



November 24, 2017

NO MEAT IS HORMONE FREE

There was a beef meeting in Beatrice at Southeast Community College (SCC) last week that caught my attention with Dr. Dan Thomson DVM and faculty member at KSU. Dr. Thomson is a third-generation veterinarian who was raised in Clearfield, Iowa and is recognized internationally as a leader in beef cattle production and health management. He really captivated his audience that evening about the current state of affairs within the beef industry and the entire food chain. I wish more of our cow-calf producers could have heard him and was glad that many of the SCC animal science students were able to.

One example given was the added hormone use in the beef industry today and the 15% advantage in feed efficiency. He cautions not to go backwards to 1950 technology. If you eliminated the use altogether, we would need to raise more corn on more land the size of New York State. He referenced normal estrogenic activity of common foods in nanograms (ng) per 8 ounce serving. Tofu is 51,483,600; white bread is 136,080; peanuts are 43,360; eggs are 252; milk is 15; beef from an implanted steer is 3 and beef from non-implanted steer is 2. An adult man produces 136,000 ng per day and a non-pregnant woman produces 513,000 ng per day. Do today's consumers of beef really understand the argument over one nanogram on a product label? No meat is hormone free.

All you meat lovers will be glad to hear Dr. Thomson say that steroid implants have no effect on beef quality. More importantly, though, the meat is safe. The technology has been used since 1954 and there are strict guidelines and regulations in place to assure that neither human health nor animal health is negatively impacted.

Thomson said when compared to meat and milk that come from animals raised without hormones, the difference is....there is none. The USDA, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Journal of Clinical Nutrition have all stated that beef from natural and organic programs is not safer, more nutritious, more wholesome or different in appearance compared to beef from animals that have received steroid implants. He said, "Aside from cooking the burgers at your next barbecue to the proper internal temperature, there's no need for you to stress about the quality of regular beef and hormone-free beef!"

Another point of emphasis was more judicious antibiotic use in the future by the beef industry. Several examples were given how preconditioning cattle before coming into a feedyard are healthier. "Would you rather pay the beef producer or pay more to the pharmaceutical industry," he said.

He emphasized the importance for cattle producers to attend Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) trainings. Thomsen really feels every beef producer should keep up to date and attend a BQA training every 3 years because technology changes and the beef industry changes. Rob Eirich of Nebraska Extension and director of the BQA program for Nebraska Cattlemen will be teaching Tuesday, December 12, 2017 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. at the Jefferson County 4-H Building in Fairbury and 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Civic Center, 601 Bradford Street, Seward. Pre-registration is required by December 8, 2017 by contacting your local extension office.



Eirich will be presenting BQA Best Management Practices, Animal Health Stewardship and information on the new Veterinary Feed Directive and Beef Inventory Survey. All producers are invited to attend these free meetings. The meetings will also be a BQA certification for those producers needing certification or recertification. There is a \$20.00 fee for those wanting to become BQA certified/recertified, which is good for a three-year time period.

For more information, contact Rob Eirich at 308-632-1230 or reirich2@unl.edu. Registration is one-half hour prior to each session.

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