

Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association

Member Media Guide



Updated: Dec. 22, 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why Work with the Media?	Pg. 3
Tips When Conducting an Interview	Pg. 3
Tips When Dealing with Reporters	Pg. 4
Talking Points	Pg. 6
Animal Care	Pg. 6
Antibiotics	Pg. 7
Beef Nutrition	Pg. 8
Beef Production in America	Pg. 9
Beef Safety	Pg. 11
Environment	Pg. 12
Greenhouse Gases	Pg. 13
Growth Promotants	Pg. 14
Citations	Pg. 15

WHY WORK WITH THE MEDIA?

TSCRA works with the news media to broadcast the messages and values that are important to the cattle industry. This is a great way to:

- Bring exposure to TSCRA and drum up new membership.
- Advocate on behalf of our association and our industry.
- Tell the REAL story of the beef industry.

Given the proper information, quotes and sound bites, the media can deliver the best possible message to an audience composed of our current and potential members, industry partners and consumers.

TIPS WHEN CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

Telling the REAL story means telling YOUR story

- You care for your animals 365 days a year, often at all hours and in all weather.
- You care for the land because it is your livelihood and legacy for future generations.
- You care about providing safe and nutritious beef for consumers.

FACT: Consumers who feel familiar with the beef industry have more favorable opinions about it; 74 percent want to learn more about the people who produce their food.

Be a good storyteller

- Stay on top of current events and beef industry issues.
- Don't let misinformation go unchecked.
- Use rationale AND passion. Share the facts, but don't forget to share your emotions too.
- Remember the Cs:
We CARE...about beef safety, your health, our animals and the environment.
We're CAPABLE...of raising safe nutritious beef while caring for our animals and the environment.

Answering the tough questions

- Every question is an opportunity for you to deliver a positive message, even the hard ones.
- You don't have to have all the facts. You're the expert; share YOUR experience and YOUR story.
- Answer questions concisely, then bridge to a positive message.

Example

Question: Do cows cause global warming?

Answer: No. Experts agree livestock production accounts for a very small percentage of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

Bridge: I understand you care about the environment. I care about the environment, too.

Message: I believe in leaving the environment in better shape for the next generation. Preserving our country's natural resources is as important to me as it is to you.

TIPS WHEN DEALING WITH REPORTERS

Know what reporters really want

- What reporters really want is usually pretty simple: They want their calls returned, they want a quote for their story, and they want to do their job and go home.

Measure your pain threshold

- If we want our story to appear in the mass media, we need to be prepared to do an interview where we might have to answer some challenging questions.

Reporters are not your friends...or your enemies

- For a story to get into print or on the air, it must raise nearly as many questions as it answers.

Phony is baloney

- If you lie to a reporter, you deserve the crummy coverage that is sure to follow.

Get them what they need ASAP

- If a reporter calls you to get your cooperation on a story, it means they are already planning to write about your company or your industry. They have to get the interview quickly because their editor is breathing down their neck.

Never say “No comment” and never go “Off the record”

- When you say “no comment” to a journalist, you are letting them speak for your company instead of capitalizing on an opportunity to share your message directly with the audience. Furthermore, just assume everything you tell a reporter is “on the record” and could be printed.

Don't think on your feet, think on your SEAT

- If you want to appear good at thinking on your feet, spend some time thinking at your seat—writing down notes, outlines, bullet points, and sample questions and answers.

Call back before the DEADLINE

- Call the reporter back before the deadline and conduct the interview full of sound bites. Don't MEMORIZE, just remember your talking points or have them in front of you while doing the interview.

You can say "I don't know" if you don't know

- It's much better to admit you are unsure than to be a know-it-all for a minute.

TALKING POINTS

Animal Care

- Texas ranchers know that quality beef begins with quality care, which is why they work hard to ensure livestock is kept healthy, safe and secure.
- American beef comes from American families. In fact, 97 percent of America's cattle ranches are family run. Caring for livestock is a tradition and commitment shared by ranchers that is handed down and improved upon from generation to generation.
- TSCRA is working to make sure every person who works with cattle is educated about proper animal care and treatment. To accomplish this, ranchers have invested their own dollars in to the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program.
- The Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA) was developed using animal care guidelines, standards and audits developed with scientific guidance from veterinarians, animal scientists, agricultural engineers and animal well-being experts.
- More than 90 percent of U.S. beef is raised under BQA program standards, helping ensure the highest level of care.
- As an association, TSCRA strongly urges all ranchers to continue to follow commonly accepted livestock and business management practices in animal health and care and to become BQA Certified.
- TSCRA offers free training to all ranchers through educational events held throughout the state.
- Ranchers' livelihoods depend on treating cattle humanely to produce a safe and wholesome food product. Providing optimal care for cattle is the right thing to do, both ethically and for the success of the ranching business today and in the future. Ranchers take this responsibility very seriously.
- TSCRA continues to be committed to working with our partners in the industry to ensure the highest level of care is given to cattle every step along the way and that the nation's beef supply remains safe.

Antibiotics

- Texas ranchers judiciously use antibiotics when necessary to keep cattle healthy. Healthy cattle are the foundation of a safe food supply.
- When it comes to cattle health a rancher's first priority is to prevent illness.
- Any antibiotics used are carefully selected and administered following veterinarian-approved guidelines.
- Multiple government regulations and industry standards help ensure the safe use of antibiotics to keep our cattle healthy and protect public health.
- The government requires about 75 different studies demonstrating an antibiotic's safety before it can be approved for use in cattle.

FACT: By law, no meat sold in the U.S. is allowed to contain antibiotic residues that violate the FDA standard.

Beef Nutrition

- Lean beef is one of the most efficient ways to meet the daily value for essential nutrients such as zinc, iron, protein and B vitamins.
- Lean beef gives you the essential nutrients needed for a healthy, active lifestyle without sacrificing taste.
- Lean beef is easier on the waistline than empty-calorie foods because it provides more nutritional benefits per bite.
- There are 29 beef options that meet government guidelines for lean, such as Tenderloin, T-bone steak and 95 percent lean ground beef.
- More than half the fat in beef is mono-unsaturated fat, the same type of heart-healthy fat found in olive oil.
- You can feel good about loving beef because the protein in beef is a powerful nutrient that helps strengthen and sustain your body.
- One beef serving provides about half of the recommended daily value of protein.
- Protein can help you maintain a healthy weight, build muscle and fuel activity.
- Lean beef provides more nutrients in fewer calories than most other animal proteins.

FACT: It takes about 7 tablespoons of peanut butter to get the same amount of protein in one 3 oz. serving of lean beef.

Beef Production in the U.S.

- U.S. beef is among the safest beef in the world.
- Each U.S. farmer and rancher feeds 144 people, a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s.
- Cattle and beef production represent the largest single segment of American agriculture.
- More than 800,000 beef ranchers across the country work hard every day to safely, humanely and efficiently raise cattle that become wholesome and nutritious beef.
- Most farms and ranches in the U.S., including cattle ranches, are family owned and operated. More than 97 percent of beef cattle farms and ranches are classified as family farms.
- Beef production positively affects the U.S. economy. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), producers of meat animals were responsible for more than \$66 billion in added value to the U.S. economy, as measured by their contribution to the national output.
- U.S. beef farmers and ranchers provide 25 percent of the world's beef supply with 10 percent of the world's cattle.
- According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) and data from the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1960 and 2007 the number of U.S. farms declined by more than 1.7 million, yet the U.S. population increased by 64 percent. In 1960, there were 3.9 million farms feeding a U.S. population of 183 million. In 2007, there were 2.2 million farms feeding an estimated population of 301 million.
- If the beef production practices from 1955 were used today, current beef production acres plus 165 million more acres of land—an area almost the size of Texas—still could not equal today's beef production according to an expert analysis.
- According to the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS), U.S. consumers spend a smaller percent of their disposable income for food consumed at home (5.7 percent) than any country in the world. This compares to 8.6 percent spent in the United Kingdom, 9.2 percent spent in Canada, 14.6 percent spent in Japan, 24.2 percent spent in Mexico and 32.4 percent spent in India.
- Ranchers raise a variety of beef choices, such as grain-finished, grass-finished, natural and certified organic beef.
- All cattle spend the majority of their lives eating grass in pastures.

- Most beef is considered natural, meaning it is minimally processed and contains no additives.
- Vigilance on ranches, rigorous safety inspections and strict government guidelines ensure the highest level of safety.
- ALL beef, no matter how it is produced, is an excellent or good source of 10 essential nutrients.

FACT: In feedlots, cattle have room to roam around, constant access to water and receive individual care and attention daily.

Beef Safety

- Ranchers are committed to providing the safest beef possible.
- We have been combating *E. coli* O157:H7 since the early 1990s. We remain aggressive in our efforts to keep beef safe from this and other food-borne pathogens.
- To date, cattle ranchers have invested more than \$28 million of their beef checkoff dollars in safety research.
- Thanks to ongoing safety efforts, *E. coli* illness rates have dropped significantly since 2004.

FACT: The beef industry collectively invests more than \$350 million in safety efforts each year.

Environment

- Texas ranchers are dedicated to leaving the environment in better shape for the next generation. Preserving our country's natural resources is as important to us as it is to you.
- Ranch land includes more than livestock. It also includes open space, grasslands, wetlands and wildlife habitat.
- Conservation is important to ranchers.
- Ranchers take steps to accomplish environmental goals such as nurturing wildlife, preventing erosion and conserving water.
- Today's rancher uses fewer natural resources to provide a growing population with safe and healthy beef.
- Compared to 1960, there are half as many farms and ranches today feeding a U.S. population that has more than doubled.
- The U.S. supplies 25 percent of the world's beef with 10 percent of the world's cattle.
- Efficiencies in U.S. food production have made food more affordable. U.S. consumers spend a smaller percentage of our disposable income on food than consumers anywhere else in the world.

Greenhouse Gas

- Recent research and government data show beef contributes significantly to a healthy diet and minimally to total U.S. GHG emissions.
- Many experts agree U.S. livestock production practices are environmentally sustainable and should be considered a model for the rest of the world.
- Cattle convert forage on land that couldn't otherwise be used to raise food into nutritious beef.

FACT: The entire U.S. agriculture sector accounts for only 6 percent of our country's greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), beef production accounts for only 2.8 percent compared to 26 percent for transportation.

Growth Promotants

- As producers in the beef industry, we rely on a steady supply of new and innovative animal health products to keep our herds healthy and help provide American consumers with a safe and wholesome beef supply.
- Numerous U.S. and international scientific studies have shown that the U.S. cattle industry produces safe and wholesome beef. Growth-promoting hormones help stimulate growth by increasing the efficiency in which feed is converted to muscle.
- Certain products, when administered to animals in very small amounts, supplement their natural hormone production and improve growth rates by allowing the animal to produce more muscle and less fat. This helps the industry produce leaner beef for consumers.
- The growth promotants used in cattle production are vigorously tested by the FDA for safety – both for the animals' well-being and for the trace amounts that may be in meat consumed by humans – and have been approved as safe.
- There is a three-level process that creates an enormous margin of safety to protect human health:
 1. It begins by identifying a level at which no effect on human health is seen in research studies.
 2. To that level, FDA adds a margin of safety (essentially taking the no-effect level and multiplying it many times over.)
 3. And the final threshold is at the production level where the level used in cattle is far less than the margin of safety FDA sets.
- In most instances, estrogen levels in beef from implanted cattle are so low, that it's virtually impossible to detect. Consequently the data illustrates the use of estrogen-containing implants has no impact on humans.

FACT: On average, a serving of beef actually has a fraction of the allowable levels of growth promotants (.3 billionths of a gram). This is nearly 57,000 times lower than what the FDA allows, and thousands of times lower than what our bodies naturally produce, not to mention a fraction of what is present in many other foods such as soybean oil, cabbage, cereals and grains.

Citations

Stewart, S. (2004). *A Guide to Meeting the Press: Media Training 101*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Walker, T.J., Todtfeld, J. (2008). *Media Training A-Z*. New York, NY: Media Training Worldwide.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association. (2011). Talking Points. Retrieved from www.beefusa.org.