A Cooperative Partnership for Economic Sustainability
Of Small to Medium-size Beef Producers in the Eastern Cornbelt – Phase II
(USDA/IFAFS Grant)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Consortium goal is to strengthen economic opportunities for the Eastern Corn Belt’s beef industry by providing added value to the consumer through a responsive production and marketing system. The Partners and Stakeholders (Five State Beef Initiative) have already initiated development of this coordinated beef production system. It was determined that production of high quality, well-marbled, and tender cattle best suits the local markets. Feeder cattle can be produced in the southern part of the region and fed in existing feedlots in the grain rich areas in the north of the region. The Initiative will work to establish a partnership and negotiate a formal business relationship with a harvest and/or post-harvest partner interested in marketing premium beef products. Five-thousand animals will enter the system in the summer/fall of 2000 with the numbers growing to 30,000 animals/year after three years. Technology exists to produce well-marbled beef through genetic selection and subsequently, to group the resulting beef products by USDA quality grades. Unfortunately, technology to genetically select for tender beef and to sort product based on tenderness is not yet commercially available. We propose to develop technology to measure post-mortem beef tenderness and to incorporate genetic marker tools for tenderness into sire selection strategies as they become available (projected year 2). In addition, this project will develop a stochastic simulation model to analyze opportunities of the various business organizational arrangements.

To achieve the overall goal this project will 1) create a collaborative education/outreach effort that will facilitate development of a coordinated high quality beef production, marketing and information system in the Eastern Cornbelt, and 2) create a collaborative regional research effort that will examine and develop solutions to impediments in a coordinated beef production system.