



MARCH 2026

Health Professional Newsletter: 2025 Year End Growth Update

The Health Professional Newsletter continues to serve as a key regional communication tool for delivering evidence-based, beef-focused nutrition resources to health professionals across Regions 1 and 2. In 2025, strategic promotion at conferences and coordinated list-building efforts with partner states resulted in substantial growth, expanding the newsletter’s reach to 1,960 subscribers across 11 states, representing an overall

growth of 40.8% for the year.

Growth was observed across both long-standing and newer partner states, with particularly strong increases in core states Kentucky (+24.2%), Tennessee (+110.2%), and Michigan (+17.7%), reflecting successful outreach and targeted recruitment efforts. Alex currently manages and tracks state-specific lists for Kentucky, Tennessee, Michigan, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama, providing guidance on newsletter promotion and ensuring consistent engagement across states. Engagement metrics remain strong, with average open and click-through rates meeting or exceeding industry benchmarks, and subscribers most frequently engaging with downloadable handouts, recipe collections, and continuing education resources.

National Nutrition Month Social Media Campaign

In recognition of National Nutrition Month each March, the Kentucky Beef Council developed a series of nutrition-focused social media posts highlighting the role of registered dietitians in sharing evidence-based nutrition information and connecting consumers to agriculture. Posts featured key nutrition partners, including Alex Scott, Southeast Regional Director of Nutrition, and contract dietitian Janine Faber, who help translate nutrition science into practical, consumer-friendly guidance. Additional content highlighted

Regional Reach & Growth of the Health Professional Newsletter

STATE	SUBSCRIBERS	PERCENT GROWTH 2025	LEVEL OF ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP
Alabama	15	1,400% ▲	Complimentary
Kentucky	903	24.2% ▲	Year-Long Partnership
Michigan	579	17.7% ▲	Year-Long Partnership
North Carolina	4	100% ▲	One-Time Partnership, Complimentary
Tennessee	330	110.2% ▲	Year-Long Partnership
West Virginia	116	5,700% ▲	Year-Long Partnership
Miscellaneous <i>(TX, OH, OR, IN, IA)</i>	13		

Overall

1,960

40.8% ▲

the council's dietetic student farm tours, showcasing how future dietitians gain firsthand exposure to beef production and food systems.

The campaign also incorporated national observances such as National School Breakfast Week and National Agriculture Week, reinforcing the connection between agriculture, nutrition education, and the foods families rely on every day. Board members and partners are encouraged to engage with these posts by liking, sharing, or commenting to help expand the reach of evidence-based nutrition messaging and increase visibility for beef producers and checkoff-supported programs.

Spring Conference and Expo Season

Dietitians Alex Scott and Janine Faber are actively participating in a full schedule of spring conferences and community events across the region. These engagements provide valuable opportunities to share evidence-based beef nutrition resources, connect with health professionals and consumers, and highlight how beef fits into a balanced diet.

Spring conferences and events include:

- March 3–4: Kentucky Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (KAND)
- March 5: Kentucky Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Association (KCRA)
- April 2: Hebron Middle School Health Fair
- April 10: Michigan Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (MiAND)
- April 16: Kentucky Academy of Nurse Practitioners & Nurse Midwives (KANPNM)
- April 17: West Virginia Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (WVAND)
- April 23–24: Derby Marathon Expo

Through these events, the team continues to expand outreach, build relationships with health professionals, and provide trusted nutrition education that connects agriculture, beef production, and consumer health.

KHSAA

Beef is the preferred protein for Kentucky high school athletics.

This year we were excited to see our in-game and out-of-game activation measures coming to fruition. Throughout March 11-13 and March 18-20, we tabled at the KHSAA Girls and Boys Basketball State Championships. Outside of our tabling efforts for our included gameday setup, we have one on-court promotion (Beef. It's What's for Dinner Flex Cam), Banners (Packed with Protein Student Section on each end), LED Ribbon Board signage, LED Courtside signage, and radio assets (one :30 spot, one feature entitlement, and one live read). Thus far we have had a great response to our presence at high school athletic events and hope that we can continue





growing our relationship, possibly in sports nutrition going forward. The Packed Protein Student Section has been a standout of this partnership bringing the groups together. The girls tournament had a turn out of approximately 30,000 players and fans. And a crowd of more than 100,000 for the boys tournament.

We've seen even more of a reach past our KHSAA partnership through logo and brand recognition being highlighted in local newspapers, regional television programs, and live streaming of the programs.

Derby Burger Champion

The 2026 Derby Burger Champion was crowned on March 12th during the live cook-off event held at a Louisville Kroger store. More than fifty burger recipes were submitted from across the Commonwealth and narrowed to eight finalists for the 14th annual contest. Following a public voting period, the top four finalists advanced to compete in the live cooking competition. Contestants prepared and presented their burgers to a panel of judges, who evaluated each entry based on ease of preparation, creativity, taste, and overall consumer appeal.

Greg Yopp of La Grange, Kentucky was named the 2026 Derby Burger Champion with his winning creation, "The Jerk." The burger features a Kentucky Cattlemen's Ground Beef patty seasoned with Dan-O's Sweet Caribbean seasoning and topped with pepper jack cheese, fresh mango, avocado, plantain chips, and sliced red onion, all served on a Dave's Killer White bun. The bold, tropical-inspired flavor profile and unique ingredient combination impressed judges and secured its designation as the Official 2026 Derby Burger.

The champion will join the Kentucky Beef Council for upcoming media appearances and promotional events. The winning burger will be featured and served at key Derby Festival events, including BourbonVille and Taste of Derby Festival, as well as sampled at Kroger locations in the weeks leading up to Derby. Additionally, the



burger will be available for purchase at Fest-a-Ville on the Waterfront during Derby Festival celebrations. One highlight to immediately increase beef sales, is that the burger will be highlighted in Kroger Endcaps leading up to the Derby in Central Kentucky stores.

Jeb Burton, NASCAR Driver

This multistate activation includes partnerships with the Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, and Alabama Beef Councils to sponsor NASCAR driver Jeb Burton. The Beef. It's What's for Dinner. (BIWFD) logo will be prominently featured on his helmet, both sides of the car, and the rear of the vehicle. In addition, digital BIWFD advertising will run through Connected TV (CTV) and Google Ads targeting NASCAR viewers during and following race events.

While Kentucky will not have an in-person activation, BIWFD and participating State Beef Councils will conduct fan engagement activities at six races, including Daytona, Talladega, Charlotte, and Martinsville. These activations will include meet-and-greet opportunities, giveaways, and promotional interactions with Jeb Burton.

During each NASCAR weekend, Burton will also serve as a mobile marketing ambassador, visiting campground and tailgate areas to engage directly with fans and provide incentives for those preparing beef at their race-day gatherings.

As part of the contract, Burton will promote beef through a coordinated social media campaign aligned with key summer holidays, including Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. A retail promotion will also take place in partnership with Burton, participating State Beef Councils, and the grocer Food Lion.

Burton's social media includes approximately 71,000 followers on Facebook, 64,000 on Instagram, and 15,000 on TikTok, providing strong reach and visibility for beef promotion messaging.

Ongoing Contracts

The following partnerships are continuously ongoing and have activations, communications, and projects monthly. Our media partnerships provide strong statewide visibility across television, digital, streaming, radio, and in-venue placements. With WAVE3, this includes a 30-minute monthly takeover show, commercial placements, monthly e-newsletters, and a full Derby week takeover. Through WLEX Peacock streaming, commercials air during NFL programming to reach highly engaged sports audiences. Our partnership with WDKY includes quarterly "Live from Chevy Chase" segments, commercial placements, website takeovers, and newsletter-style sponsored content. With WKYT, summer grilling segments air weekly from Memorial Day through Labor Day and are rebroadcast multiple times, supported by a website takeover and weekly recipe highlights.



Jeb Burton is in Daytona Beach, FL
February 13 at 3:46 PM · 🌐

Giving some beef out to some friends at Daytona!



Sports partnerships further expand reach and connect with passionate Kentucky fans. With UK Athletics, placements include Rupp Arena signage, e-newsletter inclusion, and pre- and post-game radio spots. Our partnership with WKU Athletics includes signage at sporting events, logo usage, program advertisements, segments on the “Talkin’ Tops” show, and a summer grilling giveaway social media promotion. Additional television reach is provided through WBKO commercial placements. Digital amplification is supported by Gray Digital, utilizing streaming TV, display advertising, and television commercial extensions. Radio and streaming audio placements through iHeartMedia provide additional frequency and reach through traditional radio spots and digital streaming platforms.

Beef Month

Beef month is quickly approaching. We are adding dates to the calendar, eager to celebrate your producer’s story and beef in Kentucky. This year we are again highlighting four beef recipes throughout the entirety of the month. Following our consumer dashboard, that shows relevant research on what consumers want to see, we decided to highlight four, easy, cost-effective, recipes utilizing lesser known or utilized cuts of beef, and more economical options. We will also continue attending more beef month events. We currently have the dates listed below, if there is something happening in your area that you would like KBC support or attendance please contact kbaird@kycattle.org and let Kelly know.

Local Beef Directory

KBC offers an online Local Beef Directory to connect consumers directly with Kentucky cattle producers. The directory lists farms and businesses that sell beef locally, and it has expanded to include processors and farmer-operated off-farm storefronts. To date, it features 212 producers, 10 processors, and represents 84 counties. Each listing provides details about available products, purchasing options, and contact information. For more information or to sign up visit kybeef.com/raising-beef/local-beef-directory

Beef Advanced

The first class of Beef Advance advocacy leadership program concluded in January 2026 after completing 5 sessions across Kentucky.

- Session I – Owensboro (January 14-15, 2025): The program opened with an overview and Checkoff introduction, followed by leadership development training. Tours included Riverport Terminal, Owensboro Grain, and the Poole Farm, giving participants a strong foundation in both industry perspective and on-farm production.
- Session II – Bowling Green (April 22–24, 2025): The class explored Oak Hollow Farm, CPC Feed Mill, Chaney’s Dairy Barn, the WKU Farm and Meats Lab, and The Butcher, The Baker, and The Coffee



A promotional graphic for the Kentucky Beef Council. The background is black with a repeating pattern of red location pins and a white outline of the state of Kentucky. The text "LOCAL BEEF" is prominently displayed in large, bold, white and red letters. Below it, the phrase "IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK" is written in white. Two QR codes are positioned side-by-side, with the words "BUY" and "SELL" underneath them. At the bottom, the "KENTUCKY BEEF COUNCIL" logo is shown in red and white.



Maker. Sessions focused on Beef Quality Assurance, personal branding, the Kentucky Beef Council marketing plan, and a review of consumer research.

- Session III – Somerset (July 15–17, 2025): Participants visited Branch View Angus, Burkmann’s Nutrition, Multigen Reproductive Solutions, Continental Refining Company, White Oil, and Warner Fertilizer, and attended the Region 5 KCA meeting. Classroom sessions covered storytelling and tribal strategies, beef nutrition, and social media outreach.
- Session IV – Pikeville (October 14-16, 2025): The class visited Ridgeline Coal, Blessed Ridge Farm, & Apple-Atcha Orchard. Education Sessions included a full day of intensive Media and Spokespersons Training, foreign animal diseases, movement regulations, the Secure Beef Supply Plan, and an overview of USMEF.
- Session V – Louisville (January 13-14, 2026): Tours included Sullivan University Culinary Campus, Kentucky Department of Homeland Security, Heaven Hill Distillery, Oxbow Meats, and What Chefs Want. The education portion wrapped up with a recap of Media and Spokesperson Training by reviewing their individual video interviews. A graduation dinner was held at Volare Italian Ristorante with an opportunity to meet the head chef.
- Graduation – KCA Annual Convention 2026

The KBC website has been updated to include a dedicated landing page for Beef Advance. This page provides an overview of the program’s structure and goals, along with an application-reminder form for anyone interested in joining Class II. Applications will open in fall 2026, and anyone who signs up for reminders will receive the application link directly as soon as it goes live.

Visit kybeef.com/beef-advance and click “application reminder” to submit your reminder.

Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Kentucky Farm Bureau’s 106th Annual Meeting took place in Louisville, KY on December 3th – 5th. As an exhibitor at the tradeshow, we were able to engage directly with KFB members, producers, and industry stakeholders from across the state. We distributed information regarding the check-off, recent program updates, and promotional items, including stickers, license plates, recipe cards, ear tag cutters, and more. We also took the opportunity to collect newsletter sign-ups. The event generated 90 sign-ups for the KBC producer newsletter and/or the consumer newsletter.

National Farm Machinery Show

The National Farm Machinery Show took place in Louisville, KY on February 11th -14th. The event drew a diverse audience of over 300,000 attendees and provided an excellent opportunity to engage with



consumers and producers alike. We were able to discuss all areas of the beef industry from pasture to plate, showcase all the program areas within the Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association, and provide promotional and educational resources to all who visited our booth. The event generated over 100 sign-ups for the KBC producer newsletter and/or the consumer newsletter.

Beyond the Bluegrass

Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association, Kentucky Beef Network, and Kentucky Beef Council are excited to announce that this year’s Beyond the Bluegrass Tour will be taking place in Nebraska on April 26th – 29th. Participants will have the opportunity to experience segments of the beef industry that are unique to that area. The tour will start in St. Joseph, Missouri and travel through to Omaha, Nebraska, visiting farms, feedlots, research facilities, packing plants, and other industry stops along the way.

All participant spots for this year’s tour have been claimed. However, sponsorship opportunities are still available. If you or someone you know may be interested in partnering with us, please reach out to Rachel Cain, Jake Harrod, or Amelia Carter for more information.

E-Commerce Results: August – Late Summer/Early Fall Campaign Results

Kentucky Data Overview

- KY Digital Ad Impressions: 560,301
- KY Households Reached: 77,356
- KY Attributable Beef Sales: \$634,850
- KY Attributable ROI: \$126.97

For a \$5,000 investment, over 560,000 ads were delivered to Kentucky consumers. Those who saw the ads went on to spend \$634,850 on beef within 14 days of ad exposure (This does not include purchases made with cash, as sales are tracked through linked credit/debit transactions.) This equates to \$126.97 in attributable beef sales for every \$1 invested in this campaign.

National Data Overview

- Digital Ad Impressions: 42 million
- Households Reached: 7.4 million
- National Attributable Beef Sales: \$109.8 million
- National Attributable ROI: \$321.19
- National Incremental Beef Sales: \$9.89 million
- National Incremental ROI: \$28.93

Incremental sales are calculated using a test and control group model. Members who were served our ads were compared to a similar group who did not see the ads. The group exposed to the ads purchased \$9.89 million more beef than the control group. Incremental sales are only available at the national level due to statistical requirements.



Attributable sales represent beef purchases made within 14 days by households that were served one of our ads and completed their purchase using a linked credit or debit card.

Owensboro Burger Week

KBC was proud to once again sponsor the annual Owensboro Burger Week, a community-wide event hosted by Visit Owensboro that celebrates local restaurants and culinary creativity. During the 10-day event, participating restaurants and food trucks across the community feature unique burgers at a set price, encouraging consumers to explore new flavors while supporting local businesses. A panel of judges selects “Best Overall Burger”, while consumers cast their vote for a People’s Choice Award”.

This year's event saw continued growth, with 78,388 burgers sold, totaling over 24,000 pounds of ground beef, across 59 participating businesses. Local support remained strong, with more than \$624,000 spent on \$8 burgers alone throughout the week.

Events like Owensboro Burger Week provide a valuable opportunity to connect farmers, industry partners, and consumers through a shared experience and help drive demand for beef at the community level.

The YARDS Classroom

YARDS Groups have been fairly steady for this fiscal year. As of 3/17/26, we have had 11 groups and approximately 368 people come through the classroom with a lesson. Don't hesitate to share these opportunities out with your areas. Email Bradon to book a group at bburks@kycattle.org.

Future Teacher PD's

WKU STEM TIP Professional Development:

In partnership with STEM educators, through Western Kentucky University, we will be doing a professional development experience this spring focused on new and upcoming STEM educators. Participants will engage in inquiry-based, hands-on learning that aligns with Next Generation Science Standards while demonstrating how biology, chemistry, environmental science, and applied mathematics are embedded throughout the beef value chain. By highlighting authentic industry applications and career pathways within Kentucky's beef sector, our goal is to enhance teacher competency, promote STEM integration, and provide meaningful classroom connections that prepare students for future opportunities in agriculture and food systems.

On the Farm STEM

The American Farm Bureau Federation has received more funding from the Cattlemen's Beef Board to host an on-farm professional development opportunity training trainers on how their curriculum utilizes the Next Gen Science Standards, while teaching agricultural concepts. They have asked Kentucky to host another event this year, however it will be designed for Kentucky high school science teachers only! We have already received partnerships with the Kentucky Science Teacher Association (KSTA) and the Partnership Institute for Math and Science Education Reform (PIMSER). Applications for science teachers are now open and are due April 3rd, and can be completed at <https://form.jotform.com/260294672622055>.

Beef Evaluation PD

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture conducted a survey with our KY Agriculture teachers on what areas they struggled with teaching in their classrooms. One of the glaring areas of concern was all on meat evaluation. Participants will explore the beef production process from live cattle to carcass, including instruction on USDA quality and yield grading through hands-on activities

BURGER WEEK RESULTS

78,388 BURGERS SOLD!
THAT'S 24,410 LBS. OF GROUND BEEF

BEST OVERALL BURGER
Judge's Choice
HILLBILLY'S BBQ

GERMAN AMERICAN PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD
LIBERTALIA

\$624,904 SPENT ACROSS 59 RESTAURANTS ON \$8 BURGERS

2ND THE COTTAGE FARM STAND	3RD 1885 COCKTAIL BAR	4TH LIC'S DELI & ICE CREAM	5TH FROGTOWN FOOD TRUCK
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MOST BURGERS SOLD
Libertalia
7354

Logos: BEEF, German American, GREEN RIVER, MARKET

ON THE FARM STEM
Kentucky Science Teacher Professional Development

4 APPLICATIONS CLOSE APRIL 3

JUNE 4 **JULY 9** } WEBINARS

JUNE 25 } IN PERSON EVENT

Logos: BEEF, On the Farm STEM, KSTA, PIMSER, BEEF FOUNDATION

Beef EVALUATION
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, July 7th

Williams & Evans Agriscience Center
2705 Hodgenville Road
Campbellsville, Kentucky

Logos: KENTUCKY BEEF COUNCIL

and grading cards. Educators will tour Green River Meats, gaining insight into industry-standard processing practices and cooler grading. The day concludes with a mini meat evaluation contest and discussion on classroom integration, contest preparation, and instructional resources. The event will be Tuesday, July 7th beginning at Taylor County High School. To register, visit <https://forms.gle/RCSL2TPGZTcRWUJ99>.

4-H Volunteer Forum

We were able to present at the Kentucky 4-H Volunteer Forum on February 27th. Both of our workshops were an overview of who the KBC is, how we work, as well as some “Beef Basics” information that we feel like all 4-H agents, volunteers, and FCS agents in Kentucky should know about. This is one of the first times, in a while, that we were able to present to this many volunteers and agents in the state at once.

Beef in the Classroom Grant/Educational Resources Updated

The Beef in the Classroom program provides financial support for the use of beef products in middle and high school Family and Consumer Science, Culinary Arts, Meat/Food Science & Animal Science courses. We have approved 41 schools, giving approximately \$11,500 worth of beef back to Kentucky teachers, teaching the importance of beef as a protein source.