

November Announcements

- The last Beef Nutrition Shortcourse is being offered through distance education sites throughout LA, MS, AL and FL on November 27th. Applied Nutrition Tools will be the final topic of the 6 month seminar. Registration brochures are available in Parish offices and online.
- Master Cattle Producer Courses near you! Become a Certified Louisiana Master Cattle Producer this year. Check the website to find out more about courses being offered in your area.



Louisiana Forage-Based Bull Performance Test



Sixty-seven bulls representing 7 breeds were recently placed on ryegrass to begin the 10th annual Louisiana forage-based bull performance test. The purpose of

the test is to obtain information on growth rates and other traits of economic importance to the beef industry under conditions common to commercial beef production. Bulls were processed in late November and placed on ryegrass with full access to minerals.

At 90 days bulls will be weighed again and a 90-day summary of gains and rates of gain calculated. Bulls will complete the test after

150 days grazing ryegrass. Final data will be recorded and bulls returned to their owners.

See the website for results from last year's test:
www.lsuagcenter.com/beef

The Louisiana Forage-Based Bull Performance Test is a cooperative program between the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Dixon Correctional Institute and Prison Enterprises.

Beef Cattle Nutrition Short Course - November Schedule

Hosted over interactive video at sites throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida from 6:00-8:00 PM or 7:00 – 9:00 PM each evening.

NOVEMBER 27TH, 6-8 PM

Applied Nutrition Tools

- HEIFER AND BULL DEVELOPMENT
- COWCULATOR AND STOCKER RATION BALANCERS

** For information on participating distance education sites or other short course questions contact your local Extension office or contact the person listed on the registration form under your particular state.*

Stocker Management

Pasture Vs. Drylot Backgrounding

Steers backgrounded on pasture rather than in drylot generated \$103/head more net return, according to a study by New Mexico State University and Colorado State University researchers. Published in the *Journal of Animal Science*, the study compares low-input pasture backgrounding (PAST) to a high-input drylot (DLOT) system. It encompasses 133 steers and 117 heifers over three years.

DLOT calves were fed a pelleted ration based on corn and wheat midds, fed at a maximum of 3% body weight (BW), plus alfalfa hay (0.68 to 1.13 kg/d). PAST calves were supplemented with a 32% crude-protein (CP) range cube

(0.57 kg/d; 3 days/wk). Only steers were finished at a commercial feedlot, managed as a single group.

As you'd suspect -- and like the Kansas State University study mentioned in the last issue of *BEEF Stocker Trends* -- the DLOT calves gained more weight through backgrounding. Total costs, including feed, were four times more than that of the PAST calves, however. Net income was \$45/head more for the PAST calves.

During the subsequent finishing phase, initial body weight and value were similar among DLOT and PAST steers. The DLOT steers posted lower average daily gain (ADG) through interim weight (74 -- 94 days on feed) than PAST steers, but subsequent ADG was similar. There was no difference

in interim BW, days on feed, total ADG, carcass characteristics, or proportion of steers treated for sickness. However, DLOT steers had greater death loss and lower feed cost (\$221 vs. \$238/steer).

Although the average price received for carcasses sold wasn't different between the two groups, PAST steers garnered \$111 more gross income during finish than DLOT steers and had a net return advantage of \$103/head.

For the complete study, see *Journal of Animal Science* -- page 167 in Volume 85, Supplement 2; ASAS (American Society of Animal Science) Western Meeting 2007.



November Checklist for Beef Cattle

General Checklist

- Check parasite load of cows, collect fecal sample on 10-20% of herd as an indication of whether deworming is needed. Check with your veterinarian for instructions.
- Deworm and implant steers before turn out on winter pasture.
- Start feeding high magnesium mineral supplement 30 days before cattle are turned in on winter grazing or lush fescue.
- As weather gets colder, treat cattle for lice.
- Remove old insecticide ear tags as you work cows. Old tags release low levels of insecticide that tend to pro-mote development of resistant strains of flies.
- Keep a close eye on pasture conditions as residual summer grass is consumed. Start offering some hay before pastures are totally grazed off.
- It's not too late to get forage analyzed and order winter supplements.

Spring Calving

- Check on calving supplies and order, so they will be on hand in January.
- Feed poorer quality hay to dry cows now. Save your best hay for calving season.
- Check heifers frequently. They should begin calving in December.
- Make sure cows maintain their body condition. Supplement if necessary. Thin cows and first-calf heifers would be the most likely candidates.

Genetic Profit Tips: Performance Tradeoffs

Beef producers are constantly challenged by the question of how much relative emphasis to put on each trait in a selection program. Selection for several traits at a time will slow progress for each individual trait but is the most efficient way to improve a complex breeding objective. To make the problem more difficult, some traits are genetically antagonistic to one another. If one trait is improved, then another may deteriorate. Notable genetic antagonisms include:

1. Milk production and body weight versus maintenance requirements. Selection for increased productivity through increased milk production or growth rate results in increased proportions of metabolically active tissues that must be maintained. This requires additional feed energy. Thus, gains from selection for additional productivity must be more than sufficient to offset the correlated increases in feed cost.

2. Growth rate versus calving ease. Selection for increased growth rate generally results in increased size at all ages, including birth. Particularly in temperate regions, birth weight is a major determinant of calving ease. Thus, selection for increased growth rate may also result in deterioration of calving ease.

3. Lean yield versus carcass quality. Improvement in lean yield, as indicated by USDA Yield Grade, results from reducing waste fat in the carcass. However, USDA Quality Grade is improved through increasing intramuscular fat deposition. Selection for reduced fat deposition will improve carcass value by increasing lean yield but may simultaneously reduce marbling.

4. Leanness versus fertility. Increased carcass leanness is desired in many situations. However, daughters of sires selected for reduced fat trim of

steer progeny may reach puberty later, require more services per conception, and have a longer first gestation, resulting in a heavier calf at birth being born with greater difficulty. It is important to note that these genetic antagonisms are not absolute. It is possible, for example, to identify sires with desirable genetic merit for both carcass quality and lean yield. However, identifying sires with favorable EPDs for genetically antagonistic traits will be challenging to the breeder. Selection for more than one trait at a time is optimally implemented using selection index methods. When EPDs are available for all economically relevant traits, calculating the sum of the products of EPDs weighted by their relative economic values provides a single straightforward criterion for evaluating candidates for selection.

Source: Beef Improvement Federation, 2002. Guidelines for Uniform Beef Improvement Programs, 8th ed.

Louisiana Market Report - November

Cattle receipts at the auction markets continue lighter than last month which indicates that the Fall runs are over. We may see some increase after a frost, but most of this years calf crop has been sold. The major question that remains to be answered is "what about our lightweight calves, should we hold them or sell them"? Everything I see, (high wheat prices, high fuel and fertilizer prices) leads me to believe that the demand for these calves will be light. This may be the year to hold them over. Calf price are 4.00- 7.00 lower than October and 15.00- 20.00 lower than mid September.

Article Written by Dave Foster, USDA Market News.



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