

Assuring Beef Quality

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agent. About 25 producers who attended the meeting had a chance to practice giving well-placed shots to heifers.

They also watched a necropsy on a calf that had been injected both correctly and incorrectly at various places on its body.

Dr. Jody Wade of Fort Dodge Animal Health performed the necropsy. He made a strong, clear case for good injection techniques by showing the group a number of tough, discolored lesions on

meat created by misplaced injections in muscle.

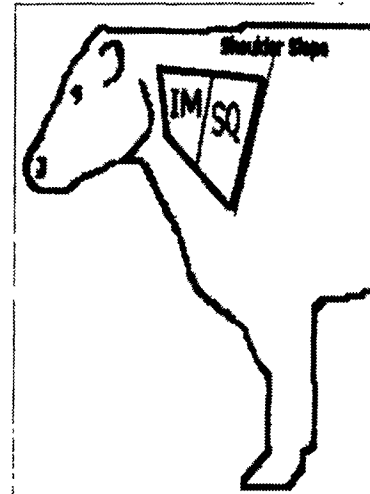
Researchers doing tenderness studies on intramuscular injection sites "had to move four inches away from where the shot was given to get back to normal tissue," Wade said.

Consumers who come across a steak from such a site are likely to be turned off of eating beef, Wade noted. The major problem is "unpleasant dining experiences," he said.

It's not the volume of an injection that ruins beef as much as



During a calf necropsy, Dr. Jody Wade shows a lesion created by an injection in the muscle.



This diagram shows the proper area for injecting cattle intramuscularly (IM) and subcutaneously (SQ). Use the subcutaneous method whenever possible, veterinarians say.



Paul Slayton of the Pennsylvania Beef Council helps Barbara Soga of Kutztown get ready to inject a heifer for practice.

how the shot is placed, according to Wade.

"It's location, location, location," he said.

Dairy farmers need to quit giving shots in the hindquarter muscle and learn to inject subcutaneously (just under the skin) in the triangular area on the upper part of the neck (see picture diagram.) They also need to make sure the needles they use aren't too long — preferably just 3/8-3/4 inch, Wade said. Needle ends should also have a short, not a long, bevel to prevent them from accidentally entering the muscle, according to Wade.

Many drugs formerly used for intramuscular injections are now labeled for subcutaneous use, Wade pointed out. By following the label instructions and locating shots properly, beef quality can be preserved.

"Today, you need to be a very good label reader," he said.

Dairy producers at the meeting took a test in order to become certified under the larger Pennsylvania Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program. Those eligible will receive blue tags for their cattle, signifying producer certification under BQA.

Slayton said the Pennsylvania Beef Council is working with major meat packers to gain recognition of the blue tags as a symbol of reliable, quality beef. The PBC estimates that dairy cull cow market prices can eventually be raised about \$70 a head through dairy farmers gaining packer trust by delivering quality beef to the market on a consistent basis.

About half the beef from dairy

cows goes for whole meat cuts used in foods such as marinated steaks, deli and fast food roast beef, Philly steak sandwiches, and fajitas, according to the PBC.

John Adams of the NMPF said the DBQA program will be expanding in the region based on its success in Pennsylvania.

A DBQA meeting set for Harrisburg in early September will represent the program's official launch. Watch upcoming issues of *Lancaster Farming* for details.

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