

March 27, 2003

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To whom it may Concern:

I am responding to the article that I read in the March 2003 issue of the Missouri Ruralist, where you asked for comments about suggestions for the USDA certification and /or audit programs. Here are my comments:

All certified programs should have a verification process. Farms selling to these markets should be able to backup their claims with a paper trail and DNA blood work from the bulls and/or cowherd. The producers should be liable for misrepresentation. There should be random testing to verify the producer's claims. Strict penalties should be imposed if misrepresentations are found.

An example of what I mean is-- if you have a registered bull breeding a crossbred cowherd, the calves produced from that bull would be eligible to be sold under that bull's breed. Or, if you have a mixed breed bull breeding a mixed breed cowherd, it should be noted that's what is being produced, beef and there's nothing wrong with it, no claims of any certain breed, just selling beef.

The public should be informed as to what the claims mean. For example:

Certified Angus beef is very misleading to the public. The public thinks that they are eating all Angus beef. According to the Certified Angus Beef web site, www.certifiedangusbeef.com, below are some quotes.

" How do I participate in the CAB program?

The certified angus beef carcass target is generally the highest value and most logical product target for most cattle that are of at least 50% angus genetics."

"How do I certify my angus herd?

No herds are certified and no living animals are actually certified Angus beef. That is the trademark for Angus beef product that, that meeting the live specification of being at least 51% black-hided, and eight carcass specifications, one being a quality grade of middle Choice or higher.

Now lets zero-in on these facts: **51% Black-hided**, and quality grade of choice or higher. Is that what makes qualified Certified Angus Beef? In today's beef market do you know how many different breeds of cattle now have black-hided lines and can make that quality grade; even some Holsteins can come out 51% black.

Black is not a breed but a gene "homozygous." This does not produce good marbling, good taste, or tenderness. But according to the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) it must. So let's rename this to "Certified Black Beef" or (CBB). When I tell people that this is the qualification for certified Angus beef, they can't believe how misleading it is!

I am sure this is not the only certified beef program that is this way. I hope to see marketing techniques like this change. Thank you for asking for my viewpoint,

Sincerely,

Jeff and Jeanne Hogan

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