

Virginia Cattle Industry Board

Final Report

7/28/2021

Project Lead: Katherine E. Carter, Extension Youth Animal Science Specialist
Organization: Virginia Cooperative Extension/VT Animal & Poultry Sciences Department
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Title:

Project Type: Education Market Development Promotion Research Youth Development

Original Funding Amount: \$5000.00

Remaining Balance: \$3872.65

Objectives and Results:

Were the objectives from the original proposal reached? How? If not, why not? Please discuss any problems or delays. Methods and resulting data should be reported as they pertain to each objective.

BQA HS Credential Program: The effects of COVID-19 on the public-school system obviously impacted our ability to effectively introduce this program as planned. We did, however, still make the new curriculum and High School Credential program available and even created a virtual delivery component for those students and school systems that did not return to in-person learning.

We tested approximately 250 students, so 1/3 of our goal, but given the circumstances, we were grateful to be able to reach and impact that many young people. The pass-rate for the BQA High School Credential was just under 75% which we considered a success for the first year of the new curriculum. Our pass range was from 20% - 100%, with the identified difference being the time and detail that instructors spent delivering the program.

Thirty-five agriculture teachers and one VCE ANR Agent utilized the curriculum resources to deliver the program to students in the 2020-2021 academic year. Expenses for this portion of the program were not incurred, as we were unable to have expense-generating in-person trainings or the ability to deliver resources to instructors. Note: We have already had one in-person instructor certification for the upcoming grant period (if approved) and the new academic year.

2021 Youth Cattle Working Competition: We were able to host an in-person Youth Cattle Working Competition in April of 2021, working under strict COVID Guidelines and protocol. Our five regional events were smaller due to ongoing COVID restrictions limiting many schools from being able to enter teams. Fifty-one teams, 153 BQA certified youth, representing 25 Unit 4-H programs and/or FFA Chapters participated in the five regional events, with the top 10 teams advancing to the State Youth Cattle Working Contest. These contests were held in a "work and go" format to comply with COVID Guidelines and Restrictions and keep youth and contest officials as safe as possible. The only expenses incurred in 2021 that would qualify as reimbursable expenses for the grant award were the supplies and products used for the State Youth Cattle Working Contest. This \$1127.35 invoice has been submitted for reimbursement.

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Overall Benefit for Virginia Cattle Industry:

Please indicate the number of people that were impacted by or involved with this grant: How will your results improve Virginia's Cattle Industry?

BQA HS Credential Program: Direct impact of the BQA High School Credential Program for the most recent grant period would be the 265 students that received the curriculum/training and sat for the VA Department of Education approved BQA Credential Exam. Additionally, there were the 35 instructors/teachers who had to complete their instructor certification and/or study the curriculum, plan their lesson delivery, and design the program for their student. With a minimum of 6 hours needed to cover the curriculum, we recognized a total of 1590 instructional hours, with an additional 150 hours of preparation and delivery time for the instructors. Another critical impact that cannot be forgotten, but is extremely difficult to measure, is the secondary learners/beneficiaries of this program – parents, grandparents, producers for whom these youth work, etc.- that begin or advance their knowledge of Beef Quality Assurance by listening to, working with, and learning from these certified youth.

2021 Virginia Youth Cattle Working Competition: The 2021 VA YCWC, while smaller and of different format than previous years, involved 153 contestants and six alternates. These contestants represented 25 VA Units (counties or independent cities) and school agriculture programs, many with two coaches working with each team, so an approximate 40 adults. Each of these contestants and their coaches must be BQA certified. In addition to the coaches and participants, each of the five regional contests, have a committee of 3-4 VCE field faculty members, all of whom are BQA certified, that lead and administer those events, along with 3 coaches per contest, for another 35 adults that contribute a total of approximately 350 hours to the coordination and implantation of these events. The state contest, held in mid-April, accounts for 30 contestants and 20 adult coaches (all who competed in regional events), seven contest officials, and three judges. All totaled, this event involves 244 people with 50 of those being involved in both the regional and state events, but these numbers do not include the producers who provided cattle for each regional event or the state contest, or the parents/supporters that attended and provided transportation.

As we continually work to increase consumer confidence in our product, it is vitally important that we focus on producer education in the area of Beef Quality Assurance. The BQA High School Credential Program and the VA Youth Cattle Working Contests as the hands-on, real-life demonstration of that knowledge, allow youth between the ages of 14 and 19 to learn and practice BQA standards. Imparting this information early in their lives allows us to reach a larger and younger audience, but also builds animal industry advocates that can share that knowledge with older family members or producer-employers that may not have taken advantage of the opportunity to learn and use the BQA Program. A percentage of these youth will remain in some segment of the beef cattle industry while others may never raise beef cattle of their own or work on an operation, however, they all are and will continue to be consumers. The information shared through these programs increases their understanding of the effort producers exercise to insure a quality product. It stands to reason, that the more knowledge we can share and the greater number of BQA certified individuals we can generate, the stronger the Virginia Cattle Industry can be, the more consistent our BQA standards can become, and the more confidence we can generate in our production practices and the quality of the product we are producing.

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Activities Associated with Project:

List any activities held in association with this project, including date, type (article, brochure, training, event, etc.), purpose, and any pertinent results.

Virtual BQA High School Educator Trainor Certifications: November 2020 – May 2021

- 35 Instructors BQA Certified and Trained to deliver the BQA HS Credential Curriculum

Southern Piedmont Regional Youth Cattle Working Contest: March 26, 2021

- 3 Teams (9 youth total) participated, working 35 head of cattle
Schools were no in session for in-person learning in SE VA, therefore these numbers are 1/3 of the normal participation

Shenandoah Valley Youth Cattle Working Contest: March 30, 2021

- 14 Teams (45 youth total) participated, working 55 head of cattle

Southwest VA Youth Cattle Working Contest: April 2nd, 2021

- 8 Teams (26 youth total) participated, working 35 head of cattle

Central VA Youth Cattle Working Contest: April 7th, 2021

- 17 Teams (53 youth total) participated, working 60 head of cattle

New River Valley Youth Cattle Working Contest: April 10th, 2021

- 9 Teams (27 youth total) participated, working 35 head of cattle

Virginia State Youth Cattle Working Contest: April 16th, 2021

- 10 Teams (30 youth total) participated, working 45 head of cattle

Lessons Learned:

Comment on what worked, what did no work, and what you would do differently.

BQA HS Credential Program: While this program did not unfold as we had planned due to COVID restrictions and the inability to hold in-person programming, we were able to get the curriculum into the hands of a number of teachers who delivered it to roughly 250 students. This experience allowed us to determine that several of the exam questions needed to be re-written to make them more age appropriate and high school student applicable. We also received excellent feedback from teachers on the strong points of the curriculum and suggestions for making it more classroom friendly. These changes have been implemented and we continue to operate in a partnership with agriculture educators to grow and develop this program as needed for classroom delivery. One element that the COVID situation required us to develop were modules for virtual delivery that could be shared with students that were not in the classroom or did not return to the classroom once in-person learning resumed. Moving forward, this mode of delivery will allow us to reach a population of students that we may not have otherwise engaged and increase the population of potential BQA certified individuals.

VA Youth Cattle Working Contest – Our COVID-compliant, “work and go” format for 2021 was very well received and preferred by many of our competitors and coaches. This option will be revisited for the 2022 competition year to determine if it increases participation and/or is required by school systems for youth participation. A Youth Cattle Working Workshop is planned for the VAAE Winter Teachers Meeting in early February to share more information about this event, provide teachers with tips and advice for coaching and preparing teams, and encourage school participation. This contest has a rich history, dating back to the early 1990’s when it began as an adult event at the VA Beef Expo. While the mechanics of the regional events and the State Contest are fairly well established at this point, an annual planning meeting is held to identify new processing steps or practices, evaluate the previous year’s events, and plan for the current year contests. In 2021 a team problem that involved youth evaluating the cost, efficacy, and appropriateness of two different products was introduced to the contest. This new element was well received and required each team of three contestants to not only understand how and where to apply products, but to also understand the importance of product selection based on your need and the future of the group of cattle you were working. Finally, conversation has begun about adding another regional contest site that would potentially draw additional youth competitors and reach the lower-central part of Virginia.

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Future Work:

Discuss continuation of the project or how results will direct future activity.

BQA High School Credential Curriculum: Moving forward, with increased participation and students returning to in-person learning, we will continue to identify ways to improve the curriculum, increase pass rates on the exam while maintaining program integrity and National BQA compliance, and reach new audiences. Goals for the 2021-2022 academic year are to have approximately 750 youth receive the curriculum with an 80% pass rate on the credential exam. This program will continue to be evaluated, grown, and revised as necessary to strengthen its usage, appropriateness, and the number of students reached. Annual updates from the National BQA program are implemented as received to keep this curriculum relevant and consistent with the National BQA Certification program.

VA Youth Cattle Working Contests: Potential future regional contest sites, annual evaluation of the contest, and working to grow participation numbers, and strengthen the quality of the event are all vital steps that are and will continue to be considered annually.

Regions:

Please indicate what Virginia cattle production areas were impacted by this grant activity:

Select all that apply:

District I – Western South West

Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise

District II – Eastern South West

Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Wythe

District III – Southern Valley

Alleghany, Amherst, Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, Craig, Highland, Nelson, Roanoke, Rockbridge

District IV – Northern Valley

Clarke, Frederick, Page, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren

District V – Northern Piedmont

Accomack, Albemarle, Arlington, Caroline, Culpeper, Essex, Fairfax, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Gloucester, Goochland, Greene, King and Queen, King George, King William, Hanover, Henrico, Lancaster, Louisa, Loudoun, Madison, Matthews, Middlesex, New Kent, North Hampton, Northumberland, Orange, Prince William, Rappahannock, Richmond, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Westmoreland

District VI – Southern Piedmont

Amelia, Appomattox, Bedford, Brunswick, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Charles City, Chesapeake, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Franklin, Greensville, Hampton, Halifax, Isle of Wight, James City, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Newport News, Powhatan, Nottoway, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, Prince George, Suffolk, Sussex, Southampton, Surry, Virginia Beach, York

Final Budget and Justification:

| Item Type | Original Awarded Amount | Final Amount Spent |
|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Personnel | [\$0.00] | [\$0.00] |

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| Fringe | [\$0.00] | [\$0.00] |
| Travel | \$1700.00 | [\$0.00] |
| Supplies & Materials | \$2950.00 | \$1127.35 |
| Contractual | \$350.00 | [\$0.00] |
| Other | [\$0.00] | [\$0.00] |
| Total | \$5000.00 | \$1127.35 |

[How does the original budget relate to the final? Discuss any differences. Please include source and amount of other supporting funds, facilities, and personnel, if applicable.]

Only a portion of the original budget was used due to COVID restrictions and our inability to conduct much of the programming that was associated with these projects. The trucking for the cattle needed for the State Youth Cattle Working Contest was donated by the producer (Senterfitt Cattle) that provided the cattle for the State Youth Cattle Working Contest, so that \$350 was not used. The entry fees charged to each team for the Regional Contests were used to cover additional expenses and awards for the regional contests and the State Contest.

The only expense was for the vaccine, products, and supplies needed to work the 265 head of cattle at the 5 regional contests and the State Youth Cattle Working Contest.

Credits: Please list how the Virginia Cattle Industry Board was recognized as a sponsor of this grant project.

Due to COVID restrictions and our “Work and Go” format, we delivered results for our State Youth Cattle Working Contest virtually via Zoom. During the presentation with nearly 100 in attendance, the VA Cattle Industry Board was recognized as a sponsor via the Youth Beef Quality Assurance Grant.