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May is Beef Month!

May is Beef Month!! Beef Month is a time to celebrate the community of farmers and ranchers who work hard every day to raise safe and nutritious beef that is enjoyed by consumers around the world. The U.S. beef production system used to be inefficient- cattle were moved around based on the location of grass at any given time.

The first widespread early cattle feed yards in the nation were built by cottonseed oil-mill operators in the 1850s to utilize mill by-products.

Around 1914, due to a drop in number of cattle, we started feeding cattle at earlier age, which resulted in higher-quality meat.

Now we are exporting beef all over the world. Our top U.S. beef exports markets (including variety meat) for 2016 (in order);

Japan: 258,653 metric tons; \$1,510 million, Mexico: 242,373 metric tons; \$975 million, South Korea: 179,280 metric tons; \$1,059 million, Canada: 116,266 metric tons; \$758 million, Hong Kong: 112,770 metric tons; \$684 million, Middle East: 104,488 metric tons; \$216 million

Top 5 states that raise cattle and calves as of Jan. 1, 2017:

Texas – 12.3 million, Nebraska - 6.45 million, Kansas – 6.4 million, California - 5.15 million
Oklahoma - 5 million

Top 5 states for cattle in feedlots with capacity more than 1,000 head as of Jan. 1, 2017³: Texas - 2.42 million, Nebraska - 2.37 million, Kansas - 2.17 million, Colorado - .900 million, Iowa - .600 million.

A large part of the beef industry's job involves making sure that beef is safe and wholesome for consumers. Beef Quality Assurance began as an effort to ensure that violative chemical residues were not present in marketed beef. Originally called "Beef Safety Assurance," the program's early emphasis was on assuring the real and perceived safety of beef. However, BQA has become much more than a safety assurance program. Today, BQA programming is expanding with information to help producers implement best management practices that improve both quality grades and yield grades of beef carcasses. Previous National Beef Quality Audits have summarized that the number one leverage point to improve competitiveness and regain market share was to improve beef quality, uniformity and consistency. Additionally, the sectors that sell beef products indicated that improvements were needed in tenderness, palatability and a reduction in excess trimmable fat.

Many consumers are familiar with quality grades and may make purchasing decisions based on quality grades at retail. But, within the consumer atmosphere the term "quality" can be confusing. Consumers and even producers often find it difficult to distinguish between the various and different ways to define "quality" with regard to beef.