

BEEF MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

Highland Beef Research Project Underway

As the last of our cattle are moved from their summering pastures to the home farm for the winter, we are reminded of the changing of the season. Although change is sometimes greeted with apprehension, change can also bring exciting new opportunities and learning. For all members of the American Highland Cattle Association the changing of this season brings an unprecedented opportunity for new knowledge about the animals that we produce, raise, care for and respect.

In previous communications at the annual meeting, through *The Bagpipe* and email blasts, you know that the AHCA Beef Marketing Committee has been working with the Highland Cattle Foundation to secure funding to carry out scientifically based research on Highland beef. It has been a careful and thoughtful process designed to ensure both that the Foundation's funds are well spent in the best interests of its constituents and that the results of the study allow us to share important empirical information about the attributes of Highland beef.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Highland Cattle Foundation and University of Missouri has been signed, consummating the relationship between the two and allowing the submission of beef samples to be sent to Dr. Wiegand for scientific measurement of lipids, tenderness and palatability. Steaks will be: 1) tenderness tested using the Warner-Bratzler Shear Force; 2) taste tested by a consumer panel using a Triangle Test; and 3) steaks and ground beef will have a Fatty Acid Profile. The submission form with guidelines can be downloaded from AHCA's website www.highlandcattleusa.org or contact AHCA. The mandatory criteria listed on the form is:

- All animals must be purebred Highland and steers or heifers.
- All animals must be state or federal inspected.
- All animals must be slaughtered between 18 and 36 months of age.
- All animals have been raised and handled in a humane manner.
- No added hormones, anabolic steroids or sub therapeutic feed antibiotics have been applied/fed to the animals.
- Ground beef will be sent in one pound units. Samples will be from a single animal and not have added trim from other animals.
- Two ribeye steaks will be sent for analysis. Steaks should be boneless, one inch thick and cut from the 12th rib portion of the rib and moving forward toward the 11th rib. Each steak shall be labeled as the 12th rib (A) or the 11th rib (B) steak. Steaks need to be packaged in butcher paper with frost guard, vacuum bag or heavy plastic film wrap.
- Producers will collect ribeye steaks and/or ground beef samples from the plant which processed their cattle. You may send steaks, ground beef or both.
- Only one sample of steaks and one package of ground beef may be sent from each animal.
- The original copy of both pages of the submission form should be sent with the sample and you should keep a copy for your records. Also, send AHCA (22 S. 4th Ave., Ste. 201, Brighton, CO 80601) copies of both pages to

receive your \$15/sample shipping reimbursement. Steaks and/or ground beef from one animal is considered one sample for shipping reimbursement. Reimbursements will be processed within 2 weeks of receipt.

- Samples can only be received at the University of Missouri from Tuesday-Friday. The lab is not responsible for samples arriving Saturday-Monday. Samples can be fresh or frozen. Samples must be shipped on dry ice or in approved shipping containers by the carrier of the producer's choice. Producers must email Dr. Wiegand (wiegandb@missour.edu) when they intend to ship samples.

I hope you are as excited about this venture as we on the AHCA Beef Marketing Committee and Highland Cattle Foundation Board are and thank you for your input and support. The Committee is looking forward to meeting together in Denver to develop new initiatives for the coming year. If there are areas or ideas that you feel are important for the Committee to address, please feel free to let any of the members know.

In the coming year we look forward to as many members as possible submitting samples and procuring with the assistance of Dr. Wiegand and the University of Missouri, hard data on what we (and our customers) already believe... that Highland beef is premium meat, the best beef on the planet!

AHCA Beef Marketing Committee

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