

Cattle Producers Challenged To Eliminate Select Beef From Production Goals

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — "It's time for the beef cattle industry to accept the fact that USDA Select beef is of little if any use in expanding beef demand in this country," said Dick Spader, executive vice president of the American Angus Association.

In his regular Angus Journal column, Spader warns that, "No cattle producer should have the goal of producing Select beef, even in small quantities."

Citing the price spreads between USDA Choice and Select, and the even wider spreads between average Choice and above and Select beef, Spader said, "Select cattle are the fall-outs of a feeding program, not the desired end result. They (cattle that grade Select) are cattle without the genetic ability to grade Choice when fed properly."

He reminded cattle producers that in 1975, the year that the USDA marbling standards for the various grades were lowered dramatically, beef held a 55 percent share of the meat market, which has declined steadily since then. "Industry experts now predict that by 2005 beef will hold a scant 25 percent share," he said.

We know how to reverse this trend, Spader said, and make beef more acceptable to consumers. Citing a retail beef loin palatability study conducted in eight American cities, Spader pointed out that steaks from Prime loins produced no undesirable eating experiences. Steaks in the upper two-thirds of the Choice grade produced 5 percent undesirable eating experiences and Select grade loins were 20 percent un-

satisfactory.

"Even a five percent failure rate is not good," Spader said, "but a 20 percent failure rate is simply unacceptable. The problem is not that beef is too expensive, the problem is that beef that produces unacceptable eating results is too expensive."

He said that a 1996 retail price study conducted in Chicago showed that at the time Select beef was selling for \$4.99 a pound, beef in the upper two-thirds of the Choice grade was selling for \$8.99

a pound and Prime was priced at \$15.99 a pound. "People not only will pay for quality, they are doing it every day. We must respond positively to these price signals that are more and more being reflected back in prices paid to producers," he said.

"Unfortunately, the beef industry as a whole isn't ready to accept these facts. There are people who still believe that select is a desirable consumer product," Spader said. For these people there is no way to change their minds before

2005, let alone change the genetics in their herds. As a result, the industry must move ahead without them.

"The prospect of beef holding only a 25 percent share of the meat market in seven or eight years is unsettling and unacceptable," Spader concluded. "Dedication to the production of consistent, high-quality beef, and to effective beef marketing is the only way we can prevent these predictions from becoming a reality."

1998 Farm Show Scooper Bowl Sunday

WHAT: Scooper Bowl Sunday Ice Cream Fund Raiser

The Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program/American Dairy Association will host the fifth annual scooper Bowl Sunday ice cream fundraiser.

Proceeds from the all-you-can-eat ice cream event benefit the Four Diamonds Fund, Hershey Medical Center.

\$3 contributions will be collected at the door.

WHEN: Sunday, January 11, 1998, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Family Corner, 2nd floor, Northeast Building, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg

WHO: Ice Cream and frozen yogurt has been donated by Hershey Creamery Company, Turkey Hill Dairy, and Penn State's University Creamery.

A media ice cream eating contest will take place at noon. Media personalities will be paired with Four Diamonds Fund children in a blindfolded ice cream eating contest.

WHY: The Four Diamonds Fund annual assists more than 350 children with cancer by providing 100% coverage of hospital bills not covered by family medical insurance.

Dairy Bus Tour Set

ERIE (Erie Co.) — A bus tour is planned Thursday, Jan. 22, sponsored by Erie County Cooperative Extension.

The one-day tour will visit three dairy farms in Huntington County, that are in the process of expanding their herds to meet the new challenges in the dairy industry today.

You can meet the bus at two locations. The bus will leave the Meadville Mall at 5 a.m. and the Mercer County Extension Office at 5:45 a.m. The bus should return

to Meadville by 8 p.m. on Jan. 22.

Cost of the tour is \$30 per person for the bus. Registrations must be received by Monday, Jan. 19. You will need to provide your own brown bag lunch. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

Please bring washable rubber boots to help in biosecurity and warm clothes.

For additional information or registration information, contact John Tyson at the Erie County Cooperative Extension Office at (814) 825-0900.

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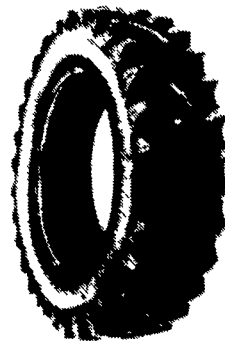
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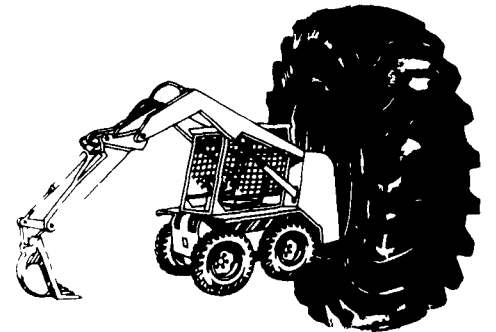


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