



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Veterinary
Services

1992 - 1993: Branding & Injection Practices in Beef Cow/Calf Herds

National Animal Health Monitoring System

Producers made few changes in branding and injection practices from 1992 to 1993 in spite of efforts at local and regional levels to boost producers' awareness of beef quality issues.

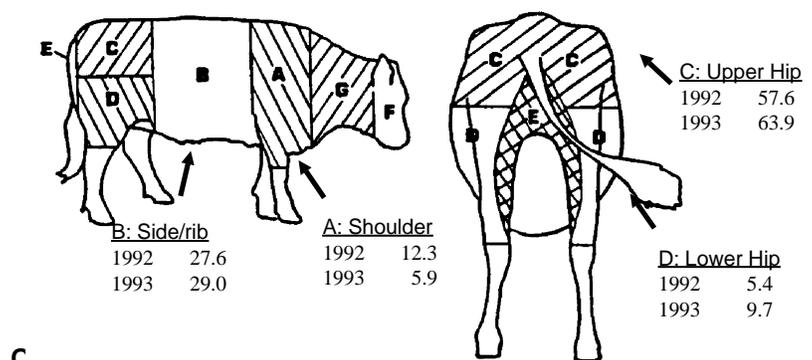
In 1992, the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System began a 16-month study of the cow/calf industry called the Beef Cow/Calf Health and Productivity Audit (CHAPA). During one phase of CHAPA, producers from 18 targeted states with large beef cow populations¹ were asked about branding and injection practices on their operations.²

In October of 1992, 16.3 percent of producers reported hide branding unweaned calves on their operation, resulting in 35.4 percent of calves being branded. The reported number of operations branding in 1993 (16.0 percent) was virtually identical to that for 1992. The proportion of calves branded in 1993 (38.5 percent) was up slightly from the year before.

Distribution of branding sites for unweaned calves also showed little change (Figure 1). Just less than one-third of producers who brand still reported branding calves on the side or rib in 1993. In addition, there was little evidence to suggest producers were preferentially branding heifers that were more likely on the operation, as replacements, than steers destined for slaughter (not shown).

Another initiative of beef quality assurance programs around the country has been to reduce intramuscular injection site blemishes in carcasses. Periodic monitoring of top sirloin butts for injection blemishes by the National Cattlemen's Association has shown some progress in reduction of the prevalence of this condition over time.

Figure 1



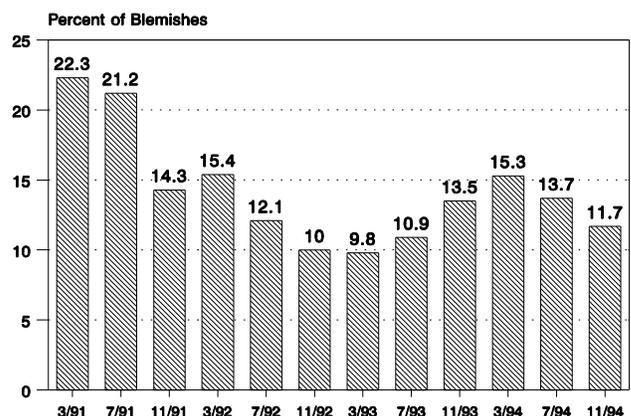
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Branding Unweaned Calves by Site, 1992 & 1993*

* Some producers used multiple sites.
Rump along Tail (E), Head (F), and Neck (G) were all under 1 percent.

However, recent surveys reveal that prevalence has not continued to decline (Figure 2). In the CHAPA, more producers indicated they gave some injections to their cattle in 1993 (72.9 percent) compared to 1992 (65.3 percent). There was little evidence that producers shifted away from giving injections in the muscle (not shown).

Figure 2

Injection Site Damage in Beef Top Sirloin Butts



Source: National Cattlemen's Association

#2485

¹ The reference population for this phase of the CHAPA were producers from AL, AR, CA, CO, FL, GA, IA, KS, KY, MS, MO, NE, NM, OK, TN, TX, VA, and WY who had at least 50 percent of their calves born in the months of January through June and had at least five cows or heifers.

² Information on other management practices was also collected. For more information, contact the address shown at the end of this report.

When asked where producers preferred to give intramuscular injections in 1993, over half (52.0 percent) indicated the upper hip as the preferred site (Figure 3). Distribution of preferred sites changed little from 1992 to 1993. The rear leg (upper and lower hips and rump) was still the preferred injection site for 76.3 percent of producers giving intramuscular injections, despite industry efforts to move intramuscular injections to less valuable cuts of meat.

Nearly 50 percent of producers indicated veterinarians gave some injections on their operation in 1993. On average, more veterinarian-delivered injections were given under the skin in 1993 (Figure 4). For intramuscular injections given by the

veterinarian, producers perceived the preferred site to be the upper hip in 47.7 percent of operations (Figure 5). This percentage is virtually unchanged from that reported in 1992.

The information reported here may help explain lack of progress in further reducing the prevalence of injection blemishes. From the CHAPA data, it was not possible to separate injections of nonirritating substances regarding preferred injection site. Producers and veterinarians may have been preferentially using lower value areas of the animal for injection of irritating substances. Facilities may still be limiting where products are injected and may be a stumbling block for quality assurance efforts relative to injection blemishes.

For further information on beef quality assurance programs, contact state cattlemen's associations or the National Cattlemen's Association in Denver, Colorado.

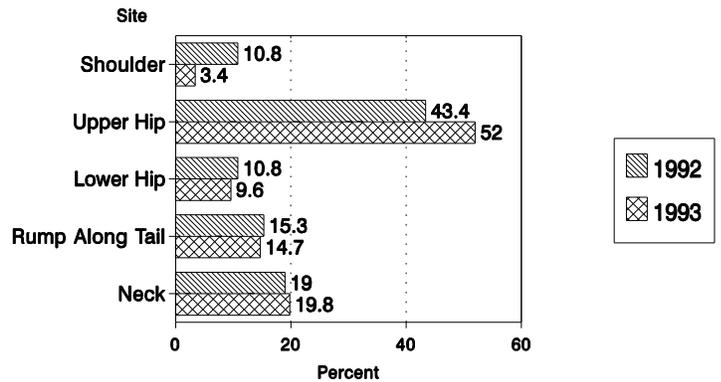
Other CHAPA information is available on the following topics: Branding, Injection sites, Identification methods, Breeding management, and Calving management. For more information, contact:

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N170.1194

Figure 3

Percent of Operations by Main Location of Producer-Delivered Injections in the Muscle, 1992-1993

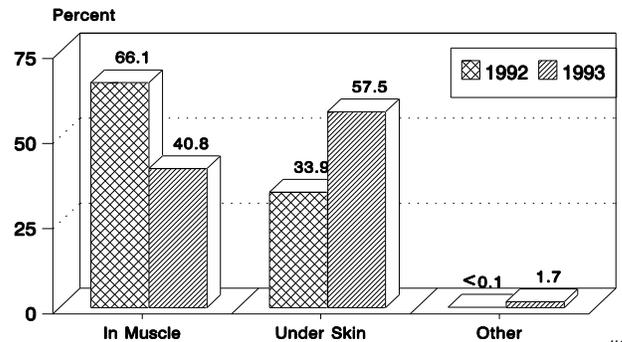


(Percentages for the Side/rib and Head were <1.0.)

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Figure 4

Operation Average Percent of Veterinarian-Delivered Injections by Route, 1992 & 1993*



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Figure 5

Percent of Operations by Main Location of Veterinarian-delivered Injections in the Muscle

