**NC State Local Finished Beef Production Guidelines**

*These guidelines have been made available to producers to edit as needed. NC State University and North Carolina Cooperative Extension do not endorse changes made to the original guidelines.*

**Guidelines at a glance:**

1. **Animals are of known age and origin.**
2. **Individual identification is maintained throughout the life of the animal.**
3. **Producer is certified in the North Carolina Beef Quality Assurance Program.**
4. **There are no restrictions on dietary ingredients, housing, or the use of FDA-approved, performance-enhancing technology.**

**Animal housing.** There are no restrictions on animal housing in this protocol. Animals may be confined in a building or outdoor lot, or they may be raised in pastures. Indoor housing should be well-ventilated and provide enough space for the barn type that is recommended for good animal housing. For more information on space requirements, see: <https://www.uky.edu/bae/sites/www.uky.edu.bae/files/id202.pdf>

Outside confinement should be in pens that do not become excessively muddy and that provide adequate space. Producers who house animals on pasture should ensure that pasture cover is maintained and follow environmental requirements. All confinement housing is subject to state regulations regarding waste management.

**Use of implants, growth-promoting antibiotics, parasite control, vitamin/mineral supplements, and vaccines.** Cattle raised under this protocol will receive only pharmaceutical inputs that are approved by the FDA for use in beef cattle according to BQA guidelines. Producers are encouraged to keep animals healthy by using internal and external parasite control, by following a preventative health program that includes effective vaccination, and by providing adequate vitamin and mineral supplementation. Animals that become sick with common diseases such as foot rot, pinkeye, or pneumonia should be treated with an appropriate antibiotic under the guidance of a veterinarian. Withdrawal times must be strictly followed. These are the basic principles of the Beef Quality Assurance Program.

**Animal origin and animal identification.** Animals will be home raised from the time they are calves or, if purchased, their farm of origin must be identified. The farm of origin must also adhere to these production guidelines. Records will be kept indicating the date of birth of each animal or, if individual birth dates are not available, a birth date window for a group of animals is acceptable. Animals will be considered “local” by most North Carolina consumers if they are born or raised in North Carolina or in an adjoining state. *Note: "Local" is not a supportable "label claim," but putting the address of the farm of origin and using point of sale signs stating the farm’s address is an acceptable approach. Producers who want to participate in the “Goodness Grows in North Carolina” marketing program maintained by the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services Marketing Division can refer to:* [*http://www.gottobenc.com/become-a-member/member-benefits/*](http://www.gottobenc.com/become-a-member/member-benefits/)*.*

Individual animal identification should be maintained on every animal as soon after birth as possible and throughout the production cycle so they can be tracked back to the farm of origin. If an animal loses its individual identification tag, the tag should be replaced immediately to prevent loss of identity. It is strongly recommended that producers use a secondary form of identification such as a second ear tag or a tattoo to prevent loss of identity. ***This is especially important if animals eligible for this program are comingled with animals that are not.***

**Beef Quality Assurance certification.** All farms marketing under these guidelines must have current certification in the North Carolina Beef Quality Assurance Program (NC-BQA) and must adhere to all BQA guidelines, including strict adherence to slaughter withdrawal times on vaccinations and other necessary health treatments. Details on the NC-BQA program can be found at: <http://www.nccattle.com/ncbqaprogram.aspx>

**Forage and feeding program.** To achieve desirable product quality, cattle need to gain weight throughout their lives, so producers should focus on providing high-quality nutrition at all times. Mineral supplements meeting university recommendations should be offered to cows and calves at all times. Mineral recommendations for our area can be found at http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B895#SelectingaMineralSupplement.

Producers should supplement with energy and protein sources appropriately to keep animals gaining at least 1.0 pound per day. To achieve target weight and degree of finish at a reasonable age, cattle should gain from 1.0 to 2.0 pounds per day from weaning to yearling, and from 1.5 to 3 pounds per day during finishing. Producers should work with a nutritionist or other consultant to develop a feeding program that will result in an animal with the carcass characteristics they desire at the harvest age they desire. In general, most producers are advised to harvest cattle at a body condition score of at least 6.5 on a 9-point scale and at an age of no more than 30 months.

Additional information on balancing diets for beef cattle is available at:

<http://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/animals-forages/beef-cattle/nutrition-feeding.aspx>

**Producer affidavit:**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**From: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This affidavit confirms that I raise my animals in accordance with the attached production protocol (NC State Local Finished Beef Production Guidelines).

Sincerely,