

Time for Prime?

Survey to Determine Interest in Meat Grading Program in Indiana

US Department of Agriculture meat grading—the program that can assign “USDA Prime” or “USDA Choice” to a steak—has not been readily available to Indiana livestock producers. The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) and Indiana Beef Cattle Association are partnering to survey livestock and poultry producers about their interest in the service to see if a meat-grading program is sustainable in Indiana.

The results of the survey will help BOAH determine the feasibility of offering USDA grading of meat at state-inspected slaughter facilities in Indiana.

While a USDA Prime label could generate extra value for the meat, that designation comes at a cost. Unlike inspection for food safety, which is mandatory and paid for as a public health service, grading is strictly voluntary and must be paid for by the producer and/or processor. To provide grading services, BOAH staff members must complete additional, extensive training.

Meat grading is available for beef, veal/calf, lamb, pork and poultry. Producers who sell (or plan to sell) packaged meat of any of these species are asked to participate in an online survey to gauge interest.

The survey is available online at: www.indianabeef.org/indiana-beef-cattle-association

Surveys must be submitted by February 1, 2019.