

empire, working as an independent freighter hauling supplies and trade goods across Kansas. In the early 1870s Rath brought Andrew Johnson into his employ. Rath was among the first to take advantage of the growing buffalo-hide trade, hunting, freighting, and marketing the hides for a high profit. Often the hideyard of the Rath Mercantile Company was filled with 70,000 to 80,000 hides at one time. In 1874, as the buffalo slaughter moved south into the Texas Panhandle, Rath and a business partner opened a combination store and restaurant at Adobe Walls, near the site of William Bent's old outpost; Rath

himself was back in Kansas on June 27 and thus missed the second battle of Adobe Walls. In the 1870s, Rath and partners such as Frank E. Conrad and William McDole Lee opened commercial establishments at Fort Griffin, Mobeetie, and Rath City. By 1879, however, the buffalo supply was exhausted. Although Rath and his associates profited briefly from the bones their crews hauled away and sold for fertilizer, his fortune soon decreased as his debts from unsuccessful land speculations mounted. He lived in Mobeetie for a while before moving to Los Angeles, where he died of "mitral insufficiency."

of dollars each year. When a livestock hauler participates in the program, they are also showing consumers they are ready to take every step possible to keep cattle as healthy and safe as possible. Stockmanship and Stewardship is a unique two-day educational experience featuring low-stress cattle handling demonstrations, educational sessions, facility design sessions, and the events provide an opportunity for attendees to become BQA certified.

To celebrate the accomplishments of outstanding beef producers, marketers and educators that best demonstrate animal care and handling principles as part of the day-to-day activities on their respective operations, the National BQA Award was developed. These annual awards recognize those who demonstrate a strong desire to continually improve BQA on their operations while encouraging others to implement the producer education program.

The BQA program will continue to evolve and adapt to meet the changing needs of both producers and consumers, but it will always be focused on the goal of producing the highest quality cattle and providing consumers with the best possible eating experience.

The program is managed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), which is a contractor the beef checkoff.

For more information, visit www.bqa.org.

Beware of Solar Scams

In some areas in the U.S., authorities are warning against impostor scams taking advantage of consumer interest in the solar power industry.

The scheme goes like this: A solar power company falsely claims to be some kind of state agency for clean energy or a government-affiliated entity. They use this fraudulent identity to falsely convince consumers that their business' services are being performed on behalf of a state, county or city.

In a recently reported scam, solar sales representatives provided a company name that appeared to be connected with a state government to gain access to a resident's home. Once inside, the scammers took pictures of the residents' appliances and energy meters and aggressively marketed vague solar products to them. These scammers disparaged other legitimate solar companies in an attempt to persuade the residents to purchase would-be solar power systems from them. Consumers may be more likely

to believe these sales representatives because they present themselves as employees of official government offices. However, these scammers are simply misleading victims to gain entry to homes.

Government impostor scams are prevalent and may increase during the hot summer months. Always think twice and do your homework to check references and reviews before inviting someone into your home or purchasing any services. A government entity will not go door to door to sell you solar power equipment.

Always verify the legitimacy of the company that a sales representative says he or she is affiliated with.

Ask for proper verification before letting any sales representative into your home. If you are suspicious of their identity or the sales representative refuses to provide it to you, do not hesitate to ask them to leave.

Remember, you can always consult with an attorney and your electric co-op before signing a contract.

BQA helps increase beef quality, consumer confidence

The Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program helps ranchers improve beef quality and increase consumer confidence and has for more than 30 years.

The voluntary, checkoff-funded program ensures U.S. beef is produced under stringent animal care standards to provide safe, high-quality meat. The BQA program trains farmers and ranchers on best practices and cattle management techniques to ensure their animals and the environment are cared for within a standard set of guidelines across the U.S. beef industry.

"The BQA program exemplifies what we, as beef farmers and ranchers, have always cared about—a commitment to caring for our animals and providing families with the safest and highest-quality beef possible," said Chris Jeffcoat, Pennsylvania producer and co-chair of the Safety & Product Innovation Checkoff Committee. "Consumers can feel good knowing there's a national program in place that sets consistent animal welfare and care standards across the beef industry."

BQA is a comprehensive management program that incorporates responsible production practices in all phases of raising beef cattle. The program combines common sense cattle husbandry techniques with accepted scientific research to help farmers and ranchers raise cattle under optimum conditions. Cattle farmers and ranchers can become BQA certified by either attending a classroom training taught by a network of state BQA coordinators and trainers or completing a series of robust online courses.

BQA programs have evolved to include best practices around good record keeping and protecting herd health, which can result in more profits for producers. When better quality cattle leave the farm and reach the marketplace, the producer and consumer benefit. And, when better quality beef reaches the supermarket, consumers are more confident in the beef they are buying, and

this increases beef consumption. For example, beef graded in the top USDA grades of Prime or Choice has increased 31% since the BQA program started. And, with more than 85% of the beef supply in the U.S. today coming from a BQA certified farmer or rancher, consumers should have the utmost confidence in the beef they purchase, according to the BQA certification database.

Over the years, BQA has expanded to include Transportation and Stockmanship & Stewardship programs. The proper handling and transport of cattle can reduce sickness in calves, prevent bruises, and improve the quality of the meat from these animals, saving the beef industry millions

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