

Fenceline
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Perceptions!

Our KSU barbecue workshop was a great time! The food was great and the conversations were even greater. One participant asked if we feed "steroids" to cattle. You may scoff, but if that perception is out there, we as beef producers have a problem. I was glad to have my display there, "Growth Promotants in Beef cattle". On display I had an implant gun that puts the 3 small pellets under the skin, on the backside of the ear of the calf. People are amazed how small the pellets really are. I guess when they hear about "implants" they seem to think of women and breast implants, needless to say they are expecting something much larger! I also had with the display some jars of M & M's that represent the amounts of estrogen that naturally occur in cabbage, peas, potatoes and a serving of beef. It is surprising to people that cabbage has the most.

Currently there are more than 30 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved growth promotant products marketed in the United States. We've had these products for over 50 years, to raise beef with fewer natural resources. Growth promotants can be fed with other feed or a small implant is inserted under the skin in the animal's ear. These growth promotants are used by the body before the cattle are harvested.

Before growth promotants are approved to be used, they go through a stringent multi-step, multi-year approval process with rigorous studies, including human and animal health studies. The use of growth promotants improves cattle growth rates, doubling our beef production from 13.2 billion pounds to 27 billion pounds, while decreasing the amount of land used for growing corn and roughage to feed cattle by 16 percent.

These products have also made today's beef leaner, with decreased carcass fat from 35 percent to 27 percent.

Hats off to our beef producers, as Beef Month closes, let's all celebrate and barbecue some beef!