



Ed Wiebe (Bar K cow boss), Margaret Hall (BC-VBP auditor), Mark Grafton (Bar K manager), Roland Baumann (BC-VBP Management Group member)

## To Audit or Not...

I'm Margaret Hall and I have been doing the auditing for the BC-VBP Management Group's Verified Beef Program now since we started in December 2005. If you find the thought of being audited an intimidating ordeal, I want to reassure you that there is nothing to fear! My experience from conducting the audits is that it is a learning experience for both parties, because every ranch is unique. Ranchers have commented that it is a very positive experience and believe it or not it is very enjoyable.

As an auditor for a very new voluntary program, I like to think that what I am doing is putting a "stamp of approval" on the good work that the majority of ranchers are already doing. All of the things that are "must do's" in the program I've come to learn are also considered important by each of the individual ranches; the only difference is each ranch has a different way of implementing them.

Because the Verified Beef Program is run under a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) like program, record keeping is very important. The two most important records consist of a:

- "Treatment Record" – a record of all the medicating that takes place, and if a broken needle occurs a note of where it is.
- "Shipping Record" – a record of every animal that leaves the farm with a cross check to the treatment record.

By doing this you cover the two most important hazards at the ranch level which are a broken needle in the animal, and medication that has not passed a withdrawal time.

Most of the time I find the only record keeping that is new is the shipping record. Although ranchers have always been diligent about withdrawal times, not everyone is use to documenting it. A simple cross check form is quite easy to implement and many have found it to be a very useful tool. Anyone using medicated feed has a little more record keeping to do but none of it is too onerous either.

The most common comment that I hear is that I hardly ever treat an animal, and that is a good news situation, but it doesn't mean the record keeping doesn't have to be done -- it just means your job and mine is that much easier. Even if no treatments have taken place the record keeping must be in place. Many people simply keep a daily diary where they record everything that happens and as long as all the necessary information is included, that works just fine.

An audit usually takes about 2 hours, a little more if medicated feed is used, so it is not a time consuming event. I try to group people in an area so it keeps program costs down, but generally there is not much waiting time. We always try to set a time that works for you.

If you have any questions about the program, the audit process or would like to book an audit please

don't hesitate to contact the BC-VBP Program Coordinator, Annette Moore at Ph: 1-866-398-2848 ext 2 or by email: [VBP@cattlemen.bc.ca](mailto:VBP@cattlemen.bc.ca)



### Benefits of Verified Beef Production

- Proof of responsible actions
- Improve awareness of food safety risks
- Readiness should market require it
- Improved use of animal health products
- Tool to develop branded products
- Basis for training staff/family members

VBP program is recognized by CFIA

