

Value-added Beef Products

(transcription)

Mac Donaldson On Behalf of Will and Jan Holder

I'm speaking for Will and Jan Holder, who couldn't be here. I happen to be familiar with Will and Jan's company, Ervin's Natural Beef, and its program because I've sold them cattle. Will and Jan's value-added beef program is based on their family ranch in the area known as The Blue, in the mountains of eastern Arizona.

The beef industry has recently used the niche-marketing concept to enable packing houses to increase sales of specific breeds of cattle. Certified Black Angus beef, as we've probably all seen in the United States, has done a very successful job of that. A number of producers have been dissatisfied with normal retailing of beef in general. In order to change that, marketers have attempted to offer unique products targeted to specific clientele.

The Holders have established a group or a set of offerings within their beef program that they make available to a more environmentally conscious buying public. They market their operation as predator friendly, a ranch that doesn't shoot predators and allows for some wolf reintroduction on their home ranch up on The Blue. The beef comes from cross-bred cattle, but they attempt to maintain quality by eliminating dairy breeds and limiting Brahman influence to about 20 percent.

The main selling point has been that Ervin's Natural Beef is ranch-raised, produced without hormones or grain, and is grass-fattened. Will and Jan are also using their contacts and abilities to develop a plan on the Forest to manage five or six allotments cooperatively. Eight to ten ranchers and the agencies connected with the ranches are getting involved in the project. The group is attempting to look at a larger scale management for the Forest allotments, tying the management plan into wildlife corridors and larger resource concepts. This is another element of their value-added natural beef product that has a lot of appeal to certain portions of the public.

Conceptually it's a very valid project, but accomplishing it has been difficult. Will and Jan and Will's father made a lot of effort to find suppliers with a product that meets their requirements and is acceptable to the public. This is what they had to do. Since they are in an arid situation, they know that the quality of their beef is going to fluctuate with the season and the amount of

precipitation. They can possibly have fat cattle ready to market in August, September, or even October, but if they try to market a fat calf, a cow, or a yearling from grasslands like these here in Chihuahua in November, the beef is not going to be very tasty, nor is it going to be acceptable to the public. So there has been a supply problem. But the Holders have worked with different processors and storage facilities, so that if they kill at volume at specific times, they have some product available to market. I think the Holders would agree that to have a value-added beef program that offers an original product and targets a specific market, it is important to ensure a steady supply before you create demand.

I'll give you an example that Will shared with me. A chef in New York City heard about the Holders' program—Arizona range beef, free of hormones, not fed on grains, from a predator-friendly ranch. It met all the parameters he was looking for. The chef called Will and arranged to get some prime rib. The chef put it on his menu, and people began raving about it. The customers really liked the product, the chef really liked the product. So the chef told Will, "Okay, I need more. I need more." But Will was thinking, "I don't know where I'm going to get more and more and more." So Will had created a market where he couldn't meet the supply needs. I think one of the caveats here is that when you do start a specific program, make sure that you do advance planning. Try not to overstep your bounds, or make promises for more than you are capable of doing. Then, as you move into something slowly, try to keep the supply and product quality consistent with demand. Ervin's Natural Beef is an excellent example of creating a bridge between cattle producers and the ecologically minded consumer.

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Productos Cárnicos con Valor Agregado

(resumen)

Mac Donaldson En substitución de Will y Jan Holder

En la industria cárnica, existe un número de productores que no están satisfechos con la forma en que se vende el producto. Para cambiar eso han orientado la mercadotecnia del producto hacia un tipo específico de cliente, promoviendo un conjunto de características para atraer a un público ambientalmente consciente. Algunas de estas características son las prácticas amigables a los depredadores.

La mercadotecnia se basa en que es ganado de rancho en pastizal, sin hormonas ni grano, y proveniente de ranchos en donde no se caza a los depredadores. Para que el concepto funcione es necesario tener una oferta que sea aceptable para un mercado específico. Además, debe existir la oferta antes de crear la demanda.

Si se crea la demanda antes que la oferta pueden surgir problemas. Por ejemplo, en una ocasión, un chef en Nueva York supo de este programa, de ganado de Arizona libre de hormonas y de grano, proveniente de ranchos que no cazan a los depredadores. El chef empezó a ordenar costilla y a ofrecerla en su restaurante. El público recibió bien el producto y la demanda empezó a crecer. De esta forma, el ganadero creó un mercado que rápidamente supero lo que él le podía suministrar. La lección aquí es: antes de empezar un programa específico, asegurarse de planear a futuro, sin sobrepasar tus límites o tus capacidades de producción. Siempre tratar de mantener un nivel y calidad de producto a la altura de las exigencias de los clientes.

Si a usted le interesa aprender más sobre la producción de productos cárnicos con valor agregado, favor de contactar a Will Holder de Carne de Res Natural (Ervin's Natural Beef):

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