

March 10, 2009

Dear South Dakota Certified Enrolled Cattle™ producer,

There have been recent changes to the rules managing the South Dakota Certified Enrolled Cattle™ program. These rule changes are an effort to strengthen the program and provide greater flexibility for producers. The following is a summary of these changes.

The rule change in South Dakota Administrative Rule 12:79:03:01(7) affects enrollment of cattle. Calves are no longer required to be enrolled at or before weaning for a producer that would keep calves and not commingle them with outside cattle. For example, if you background only your own calves, you would be able to enroll these calves at a later time. This gives you the opportunity to pick replacements, decide when and where to market calves, and tag and enroll them at the best time for your operation. If you sell the calves off of the cow or send pairs out to be managed by somebody else, then you still need to enroll the calves and do the appropriate transfer before those cattle leave the premise of origin.

Another rule change amends the feed requirements for finishing cattle. The new rule, South Dakota Administrative Rule 12:79:03:08(1), addresses requests from producers and feeders in the program wanting greater flexibility in the finishing rations. The rule originally stated that the cattle needed to be finished on a diet of at least 50% corn and/or distillers grains on a dry matter basis. The amended rule still requires a high starch grain diet based on a 50% dry matter basis but now allows producers to source the best and most cost effective grain for their operation.

An additional rule change that will affect new producers in the program allows those that have Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) training before their calves were born, to become licensed in the South Dakota Certified Enrolled Cattle™ program at a later time. This rule change helps spread out the licensing time window for producers to get into the program and helps department staff work with producers more effectively and timely.

We hope you will agree that these rule changes provide greater flexibility in your use of this program and we look forward to working with you to continue to improve the program and meet your source and age verification needs. If you have any questions, please contact our staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Farris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jon Farris
Ag Development Division Director
South Dakota Department of Agriculture