

Production and Management Tips for Beef Producers

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CATTLE NUMBERS

The June, 2019 county cattle estimates, based on Missouri inventory shows the top 5 counties as follows:

<u>Beef Cows</u>		<u>Milk Cows</u>	
1. Polk	54,000	1. Barry	5,900
2. Lawrence	50,000	2. Wright	5,700
3. Texas	46,500	3. Vernon	4,800
4. Barry	46,000	4. Lawrence	3,800
5. Newton	45,500	5. Scotland	3,600

All Cattle & Calves

1. Lawrence	120,000
2. Polk	110,000
3. Barry	100,000
4. Texas	90,000
5. Bates	89,000

About the same time those number appeared, the July, 2019 Progressive Cattle magazine contained 2019 U.S. Beef Statistics based on USDA National Ag Statistics Service. The top 50 beef cow counties in the U.S. included 3 Missouri counties. Lawrence was 21st with 56,000; Polk was 35th at 51,000 and Barry ranked 43rd with 48,000 head.

Yes, the numbers are slightly different but the bottom line is there's a lot of grazing cattle in this part of Missouri.

STEER FEEDOUT RESULTS

Profits were hard to come by as the 2018-19 Missouri Steer Feedout came to a close. Fifty-three steers did show a profit out of the 182 head that finished with carcass data. Only one group of steers showed a profit. They were entered by Norman Garton, Nevada. The 13 Angus had a \$13.79 per head profit and were the top average daily gaining group at 3.65 lbs. per day. All graded low Choice or better with 7 head receiving premiums for being Prime, Certified Angus Beef or Yield Grade 2's.

Close behind those top profits were 13 purebred Angus entered by Jeff Goodnight, Republic. They were so close to being profit makers as they had a negative \$0.74 per head return. Nine of these received premiums for Prime, CAB or YG2 carcasses. Rounding out the first five groups were: Larry Peters, Carthage, Ronnie Veith, Purdy and Steve

Jones, Mt. Vernon . A Veith steer was the top profit steer overall making \$160.11.

There are no big cash awards given in the feedout. The emphasis is on education and using the results to make adjustments in both seedstock and commercial feeder cattle performance in the feedlot and on the rail. Participants can share their good performances with their marketers and hopefully they receive a boost on the bid prices when they sell.

Rick Huffman, Missouri Department of Agriculture market news reporter in this area asked me how the overall profit/loss column stacked up in the 50 feedouts since 1981. I didn't have the ratio on the tip of my tongue but I did some researching and found that of the 50 feedouts 26 have been profitable while 24 have shown losses. That's very close to a 50:50 split.

Granted, some individual owners seem to come out in the black significantly more than the 50:50 split. They usually have zero death loss, their steers gain above the average, they grade at least Choice minus with a premium Choice or two in their group and they have zero "outs." Oh, one other very important help is to have steers that weren't top-priced at the beginning. Perhaps they weren't uniform in color, size, breed, muscling, etc.

Our next Missouri Steer Feedout entry deadline is October 10. It is for calves born after January, 2019. They should be weaned 45 days prior to the pickup day, November 5. The pickups will be made at Joplin Regional Stockyards, Carthage and Paris Veterinary Clinic, Paris. Contact an Extension field specialist in livestock for more details.

If you would like to see what the past feedout's cattle looked like and how they performed you can go on your computer at <http://extension.missouri.edu/lawrence/> and get a complete review on the PowerPoint Show. You might find some cattle that look like yours.

EAR TAG UPDATE

You may recall last month I put a picture in my letter of a 1960's tag. At the Beef Improvement Federation in

Brookings, South Dakota which I attended, a speaker, Mark Trotter at Central Queensland University, spoke about the up and coming, smart ear tags. The smart tags will have many uses but come with a fairly high price tag. Since technology usually improves and it gets cheaper. We will likely see them used for, location, behavior, health and many other management/records practices.

Examples of their use he mentioned include: bull mating activity; weights; calving; temperament; disease detection; grazing and rumination behavior as a measure of pasture quality; virtual fencing like some folks now have to keep their pets on their property; theft; insects that reduce animal performance.

Today, items such as this tag are used on research projects, but in a bulkier package and the \$50 plus price tag will limit their use but it will happen.

OTHER BIF NOTES

- The National Association of Animal Breeders reported semen sales are up, thanks to more beef semen being used on dairy cows.
- If you use sexed semen, the pregnancy rate is higher if the cow is actually in heat at breeding. The use of heat detection patches and split-time AI is recommended.
- Research is underway to determine why some bulls have better results sorting their semen for gender.
- The beef industry needs to get data sooner on young bulls and heifers. Genomic enhanced EPDs helps.
- Only keep heifers that conceive on first service and only give mature cows two cycles to breed.
- Cattle need to develop heat tolerance due to global warming.
- Cows that are depreciated out are the most profitable ones in the herd and are usually 7 to 9 years of age.
- Data drives everything!
- Whole herd reporting is a must.
- Heifer pregnancy rates need to indicate when she became pregnant and not just that she is pregnant.
- We need to come up with better terms when communicating with consumers.
- **Heterosis works!!!**

That last statement seemed to come out of several genetic researchers' and producers mouths. Do you utilize crossbreeding effectively in your herd?

EYE PROBLEMS

I've been asking around about the prevalence of eye irritations on cattle this summer. So far, so good as most folks I have talked to say they haven't seen much "pink eye." Eye problems are blamed on eye irritants like dust, pollen, flies and bright sun. I think the weather we've had this summer could be helping out as much as anything.

One other help might be your pinkeye vaccination program. I feel the new vaccines like the implant and the ones that include *Moraxella bovoculi* and the autogenous type some veterinarians have developed from local cultures need some credit.

LESSONS FROM FEEDOUT

Following each steer feedout I ask participants what they learned. Here are some replies after our July 2, Finale.

- How bulls affect results
- Carcass information
- I now understand grading
- Data from feedout on gain and grade
- You can't tell how they will perform or grade by looking at the live calf.
- Performance of cattle
- What our steers show about their sires. We compare this to statistics gained from bulls at Green Springs bull test.
- Which cows and bulls are not profitable.
- Makes you think more about the end product.
- How my steers grade.

PREG CHECK EARLY

We're preg checking heifers now for the Show-Me-Select program. Many cow-calf raisers probably think this is too early as they typically preg check their females at weaning, probably in October or November.

Preg checking about 4 to 6 weeks after the bulls are pulled does make sense. First of all, if you want the vet to estimate calving dates the best time to do so is between 30 and 90 days into the pregnancy. If you're checking at 65 to 80 days some vets will make a gender call on the fetus.

Remember, early embryonic preg losses usually occur before 40 to 45 days. Some of you are having the blood test to determine if a female is bred or not. This is ok, but if done too early some females may lose that pregnancy if done before 42 days. Also, you won't get as accurate an estimate on calving data as you would with ultrasound.