

'Blue Print For Success'

(Continued from Page A41)

ketability. It also provides some liability protection.

• "But I've gotten along just fine with my limited records all these years..."

My response may sound harsh, but it's the truth, "Times are changing and so is the beef industry."

To quote from Ken Jordan, director of auctions for Jordan Cattle Auction in Texas, "The train is leaving the station, we better get on board, or we will be left standing at the station."

• "So what kind of records should I keep, and for how long?"

This is a frequently asked question. Most experts recommend keeping records for at least two years after marketing your cattle. Cow-calf producers should keep them a bit longer.

To keep accurate records, first of all, the cattle need to have ear tags for proper identification. Either put your own in, or if your cattle come with tags, they can be used. Observation and sorting are easier and more precise when

you can identify a steer as the blue tagged #123, rather than the black, blaze-faced steer with the white spot on his left rear foot.

Maybe descriptions work for you, but how are you going to record information about that steer by his description?

Your record sheet will need to include the tag ID (in this case B123), treatment date, withdrawal date, diagnosis, temperature, product used, route of administration, dose, how many times treated, and treatment results. Your records should also include date placed on feed, incoming weight and health status, vaccinations, de-worming and implant dates and information as noted above.

If the packer calls and says there was a quality problem with one of your steers, and the hide is already off, how are you going to know which steer it was and more importantly, why you had the problem? You can't even begin to tackle the problem without records and identification.

In most cases, the ear tag would provide the packer a way to identify the steer so you would

know which one was the dark cutter, for instance. Then you could look over the records to help determine why. Your records are the most valuable management tool on your farm.

Another aspect of the Blueprint program is Beef Quality Assurance. An advisory committee is developing a BQA Certification program for PA cattle producers.

• "Why should I become a BQA Certified Producer?"

There are four major reasons.

• The first is the obvious fact that we should all be working together to gain and secure consumer confidence. We should be doing everything in our power to assure a quality and safe product.

• The second is product accountability. The industry-wide trend from commodity to brand name recognition of beef has come about, in part, because consumers look for accountability. Like it or not, the consumer holds us accountable. Following BQA guidelines both protects us and holds us accountable for our part in the production of safe, quality beef.

• The third reason for becoming BQA certified is to make bet-

ter business decisions with the use of good records. The record keeping allows the individual operator to determine which part of his production system may need adjustments or changes.

• Fourth, BQA is economical. The records you keep benefit the management economics of your enterprise, and it helps your lender understand what you're doing. In essence we're building

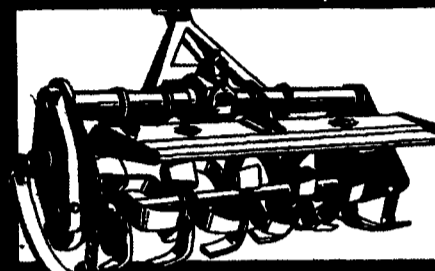
economic value in our industry by using BQA to build consumer confidence that leads to greater demand for beef... which ultimately benefits everyone's bottom line.

*Feedlot Corner
December, 2000
Wendall Landis,*

*BQA Certification Director
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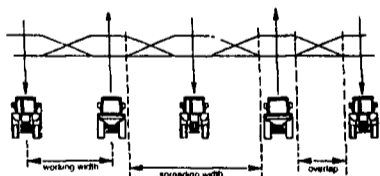


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