

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association—Productivity and Quality



Upcoming events:

- March 12—Profitable Pastures Seminar, MSU Bost Extension Center
- March 13—Profitable Pastures Seminar, Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center, Raymond, MS
- May 21—Beef Cattle Short Course presented by the American Breeds Coalition, Raymond, MS
- May 25-29—Beef Improvement Federation annual meeting, Sioux Falls, SD

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MBCIA Annual Meeting Highlights

The Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association met at the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association annual convention on February 6, 2004 in Jackson, MS.

Dr. Darrh Bullock, University of Kentucky Extension Beef Specialist, talked about how to decide what traits are important in beef cattle selection and how to decipher the increasing amount of information available for making animal selection decisions. He emphasized the importance of well-planned crossbreeding strategies for Mississippi cow-calf operations.



Dr. Darrh Bullock addresses the BCIA session at the Mississippi Cattlemen's Convention in Jackson

Crossbreeding Options for Beef Producers

Beef producers familiar with hybrid vigor know that two plus two can equal five instead of four. Hybrid vigor or heterosis is simply the added performance boost in crossbred calves over the performance average of the purebred parents. An organized crossbreeding program can capitalize on hybrid vigor while producing calves with a desirable combination of characteristics from multiple breeds.

Different breeds tend to excel for different traits. A well-structured crossbreeding program combines the performance strengths among several breeds. Considerations for designing a crossbreeding program include the current breed composition of the herd, whether or not replacement heifers will be kept, market targets, environmental conditions, and forage and feed resources.

There are different types of crossbreeding programs depending on the number of breeds used and whether replacement heifers will be produced. A simple program uses two-way cross females for herd replacements mated to a bull of a third breed. In this terminal cross, replacement females are purchased and all calves are marketed after

weaning. Another type of crossbreeding program rotates sires of different breeds and can be used to produce replacement females. One example of this type of crossbreeding program is where bull breeds are changed every three years and heifers are only saved from the second or third calf crops of each sire to prevent sire-daughter mating. A high level of hybrid vigor can be maintained in both the cow herd and the calf crop using a rotational crossbreeding system.

No breed or breed combination is necessarily always best for all production and marketing environments. A variety of breed combinations can be appropriate. Within each breed, there are also both superior and inferior cattle. Crossbreeding does not make up for poor genetics. Careful consideration should be taken in choosing both breeds and individual animals within breeds. With a little patience, genetic progress can be made in the cow herd with a well-designed crossbreeding program. For more information on crossbreeding or related topics, contact your local Extension office.

MBCIA Elects New Board of Directors



A new board of directors was elected at the MBCIA annual membership meeting

At the Mississippi BCIA annual membership meeting in Jackson on February 6, 2004, a new Board of Directors was nominated and approved. The Board is comprised of slots representing a variety of groups and individuals involved in Mississippi BCIA. These slots are allocated based on the by-laws adopted at the annual membership meeting in 2003.

Several new faces and several familiar faces are on the 2004 Mississippi BCIA Board of Directors.

Commercial Producers
Mike Keene (Term expires 2005)
Wayne Doler (Term expires 2006)
Mike Smith (Term expires 2007)

Purebred Producers
Bill Darnell (Term expires 2005)
Dave Schubert (Term expires 2005)
Charlie Hull (Term expires 2006)
Mike Howell (Term expires 2007)

Mississippi Cattlemen's Assoc. Exec. VP
Sammy Blossom

Mississippi Cattlemen's Assoc. President
Phil Slay

MSU Animal and Dairy Science Department
Terry Kiser

Extension Animal Scientist
Blair McKinley

Area Extension Agent
Roy Higdon

Hinds Bull Test Station
Billie Banes

South Mississippi Forage Bull Test
Lamar Adams

Past Presidents of Mississippi BCIA

Locations of BCIA sponsored sales
Kenny Banes

Officers (Terms expire 2006)

President
Jim Anderson

Vice-President
Jack Evans

Secretary/Treasurer
Jane Parish

Mississippi BCIA appreciates the service and dedication of the 2003 Board of directors. The 2004 Board hopes to build on the foundation laid by these individuals.

Profitable Pastures Programs Focus on Production Potential

Close to 300 attendees spend the day learning about forage production and utilization at the recent Profitable Pastures seminars. The first program was held on the Mississippi State University campus on Friday, March 12, and the second program was held at the Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Raymond on Saturday, March 13. Drs. Don Ball (Auburn University), Carl Hoveland (The University of Georgia), and Garry Lacefield (University of Kentucky) discussed forage fertility, forage ecology, forage quality, warm-season grasses, forage legumes, over-

seeding with winter annuals, grazing management, tall fescue challenges, and minimizing stored feed requirements. The weather cooperated for an outdoor electric fencing demonstration as well. *Southern Forages* books were provided to participants, and the authors signed autographs in the books. Dr. Ball closed the program with "A Cow's Complaint", an entertaining poem emphasizing the importance of good forage programs in livestock production. Mississippi BCIA is proud to have helped sponsor such an outstanding producer education program.



Profitable Pastures brought Drs. Don Ball, Garry Lacefield, and Carl Hoveland to MS

South Mississippi Replacement Heifer Sale Guidelines

Guidelines for the upcoming South Mississippi replacement heifers sale are as follows:

Age—Heifers must be born between August 2002 and January 30, 2004.

Health—Heifers must originate from a certified brucellosis-free herd or must be tested within 30 days of sale. Health papers from a veterinarian verifying the above must accompany the heifers to the sale. Calfhood vaccination is recommended. Heifers must be dehorned, dewormed, treated for external parasites and vaccinated for the following: 7-way Clostridial, IBR, PI3, BVD, BRSV, Vibriosis, and Leptospirosis. Heifers should not have been implanted.

Fertility—Open heifers must be verified as such by a veterinarian and should have a reproductive tract score of 4 or 5 to qualify.

Bred heifers must be palpated or ultrasounded and confirmed pregnant by a qualified veterinarian. Pelvic measure must meet or exceed 180 cm².

Heifers must be of known breed composition and known parentage or noted. It is recommended that heifers be sired by performance-tested sires. Heifers should be pro-

duced by consignor or sold as assembled groups.

Bred heifers should be bred back to performance-tested sires. Breed of sire and exposure and AI dates must be noted.

Heifers must be structurally sound with no obvious defects.

Minimum adjusted 205-day weaning weights will be 500 pounds.

Minimum target weights from bred heifers by August 31st:

British breeds or breed combinations—800 pounds

Continental and /or Brahman combinations—900 pounds

Sale order will be determined by a committee of three based on performance, general conformation, quality, interest and rotation.

Open heifers must have been weaned at least 21 days and broke to bunk feeding and weigh a minimum of 650 pounds.

For more information on the South Mississippi replacement heifer sale, contact your local Extension office or Mike Keene at mikek@ext.msstate.edu or 601-545-6083.



The upcoming South Mississippi heifers sale is designed to be a source of quality heifers

Beef Cattle Short Course to Feature Nolan Ryan

The May 7th early registration deadline for the Beef Cattle Short Course featuring Nolan Ryan is fast approaching. The short course will be held Friday, May 21 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the Hinds Community College campus in Raymond, Mississippi.

Educational programs will focus on "Production Targets for Success in the Beef Industry" and are being presented in cooperation with the American Breeds Coalition.

Topics will include: where *Bos indicus* cattle fit in the industry, the Nolan Ryan Tender Aged Beef program, Texas A&M Ranch to

Rail program results, marketing alliances for small producers, electronic identification, and herd health and management practices to improve feeder calf value. There will also be an opportunity to interact with the speakers from Nolan Ryan Tender Aged Beef, Texas A&M University, Cactus Feeders, and Mississippi State University during a panel discussion.

For more information on the upcoming Beef Cattle Short Course, contact your local Extension office. Registration forms are also available on the internet at <http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/>

"Educational programs will focus on 'Production Targets for Success in the Beef Industry'"

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

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Visit MBCIA online at
<http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/>

MBCIA Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

County: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

(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 Management Calendar—March 2004

GENERAL

Watch for grass tetany, particularly on lactating cows grazing lush pastures. Feed a high magnesium mineral supplement to cows on ryegrass/tall fescue pastures. Provide proper free-choice minerals and fresh water at all times. Maintain at least 4" average stubble height on winter annual pastures to avoid overgrazing. Fertilize cool-season grasses according to soil tests if not done by February. Locate hybrid bermudagrass sprigs for planting next month. Spray to control little barley, buttercup, and other winter annual weeds. Plan summer fly control before fly population buildup. Consider vaccination for anaplasmosis and/or pinkeye. Vaccinate all calves more than three months old for blackleg (7-way). Consider marketing cull cows.

SPRING CALVING

January, February, March

Dip navels, identify, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as appropriate at birth. Acquire quality herd sires with performance information from reputable sources. Make sure that calving ease sires are selected for breeding to

heifers. Conduct breeding soundness exams and make sure bulls are in good condition in advance of spring breeding. Vaccinate all open cows and heifers for vibriosis, leptospirosis, and IBR at least 30 days before breeding. Consult with a veterinarian for BVD recommendations for the local area. Cows need to be in moderate to good condition to rebreed early. Place cattle with the highest nutritional needs (lactating first-calf heifers and cows) on the highest quality grazing and hay. Supplement the cow herd as needed according to forage test results. Start breeding heifers about a month before the cow herd.

FALL CALVING

October, November, December

Remove bulls 283 days prior to the end of the desired calving season (mid-March to end the calving season around late December). Keep bulls in a small pasture traps with effective fences. Feed bulls to start the next breeding season in good condition. Observe the cow herd for returns to standing heat. Castrate and dehorn late calves or those missed in early working.