

## Production and Management Tips for Beef Producers

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### MONETT BEEF CONFERENCE

Please look the enclosed leaflet over regarding the Monett Beef Cattlemen's Conference on February 8 beginning with registration at 3:30 pm. We have five excellent presentations by noted speakers. The one that may not tweak your interest, at first, is the one by Dr. Place with the word, sustainability in it. This topic probably won't give you a take home idea that makes your calves gain faster or helps market your calves to the best of their ability. It will give you ideas how you and your family can cope with ideas being tossed around by an assortment of persons that actually are your customers now and in the future.

### NOVEL FESCUE SCHOOL

Another calendar date. Note that after looking at the other side of the Monett Beef Conference flier. This day-long program is geared toward increasing your knowledge about fescue toxicity and what you can do to manage around it successfully. This school will be the only one in Missouri this year. It will also be offered in Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina.

We realize there will never be total eradication of Kentucky 31 fescue with the toxin producing endophyte. However, this school will open your eyes to the science behind the problem. You will profit by attending.

### STONE COUNTY LIVESTOCK FORAGE EVENT

Plan to attend the Livestock & Forage Conference at Crane First Baptist Church on February 15, 6 pm. The program features Dr. Tim Evans, University of Missouri Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. He'll discuss causes of cattle deaths. Teaming with him on vaccination strategies for Missouri cattle operations is Dr. Craig Payne our UM extension veterinarian. Register by February 12 and pay your \$5 fee. The Southwest Missouri Cattlemen's Association will grill ribeyes for the sandwich supper.

### MO BEEF FOR MO KIDS

There's an interesting project going on in the Mt. Vernon schools. Back in the summer representatives from the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the Missouri Beef

Industry Council and the Mt. Vernon schools started work on a plan to double the amount of beef students receive from their lunch menus. Along with OOPA, the food purveyor, the plan was put in place in mid-October.

The beef is from "retired" cows that are in a body condition score of 5 or 6 and are healthy. They are being donated at this time and the donation is a deductible item. They are slaughtered at Cloud's Meats, Carthage and broken down into cuts suitable for the school's cooks to handle.

The beef will mostly be processed for use in sloppy joes, tacos, spaghetti, meatball subs, Philly cheesesteak sandwiches, beef cheddar melts and other items. Early reports are the kids and the cooks love the beef items.

The pilot project thus far has cows from nine Southwest Missouri Cattlemen's Association members. The need is for about three cows per month. If you'd like to participate let me know. Meanwhile, Mark Russell, with the Missouri Beef Industry Council says there's a lot of interest around the state in trying to set similar programs in other schools.

### FEEDOUT RESULTS

Last July's letter was a happy one regarding the profit made in the feedout that wrapped up in late May. The 139 steers set a record for profitability with an average of \$299.74.

The results are in for the fall-born steers we sent to Iowa in early June. The results were not happy. The 102 steers showed a loss of \$134.76 per head. There were 14 different groups and each one showed a negative return ranging from \$29.05 to \$348.43. Death losses are a big negative, especially when the death occurs near the time they're about ready to get on the truck to go to the packer.

Even though the total returns were negative, roughly one-third of the steers made some money. The feedouts are not designed to have a pitty party but to use the results to make genetic and management decisions as you build your

program to make buyers sit up and take notice when your feeders, stockers or breeding stock enter the ring.

Overall, the average daily gain was slightly above the Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity (TCSCF) at 3.47 lbs. Easily the runaway top gaining steers were from Steve Jones, Mt. Vernon, with an average of 4.30 lbs. for the 6 survivors. Steve did lose one which put him down the line in profit at -\$139.51. Helping him avoid a great loss his steers all graded Choice. Another negative was one steer received a dock for having a 4 Yield Grade carcass.

The group of steers that had the least loss per head \$29.05, were entered by Eugene Dilbeck under the name of Meadowlyn Farm, Cassville. His 5 steers were Angus-sired. They gained 3.62 lbs. per day. Eighty percent graded Choice and 80% were Yield Grades 1 and 2. Close behind were 5 head from Carrier's Muddy Creek Angus, Lockwood with a \$32.91 loss per head. They gained 3.67 lbs., had 100% Choice with one Certified Angus Beef carcass.

Uniformity within a group is valued by the different players in the beef industry. A consignor raised the question why within his five head entry there was such a wide spread between his high and low profit steers. Here's what I found after digging into the numbers. The low-profit steer did lose \$184.02 in the feedlot. The best profit steer made \$90.43. The biggest reason in this case was an extra 5 weeks on feed which ended with the low profit steer having \$111 more feed cost plus the steer's carcass was discounted as he had a 4.4 Yield Grade. He'd also had a treatment charge against him of \$42.

Within the 97 steers finishing the program, the most profitable steer made \$230.37. The least profitable steer showed a loss of \$548.20. The feed cost per cwt of gain was \$53.36 and the overall cost per cwt was \$75.51. These values do include the deads.

There are always lessons learned from the feedouts. I encourage each of you who are in the beef cow-calf enterprise to put a representative sample of your calves in our feedouts or some similar program. I never guarantee you'll make a big pile of money but I will guarantee you'll learn something about strengths and weakness in your breeding program. The next opportunity to enter the Missouri Steer Feedout is with your July to October, 2017 steers. Entry deadline is May 10 and the calves will be sent to Iowa on June 5. Call for details or go online for the specific guidelines at <http://extension.missouri.edu/lawrence/livestock.aspx> .

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Brant Mettler, with Dow, had an item in his newsletter back in the fall that caught my eye. This may not be news to some of you but here's what he pointed out as we entered hay/haylage feeding time.

Grazon Next HL, Chaparral and Milestone herbicides have no grazing or haying restrictions for any class of livestock. However, label precautions do apply to forage treated with those herbicides and to manure from animals that have consumed treated forage within the last three days. Consult the label for full details.

Residue from those products will pass through the animal in manure and urine. If feeding hay on cropland that will be rotated this spring to a sensitive crop such as soybeans or alfalfa they will be affected if manure or urine fell in that area. The same applies to waste hay. Also use caution if you're selling treated hay to someone. Just read the labels.

### **RENT A BADGER**

We don't have very many badgers in southwest Missouri but occasionally I have farmers tell me they've seen one or have evidence they're on their place. My wife loves finding things on the computer. The other day she showed me a video taken by folks in Utah with trail cameras. Chances are you may have seen it but it showed, over a period of time, a badger buying a dead animal. They called it a small cow, but possibly it was a calf. Anyway, the badger went about it very methodically. It didn't reveal if the badger ate parts of it later or if it was just keeping it away from coyotes, wolves, eagles, vultures, dogs, etc.

The bottom line is, dead animals must be disposed of and burial is an acceptable method and badgers could be an alternative to a \$100 backhoe bill. Of course they may not be fast enough and they will dig a lot of holes that aren't necessary or where you want them.

### **BALE FEEDING**

Long ago it was researched that cone-shaped, big round bale feeders were the best. In addition, having a solid skirt on the bottom of the feeder reduced waste. Another point to consider is eating space. Do your big bale feeders have adequate space for all your cows or yearlings to eat at one time? It's more critical to have plenty of space if you're feeding palatable, high quality hay such as a legume or grass-legume mix.

I know a lot of you have mixed classes of cattle running to the same bale ring, maybe you have some horned animals or others that are dominant around the ring. To make eating opportunities equal, provide enough space for all to eat at once.

### **WE'RE NOT ALONE**

The earlier comment about our death loss at our feedout apparently is consistent according to Dave Lalman, Oklahoma State Extension Beef Specialist. During his presentation at the KOMA Beef Conference in Springfield on January 16 he said in spite of all the efforts by cow-calf operators, feedlot folks say health challenges are getting worse in feedyards. It has everyone scratching their head.