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livestock specialists.....



Shawn Deering, Gentry  
(660)-726-5610  
deerings@missouri.edu



Amie Schleicher, Atchison  
(660)-744-6231  
schleichera@missouri.edu



Jim Humphrey, Andrew  
(816)-324-3147  
humphreyjr@missouri.edu

## DATES TO

### REMEMBER:

- January 11th—4 State Beef Conference, Bethany Community Center
- January 30th-February 2nd—Cattlemen's Tour
- February 3rd—Gentry County Cattlemen's Association Organizational Meeting
- February 24th—NW Missouri Beef Improvement Association Performance Tested Bull Sale, United Producers Inc., Maryville

## New tool developed to determine beef tenderness

A new non-destructive tool has been developed to measure beef tenderness. It was a cooperative effort of Analytical Spectral Devices, Inc. and the US Meat Animal Research Center. The QualitySpec® device uses near-infrared to scan the carcass in about 3 seconds, so it can be used at the packing plant when carcasses are being graded, and it displays the data immediately. Until now, tenderness had to be measured by Warner-Bratzler shear force, in which a machine measures the amount of force it takes to cut through a meat sample of interest. According to a company press release, the system has been in use at a major packing plant for several months. Tenderness has been identified as one of the major problems we face, so maybe this new tool will help us to jump over that hurdle.

## *E. coli* vaccine approved for use in Canada

A vaccine to reduce the shedding of *E. coli* O157:H7 bacteria in cattle has been approved by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for distribution to veterinarians in Canada under a conditional permit. Bioniche Life Sciences Inc., a biopharmaceutical company, developed the vaccine in partnership with the University of British Columbia, the Vaccine and Infectious Diseases Organization (VIDO) at the University of Saskatchewan, and the Alberta Research Council. To get a full license, the company must have additional data which confirm a reduction of *E. coli* shedding in animals that are vaccinated. Experiments have shown so far that there are significant reductions in the number of bacteria that are shed by cattle after being vaccinated.

Although *E. coli* is normally found in the digestive tracts of cattle and humans, certain strains like O157:H7 in cattle produce a toxin that can cause severe illness in people when they consume food or water contaminated with the bacterium. Vaccinating cattle could, in theory, decrease the number of bacteria they shed and reduce potential contamination of food and water for human consumption.

It will be interesting to hear how widespread the vaccine will be used by producers in Canada.

## What is your check-off money spent on? Here's one example

The Center for Research and Knowledge Management at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association has a website where you can browse through the research that has been funded by check-off dollars. The categories are product enhancement, beef safety, human nutrition, and markets. Visit the website at <http://beefresearch.org>.



**County Ag Update Meetings Scheduled**

Due to the positive response received last year, we will once again be holding Ag Update meetings in each county in the NW region. There will be a morning and afternoon session. One session will be an agronomy update. The other session will include topics such as High Tunnel Produce Production, Ethanol Co-Products for Cattle Feeds, Grain Bin Moisture Management, etc. Dates and locations follow:

- Jan. 9—Holt County
- Jan. 18—Nodaway County
- Jan. 25—Buchanan/Clinton
- Jan. 30—Livingston/Caldwell
- Feb. 6—Harrison/Mercer
- Feb. 8—Daviess/Grundy
- Feb. 13—Atchison County
- Feb. 15—Andrew/DeKalb
- Feb. 21—Gentry/Worth

For more information, contact your local University of Missouri Extension office.

**Campus Corner**

**Performance Resolutions for the New Year**

**Dr. Bob Weaber, State Extension Beef Genetics Specialist (573)-882-5479, weaberr@missouri.edu**

As we begin 2007, it is a good time to reflect on the successes of the year just past. It is also a great time to make plans for the New Year. If you're a seedstock producer, those plans should include performance record collection. All too often in our busy schedules, performance record collections is viewed as a 'chore' and not a mission critical activity. Complete documentation of your cattle's performance should be your objective. Listed below are the some of the traits you should collect. Once you collect the data make sure you report the information to your breed association(s). After all, data stored away in a file never becomes useful information.

Trait	Class	Timing
Calving Ease	Calves	at birth
Birth Weight	Calves	at birth
Vigor	Calves	at birth
Weaning Weight	Calves	160-250 days of age*
Yearling Weight	Calves	320-410 days of age*
Yearling Hip Height	Calves	320-410 days of age*
Ultrasound Composition Data	Calves	320-410 days of age*
Yearling Scrotal Circumference	Calves	Bulls 320-410 days of age*
Reproductive Tract Score	Calves	~12 months of age
Chute Score (disposition)	Calves	weaning and yearling processing
Mature Weight	Cows	pre-calving and post weaning
Body Condition Score	Cows	pre-calving and post weaning
Mature Height	Cows	pre-calving and post weaning
Udder/Teat Score	Cows	at calving

\*Some breeds allow wider/different age windows for data reporting.

More information on standardized performance record collection procedures is available at: <http://www.beefimprovement.org/library/06guidelines.pdf>

**??Question of the Week??**

***Calf scours have been a real problem for me in the past. Any suggestions on what might help?***

As the old saying goes...an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. There are really four main things that you can do to help with this problem: 1) Do whatever it takes to maximize colostrum transfer from the cow to the calf within 2 to 4 hours of birth. 2) Increase sanitation in your operation. 3) Decrease stressors such as poor nutrition, overcrowding, calving difficulty, etc. 4) If you have had problems, consult your veterinarian. A vaccination program for the cows prior to calving that includes protection against *E. coli*, rotavirus, coronavirus, and *C. perfringens* might be in order.

**Northwest Region Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Contacts**

**Agronomy**

Wayne Flanary  
(660)-446-3724  
flanaryw@missouri.edu

**Ag & Natural Resources**

Jim Crawford  
(660)-744-6231  
crawfordj@missouri.edu

**Ag Business**

Kevin Hansen  
(660)-646-0811  
hansenk@missouri.edu

**Horticulture**

Tom Fowler  
(816)-279-1691  
fowlert@missouri.edu

Vacant  
Harrison County  
(660)-425-6434

Bob Kelly  
(816)-279-1691  
kellyr@missouri.edu

Tim Baker  
(660)-663-3232  
bakert@missouri.edu

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