

Project Summary

Revision of the Beef CARDS Software Program

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Background

The CARDS program has been a valuable tool to beef retailers in identifying costs associated with fabrication of the subprimal cuts. One of the drawbacks to the web version of the CARDS program is it is difficult to collect data and store it for future retrieval and analysis at different locations in an organization. Many of these drawbacks can be overcome by moving the program to an enterprise portal system such as Life-Ray. An enterprise portal, also known as an enterprise information portal, is a framework for integrating information, people and processes across organizational boundaries. It provides a secure unified access point, often in the form of a web-based user interface, and has been designed to aggregate and personalize information through application specific portlets.

Methodology

The program was developed using MAC iWorks software to develop a working model of how the program worksheet could calculate the information desired (Figure 1). This information was then programmed into a website using Life-ray. The program was tested to determine if it was making the correct calculations and a website designer inspected the site to improve user friendliness. Pop-up windows were included on each of the columns to assist the user in entering and interpreting the data.

The data management segment of the site was also developed. This portion of the site will allow the site administrator to add yield grade and quality grade information, additional subprimal and retail cuts and standard cutting test data from other sources to form a sample library. Presently, all checkoff-funded cutting test collected at Texas A&M University has been added to the library. As additional cutting test data is collected, it also can be added. The only person that will have access to this portion of the site is the site administrator.

The website also has a login in feature where users can obtain account numbers. The user can be part of an organization such as a business or institution. This allows individuals in a specific organization to perform cutting tests at various locations and anyone can preview the cutting test and also alter the economic data based on their situation. The following are screen images of the account creation and introduction to the website.

There are additional features included such as, blank forms that can be used in the collection of cutting test data as well as the ability to print the completed cutting test. There are links to several of the websites including Beef.org and the Bovine Myology website. This site can be easily updated to add new retail cuts and methods of preparation for the cuts. As these are developed sample cutting tests can be added that will help retailers get the full value of beef through merchandising.

Figure 2. Account Creation

Figure 3. Login Page

Figure 4. Introduction

Figure 5. Link to Website

Implications

In the past decade the Beef Industry has made an effort to rethink the marketing of beef. This effort has led to new cuts such as the Flatiron steak, the Ranch cut, and the Denver steak which are gaining acceptance with consumers. Recently there has been a push to look at ways to fabricate underutilized sub-primals such as the chuck roll, to increase its value by fully utilizing all of the muscles found there. One concern the retailer has is what is the economic benefit to merchandising the product? The Retail Beef Decision Tool (RBDT) helps by providing a way the retailer can see the benefits of marketing a sub-primal in an innovative way through monitoring and modifying cutting methods. With the RBDT a retailer can use a previous cutting test in the library and apply their economic variables to the test to help them determine the prices and margins they can receive. By doing periodic cutting tests it will be possible to track any changes in retail product preparation. This will help the beef industry to utilize the portions of the carcass that will provide the greatest economic benefit to the producer, retailer and consumer.

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