



ILLINOIS BEEF QUALITY

2025-26 Showcase

What It Is:

Illinois Beef Quality Showcase is presented by the Illinois Beef Association to highlight the exceptional performance of cattle produced by the state's preeminent beef operations. The IBQS program is a fed cattle competition that will showcase the performance of steers through an on-feed test protocol at the University of Illinois Beef Farm. Donated calves will be on-feed for approximately 180 days. Donated cattle will be delivered in late November of 2025 and will be fed through Mid-May of 2026. The IBQS program will coordinate harvest of cattle at a packing facility where carcass and grade data will be collected using standard industry metrics. Cash prizes and special awards are presented to donors of the top steers. Award winners will be determined using profitability, feed efficiency, and carcass data. Prizes will be given to the Top Five Steers Overall (combining profitability, on feed, and on the rail data) as well awards for the Top Steer On Feed and the Top Steer On the Rail. Winners will be announced in June of 2026.

How It Works:

Illinois beef producers are invited to participate by donating a feeder steer to the program. Each donated steer should be 750 pounds (+/- 10%) by mid November 2025. Steers will be accepted at the U of I Beef Farm during a warm-up period in late November. All steers must be in place for processing and kick-off of the feeding competition week of Thanksgiving. IBA can help producers facilitate delivery of donated steers to the U of I Beef Farm; arrangements will be made with participants once cattle are officially committed to the program and a commitment form has been submitted to the IBA Office.

IL Corn partnership with IBA for steer donations:

IL Corn has partnered with IBA and the IBQS committee to provide funding for the 2025-26 program to assist beef operations with the cost associated with donating a live animal to the program. If you are interested in participating but would like a subsidy to support your steer entry, please complete the commitment form and contact IBA or the IBQS Committee chair to finalize the entry.

Steer Requirements:

All donated animals must be at a target weight of 750 pounds by mid-November. A 10% +/- variant will be accepted at the donor's acknowledgement. No dairy breed type cattle will be accepted. No evidence of warts, ringworm, lice, or mange. All steers must have been castrated at least 30 days prior to delivery.

All steers must have been dehorned and healed from dehorning. Steers must be weaned, bunk broke and on a mixed ration prior to delivery. Any steer unable to adapt to the facility pen, encountering a health challenge or injury during the feedlot period, may be removed from the contest prior to the marketing date.





ADDITIONAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

You must submit a commitment form by October 30 to IBA. Steer delivery must include a completed information sheet (provided once commitment is received) that includes steer description and all vaccinations given in the last 21 days. *If steer has been implanted, participants must disclose date of implantation and product used. Failure to document and disclose is grounds for disqualification.*

Timeline of the 2025-26 IBQS Program:

Commitment forms due to IBA by October 30, 2025. Delivery will be scheduled for mid-November. On-test weigh and scan of steers will be at the beginning of December. Mid-test weigh and scan of steers will be mid-February 2026. An open house for IBQS participants will take place at U of I Beef Farm in March of 2026. Winners announced at the IBA Awards Banquet in June of 2026. Participants will receive monthly program updates via e-mail from U of I tracking the status of the IBQS On-Feed program.

Nutrition Protocol for IBQS:

We anticipate all steers weighing around 750 pounds upon arrival. We will work with the feedlot to build rations for a target ending weight of 1,450 pounds. Steers will be on a two-week acclimation period prior to initiating the feedlot performance test. This allows each steer to adapt to pen conditions and normalize to diet and weight. Cost of gain will be important but not a limiting factor for this contest. Steers will be ultra sounded at the midpoint to project how they are performing throughout the contest.

Feeder Calf Appraisal:

Determining overall commercial performance in the program requires evaluating total profitability of each steer, and we will implement an appraisal process for each steer entry in the program. IBA will convene a panel of three industry-recognized cattle buyers to evaluate the calves at drop off period, to apply an average "initial value" on each steer. This appraisal will account for market value at the start of the competition, taking into account any marketplace premiums or discounts based on calf attributes.

Health Protocol for IBQS:

PRE-ARRIVAL: Steers will be weaned no later than mid-October with a delivery date of mid-November. Cattle will require vaccinations listed between the dates of Sept. 1 to Oct. 30. **Required vaccinations:** IBR, BVD, BRSV, PI-3, seven-way Clostridia, Mannheimia haemolytica, and Histophilus somni.

ARRIVAL: Processing on arrival will include: 5-way modified live viral, paste dewormer, lice control pour on, an intermediate steroid implant (unless previously implanted), and a preventative antibiotic dose. U of I reserves the right to conduct a blood draw, deep pharyngeal swab, and BVD PI test. Any positive test results will result in immediate removal from the competition.

TREATMENT PROTOCOLS:

Pull and treatment reports will be communicated between U of I and IBA. Animals will be treated and returned, unless a sick pen is needed. All deaths will be posted and reported to IBA, as well as the donor notified. Neither IBA, nor U of I will be held liable for any sickness or any death loss of the IBQS steers. Cattle will be monitored closely to avoid health issues. If a steer becomes chronic, IBA will be consulted on railing the steer. Steers that don't fit projections from the scan and weight data will be addressed at the halfway point for railing the steer.



2026 Commitment Form

DONOR INFORMATION

Please list ALL donors and sponsors you want listed for this steer on all materials.

Steer donated by:

Please list primary contact information below (ALL FIELDS REQUIRED):

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please list additional co-donor(s) or sponsor(s): (These contacts will receive all program communication)

Partner(s) or Sponsor(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Email: _____

Partner(s) or Sponsor(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Email: _____

Will you require assistance with delivery of your steer to Univ. of Illinois in November? Yes No

Are you receiving any financial support or sponsorship for the donation of this steer? Yes No

Do you desire financial support for the donation via the IL Corn partnership? Yes No



YES! I agree. I agree to donate & deliver a feeder steer following the given guidelines for the Illinois Beef Quality Showcase for weaning, weight, and vaccinations, to University of Illinois or designated pick-up site at the date given to me by the IBA staff coordinator. At delivery, I understand the ownership of the steer will be turned over to the IBQS program and the funds raised by the marketing of the finished steer will be used in the IBA general fund to strengthen Illinois' beef business through educational programs and leadership development.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORMS TO:

Josh St. Peters | josh@illinoisbeef.com

Illinois Beef Association | 2501 N. 8th St. | Springfield, IL 62702 | (217) 787-4280