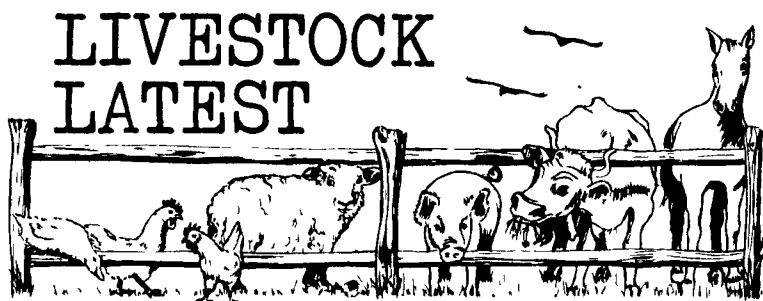
Since kicking off their program in August, the association has seen some results. Several of the grocery managers attending the picnic subsequently requested in-store demonstrations. "We've done a half-dozen so far and we hope to do a lot more," Stockdale reports. He is also pleased to add that several of the grocers have adopted the Nutri-Facts system for labeling their beef.

The association is also hoping to present the videotape in schools and at meetings throughout the

county. In addition to the 13-minute video, they expect to produce other segments, based on 15 hours of beef information that was taped. "Our video right now is geared for the consumer," Stockdale says. "Although we can probably use it right now for high school groups, we hope to do a slightly different version for younger school children and other groups in the future."

Ironically, none of the Westmoreland County Cattlemen produce their beef for sale within the county. Sandy Truckner, who with her husband Bill is involved in the association's promotion explains, "We're not doing this for our own benefit. We're doing it because we want to see all beef producers get some benefit. If we do it in our county, maybe someone else will jump on the band wagon, and it'll benefit us in time."

Producers who would like to view the videotape or learn more about the Westmoreland County program are invited to contact Terry Stockdale at (412) 668-7088 or to write to the association's secretary, Bill Doney, R.D. Smithton, Pa.



## Ideal Beef Animal Defined At Conference

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — The U.S. Beef cattle industry has created a dilemma over the past 20 years, Bob Hillier, manager of Hitch Feeders at Garden City, Kansas, told some 540 people at the National Beef Profit Conference Sept. 12 in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The problem, Hillier said, is that the industry has gone from three breeds that are fairly uniform in meat characteristics that served a relatively broad beef retail market to 71 breeds with wide variation in their production traits and a market with ever narrowing product specifications.

"I must say here that many cow-calf producers have given little thought to the kind of end product they are providing, judging by the wide variations in the cattle seen at central markets or at the auction market," Hillier told the crowd at the conference sponsored by the American Angus Association.

Cattle producers who want to get top price for their feeder cattle, or a premium, are going to have to breed cattle with uniform performance characteristics that meet fairly narrow feedlot and packer specifications, Hillier said.

### Sets Target Animal

The target animal for the feedlot should be one that will gain from 3 to 3.5 pounds a day from pay weight to pay weight and have a feed conversion of one pound of gain for six pounds of dry matter consumed, Hillier emphasized. Then in order to satisfy the packer the animal must grade USDA

Choice when it weighs between 1,050 and 1,250 pounds and produce a 600 to 800 pound carcass with a yield grade of 1, 2 or 3. And, specifications probably will narrow in the future, Hillier said. He expects yield grade 2 to become the standard, and that the top acceptable carcass weight will be reduced below 800 pounds.

Hillier then displayed charts showing how feeders and packers can legitimately discount cattle that fail to meet these target specifications. For example, he pointed out that in a 100-head pen of feedlot cattle each 10 head that fail to make the USDA Choice grade make the pen worth \$362.50 less, if Good sells for only \$5 per hundredweight less than Choice. If 50 percent fail to make Choice that pen is worth \$1,812 less.

### Ranch Turns Profits

Keynote speaker, Henry Gardiner, who runs 200 registered and 400 commercial Angus cows at his Ashland, Kansas, ranch, said that despite the beef cattle recession, "The last three years on our ranch have been the most profitable three years in the 56-year history of our ranch." He credits this profitability to improved grass and farm management, and to the use he makes of the Angus sire evaluation data from the American Angus Association. "Without the use of the yearly sire evaluation report we also might be wondering how much longer we could stay in business. The sire evaluation report is worth many thousands of dollars a year to our

operation."

From 1964 through 1973 the average weaning weight of all the Gardiner steer calves, at 10 months of age, was 523 pounds. From 1982 through 1986 the average steer weaning weight has been over 731 pounds; the 1986 calf crop averaged 786 pounds.

These results Gardiner attributed to "stacked sire evaluation pedigrees." In other words he has used the top sire evaluation bulls every year and saved replacement heifers from these bulls, each generation "stacking" more sire evaluation performance into the herd.

### Feedlot Performance

The Gardiner cattle also perform in the feedlot and on the rail. From 1981 through 1984 Gardiner's progeny test steers have gained from 3.21 to 3.74 pounds a day at a cost of gain ranging from \$43.75 to \$51.12 per cwt, with a finished weight of 1108 to 1167. In 1984 some 97 percent of these steers graded USDA Choice.

"A stacked pedigree animal is a new and superior animal made possible by the Sire Evaluation Report," Gardiner said. "This fall every replacement female we breed, either registered or commercial, will be sired by a proven AI bull and bred to another proven AI bull."

If you breed superior cattle, then how do you get paid for the valuable genetic package? Three commercial cattle producers from Kansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska, said that the key is "retained ownership" through the feedlot.

## Beef Briefs

by  
**Chester D. Hughes**

Lancaster Co.  
Extension Livestock Specialist

## The Beef Checkoff And You

The one dollar per head check-off assessment, as prescribed by federal law, under the 1985 Beef Promotion and Research Act begins Oct. 1. Its a law that carries hefty fines for noncompliance and a system with several potential informants. The dollar per head assessment program is designed to help the beef industry halt the steady decline of beef consumption and make beef production once again profitable for all segments of the beef industry. The program is for you, the beef producer, or anyone associated with the industry.

In simple terms, the program works as follows: When you sell your cattle, you pay a \$1 per head checkoff to the buyer; when you buy cattle you get \$1 extra from the guy or a form in which he certifies

and send the rest to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board.

If you sell to an order buyer or dealer, he will operate the same way, providing you with an invoice showing the money was deducted. If you sell private treaty, to a neighbor, for instance, make sure you get a receipt indicating you have paid him (or he has deducted) the \$1 per head.

Collecting persons who do not collect assessments that are due and/or producers who do not pay will be in violation of the Beef Promotion and Research Order and may be subject to a \$5,000 civil penalty in addition to a late payment charge.

Producers requesting a refund should write for a refund application from their State Beef

**Violators of the Beef Promotion and Research Order may be subject to a \$5,000 civil penalty plus a late payment charge.**

## Lampeter Fair Livestock Champions Sold



In photo at left, Jerry Darrenkamp, left, of Darrenkamp's Country Market, Willow Street, purchased Robert Rush's Lampeter Fair grand champion steer for \$3 per pound. A total of 15 steers were sold for an average of \$1.13 per pound; sale average without champions was 95 cents per pound. Willow Valley Market purchased the reserve champion for \$1.60 per pound and Willie the Butcher was the volume buyer, taking home three steers.

In photo at right, Andy Groff, right, sold his Lampeter Fair champion hog for \$6.25 per pound to Kunzler and Co. Inc., represented here by Dan Welk, left. Hatfield purchased the reserve champion for \$3.40 per pound. Sale average on the 44 hogs was 93 cents per pound with champions and 74 cents without.

that he's exempt. The law says the seller must pay and the buyer must collect and remit. The assessments must be sent by the "collecting person" or cattle purchaser to the PA Beef Council.

Exemptions are granted only to graders, order buyers, and dealers who (a) have owned the cattle less than 10 days and certify that they purchased them only to "expedite" marketing or (b) purchased them from a third party at a predetermined fee.

Auction barns and livestock dealers will be equipped with collection kits. These kits include the necessary forms and instructions to carryout the program. If you're selling at an auction, the auction will deduct \$1 per head from your check and send it to the State Beef Council. The State Council will keep up to half

Council. The refund application and necessary documentation must be mailed within 60 days from the date the assessment was due.

After the program operates for 22 months, cattle producers across the nation will have the opportunity to vote through a national referendum on whether to continue the established program. The PA Beef Council has pledged their efforts to the success of this beef promotion program. It is hoped that this Beef Checkoff program can generate \$60 million dollars per year to be used in the promotion of beef nationwide through the most competitive media segments. If it takes the likes of Bill Walton and Refrigerator Perry to sell beef, then we should all chip in to make the program successful.