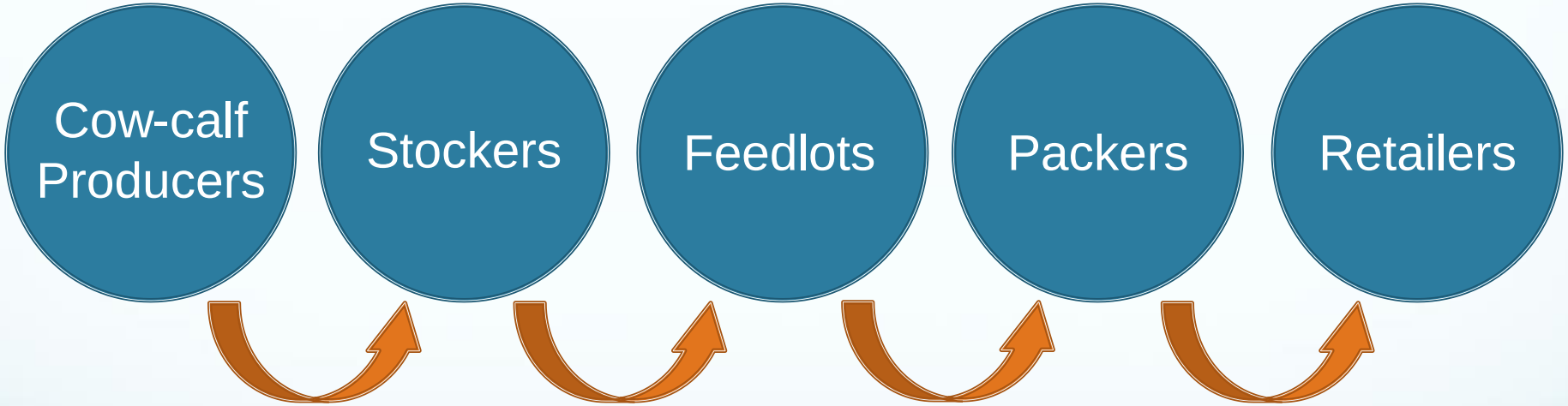
From Seed to Slaughter

Opportunities and Obstacles to Information Exchange in the U.S. Beef Industry

Beef Supply Chain



Key Information By Segment

Cow-calf Producers

- Breed
- Genetics (seed origins)
- Birth weight
- Health records (vaccinations)

Breed is commonly communicated in the marketing

No institutionalized mechanisms to communicate other traits

Key Information By Segment

Stockers

- Varies greatly
- Not major players
  - Fewer stockers after extended drought

Key Information By Segment

Source Information
- Origin of cattle
- Traceability

Pricing Details
- Price paid to suppliers
- Price paid by packers

Quality Details
- Grade of final product
- Problems with any cattle

Feedlots

High volumes of fine-grained information

Key Information By Segment

Quality
- Beef grades
- Yield grades

Availability
- Supply of incoming cattle

Retail interests
- Consumer demands
- Details of retail programs

Packers

High volumes of fine-grained information
- held by only a few firms

Key Information by Segment

Sales Data and Trends

- Shifts in consumer preferences
  - Types of cuts of beef
  - Niche markets (organic, grass-fed)

- Seasonal sales trends

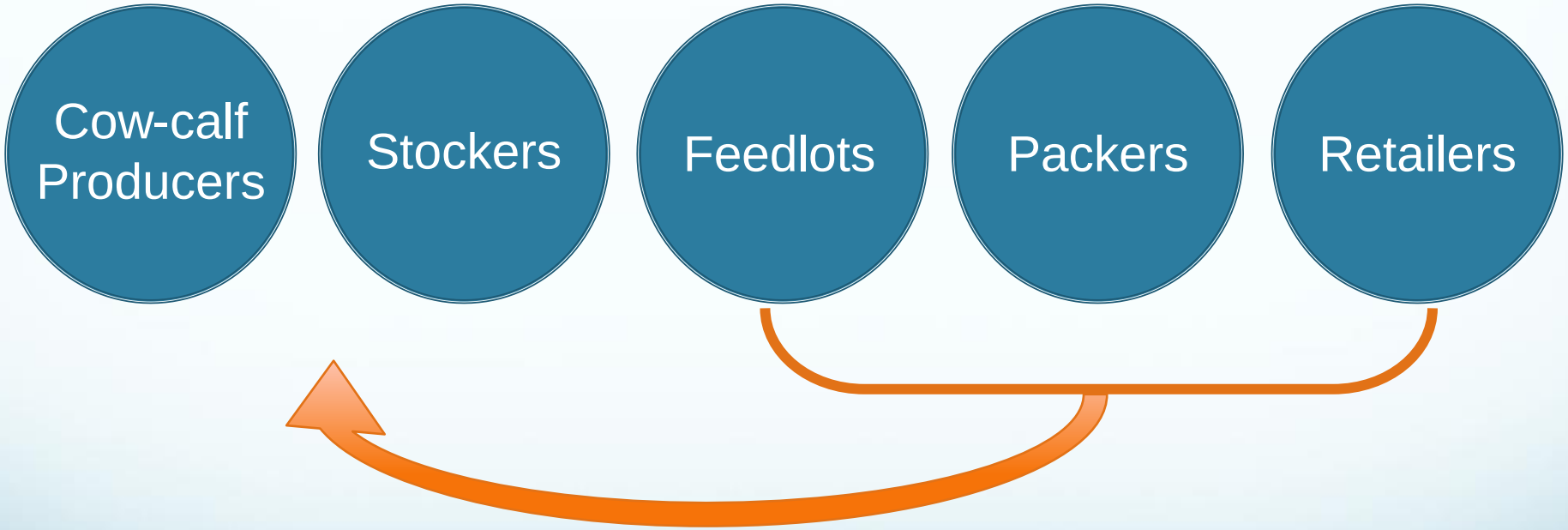
- Market-basket purchasing decisions
  - Price limits on beef items
  - What consumers buy with beef

Retailers

Certain Segments Hold Information Advantage

- Cow-calf Producers
- Stockers
- Feedlots
- Packers
- Retailers

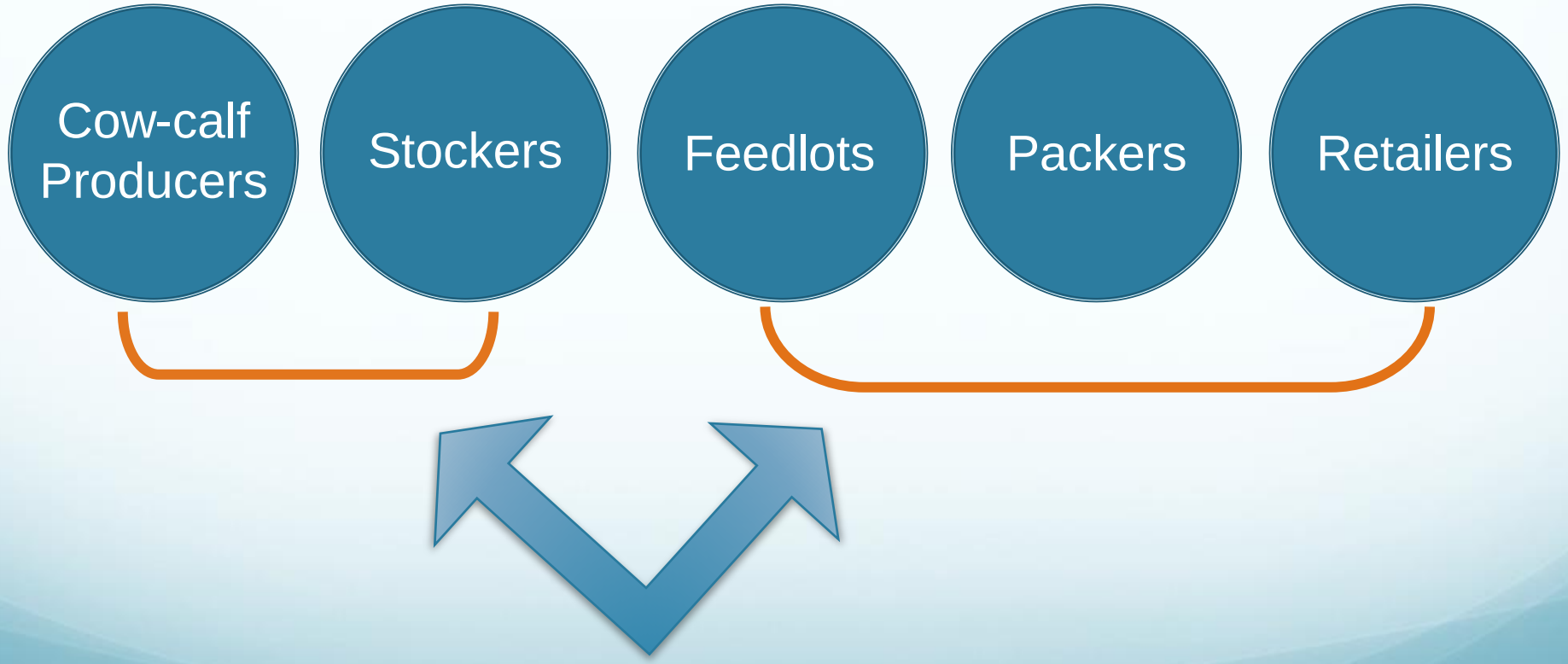
Opportunities for Information Exchange?



Need incentive to share information with upstream producers

What type of incentives exist?

Can provide:

- Increased traceability
- Detailed health records
- Age and source verification
- Calves tailored to packer and retail standards

Opportunities for Mutually Beneficial Exchange Exist