



VPP Beef Niche Market Cow earns a premium - BCS #3

DQC
Dairy Quality Center
a Division of Agri-Education, Inc.

BEEF TRIM



Unworthy of selling into the VPP Beef Niche Market - BCS #1

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Southwest Region

Cows, Technology and Dedication

Who would have believed that people would pay to visit a dairy? The Fair Oaks Farms in Indiana is wildly popular and ever expanding! They are almost overrun by people wanting to see and learn how their food is produced. Adventures abound from the "Birthing Barn" to the "Grass to Glass" milking parlor. Guests can purchase food, enjoy live music, climb rock walls and more!

Meanwhile, back at the dairy - you too have a great story to share. No, you don't have to open up your barns for thousands of tourists but every little bit you do to promote transparency, integrity, etc. is great. Explain that you have voluntarily enrolled in a pre-harvest quality program, (Verified Premium Plus) utilizing a licensed veterinarian. This is an annual audit!

Your role and image as the milk producer has with it an increased risk - the need to share what and how you produce milk. How can consumers continue to earn your trust? They want to know you, your goals, understand your dedication to the cows and to the people that are working for you.

How will consumers know that you produce their food every day? Remind them how you keep animals healthy while increasing milk production (which is intriguing to consumers!)

Consumers want to know you have a working relationship with your veterinarian. That you keep your animals healthy and manage any pain they may experience.

Enlighten them with the fact that milk production is more than an 8 am to 5 pm /five day a week commitment. How can you explain that maintaining herd health is optimum for you, your cows and also for them? Educate consumers that you too are focusing on reduced use of antimicrobials - by keeping the cows healthy you reduce inputs costs and reduce the risk of illegal residues in their food.

The DQ Center provides you with an avenue to communicate with consumers- risk free! People desire to know how their food is produced. What better way for you to share information on food production?

Modern food production practices are increasingly built around technology and innovations. For example: robotic milking machines, automatic calf feeders, thermometers capturing and recording milk temperatures, self propelled feed pushers, code accessed/thumb scanned supply rooms, cameras capturing body condition scores, record systems that can capture the amount of time a cow eats, rests, her heat cycles, unexpected changes in routines; improved breeding choices for polled genetics, sexed semen, traits for healthier calves and more.

Why does your milk market offer premiums for quality milk components, and your beef packer for quality carcasses? The Verified Premium Plus pre-harvest audit by a veterinarian, along with age and source information, enables you to earn a premium for your dairy beef. This process documents responsible production practices for you, for the retailers, and for consumers. Animal care/welfare, herd health, milk production are key. Not to mention improvements in genetics, nutrition and rations to meet the changing needs of the cow's life cycle. Describe for consumers the attention and dedication required from everyone at the dairy to produce food.

The DQ Center is setting up a webpage for you to explain what you do. Check it out at www.bovinebuzz.com. You can:

- Provide details of a typical day on your dairy
- Share the joy of a healthy new heifer
- Express the pride you have in your family and dairy team
- Reveal activities with your local schools, community groups, clubs

(You will need to send your comments, photos, etc. to www.agri-ed.com to be posted on the webpage).

You ask, why should I be proactive and authentic? Answer: So consumers have confidence in you, in your cows, and in their food - your milk and lean beef!

