Assessment of Animal Care and Welfare

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- Consumer Perceptions
  - BSE vs. FAD
  - Hallmark / Westland video
  - Activist groups and their cash
  - “Factory / Industrial” farming
  - Urbanization of Population
- Pressure from retailers
Assessment of Animal Care and Welfare

- AW tools have been produced
  Animal Care and Welfare
  Transportation Issues
  Drug use / residue avoidance
  Adoption? Enforcement?

- Emphasis has changed
  Documented BMPs
  3rd Party Verification
Caring for Compromised Cattle

What is a compromised animal?

Any animal with reduced capacity to withstand normal stress

- living, functioning as part of the herd, transportation, etc.
- regardless of cause

a. Fatigue, age extremes (old or young)
b. Injury or other health issues
c. Infirmity, impending parturition

Task is to prevent compromised from becoming “unfit”
Caring for Compromised Cattle

- What is an animal that is “Unfit”?
  An animal that cannot be moved without avoidable suffering
    - Regardless of cause
      a. Injury or poor animal health
      b. Disabled or fatigued
    - This animal must not be loaded for transport
  High probability of not walking off the truck / trailer
    - High risk of becoming a “downer”
Caring for Compromised Cattle

- Decision Making to Prevent the Compromised Animal
  Prevention – biosecurity, herd health, facility design and maintenance
  Observation – several times per day, especially during feeding
  Treatment - treatment protocols in place by organ system
  Separation – compromised animals can’t compete with normal
  Transport – withdrawal times and healthy enough for transport
  Euthanize – would you put this animal in your own freezer?

Caring for Compromised Cattle

- Do not load or transport if:
  Withdrawal time has not cleared
  Extremely thin BCS
  Chronic calves – time in marketing
  Lameness score \( \geq 3 \) (see p. 12)
  Bone fractures (non-weight bearing)
  Extreme arthritis causing lameness
  Fever of 104°F or greater
  Stage 3 cancer eye
  Reproductive – calving or prolapse
  Heart failure, blindness, “Brainer”
Caring for Compromised Cattle

- Compromised animals typically don’t occur acutely

  Understand the most common causes of compromise

  - chronic pneumonia, lameness, bloat, etc.

  BMPs in place to minimize / prevent these conditions

  - treatment protocols, timely observation, bunk management

  BMPs in place to deal with compromised animals

  - reconditioning, needed surgery / medicine, or euthanasia
BQA Feedyard Assessment

- BQA – FA
  On-site educational tool
  Assess and benchmark
  - animal care
  - animal well being
  - feedyard conditions

Focuses on three main areas
  - Animals
  - Records and BMP
  - Facilities / Equipment
BQA Feedyard Assessment

- BQA – FA
  Self assessment
  3rd Party verification
  Repeated periodically
  - comparisons
  - trends over time
  - BMP refined
- Maximize animal well-being and feedyard efficiency

BQA Feedyard Assessment

- BQA – FA should be completed under normal conditions
  Avoid times of disease outbreaks
  Extreme weather conditions or natural disaster
  Unusual animal handling that decreases their well-being
- Forms included to establish protocols or action plans
  Random selection of pens and animals for evaluation
  - yard sheet is useful for selection
  - minimum of 10 pens of cattle assessed
  - need to include processing / receiving / shipping areas
BQA Feedyard Assessment

- BMP Templates included
  - Written protocols / assignments
  - Worst case scenarios
  - Emergency Action Plans

- Should be utilized to improve animal welfare and efficiency
  - independent of evaluation

- Completed prior to assessment

BQA Feedyard Assessment

- BMP Templates include
  - Pen Floor Management
  - Humane Euthanasia
  - Handling of Downer Animals
  - Herd Health Program
  - Biosecurity and Carcass Disposal
  - Medication – injections and oral
  - Receiving, processing, shipping
### Cattle Handling Observation Scoresheet

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### Pen/Equipment Observation Scoresheet

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BQA Feedyard Assessment

- Cattle Handling Benchmarks
  - Electric Prod Use < 10 %
  - Fell at chute release < 2 %
  - Tripped at chute release < 10 %
  - Vocalized in chute < 5 %
  - Jumped / ran on release < 25 %
  - Miscaught w/o adjust 0 %

BQA Feedyard Assessment

- Pen / Equipment Benchmarks
  - Pen space adequate 100 %
  - Pen Mud 70 %
  - Water accessible / clean 70 %
  - Bunks accessible / clean 70 %
  - Based on % of pens not individual animals in the pen
BQA Feedyard Assessment

- Final Assessment of Feedyard
  - Found on pages 3 – 7 of manual
  - different areas are scored
  - need to be “acceptable” in all areas
  - Deficiencies corrected and yard can be re-evaluated ASAP
  - market will determine value

BQA Feedyard Assessment

- Summary
  - Forces outside of agriculture are changing how we produce beef
  - Animal welfare concerns at the consumer level are affecting programs at the retail level
  - Assessment tools offer a way to improve animal welfare, feedyard efficiency, and consumer acceptance