

Value Added Programs

October 2019



Background

There are many ways to add value or differentiate your cattle, especially if you sell on a video sale where you have the opportunity to advertise to thousands of buyers throughout the country. Adding value can be as simple as insuring that you have a uniform set of calves with a comprehensive vaccination program, or can be more complex and include multiple marketing claims such as “natural” or “source and age verified.” To help our consignors understand some of the various marketing claims that buyers are currently looking for, we put together this reference information. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your representative or WVM staff and let them know you are looking for more information about value-added programs.

Owner Certified

Several cattle marketing programs have evolved in recent years that rely on “self-verification” via an affidavit. Often referred to as “owner-certified,” these programs ask that a producer complete and sign a form or affidavit designating that a group or lot of cattle meet certain specifications. The most common affidavit programs are for “owner-certified natural.”

Western Video Natural

As a service to its customers wishing to pursue this marketing claim, WVM adds a special designation in its catalog for cattle marketed as owner-certified natural. This

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means that cattle meet the following specifications, and that the seller is willing to sign an affidavit to that effect:

- Never fed or administered any antibiotics.
- Never fed any ionophores such as Bovatec or Rumensin.
- Never administered or implanted with any added hormones, such as growth implants or estrus synchronization products.
- Never fed any feedstuffs or supplements containing animal by-products.

For producers who wish to target this program, please be sure to communicate to your representative that you want to market your cattle as WVM Natural. You must be willing to sign buyers' affidavits similar to the generic WVM Natural Affidavit that you can find on www.wvmcattle.com under the Value Added tab. Additionally, if you have purchased cattle that are being marketed as owner-certified natural, the previous owner must also be willing to complete and sign buyers' affidavits.

Third Party Verification Options

Many consumers, both international and domestic, and end-users of beef are asking for third-party verification of various marketing claims. This means that a third-party certifier or entity such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) verifies production practices and records through an audit or inspection process. These are voluntary programs that many producers have chosen to become involved in due to the potential premiums that exist when they sell their cattle.

USDA Process Verified Programs

Companies or producers with approved USDA Process Verified Programs (PVP) are able to make marketing claims associated with their process verified points, such as age, source, feeding practices, or other raising and processing claims, and market cattle as "USDA Process Verified" with use of the "USDA Process Verified" shield and term. Individuals or companies can establish their own Process Verified Program with direct oversight from USDA, or work through a third-party provider and be approved under that company's "umbrella program."

Source and Age Verification (SAV)

This is the basis for most USDA Processed Verified Programs for cattle. Source and Age establishes group age and source, and requires a "program compliant tag" that meets export requirements.

Several companies and breed associations offer this verification with oversight from USDA. For a complete list of approved companies, visit: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/process-verified-programs>.

Non-hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC)

The Non-Hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC) program has been in effect since 1999, when the European Union (EU) and the U.S. agreed to measures to facilitate the trade of non-hormone treated beef. Cattle may never receive any added hormones and certification requires an on-site visit by a USDA-approved third-party certifier to your operation. Calves must be purchased by an approved NHTC backgrounder or feedlot, and ultimately processed by an approved NHTC packer to maintain NHTC certification.

Verified Natural

Verified Natural programs are essentially the same as what producers who are participating in "owner certified natural" are promising a buyer, but have the added component of a third party verification that the cattle have never received added hormones, antibiotics or been fed any animal by-products. Most companies that offer this services are part of process verified programs with oversight from USDA. These programs also require an on-site visit to your ranch by a private third-party certifier.

Certified Organic

The National Organic Program also has oversight from USDA. Producers who wish to become involved in this program may be certified by a private, foreign or state entity that has been accredited by USDA. Cattle being marketed as Certified Organic must comply with the USDA organic regulations. Visit the USDA National Organic Program website for more information and to find a list of companies accredited to provide this certification.

Other Third Party Verification Claims

There are several marketing claims that do not have oversight from USDA, but still require some level of third-party verification in order for a ranch or group of cattle to qualify. Western Video Market works with verification companies to insure that cattle are represented accurately. Examples of some of these types of programs may include vaccination programs, genetic or breeding specifications, or animal welfare certifications. Some examples include:

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Cattle Health Program Verification

- Zoetis SelectVAC

Genetic Verification

- Top Dollar Angus

Welfare Verification

- Global Animal Partnership (GAP) is a private certification that qualifies beef to be sold primarily to Whole Foods, a major U.S. retailer that requires this certification of any of its meat suppliers. Cattle sold as GAP verified must also meet “natural” requirements and never have received antibiotics, be fed animal by-products or administered added hormones. GAP works with third-party certifying companies to conduct inspections.

Getting Started

If you are interested in marketing your cattle through one of these programs, please contact your WVM representative or our office. You can also contact a third-party verification company directly to learn more about the various requirements.

This fact sheet is being provided to you as a service for WVM consignors. Contact your representative or Western Video Market directly for more information.¹

¹ This information is being provided for informational purposes only. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this information, Western Video Market does not make any warranties to that effect.