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BQA Program Membership Sets New Record

The Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance Program announced Monday that the organization's current membership numbers have surged, reaching 4,000 this year. The organization's membership, comprised of beef producers statewide, grows at an annual rate of 10 percent.

The Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance Program focuses on ensuring consistency in beef all along the production line, beginning with the raising of healthy animals. To do so, the program emphasizes veterinary involvement, product quality, responsibility and stewardship.

"It's in our utmost interest to produce the best beef in the world," said Michael Kelsey, executive vice president of the Nebraska Cattlemen.

Through efforts of the program and its members to produce high-quality beef, the Nebraska beef industry has been well-represented and recognized at the national level. Registration in the Nebraska program also enables members to participate in the national program. In 2009, Anne Burkholder, Cozad, was awarded the national program's first ever National Beef Quality Assurance Producer Award.

The voluntary Nebraska program began more than 20 years ago, when beef producers across the state had a desire to address consistency issues in beef products.

"This also gave us an opportunity to address, exemplify [and] establish some standards that allow us to share with our consumer exactly what we do and how we do preparing, producing and raising our product," Kelsey said.

To become certified in the program, beef producers complete an educational program that allows them to learn from experts in the field on topics including standards to treat, feed, house, medicate, care for and transport beef animals. Those who complete the program receive a two-year certification.