The Sheep Safety and Quality Assurance Program

Dr. Jim Logan, Wyoming State Veterinarian
THE MISSION OF SSQA

- Maximize consumer confidence in, and acceptance of, sheep products by using research and education to improve management during the production of safe and high-quality sheep products.
PROGRAM HISTORY

• 1992/93 – ASI and Colorado State University conduct first industry quality audit

• 1993 – ASI and Colorado State University collaborate on first SSQA program

• 2004 – ASI, Colorado State University and University of Minnesota collaborate to revise and update SSQA manual

• 2007 – Colorado State completed another industry quality audit and made adjustments to SSQA materials

• 2013 – SSQA Manual Updated
SSQA SAFETY CRITERIA ACHIEVED BY IMPLEMENTATION OF WRITTEN SOP’S

- S.1 Do NOT feed prohibited mammalian-derived protein
- S.2 Use only approved medicated feed/water additives according to label directions and FDA Good Manufacturing Practices
- S.3 Adhere to all required withdrawal times to avoid violative residues
- S.4 Employ extra-label drug use only when prescribed by a veterinarian
- S.5 Follow Judicious Antibiotic Use Guidelines
- S.6 Use only feeds and feed ingredients that are free of contamination
- S.7 Implement biosecurity procedures to prevent introduction and/or transmission of animal diseases
- S.8 Implement sanitation and hygiene procedures to prevent introduction and/or transmission of foodborne pathogens
- S.9 Use a validated pathogen-intervention system where appropriate
- S.10 Eliminate contamination from foreign materials in meat
SSQA QUALITY CRITERIA ACHIEVED BY IMPLEMENTATION OF WRITTEN SOP’S

• Q.1 Administer/inject all products according to label directions. Intramuscular injections must be administered in the neck.
• Q.2 Prevent wool contamination with foreign material
• Q.3 Harvest fed lambs at US Yield Grade 3 or better
• Q.4 Reduce stress and prevent bruising and other injuries
• Q.5 Control internal and external parasites
• Q.6 Adequately maintain facilities and equipment, and apply proper handling techniques
PARTICIPATION LEVELS

• Level 1 – SSQA Participant
  – Training in groups or on the ASI website
  – Introduction to the concept of a QA program
  – Basics of the safety and quality criteria

• Level 2 – SSQA Certified
  – Training in small groups by certified trainer
  – Development of site/ranch specific plans
  – Standard Operating Procedures to address the safety and quality criteria

• Level 3 – SSQA Verified
  – Independent 3rd parties audit of sites to verify implementation of plans and to facilitate continual improvement
AVAILABLE RESOURCES

• SSQA Level 1 training – online on the ASI website
• SSQA Manual
• Sheep Care Guide
• Sheep Producers Handbook
WHY DO WE NEED SSQA?

• SSQA Program was first developed to:
  – Assure Product Quality
  – Assure Product Safety

• Implementation of the tenants of the QA program =
  – Improved product quality and safety =
    – Increased consumer confidence =
    – Increased consumer purchasing =
    – Increased health of the industry

• Total quality management must be done on a comprehensive and ongoing basis
  – This includes good recordkeeping
  – Quality and profitability go hand in hand
  – When quality and safety are continuously improved, everybody benefits
INCREASING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

• The common quality and safety concerns we associate with the consumer still apply
  – Consistent, enjoyable eating experience
    • Healthy
    • Good flavor
    • Tenderness
  – No food borne illness
• But now the consumer is very focused on HOW that product came to be and the key areas they want to feel confident in:
  – Antibiotic use
  – Animal Welfare
  – Environment
• The SSQA program gives us a platform to communicate our industry practices and our commitment on these issues.
A ROBUST SSQA ALLOWS US TO SHOW

• Stewardship program
• Educated producers
• Documented training
• Established network to distribute new information and training
• Discussion points in media responses
HOW’S OUR PARTICIPATION?

• Have about 3000 SSQA participants documented. – level 1
• That’s roughly 3.8% of the estimated 80,000 producers.
• Many have gone through level one training but if they do not request a certificate then we cannot track them currently.
WHAT DOES THE SHEEP INDUSTRY NEED TO DO TO MAKE SSQA PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL?

- Industry needs to drive it.
- Likely time for revision and expansion
  - Expand our verbiage to talk about Animal Care, Husbandry, Animal Welfare and environmental consciousness - not just safety and quality.
  - Include sustainability and environmental impact
    - Have information to combat articles like the Washington Post
- Facilitate more in person level 1 and 2 trainings so that the concepts are fully understood.
- Transportation and Handling Specific QA training and certification
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

• Dr. Melissa Van Laningham Superior Farms
• Dr. Paul Rodgers ASI
• Ms. Judy Malone ASI