



SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Animal Science

Beef Day 2020

Extension

Beef Quality Assurance Programs

Description

Since January 2018, SDSU Extension has coordinated the various South Dakota Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) programs including BQA certification, BQA Transportation (BQAT) certification, BQA on-farm assessments, and South Dakota BQA Trainer certification. Additionally, as the State BQA Coordinator, assistance is provided to dairymen on the national BQA-equivalent program, Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) Animal Care.

Consumers in the United States and globally are interested in knowing more about their food such as its safety, how it's produced, and how the animals are treated. Cattlemen and dairymen participating in these quality assurance programs demonstrate their commitment to animal care, food safety, and ultimately provide confidence to beef and dairy consumers.

The BQA, BQAT, and FARM programs cover topics including animal handling, veterinary-client-patient relationship, employee training, herd health plans, animal health product management and handling, biosecurity, injection site techniques, transporting animals, weather planning, and risk management for operations and roadways.

BQA: This voluntary certification is for producers, owners, managers, and employees providing care to cattle. Certification is achieved by completing either an online or an in-person course. Certification is valid for three years. There are three online course options: Cow/Calf, Stocker/Backgrounder, and Feedyard. An individual only needs to complete one of these online courses to become certified. South Dakota also certifies veterinarians and SDSU Extension professionals in beef and dairy as BQA Trainers. Trainers may conduct in-person certification trainings for producers. South Dakota BQA Trainer certification is valid for three years.

BQAT: This voluntary certification is for producers and professional transporters that haul cattle. Certification is achieved by completing either an online or an in-person course. Certification is valid for three years. There are two online course options: Farmer/Rancher and Professional Driver. An individual only needs to complete one of these online courses to become certified.

FARM Animal Care: This on-farm evaluation program is for member farms of dairy cooperatives and processors or independent dairies. Evaluations are conducted at least once every three years by a 2nd party FARM Animal Care Evaluator. Farms also participate in a 3rd party random sampling protocol and verification process. Dairies work with their 2nd party FARM Animal Care Evaluator to manage program expectations. An important criterion for this program is all

employees should complete annual training in assigned animal care tasks. Thus managing employee training opportunities is critical.

Highlights or Impacts

BQA: In addition to the State Coordinator, there are currently 27 South Dakota BQA Trainers.

Table 1. Number of individual BQA certifications by year.		
Type of Certification	Oct 2017 – Sep 2018	Oct 2018 – Sep 2019
SD BQA Trainer	23	6
In-person BQA	252	1,878
Online BQA	500	1,080

BQAT: Limited in-person trainings were offered in South Dakota. However, strong promotion of the online BQAT courses were successful to get people certified. Individuals certified in 2018-2019 reported hauling over 78,143 loads of cattle per year and individuals certified in 2017-2018 reported hauling over 178,102 loads per year.

Table 2. Number of individual BQAT certifications by year.		
Type of Certification	Oct 2017 – Sep 2018	Oct 2018 – Sep 2019
In-person BQAT	5	63
Online BQAT	60	203

FARM Animal Care: One on one contact includes training at two dairies regarding FARM Animal Care guidelines with employees and three dairies receiving help writing protocols to meet FARM program expectations. Table 3 shows the number of South Dakota farms participating in the FARM program for each version (as of 11/26/19). The FARM Animal Care program is updated every three years. The FARM V3 participation represents approximately 90% of the total South Dakota dairies.

Table 3. South Dakota dairies participating in each FARM Animal Care version.							
Last Evaluated Under	Total Farms*	Bulls	Calves	Dry Cows	Milk Cows	Weaned Heifers	Total Animals
FARM V1 (2011-13)	50	122	688	1,283	4,203	2,729	9,025
FARM V2 (2014-16)	70	73	708	1,271	11,078	1,911	15,041
FARM V3 (2017-19)	164	211	5,871	13,612	105,690	21,553	146,937

*There is missing data for V1 and V2, so farm totals and animal numbers are underrepresented. Use caution in making direct comparisons across FARM versions.

Contact

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More information about BQA and BQAT certifications: <https://www.bqa.org/>

More information about FARM Animal Care program: <https://nationaldairyfarm.com/>