



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

Beef to School

Connecting Cafeterias and Classrooms with Local Beef and Beef Education

Presenting Author

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Introduction

The general population is becoming further removed from agriculture, with fewer people having direct tie to this industry. Additionally, parents want high-quality and nutritious meals provided for their children in the school cafeteria. By integrating local beef sourcing with hands-on education, Beef to School (B2S) builds a sustainable model that benefits students, schools, and communities while reinforcing the importance of local food systems.

Beef cattle inventory in South Dakota is at 1.4 million head as of Jan. 2025 (USDA NASS) while the human population is 924,669 (2024 US Census). Even given this, many residents are unfamiliar with how beef makes it to their plates. Schools who strive to offer a local product struggle to understand the process of getting this local product integrated into their cafeterias. The B2S program aims to provide information to both parties. A collaborative team from various capstones of SDSU Extension joined together to craft an updated version of the FAQ about Beef to School document and a curriculum that educates youth in grades 3 through 5 about beef production in South Dakota.

Local Beef in School Meal Programs

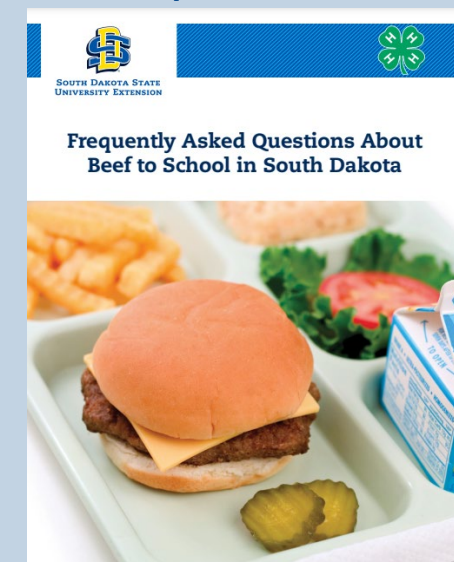
Updated the Frequently Asked Questions about Beef to School

- Completed interviews with experienced school food service directors, beef processors, and support organizations.
- Incorporated lessons learned from interviews into the new publication.
- Distributed the updated version to school food service directors, inspected processors, and other stakeholders.

Original



Updated



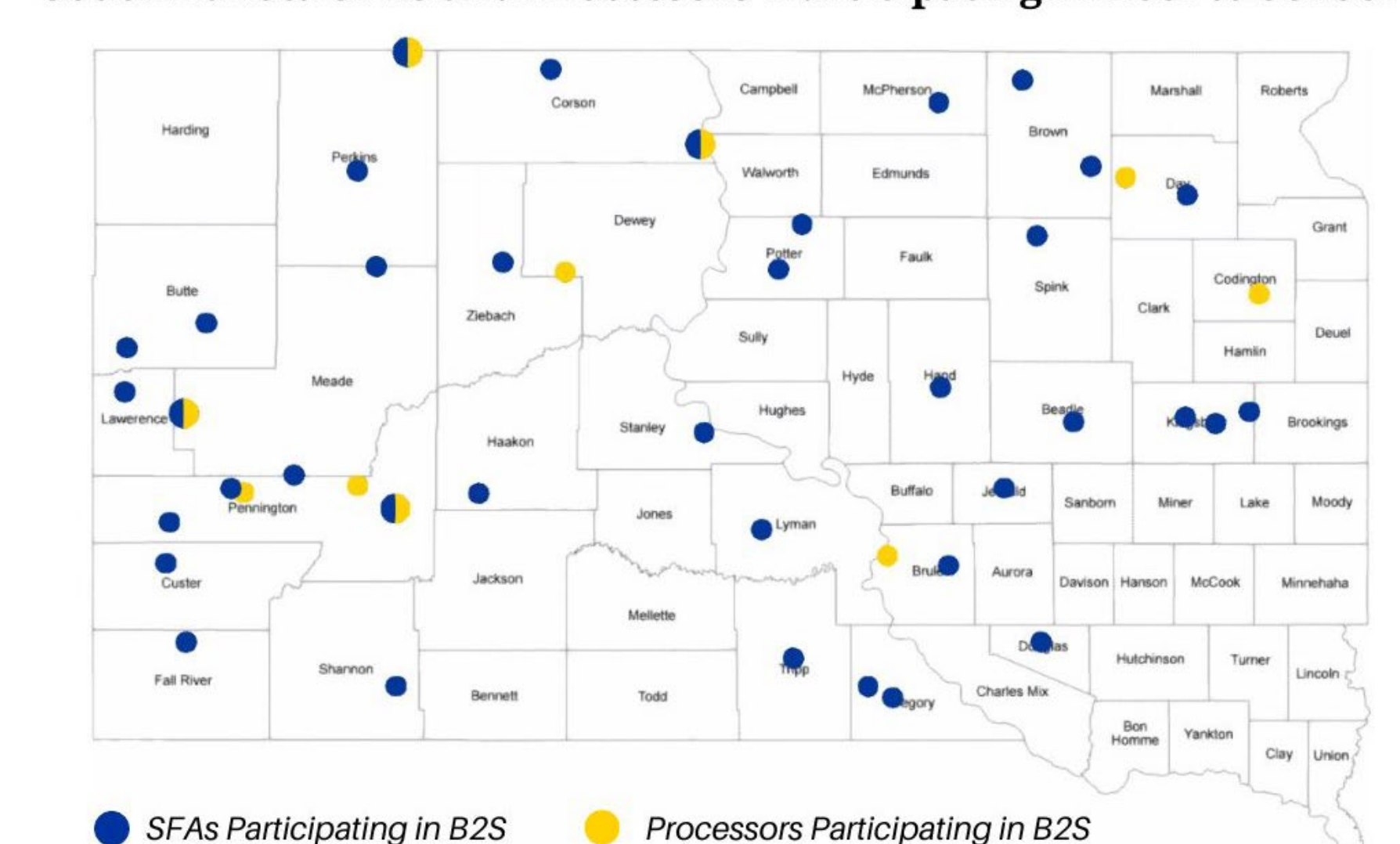
Contents

- Introduction
- Food Safety & Product Labeling
- Incorporating Local Beef into Child Nutrition Program Meals
- Local Beef Donations and Sales

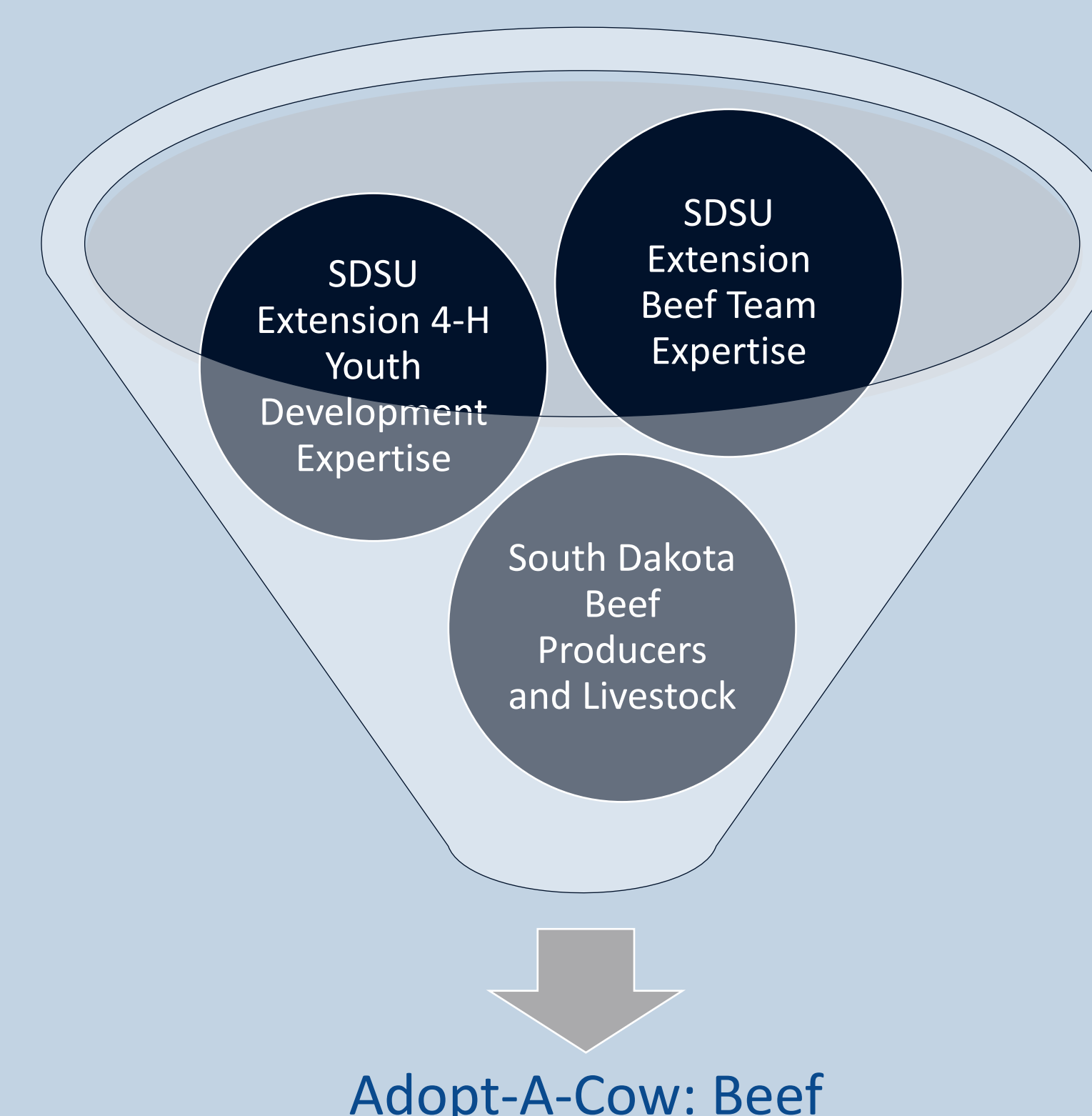
Completed the first SD Beef to School Survey

- Based on the USDA Farm to School Census
- Leveraged funds from a USDA Farm to School Grant in partnership with the SD DOE to hire the Population Health Evaluation Center to write, send, evaluate, and create a survey report.
- Serves as a baseline with plans to repeat annually.

South Dakota SFAs and Processors Participating in Beef to School



Beef Education – Adopt-a-Cow Beef



Adopt-A-Cow lessons address:

- Beef's historical impact on SD
- Beef genetics
- Animal husbandry including vaccinations and antibiotic use
- Rumination and nutritional needs of beef cattle
- Beef biproducts
- Beef related careers and impact on the economy

Adopt-A-Cow includes bonus materials:

- Virtual escape rooms
- A board game
- Children's book recommendations

Adopt-A-Cow's pilot reached

- 7 school districts
- 230 youth



Why Together?

Presenting schools with both the "Frequently Asked Questions about Beef to School" publication and the "Adopt-a-Cow Beef" curriculum equips them to implement local beef in the cafeteria AND local beef education in the classroom, creating strong local beef-to-school programs.

Next Steps

Completed

- Publish new/updated materials.
- Create and complete a B2S survey.
- Send B2S kits to educators statewide.

Ongoing/Upcoming

- Provide training on the materials.
- Evaluate the reach, effectiveness, and impact of the project efforts.
- Create additional videos and curriculum

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