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livestock specialists.....



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## DATES TO

### REMEMBER:

- September 4th—Labor Day Holiday, Extension Offices Closed
- September 6th—Hundley-Whaley Field Day, Albany
- September 12th-13th—Regional Grazing School, Guilford
- September 15th-16th—Regional Grazing School, Maysville
- September 19th-20th—Regional Grazing School, Spickard
- October 7th—MU Beef Research and Teaching Farm Field Day, Columbia
- November 2nd—Fall Beef Seminar, Maryville

## Advanced Notice on the Annual Fall Beef Seminar

Make sure and mark November 2nd on your calendar and plan to attend the Fall Beef Seminar. It will once again be held in Maryville at the Community Building. Topics to be covered include Planned Heterosis and Modern Crossbreeding Systems, Managing Two-Year-Olds, Producer Perspective on By-Product Usage in Growing and Finishing Cattle, and By-Product Mineral Supplementation.

## Missouri Steer Feedout

The 2006-07 Missouri Steer Feedout will begin November 7th. Eligible steers are those born after January 1st, 2006. A minimum of 5 head is required. The feedout's primary objective is to provide cow herd owners a low-risk opportunity to sample a portion of their feeder calf crop and see how they perform after leaving their place. Rates of gain, sickness, temperament, and carcass value are a few of the traits monitored. Steers will be fed in one of the Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity feedlots in southwest Iowa. The deadline for entering is October 10th.

## Why Are Quality Grades on the Decline?

Larry Corah and Mark McCully of Certified Angus Beef® recently explored the reasons why beef quality grades/marbling scores are declining, based on past research. From 1975 to 2005, USDA Prime decreased by 1 percentage-point and Choice decreased by 6.2 percent. Marbling is important because beef's unique flavor and aroma comes from the carbonyl compounds found in marbling. The authors attributed the decline to a number of factors: (1) Health problems are increasing, probably due to lighter placement weights and feeding younger cattle. Another factor could be the larger feedlots' lower employee:cattle ratios which may affect health management. (2) More ethanol co-products are being fed. Starch availability is lower with distillers grains compared to corn so, although feedlot performance is not affected, it could be affecting marbling adipocyte differentiation. (3) Larger feedyards typically use steam-flaked grain while smaller yards tend to feed rolled or cracked grain, usually corn. Steam-flaked grain increases average daily gain and ribeye size, so the decreased marbling could be due to less days on feed or dilution of marbling. Corn has been shown to result in better quality grades than other grain sources. (4) Marbling occurs over a lifetime, not just during the feedlot phase. The time near weaning is especially critical; management strategies (early weaning, creep feeding, delayed implanting, and health management) during that time affect subsequent quality grade. (5) Implant strategies. While very economical, certain implant scenarios can hurt quality grades. Delayed implanting and reducing the number and aggressiveness of implants can help. Other Factors: (1) Genetics—marbling is very heritable and can be impacted by genetic selection. (2) Early weaning—positive effect on quality grades, esp. with early and steady use of high-grain ration. (3) Creep feeding—feeding corn in a high-grain ration as part of an accelerated production system can increase marbling. (4) Disposition—aggressive behavior greatly reduces quality grades. (5) Vitamin A levels—high levels of vitamin A may decrease marbling deposition (needs to be studied further). (6) Gender—heifers outgrade steers by 8-10% in Choice quality grades. (7) Calves vs Yearlings—calf-feds may be more likely to grade Prime and Choice versus yearlings. (8) Sorting of feedlot cattle—some report an improvement through sorting but no solid data. (9) Antagonistic genetic selection traits—antagonism between marbling and ribeye area, although genetic selection could overcome the correlation.



Photo from Texas A&M Meats Extension

The 2005 National Beef Quality Audit is due to be released this fall. Preliminary findings of the audit included the Industry's Top Ten Challenges:

1. Lack of traceability, individual ID, source/age verification.
2. Low uniformity.
3. Need for instrument grading.
4. Inappropriate market signals.
5. Segmentation of industry groups.
6. Heavy carcasses/cuts.
7. Low cutability.
8. Ribeyes too large and also too small.
9. Reduced quality grades and tenderness from implants.
10. Insufficient marbling.

## Campus Corner

### MU Beef Research and Teaching Farm Field Day

**Dr. Bob Weaber, State Extension Beef Genetics Specialist**  
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The University of Missouri South Farm, located south of Columbia off US -63 on Old Millers Road adjacent to the KOMU TV station and tower, is hosting a field day on Saturday, October 7th, 2006 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The goal of the field day is to showcase the beef research and extension programs conducted at the farm. Highlights of the day include a pasture walk, children's activities, free lunch, on-site premise ID registration, equipment displays, one-on-one farm tours, and updates on the latest science on reproductive management, nutrition and genetics.

Presentations will be made on the following topics: Use of Distillers Grain Solubles for Cow/Calf and Backgrounding, National Animal ID, MO Perspective, Tools and Tips for Beef Sire Selection, Value of Genetic, Source and Process Verification, Market Update, Beef Industry Issues Update, and the Importance of Beef in Missouri's Agricultural Economy.

For more information contact me at the number above. In order to participate in the free luncheon, please RSVP to Judy Burton at (573)-882-7327 by September 15th.

### ??Question of the Week??

***I participated in the Missouri QSA Program last year, what do I need to do this year?***

Once you have been approved, you are able to enroll your group of calves as needed. Get a blank copy of the enrollment form (ID400) and fill it out. Once completed, send the enrollment form into the program you are using. Remember to use the actual birth date of the first calf born in that group or calving season. You will also need to send in a tag order form. Once your enrollment form is approved, then your tags can be sent and you are ready to go. Just a reminder...producers must keep records for 3 years. - information from Greg Onstott, Missouri Department of Agriculture.

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