

## Production and Management Tips for Beef Producers

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### **CALENDAR CHECK**

October 29, 7 pm Regional Performance Tested Bull Sale – Springfield Livestock Marketing Center – At 5:30 pm you're invited to attend a 30-minute program on understanding EPDs and genomics (DNA) when shopping for bulls. The presenters will be the livestock specialists from the area.

### **SHOW-ME-SELECT HEIFER SALE**

Here's another important date, November 16. That's the SMS bred heifer sale at Joplin Regional Stockyards at 7 pm. There are 330 heifers this time with a little over one-half blacks and black baldies. The others are reds with about 100 straight Red Angus heifers.

Nearly one-half of the heifers will have genomic data which the sellers share with a better idea of what you're getting genetically. The consignors have invested around \$30 per heifer to obtain these numbers which I feel help you make selections more wisely.

Contact your nearest Extension livestock specialist for details and request a catalog. The catalogs are on-line at [www.swmobcia.com](http://www.swmobcia.com) The sale will also be on-line at LiveAuctions.tv.

A lot of folks culled their cow herd earlier this year due to a scarce feed supply. This sale should attract attention as an opportunity to add a few head back now that it's rained and we have a brighter outlook on the cattle business.

### **FEEDOUT CATTLE EVALUATION**

If you'd like to learn about feeder cattle grades such as frame, muscle score and body condition, a "must attend" event will be at Joplin Regional Stockyards on November 6, 6 pm. You'll receive supper and get to hear remarks from evaluators on the strengths and weaknesses of 15 groups of steers. The steers are January-April, 2018 calves entered in the Missouri Steer Feedout in southwest Iowa. They come

from Newton, Jasper, Dade, Vernon, Lawrence, Barry and Texas counties.

The panel consists of feeder cattle order buyers, Matt Thompson, Columbia, Scott Kirby, Liberal, Jackie Moore, JRS and Rick Huffman, Market News Reporter. Mark Harmon, JRS will explain how to provide information to your marketing agency to help the auctioneer get one more bid on your cattle. There is a chance for the audience to place their own estimates on expected steer performance.

The three questions we ask the audience to place a guesstimate on are: which three groups will grade premium Choice or Prime; which three groups will be the top gaining groups; which three groups do you feel will have the best feed conversion or feed required per pound of gain.

Last November when we gathered the steers I asked the same questions. We do not offer prizes for the person getting the most correct, but had we had prize money, Keith Hankins, Stockton would have been the winner. For those same three questions, he had two of the three correct for each question. He was accurate 67% of the time. Three other participants had 56% accuracy. Maybe we should ask Keith to serve on the evaluation panel this year. Call 417-466-3102 to reserve your meal by November 1.

### **TIMED AI DEMO & OPEN HOUSE**

Here's another date for your calendar or phone. On December 3 at 8 am the University of Missouri Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon there will be a program at 8 am reviewing estrus synchronization, EPD's, genomic testing, SMS heifers and plans for the University's beef herd at the Center.

At 10:30 am we'll go over to the corral where the use of timed AI and sex-sorted semen will be discussed and demonstrated.

Food attracts people to meetings so there will be donuts and coffee at least for those who attend the 8 am sessions. I'll give you a reminder in the November letter.

### **FREE PIE**

Another incentive to attend the SMS heifer sale is the free piece of pie you can receive simply by attending. A few sales ago, FCS Financial started offering pie to the folks at the sale. Now, I think some may come just to get dessert even though they have no intention of buying heifers.

### **HOURS PER COW**

Each year the University of Missouri Extension folks put together a publication of budgets for a variety of enterprises. I've been involved in providing some of the numbers for beef cattle in south Missouri. Fellow Extension specialist, Wesley Tucker at Bolivar also provides input.

It's time to develop the 2019 budgets and a week ago Wesley and I were discussing the hours of labor required or actually spent per cow on a 50-cow operation each year in south Missouri. In recent years the number has been 5 hours. The number of hours is multiplied by the hourly wage rate which is \$12.

Wesley felt the 5 hours per cow was too low. I said, I'd seen some budgets from western states with lower hours per cow. Of course the way they work with larger herds, less hay harvested and may not check cows as often as Missouri producers do, makes a difference.

During Mt. Vernon's Apple Butter Makin' Days while there was a break in ribeye steak selling, I visited with six or eight cow-calf raisers about how many hours they'd estimate they spend per cow per year. Their immediate response was, "I have no idea." But after some thought they started doing some estimating. All of the ones I talked to had more than 100 cows with some having more than 400. They agreed time per cow should be lower than the 50-cow operation. However, they felt their actual time could be 10 hours or more. Hay harvest and feeding were the biggest labor demands which comes as no surprise.

When I started in Extension one project I worked with was the "beef panel" of 6 or 8 farmers in Saline county. All of those farmers also did significant row-cropping. They were asked to keep records of time spent with their beef cow herds. There were quite a few other counties around mid-Missouri that contributed data like I did.

A lot of technology has come down the pike, which you'd think should reduce labor for beef herds. Maybe all this topic does is create coffee shop, feed store or sale barn

chatter. Let me or Wesley know if you have a better estimate than we use on our Missouri budgets.

### **BULL BUYING TIPS**

A cattleman asked recently why bull sale catalogs have accuracy values of only 0.05. Different breed associations have varied ways of expressing low accuracies of expected progeny difference (EPD). Low accuracies may result from incomplete data from sire and dam, contemporary grouping, embryo calves and numerous other reasons.

You need to ask questions if you are interested in an animal with an unusually low accuracy. Low values don't mean they're inferior genetically, it just means their offspring could show actual variations that are more extreme, one way or the other, over an animal with a 0.30, 0.40 or higher accuracy.

Accuracies increase as more is known about the animal's true genetic profile. This information comes from sire's and dam's with high accuracies, individual animal performance and the most recent method is genomic or DNA testing. The latter technology is getting more economical with some tests under \$30. Not only is it economical, it's becoming more accurate and may cause the animal's accuracy to equal what actual progeny values from eight to twenty progeny would reveal. Genomic testing can be done on newborns.

Buyers and sellers of Show-Me-Select heifers need to remember that after February 1, 2019 bulls purchased must have genomic-enhanced EPDs. Previously purchased bulls will be accepted in the program until February 1, 2020 at which time all natural service bulls must have genomic-enhanced EPDs.

### **SPRING IN SEPTEMBER**

2018 has been one for the record books. September weather has been a lot like spring. In fact we've had more forage growth recently than we had in April and May. Unfortunately, a lot of that growth was johnsongrass and crabgrass. So far, we've seen no significant problems with johnsongrass but watch out for naïve cattle going into a field that's got a lot of small (under 18 to 20 inch) johnsongrass plants.

### **LAMENESS IN CATTLE**

Veterinarians and cattle producers have seen an unusual amount of lameness this summer and fall. It really doesn't seem to be typical foot rot nor fescue foot. Others blame excessive pond standing, rock or gravel injury. Observe your herd closely for hoof problems.