

# Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association—Productivity and Quality



### Upcoming events:

- January 31 to February 3—Cattle Industry Annual Convention and Trade Show, Nashville, TN
- February 9—Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association annual membership meeting, Regency Hotel, Jackson, MS, 1:00 p.m.
- February 9-10—Mississippi Cattlemen's Association Annual Convention, Regency Inn, Jackson, MS
- March 1—Hinds Community College Bull Test Sale, Raymond, MS
- March 8-10—Young Cattlemen's Conference, Jackson, MS
- March 15-17—MSU Artificial Insemination School, MSU campus, TBA
- April 12—Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo, Raleigh, MS
- April 16-18—Alabama Beef Excellence Program, Auburn, AL
- May 8—South MS Gain on Forage Bull Test Sale, Tylertown, MS
- June 6-9—Beef Improvement Federation Annual Convention, Fort Collins, CO

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## Mississippi Animal Disease and Disaster Preparedness Launched

The Mississippi Animal Disease and Disaster Preparedness Program is designed to safeguard animal agriculture in Mississippi. The program is administered through the State Veterinarian's office at the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.

The Mississippi Animal Disease and Disaster Preparedness Program opens lines of communication between producers and state animal health officials. It allows animal health officials to alert you when a disease or disaster event might put your animals at risk and provide the necessary information and assistance to help you take action to protect the health of your animals.

### Be a Part of the Solution

Do your part to protect the health of Mississippi's livestock herds.

It is very important that Mississippi livestock producers move forward as an industry to safeguard the health of our herds. The danger of a contagious disease outbreak in the national cow herd, whether by natural occurrence or terrorist attack, makes it imperative that the location of producers and their herds be readily available to animal health officials. Producer cooperation is very important for rapid disease response in the instance of a contagious disease outbreak.

Rapid response to disease events is critical to maintain the health of the state herd. Not only do certain diseases endanger the entire industry, they could cripple our nation's economy. Diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease, Bovine TB or Johne's Disease have far-reaching potential for major economic impact on cattlemen. Quick and effective disease containment is vital for keeping a disease from affecting additional producers.

Enrollment in the program also gives animal health officials contact information to coordinate aid and relief efforts for natural disasters such as hurricanes. A recent example of

the advantages to participating in a state animal disease preparedness program involves the severe winter weather experienced in Colorado in 2007.



## MISSISSIPPI ANIMAL DISEASE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

Ranchers with registered farms were called by the Colorado Department of Agriculture's State Veterinarian's Office. Phone calls directly to ranchers in southeast Colorado helped evaluate the safety of those ranchers' families and the well being of Colorado livestock during the blizzard recovery operation. Those phone calls helped locate animals and find out if they have had access to feed. Emergency hay drops then followed.

Similarly, a state-level animal disease preparedness program here at home will be invaluable when severe weather or other disasters in Mississippi threaten animal agriculture.

### How the Program Works

**Step 1) Fill out a producer registration form.** A producer registration form is available from the Mississippi Board of Animal Health. Filling out a producer registration form means making basic contact available to state animal health officials for use only in the event of an animal health emergency. An online version of the form is also available at the following website:

<http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/>  
The Mississippi State University Extension Service can assist producers in obtaining



Producer cooperation is very important for rapid disease or disaster response to help protect Mississippi's herds

## Animal Disease and Disaster Preparedness (Cont.)

and filling out these forms as well.

### **Step 2) Return your completed producer registration form to the State Veterinarian's office at the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.**

Completed producer registration forms can be mailed, faxed, e-mailed, or completed online. Contact information for the State Veterinarian's office is included on the producer registration form.

### **Step 3) Receive your unique producer registration ID.**

A randomly generated unique producer registration number will be assigned to your producer registration form. You will receive a letter from the State Veterinarian's office confirming receipt of your producer registration information and notifying you of your producer registration ID. **In the event of an animal health emergency, this information will be used to rapidly respond to the emergency to protect your animals and Mississippi's livestock industries.** Otherwise, this basic contact information will sit in a database at the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.

What Do I Need to Know?

#### **What does it cost to sign up?**

Enrollment in the program is **free of charge to Mississippi livestock producers.** The only cost is a few minutes of your time to complete the sign-up process. This is a small price to pay for protecting the health of animal agriculture in Mississippi.

#### **Why should I register my farm?**

In an animal health emergency, no one can help you protect your animals if they do not know you are there. This basic contact information opens the lines of communication between producers and animal health officials. Registering your farm means that you will be alerted quickly when there is a potential disease threat to your animals. You then have the information and assistance you need to take action and protect your animals and your investment.

#### **Where will the data be stored?**

The Mississippi Board of Animal Health will be responsible for keeping the data on file. The information provided as part of this state animal disease preparedness program will only be accessed on an as-needed basis in the event of an animal health emergency.

## Mississippi Producers Invited to Beef Excellence Program

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service has extended an invitation for Mississippi beef producers to attend the Beef Excellence Program on April 16-18, 2007 at the Auburn University campus.

This hands-on course focuses on beef end-product. Topics covered include live animal evaluation, selection for carcass merit, pre-weaning management practices affecting end product, whole animal marketing, HACCP training, USDA Yield and Quality Grading, meat fabrication, retail cuts, carcass pricing of fabricated cuts, grid marketing, feeder calf pricing, alternative marketing strategies, marbling, ultrasound data, DNA testing, taste panel, tenderness, carcass evaluation, injection sites and meat quality, and what Alabama feeder cattle look like in U.S. packing plants.

**Registration is due by April 2, 2007, and**

participant **space is limited.** Cost for the entire course including all course materials, meals, and breaks is \$200 per participant.



For more information contact:

Josh Elmore (205) 646-3610

Bob Ebert (334) 844-1563

Dr. Lisa Kriese-Anderson (334) 844-1561

The Beef Excellence Program will be held at the Lambert-Powell Meats Laboratory, 500 Shug Jordan Parkway, Auburn, AL. The Mississippi State University Extension Service is planning a similar program to be hosted at Mississippi State University on June 28-29, 2007.

*"...This hands-on course focuses on beef end-product and covers a wide variety of topics relevant to Southeastern cattle producers..."*

## Consider Yearling Bulls and Mississippi Bulls

**By: Lance Newman, Area Livestock Agent,  
MSU Extension Service, Oxford, MS**

More cattle producers are realizing that they need quality bulls to breed cattle. Cattle producers know that if they are going to get top dollar for their calves, they must start with good bulls.

There are some advantages and some disadvantages to buying a younger bull. One advantage is that you get to purchase bulls that have not yet been picked through. Most purebred producers will let buyers purchase bulls as yearlings or younger. This can help with getting the best quality bull you can afford. Now is the time to be looking for a bull to use this winter and spring. Most purebred breeders have weaned their spring-born calves and will be glad for you to look through them. They may also have fall babies on the ground for you to start viewing.

By purchasing a younger bull, you are able to use him lightly. I strongly emphasize LIGHTLY. Too many times we just turn bulls out and forget them. We cannot do this, especially with yearling bulls. Producers ask me, "How many cows can a yearling bull breed?" My first answer is not about how many they can breed, but about how long are they left out. Yearling bulls should not be left out more than 45 days at a time. These animals are still growing and maturing. They need time to do so. They cannot do that when they are out trying to breed a herd of cows. Please note also that none of our bulls should be out more than 90 days at a time. The big disadvantage of buying a younger bull is that you will have to continue to grow and maintain this bull. When purchasing older bulls, there is still a growing and maintenance process, just not as much as with yearling bulls. Also, the younger bulls will not be able to handle as many cows as older, mature bulls.

I encourage you to look at purchasing younger, good quality bulls. Good quality two-year-old bulls are difficult to find because many producers are buying earlier, selecting better quality in the beginning, and planning for that bull before he needs to be turned out. We cannot wait until the last minute because the good bulls will be gone.

Plan ahead, and this plan may include purchasing a yearling bull as your next bull.

### Mississippi /Southeast Bulls

Too many times I hear of producers who have gone to Texas, Montana, Kansas, Nebraska, etc. to purchase bulls. I am not denying that there are good bulls out there, but many of the bulls right here in Mississippi and the Southeast are just as good.

Our producers are some of the most aggressive producers and are using the same breeding/genetics as those in many other states. With the use of A.I. and embryo transfer many of our producers are using the same genetics. Not to mention that the Mississippi and Southeast bulls will be better adapted to our climate.

The major advantage that some of the breeders out West have is strictly numbers – it is not quality. We do have some local producers that are large enough to fill a big order of bulls to purchase if contacted early enough. This is why we need to plan early to purchase bulls and get the best quality that our producers have to offer. If you have not visited with some of them yet, I encourage you to do so.

I have been on both sides of this issue as I used to sell bulls here in Mississippi for a purebred cattle operation and know the challenge of the ever-increasing demands from the producers. They want the best bull for the least amount of money. In my role now as an Area Extension Agent, my job is to help educate the producers so hopefully they can make informed decisions that can help improve their operations.

There are several easy ways to find out about Mississippi bull producers. First, contact your local Extension Service office to find local breeders. Other sources are the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, MBCIA, Farm Bureau, as well as regional publications. Work with your Extension Agent or Extension Specialist to find others that fit your specific needs. Mississippi purebred producers can meet your needs. Just take time to visit with them and see what they have to offer.

*"...Cattle producers know that if they are going to get top dollar for their calves, they must start with good bulls..."*



It is important to visit with breeders to find bulls that fit your specific needs.

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement  
Association—Productivity and Quality

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Send questions or comments about this  
newsletter to Jane Parish, Extension Beef  
Specialist, Mississippi State University  
Extension Service

Mississippi State  
University does not

discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion,  
national origin, sex, sexual orientation or group  
affiliation, age, disability, or veteran status.



Visit MBCIA online at  
[http://msucares.com/  
livestock/beef/mbcia/](http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/)

## MBCIA Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check one) Seedstock:  Commercial:

Cattle breed(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Completed applications and \$5 annual dues payable to  
Mississippi BCIA should be mailed to:

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association  
c/o Jane Parish, Extension Beef Specialist  
Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762

## BCIA Genetic Profit Tips—February 2007

### Importance of Performance Testing

Data from an on-farm or centralized bull test combined with breed association genetic evaluation programs provides prospective bull buyers with good indications of underlying genetic merit for traits measured.

Bull tests evaluate the postweaning performance of bulls under uniform conditions and considers contemporary groups. A contemporary group is a group of animals of similar age, sex, and breed composition that are raised under the same management conditions. When used in conjunction with breed association record programs, bull test reports can be completed with little additional work beyond completion of breed association records.

### Which Bulls Should be Tested?

Bulls that are being considered for sale as breeding animals or being incorporated into a breeding program are potential candidates for performance testing. Bulls should be evaluated at weaning for structural soundness and conformation. Bulls with poor feet, legs, or eyes may not perform well in a pasture breeding scenario and may need to be culled at weaning. Bulls to be tested should have a weight per day of age of greater than two pounds per day. In an on-farm test, at least five bulls should be tested to allow each bull's performance to be compared to the average performance for the group.

### Types of Tests

There are two types of performance tests for bulls: feed-based test and forage-based tests. The feed-based test simulates a feedlot or finishing program, while the forage-based test relies more on pasture and hay. Choose

the type of test that best fits your resources and marketing strategy.

### Feed-Based Test

Feed-based tests typically supply higher levels of nutrient intake and are shorter in duration than forage-based tests. Feed-based tests should be considered when:

- Bulls are marketed as yearlings.
- Feed mixing and feeding facilities are available.
- A dependable feed supply is available at reasonable cost.

### Forage-Based Test

Forage-based tests should be considered when:

- Bulls are marketed at 18 months of age or older.
- A year-round supply of high quality forages is available.
- Pastures have adequate fencing and water sources.

For a bull test to be most effective in separating bulls based on genetic potential for growth performance, **it is important that bulls placed on test remain on test throughout the duration of the test.** The main objective of a bull test is to evaluate postweaning performance of bulls under uniform conditions. Data collected from bulls that do not complete the test cannot be used in comparisons with the animals that remained on test for the duration of the testing period. Removing bulls from the contemporary group lowers the value of the test and can bias the results, especially if high- or low-performing bulls are removed. Removing low-performing bulls from the test based on interim test weights may increase the test average for growth performance, however, the performance of the high-performing bulls will then be closer to the average of the group.