

Raise Your Grade

Feb. 5 conference in Springfield, Ill., focuses on how to raise high-grading beef.

Beef cattle producers in Illinois and the Midwest are in a unique position to supply the demand of high-quality beef. Resources that make this possible include a large supply of feed grains, genetics,

smaller feedlots that can feed for a specific end point and a large population of consumers. However, to produce a white-tablecloth product, all segments of the industry must stay focused and

incorporate all the technologies available.

Most of these technologies will be discussed at a conference Thursday, Feb. 5, titled "Producing High-Quality-Grading Beef." This conference will be at the

Extension Building on the Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield, and will include a series of specialists throughout the Midwest covering topics from conception to harvest, says Dave Seibert, animal systems educator with the University of Illinois (U of I) Extension.

Headlining the program will be Twig Marston, Kansas State University (K-State) beef specialist. Marston will cover the effect on the beef cow herd of selecting for marbling.

Also headlining the program will be John Brethour, beef cattle scientist at K-State's Agricultural Research Center, Hays, Kan. Brethour will discuss how to utilize ultrasound technology in producing high-quality beef. Brethour developed the ultrasound technology for evaluating meat quality in cattle and was proclaimed the winner of the National Angus Carcass Challenge (NACC) Best of *the* Breed (BoB) contest that resulted in a \$100,000 award.

Steve Suther, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) industry information director, will discuss reasons why many cattle don't qualify for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) and the need to increase the percentages of CAB-accepted cattle to fill future demand.

John Lawrence, livestock marketing specialist and director of the Iowa State University Iowa Beef Center, will discuss assessing the cost of beef quality. And Jim Gibb, general manager of Frontier Beef Systems of Louisville, Colo., will review the application of DNA technology to identify marbling.

U of I meats specialists Tom Carr and Floyd McKeith will cover marbling, how to manipulate it, and the effects of stress on marbling. U of I beef specialists Dan Faulkner and Doug Parrett will discuss the effect of early weaning on quality grade and utilizing beef cattle selection to increase marbling and tenderness. Paul Walker, beef cattle professor from Illinois State University, will discuss the effect of implant and ractopamine on quality grade. Dave Seibert will present the 2000 National Beef Quality Audit and assess where we are in meeting goals of beef quality assurance (BQA).

Co-sponsors of the conference include U of I Extension, Illinois Beef Association, Illinois Soybean Association/Illinois Soybean Checkoff Board, Illinois Corn Marketing Board and the Senator Simon E. Lantz Memorial Lecture fund. The conference will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at 4 p.m.

Registration for the seminar is \$13, which includes a meal and handouts. Late and at-door registration will be \$18. The deadline for reservations is Friday, Jan. 30. Reservations can be made through the East Peoria Extension Center at (309) 694-7501.

For additional information on the program, or for a copy of the program, contact Seibert at the East Peoria Extension Center, 727 Sabrina Dr., East Peoria, IL 61611; (309) 694-7501; or dseibert@uiuc.edu.