

BCRC BEEF SCIENCE CLUSTER

RESEARCH

Facts

IN PROGRESS

Canada's Beef Quality Audit BQU.01.09

Project Title: National Beef Quality Satisfaction Survey and Carcass Audit

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Background: The CCA's "Quality Starts Here" program was developed to help improve issues identified in Canada's 1995 and 1998 carcass quality audits. The Canadian beef industry also conducted national consumer satisfaction surveys in 1995 and 2001. Follow-up studies to determine industry's success in addressing its shortcomings were planned but derailed in the wake of BSE.

Objective: To identify how Canadian beef carcass and eating quality have changed since past audits, and identify production practices that need continued improvement.

Carcass quality audit: Approximately 33,000 youthful and mature cattle and carcasses will be assessed for hide color, brands, horns, tag, bruises, grubs, surface injection site lesions, body condition score, liver abscesses, condemnations, age, weight, ribeye area, grade fat, lean meat yield, and quality grade. Line speeds, intervention strategies, and sources of electrical stimulation will be described. Surface, loin and deep hip temperatures and pH will be also monitored on some carcasses to study cooling rates.

Feedlot to plant survey: Feedlot operators, truckers and processing plants will be surveyed to determine the prevalence of management and shipping practices that may be related to carcass quality defects.

Consumer satisfaction survey: Retail steaks representing different cooking categories, price ranges and portions of the carcass will be purchased across Canada. Up to 1,500 beef consumers will prepare a steak at home and assess tenderness, juiciness, flavor and overall satisfaction. Follow up calls will collect demographic, cooking and product perception information. Another 1,200 steak packages will be evaluated for microbial quality, trim levels, cut weights, cut dimensions, fat and lean color, shear values and chemical composition, and taste panel evaluation of tenderness, juiciness, and flavor.

Implications: These results will form the basis of an industry strategy to market the Canadian Beef Advantage, to develop applied research plans, and to correct deficiencies through industry communication and education programs (e.g. CCA's Quality Starts Here / Verified Beef Production™).

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