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RETAILERS LAUD BEEF INDUSTRY'S MEAT DEPARTMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

Interactive Beef Training Camp Improves Service, Merchandising at the Meat Case

DENVER (July 13, 2005) —Beef Training Camp, the popular training program funded by the Beef Checkoff Program, is designed to give participating retailers a competitive edge in the fresh meat case, is close to marking its first anniversary in September. After nearly a year in action, Beef Training Camp is considered a very comprehensive retail training program in the meat industry, earning praise from retailers across the country.

Comprising of several convenient training tools, Beef Training Camp helps retailers of all sizes enhance their meat departments by providing guidance for improving beef merchandising at the meat case. The program is unique in that participating retailers have the opportunity to tailor training topics and activities to specifically address issues and challenges facing their meat departments and employees. Additionally, the modular nature of the program allows retailers to train for an extended period of time.

“The Beef Training Camp program enables retailers to shape their beef knowledge to better drive traffic to the meat case and help increase sales,” said Randy Irion, director, retail marketing, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), which manages the program on behalf of the Cattlemen’s Beef Board and state beef councils. “We created this program for retailers and their meat departments to help maximize beef merchandising and sales through employee education.”

Utilizing a universal sports theme in program materials, Beef Training Camp provides participating retailers with a detailed instructional manual, training video and interactive CD-ROM. These resources cover a variety of information on beef-related topics including consumer trends, cooking methods, nutritional value, in addition to consumer and retail food safety practices.

“Beef Training Camp has helped us educate our store-level staff to best meet our customers’ needs,” said Mark Doucette, meat merchandising execution manager, Big Sky Area, Albertsons. “This program provided us with resources that have helped strengthen our meat department and utilize all opportunities for enhanced beef marketing and promotion.”

Participating retailers also have the opportunity to request a live training seminar to supplement the Beef Training Camp materials. Seminars, coordinated and facilitated by the NCBA, State Beef Councils or by individual retailers, run approximately four hours for any given session and include the opportunity for hands-on cooking demonstrations (if the facility permits.)

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“Beef Training Camp was extremely educational,” said David Whatley, director of meat operations for Associated Grocers Inc. of Baton Rouge, La., which supplies 300-plus independent retailers throughout Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, East Texas and Southern Arkansas. Whatley hosted the program for 80 of his retailers in October 2004. “The interactive nature of the program provided resources that most store-level people are rarely exposed to. It’s an outstanding program.”

Additionally, in April 2005, the program was awarded the 2005 International Association of Culinary Professionals' (IACP) Award of Excellence under the category of Consumer Education and Communications Materials during the IACP's annual conference in Dallas.

Retailers interested in conducting Beef Training Camp sessions should visit the beef checkoff's retail Web site, www.BeefRetail.org or contact their local State Beef Council.

Beef Training Camp is funded by the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) and managed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). For additional questions, please contact Randy Irion at 312-670-9403 or at ririon@beef.org.

* The Beef Checkoff Program is funded by America's Beef Producers through the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the federation of State Beef Councils.

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The Beef Checkoff Program was established as part of the 1985 Farm Bill. The checkoff assesses \$1 per head on the sale of live domestic and imported cattle, in addition to a comparable assessment on imported beef and beef products. States retain up to 50 cents on the dollar and forward the other 50 cents per head to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, which administers the national checkoff program, subject to USDA approval. The checkoff assessment became mandatory when the program was approved by 79 percent of producers in a 1988 national referendum vote. Checkoff revenues may be used for promotion, education and research programs to improve the marketing climate for beef.

Producer-directed and consumer-focused, the NCBA is the trade association of America's cattle farmers and ranchers, and the marketing organization for the largest segment of the nation's food and fiber industry.