

## Production and Management Tips for Beef Producers

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### **FEEDOUT 2019**

The deadline for signing up for the fall steer feedout is May 10. Calves must be born after July 1, 2018 and there must be at least 5 head in the group. There's lots of talk and news items about building your herd's resume' for excellence. Well, here's your chance to see if your steers perform in the feedlot and in the carcass well enough to merit notable comments from the auctioneer.

Here are a few key points to remember about the Missouri Steer Feedout.

- On June 4 when steers are picked up at Paris Veterinary Clinic and Joplin Regional Stockyards they should weigh at least 550 lbs.
- They should be weaned by April 20.
- The larger your cow number, the more calves you need to obtain meaningful herd comparison.
- Study and follow the vaccination protocol and do not send steers that have suffered health issues during their lives.
- Sire identity is helpful if you have 5 to 10 head per sire.
- Entry fee is \$20 per head due by May 10. No added money is required as all other expenses will be deducted from your steer's carcass proceeds.
- Do not implant at or near weaning.
- Keep calves growing after weaning but don't strive for high gains, save that for the Iowa feedlot.
- Select steers that represent the average of your herd rather than what you think are your outstanding steers.
- Remember, there are a lot of "average" cattle in our herds. Here's a chance to see if your cattle's genetic makeup deserves a premium or a discount or do they fall into the average, commodity category.

### **GRAZING SCHOOL TIME**

The Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon is gearing up for the grazing school on May 7, 8 and 9. This is a daytime

school running from 8 am until late afternoon. Attendees are quite varied with novices to seasoned forage growers. In addition to learning how to raise and efficiently utilize pasture you'll learn about fencing and water needs, soil fertility, layout design, grazing animal nutrition, economics and more. If you don't learn "stuff" from the instructors, at breaktime you'll likely pick up valuable comments from other attendees.

Registration is due by May 1 along with the \$150 registration fee. Contact my office for forms and details.

### **BLACK VULTURES**

Last fall you heard about the emergence of black vultures as a threat to newborns and possibly older calves. So far this spring I have not heard of any problems but keep your eyes open, especially in the calving pasture. You'll recall they are somewhat smaller than the turkey vulture but are more aggressive. They tend to flock with the turkey variety.

The Midwest Cattleman paper in late February had a long, good article about black vultures in Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana. If you haven't read it see if you can find the paper and read about this increasing pest. If you're having problems, please contact your nearest Missouri Department of Conservation agent.

### **ANGUS UPDATE \$VALUE INDEX**

State specialist, Jared Decker has posted on his, "A Steak In Genomics" blog that the American Angus Association will make some changes in the \$Value Indexes. The updated versions will be available in June. The changes involve Beef Value (\$B) and Weaned Calf Value (\$W) will be updated to a new Maternal Value (\$Maternal). All \$ Values will be rounded to whole dollars.

Quality Grade (\$QG) and Yield Grade (\$YG) will be removed because \$QG is redundant to the Marbling EPD and \$YG is redundant to Fat and Ribeye Area EPDs. By June 2020, there will be a balanced index.

If you're using Angus in your breeding program, follow these changes as you should find some more user-friendly numbers to adopt in your selection effort.

## **OTHER JARED THOUGHTS**

Earlier this month Jared Decker spoke at the Beef Repro Gene Conference at Nevada. I thought these “thoughts” were worth you hearing.

- ✓ Why do farmers adopt DNA technology? IT WORKS!
- ✓ Full siblings are not identical genetically. Genomic testing is effective at picking up those differences.
- ✓ When bull shopping, look for those with Genomically Enhanced EPDs. It will pay off in the long run.
- ✓ If you spend money on genomic testing use the test designed for the breed makeup of your herd.

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

At press time, it looks like we’ll have around 250 SMS heifers for our May 17 fall-calving bred heifer sale at Joplin Regional Stockyards, Carthage. Black, black baldies, reds, Charolais crosses and other breed combinations are in the mix.

About every year or maybe even more often, I encourage readers to examine their own heifer replacement selection and development efforts. Small herds should be buying replacement rather than trying to keep back 4 or 6 heifers each year to sustain their herd.

Former, MU Extension beef specialist Dave Lalman and current Oklahoma State Extension beef cattle specialist wrote a good article recently that supports the merits of a crossbred cow. His reference was an OSU trial that compared straight bred Angus cows to Hereford-sired black baldy cows.

Dave said there is substantial older data supporting the value of heterosis but not much data on crossing a breed known for lower feed intake, Herefords, with Angus.

The OSU study showed black baldy cows averaged a better body condition score than straight Angus cows. The crossbred cows maintained better body condition throughout both phases of the experiment.

He pointed out that on average they measured just under two pounds per day less moderate quality forage intake in the crossbred cows. He calculated that on an annual basis, the black baldy cows would be expected to eat around 725 pounds less forage.

Dave concluded with this statement, “Raising livestock is not, nor has it ever been, a one-size-fits-all solution. Cow efficiency is one more important feature in the cattle producer’s tool box, relative to the decision-making process.”

Figure out the production goal or goals for your farm or ranch. Most of the time, crossbreeding is the best way to achieve it and purchasing females rather than trying to raise them.

## **A THOUGHT ABOUT LEGUMES**

Have you applied legumes to your pastures yet in 2019? As you know, it’s one of the best ways to counteract the negative problems of toxic fescue. With all the moisture we’ve had this year I predict we’ll have a banner year for clovers and lespedeza. Of course, a lot can change, weather-wise, in a couple of months. It’s really getting a little late to overseen or no-till legumes but if you get after it soon there’s a good chance it will be successful for your thinning fescue stands.

The choice of which legume to go with depends on whether it’s for hay, probably red clover, or pasture, ladino or white clover. Each of these legumes require a higher soil pH. If your recent soil test was much below a 6, then this year you might want to go with lespedeza. Speaking of soil tests, we’ve noticed in our office fewer soil samples coming in. It’s still the most effective way to economically approach the need for fertilizer. You can’t afford to guess.

## **DON’T FORGET THE BULL SALE**

You might be thinking, which bull sale? Have you ever seen so many bull sales down here in the four states? Each sale is trying to convince buyers their sale offers the best genetics, customer service, delivery and guarantees for defective bulls. I hope you think about your past experiences with sellers and the source of their bulls.

As you’d expect, I hope you keep in mind what your primary forage is. Most of you have a considerable amount of Kentucky 31 fescue with the toxin-producing endophyte. Bulls that have never been on “hot fescue” as nursing calves or yearlings are likely to experience heat stress and reduced fertility issues when they get on your place.

Many buyers seem to have the mindset that it’s impressive to buy bulls from a long distance from here. However, I am just the opposite and I encourage you to shop for good bulls closer to home.

Our Southwest Missouri All-Breed Performance Tested Bull Sale on March 25, 7 pm at the Springfield Livestock Marketing Center has some very impressive EPDs and most are genomically enhanced this sale. Even if you don’t need a bull, come to the sale and evaluate their numbers and I’ll bet most all of them have tasted several bites of fescue.

Join us in the sale ring at 5:30 for our session we refer to as, “Buying Bulls By The Number”. Bring questions and my co-workers and I will try to clear the air.