

# **Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Training and Certification Requirement**

Ron Lemenager, Matt Claeys, Phil Reid, Nick Minton  
Purdue Animal Sciences Extension  
8-20-18

***All producers supplying “fed cattle” to Tyson must be BQA certified after January 1, 2019.***

Purdue University Extension in cooperation with the Indiana Board of Animal Health, Indiana Beef Council, Indiana Beef Cattle Association, and the beef cattle auction markets located across the state will host a series of 14 face-to-face training and certification programs to assist producers in becoming Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certified. Light snacks, but no meals, are planned for most locations.

*Background:* Consumer demands and expectations drive the marketplace, and beef is not immune from this fact. In response to consumer demand by food service companies for more beef quality assurance, Tyson (no. 1 beef processor of fed cattle in the U.S.) has adopted the requirement for all suppliers of fed cattle to be BQA certified by January 1, 2019. Tyson does not process cull cows, cull bulls, or any dairy cattle. Therefore, only suppliers of fed cattle are required to become BQA certified at this time if they expect Tyson to be a competitive bidder on their cattle. Additionally, National Beef Packing Co. (no. 4 beef processor) has said they will implement the same requirements as Tyson.

After January 1, 2019, Tyson and National Beef buyers will only accept cattle from BQA certified producers. This means that cattle feeders selling direct to either Tyson or National Beef must be BQA certified, and have a copy of their BQA certificate and BQA number on file with their respective processor. Producers selling fed cattle through an auction market that supplies cattle to either Tyson or National Beef will need to have a copy of their BQA certificate and BQA number on file at the auction market. For those producers selling “freezer beef” processed through an Indiana State Inspected plant, they are not required to be certified at this time, however, becoming BQA certified would assist in explaining how management practices ensure a safe and wholesome beef product.

At this time, Cargill (no. 3 beef processor) has said they will require 90% of their beef suppliers to be BQA certified, however, a date for that requirement has not been established. The regional branch of JBS (no. 2 beef processor) servicing the Indiana market has not publically announced a date, but are moving toward requiring BQA certification of “all” producers supplying live cattle to their plants (including cull cows and bulls, as well as dairy) in the future. Aurora Pack, American Foods Group (Green Bay Dressed Beef, no. 15 processor), Creekstone Packing, and Iowa Premium all encourage and support BQA certification, but are not requiring producer BQA certification at this time (8-20-18).

*Auction Markets Have Two Options:* 1) require all fed cattle suppliers be BQA certified to sell in the auction; or 2) announce from the auction block during the sale which cattle are, and which cattle are not sourced from a BQA certified supplier. Regardless of which option is used at an individual auction market, non-BQA certified producers should expect a discount for their cattle as a result of reduced bidding competition in the marketplace.

*Anticipation:* We anticipate that there will be a domino and trickle-down effect as it pertains to an increased participation of beef processors requiring cattle suppliers to become BQA certified. Our anticipation is that many auction markets will ultimately require all suppliers of fed cattle be BQA certified to avoid marketplace discount for all fed cattle clientele, as well as simplifying BQA verification during the course of the sale. It is also anticipated that feedlots selling cattle to either Tyson or National Beef will begin requiring their feeder calf suppliers (cow-calf or background/stocker operations) to also be BQA certified to maximize animal health, well-being, and marketability. Therefore, one should anticipate in the future that cow-calf and background operations selling feeder cattle (weanlings or pre-conditioned calves will need to become BQA certified. Likewise, cow-calf operations selling cull cows and cull bulls should assume they will need to

become BQA certified in the future. It's important to note that these are our anticipations and, therefore, are unable to provide dates or times at this point.

***BQA Certification:*** We have been told by Tyson Headquarters that they will accept state face-to-face BQA certification programs, any of the three on-line BQA certification modules (feedlot, stocker, or cow-calf) offered through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the dairy FARM certification program, and the Youth Quality Assurance (YQA) certification program for those producers less than 18 years of age. Special Note: ***BQA certification is good for a three year period.***

The Indiana BQA face-to-face training and certification program includes cow-calf, stocker, and feedlot elements to ensure that "all beef producers" will have the credentials to market animals in the future as more processors incorporate the BQA requirement. **Beef Quality Assurance training and certification are free and will be approximately two hours in length.** Producers from Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, and Ohio that market their cattle across state lines can be certified at these face-to-face meetings to meet BQA requirements.

Only one person in each operation is required to be certified, but they are responsible to make sure all personnel and employees in their operation follow the BQA standards. Everyone in the operation that handles and manages fed cattle are, therefore, encouraged to become BQA certified.

### What is BQA?

Beef Quality Assurance is a nationally coordinated, state implemented program that provides systematic information to U.S. beef producers and beef consumers of how common sense husbandry techniques can be coupled with accepted scientific knowledge to raise cattle under optimum management and environmental conditions. BQA guidelines are designed to make certain all beef consumers can take pride in what they purchase - and can trust and have confidence in the entire beef industry.

BQA programs have evolved to include best practices around good record keeping and protecting herd health, which can result in more profits for producers. When better quality cows leave the farm and reach the market place, the producer, packer, and consumer all benefit. When better quality beef reaches the supermarket, consumers are more confident in the beef they are buying, and this increases beef consumption.

The efforts of BQA across the nation have been instrumental in recent successes that continue to rebuild and sustain beef demand. Through BQA programs, producers recognize the economic value of committing to quality beef production at every level - not just at the feedlot or packing plant, but within every segment of the cattle industry.

### The guiding principles of BQA are based on these core beliefs

- WE BELIEVE production practices affect consumer acceptance of beef.
- WE BELIEVE the BQA Program has and must continue to empower beef producers to improve the safety and wholesomeness of beef.
- WE BELIEVE these fundamental principles are the fabric of the BQA Program.

For more information, or for on-line BQA certification as an alternative to face-to-face certification: <https://www.bqa.org>

## Indiana Beef Quality Assurance Training and Certification Schedule

**Pre-registration is highly encouraged so we can ensure appropriate accommodations and to speed the on-site registration process and printing of certificates. Please go to: INBQA.com to pre-register on your computer or smart phone. Thank you in advance.**

Location	Date/Time <sup>a,b</sup>	Contacts for Questions
<b>Stewart Seeds</b> 2230 E. Co. Rd 300 N, Greensburg, IN 47240	Tue., Oct. 23, 6:30-8:30 pm Sat. Oct. 27, 9:00-11:00 am	Andrew Stewart (Stewart Select Angus, 812-614-4867); Mary Rodenhuis (Purdue Extension, 317-412-4131)
<b>Southern Hills Church</b> 1645 Hwy 135 Salem, IN 47167	Mon., Oct. 8, 6:30-8:30 pm Thu., Nov. 1, 6:30-8:30 pm	Ryan Batt (United Producers, Inc., 812-752-4222); Purdue Extension (Danielle Walker, 812-620-4726 and Ophelia Davis, 812-275-4623)
<b>Purdue University</b> Creighton Hall of Animal Sciences, Rm 1042; 270 S. Russell St., W. Lafayette, IN 47907	Sat., Oct. 13, 9:00-11:00 am Tue., Oct. 30, 6:30-8:30 pm	Ron Lemenager (Purdue Extension, 765-494-4817); Phil Reid (Purdue Extension, 765-496-7370)
<b>Fulton County Extension Office</b> 1009 W. Third St., Rochester, IN 46975-7119	<b>Pre-registration required at this site.</b> Tue., Oct. 16, 6:30-9:00 pm Thu., Nov. 1, 6:30-9:00 pm	Vince Hoffman (Rochester Sale Barn, 574-223-2615); Mark Kepler (Purdue Extension, 574-223-3397)
<b>Parke County Fairgrounds</b> 1472 N. U.S. Highway 41, Rockville, IN 47872	Thu., Oct. 4; 6:30-8:30 pm Thu., Oct. 18; 6:30-8:30 pm	Bill Eberle (Indianapolis Stockyards; 765-569-0611); Jim Luzar (Purdue Extension, 812-236-6039)
<b>Shipshewana Auction, Inc.</b> Antique/Misc. Auction Building, 345 S. Van Buren St. Shipshewana, IN 46565	Thu., Oct. 11; 6:30-8:30 pm Sat., Oct. 20; 9:00-11:00 am	Keith Lambright (Shipshewana Livestock Auction, 260-336-6008) Steve Engleking (Purdue Extension 260-499-6334)
<b>Southern Indiana Purdue Agricultural Center (SIPAC)</b> Conference Room, 11371 E. Purdue Farm Road, Dubois, IN 47527	Tue., Oct. 9; 6:30-8:30 pm Thu., Oct. 25; 6:30-8:30 pm	Dan Ashley (United Producers, Inc., 812-890-2616); Purdue Extension (Nick Minton 812-797-7944 and Sadie Davis 812-381-2271) ; Jason Tower (SIPAC 812-678-4427)
<b>Indiana Beef Cattle Association (IBCA) Convention</b> Sheraton North, 8787 Keystone Crossing, Indianapolis, IN 46240	Sat. Jan. 26; 8:45-10:45 am	Joe Moore (IBCA Exec. VP); Purdue Extension (Ron Lemenager 765-427-5972 and Sadie Davis 812-381-2271)

<sup>a</sup> Producers only need to attend one meeting lasting approximately two hours. BQA certification is good for 3 yr.

<sup>b</sup> Producers can go online at <https://www.bqa.org> and become certified as an alternative to these face-to-face meetings.

