

Gersh Public Relations

Press Release

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Kentucky Beef Network Plays Key Role in Beef Quality Programs \$2 Million Invested in Electronic Animal ID System

Lexington, Ky. . . The Kentucky Agriculture Development Board has invested \$4 million in the Kentucky Beef Network (KBN) since 2001 to ensure that quality control programs were put in to place in Kentucky's beef industry. The Kentucky Livestock Auction and concentration markets received \$2 million of these funds for development of an electronic animal identification system.

Today, Kentucky is one of a handful of states with a seat on the United States Animal Identification Plan, Species Working Group. This is a national working group that will develop a more precise transition and implementation of the national identification plan.

Following are some of the KBN programs being developed to ensure a quality beef product and to track beef cattle from birth:

ID and Traceability Programs

- The KBN, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, Kentucky Farm Bureau and the Kentucky Livestock Marketing Association formed an issue working group a year ago to work on the implementation of the animal ID and traceability system.
- Kentucky is looked at as a leader in the implementation of an animal tracking model, because there is no other state in the nation as far along as Kentucky in establishing an ID program for tracking cattle.
- The \$2 million received by the Kentucky Livestock Auction and concentration markets are matching funds and will be used for the purchase of computer hard and software equipment as well as scanners, readers and a web based database that will allow 48-hour trace back to the birth farm. The system will begin operation in early 2004.

- ID programs have already been put in place with producers interested in voluntarily identifying their animals with electronic identification tags (EID) and stockyards willing to put scanner and computer systems in place to track animals as they move through the marketing system.
- The KBN provides producers the tools for accurate record keeping and herd assessment and personnel are available to assist with farm records entry and evaluation. Records are the foundation of any product protection program.
- KBN has 13 regional facilitators on the ground in their home areas. These KBN facilitators work one-on-one with area farmers to assist in implementation of quality assurance programs.

Quality of Beef

- Since October, 2001, Kentucky has trained and certified over 8,000 Kentucky beef producers in the “Beef Quality Assurance” program. This program trains beef producers on issues like record keeping for traceability, food safety, bio security and animal management. There are more BQA certified producers in Kentucky than in any other state in the nation.
- CPH 45 (Certified Preconditioned Health) feeder calf sales have expanded dramatically over the past three years. This 20+ year old program is a premium feeder calf management and marketing program that uses unique individual ID and traceability as its cornerstone.

“The Kentucky General Assembly took a very proactive stance and used half of the funds from the tobacco settlement funds for the revitalization of rural Kentucky and the insurance of a productive and safe food supply. Today, everyone realizes the importance of this decision and the benefit it has, not only for beef producers, but for consumers as well,” said Dave Maples, vice president of the Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association.”

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