

# Convenience Rather Than Diet, Health Issues Top Beef Consumer Demands

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In an interview conducted at Herr Angus Farm (which used to be a seedstock farm of purebred Angus, but now is a beef finishing operation), Byrne spoke about the future drives and directives of the Council.

New programs and projects include a more aggressive campaign to reach the "grassroots-level" consumer regarding the benefits of beef products, "which is different than what we've done in the past few years," said Byrne.

He said what makes that programs different is the shift in concentration from "thought leaders" in the press directly to consumer. Which means, according to the Council chairman, you'll be seeing a lot more in-store demonstrations, sampling of beef products, and direct advertising.

## Variety of programs

"We're going to be involved in a lot more of the food fairs and that type of thing than we've been in the past," he said.

The checkoff money collected (\$1 per head of cattle sold) is spent on a variety of programs. Of the \$1.1 million collected, about \$200,000 is returned to the state of origin (cattle purchased from other states). Of the about \$900,000 remaining, according to Byrne, half goes to the national beef council program. About \$450,000 is returned to the state, of which \$270,000 is used for direct advertising and promotional campaigns for beef. The rest is used for administrative purposes and program coordination.

Most of the \$270,000 will be going to "let the producer know we're doing all we can for his



At Herr Angus, Byrne is involved in the overall management of operations. The 1,000-acre beef finishing farm is home to about 1,800 head of cattle a year.



Dennis Byrne keeps careful records of calves brought to finish to the Herr Farm.

buck," he said. "But at some point we have to realize that the more dollars we spend convincing the producer we're doing a good job with his buck, the less we're spending on the consumer who is going to buy his product."

Soon, more money will be allocated for direct promotion. Already the Council is writing up proposals and constructing methods to heighten the promotion of beef products.

## Partnering

"Currently we're discussing some possibilities with the Heinz Foundation and partnering on some beef ventures," he said. "That will be exciting."

But what excites Byrne the most is the current veal marketing program under way, particularly in the Philadelphia area.

The new campaign uses "on the spot" radio advertising to feature veal promotions, recipe contests, cookouts, and other methods to deliver a positive message about veal products.

"We're hearing really good things about that," he said. Written and implemented by staff at the Beef Council in cooperation with veal packers, the campaign is a partnership "that hasn't happened in any other beef council in any state," he said, because the industry is contributing additional dollars on top of the checkoff.

## 1,800 head of cattle

At Herr Angus, Byrne is involved in the overall management of operations. The 1,000-acre beef finishing farm is home to about 1,800 head of cattle a year. Two full-time herd managers, David Bell and Doug Lawrie, contribute to managing the care and feeding of cattle, in addition to 220 acres of corn, 250 of pasture, 50 acres of barley and 50 acres of wheat cash crops, 60 acres of reed canarygrass, and the remainder in soybeans.

The farm, which began with 300 heifers as a purebred Angus seedstock operation in 1985, now hosts various Angus/Hereford and Charolais crosses.

What makes the farm interesting is the use of Herr Snack Food by-products. To displace the use of corn silage, Jim Herr, owner, and Byrne have made use of three different types of by-products to feed the steers.

One product is what Byrne refers to as "steer party mix," which includes the unused and not-



To displace the use of corn silage, Jim Herr, owner, and Dennis Byrne (pictured here) have made use of different types of by-products to feed the steers. One product is what Byrne refers to as "steer party mix," which includes the unused and not-up-to-standard chips, pretzels, and popcorn that are manufactured at the plant close by, hauled (2-3 tons daily) onto the farm and used as feed.

up-to-standard chips, pretzels, and popcorn that are manufactured at the plant close by, hauled (2-3 tons daily) onto the farm and used as feed. The other products are potato peels and other rejected potato material, with much of the water removed, hauled daily to the farm. The final product is waste water

used to wash the potatoes, composed of about 1 percent solids, which is used to irrigate the reed canarygrass.

## By-products used

"Jim Herr always thought that somehow or other their by- (Turn to Page A22)



Here, Dennis Byrne computes the weight of cattle loaded onto the scale.



According to Dennis Byrne, potato peels and other rejected potato material, with much of the water removed, are hauled daily to the farm and fed as a replacement for corn silage.