

Beef Quality Assurance

The Right Thing to Do for Your Cattle and for Arizona's Cattle Industry

Written by Ashley Wright, Area Assistant Agent, Livestock at University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
Cochise, Pima, and Santa Cruz Counties

Office: 520-384-3594 | Cell: 520-270-7075 | awright134@email.arizona.edu



What is Beef Quality Assurance?

The Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA) is a voluntary program designed to increase consumer confidence in the beef industry. This program is coordinated at the national level, but each state implements BQA in a way that best meets the needs of its producers. In Arizona, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Service manages the Arizona BQA program.

BQA focuses on providing producers with best management practices for all aspects of the cattle

operation: herd health, marketing, record keeping, and cattle handling. These practices are guided by sound scientific knowledge and common sense husbandry and are designed to aid the producer in increasing their profits while maximizing consumer trust in the beef industry.

How did BQA get started?

BQA was originally called "Beef Safety Assurance" and its goal was to prevent violative chemical residues (aka drug residues) in beef. While BQA still includes best management practices for the proper use of drugs and antibiotics, the program has expanded to improve the quality, safety, and wholesomeness of beef throughout every segment of the beef industry.

How can BQA benefit me?

In addition to the benefits seen through implementing improvements in herd health and other operation practices, there is an additional potential economic benefit to becoming a BQA certified producer. In 2019, Colorado State University conducted a research study titled "Effect of Mentioning BQA in Lot Descriptions of Beef Calves and Feeder Cattle Sold Through Video-based Auctions on Sale Price." They reviewed data from 8,815 Western Video Market lots sold in nine western states from 2010-2017. From that data, they determined that producers whose lots mentioned "BQA Certified" received an average premium of \$16.80 per head. When broken down by weight class, premiums averaged as high as \$3.73/cwt for calves averaging 450 lbs./head to \$2.24/cwt for 750 lbs./head.

How can I get certified?

Check out our website, <http://extension.arizona.edu/bqa>, for a list of upcoming in-person certifications and continuing education opportunities. You can also contact your local Cooperative Extension Office or County Ag Agent to find out about opportunities or request a training be held in your area (visit <http://extension.arizona.edu> to find the office in your county). In-person Arizona trainings take approximately 2 hours. Certifications are good for three years and can be renewed by attending continuing education opportunities held throughout the state each year. Certification is also available online through BQA.org.

What other types of BQA certifications are available?

In addition to Cow-Calf (the primary type of certification offered in Arizona), BQA programs are also available for producers who raise and sell feeder cattle (Stocker/Backgrounder) as well as a Feedyard BQA for those who sell fed cattle. BQA Transportation certification is also available for both Farmer/Rancher and Professional Driver. Finally, dairy producers can participate in Dairy FARM, or Dairy Animal Care and Quality Assurance.

Visit BQA.org and <http://extension.arizona.edu/bqa> to learn more!