

Need for Continuing Education in the Fed-Cattle Industry

- Finding skilled employees for beef cattle feeding operations can be a challenge.
- High-quality training and continuing education is essential for beef cattle feeding operation employees producing high quality beef products.

AgriLife Extension's Response

- The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service partners with the Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA) in delivering three programs targeting workforce training and development for the beef cattle feedyard industry – Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) workforce trainings, Feedyard Technician Vocational Program, and the Feedyard Beef Career and Leadership Camp.
- In response to the first National Beef Quality Audit in 1991, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association initiated the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Program to educate beef producers on management practices to ensure production of safe, high-quality beef products. Producers can become BQA certified through the program offered by AgriLife Extension.
- AgriLife Extension provides BQA training programs for TCFA members' employees. Participants receive education and hands-on training to learn about animal health products, feedstuffs, feed additives and medications, care and husbandry practices, and other core practices.
- The Feedyard Technician Vocational Program, certified through the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Career and Technical Education Program, is also a collaboration with West Texas A&M University.

- The program offers two career paths: (1) cattle handling and care, and (2) machinery operation, maintenance, and repair.
- The program delivers education in areas such as basic cattle nutrition, humane cattle-handling practices, daily feedyard responsibilities, cattle processing and care, machinery operation, inspection and safety, welding techniques, shutdown procedures, and other areas.
- In collaboration with West Texas A&M University, the TCFA Feedyard Beef Career and Leadership Camp is available to incoming high school juniors and seniors who have an interest in pursuing a career in feedyard operations and management.
- The three-day camp teaches the students about beef literacy, feedyard operations, anatomy of a beef carcass, problem solving, leadership, consumer tastes and preferences, and marketing yourself to the job market.
- Students also participate in a job shadowing exercise at a local feedyard, and tour a retail meats counter.

Jobs Supported

- Average annual wages for feedyard managers and employees were used to estimate the salary impacts of trained participants who sustain jobs and businesses.
- Job training and continuing education through BQA workforce trainings, Feedyard Technician Vocational Program, and the Feedyard Beef Career and Leadership Camp support a combined 198 Texas jobs, with an annual wage base of \$5.2 million.