

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association—Productivity and Quality



Upcoming events:

- July 12—Cattlemen's Exchange Meeting: Facilities/Handling, NMREC, Verona, MS
- July 13—Cattlemen's Exchange Meeting: Forages, EE Ranches Cafeteria, Winona, MS, 7:30 p.m.
- July 15—Cattlemen's Exchange Meeting, Rankin County Extension Office, Brandon, MS, 7:00 p.m.
- August 14—Cattlemen's Field and Hay Day, Brown Loam Branch Experiment Station, Raymond, MS
- August 17-18—Cattle Nutrition Short Course, Distance Education
- August 31—Marketing Your Way to Profitability Cattle Risk Management Workshop, Forrest County Extension Office, Hattiesburg, MS 9:00 a.m.
- September 1—BCIA Annual Fall Bull Sale Consignment Deadline
- October 12—Bulls arrive at Hinds Community College Bull Test
- October 26—Hinds Community College Bull Test begins

Cattlemen's Exchange Programs Launched

Cattlemen's Exchange groups are starting up across Mississippi and are a joint effort between the MSU Extension Service and the Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association. Cattlemen's Exchange is designed to address in-depth issues and management practices for more progressive beef cattle producers. Meetings are typically held once a month, and topics for discussion are based on input from producers at the previous meeting. These meetings are very interactive and informal with no meals or refreshments.

Beef producers share information on production and marketing problems and solutions based on their own experiences. Facilitators from Extension and BCIA are on hand to help guide discussions. Group marketing and purchasing efforts are just some of the potential outcomes of this unique educational program. For more information on Cattlemen's Exchange and a schedule of upcoming meetings in your area, contact your local Extension office or visit <http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/exchange.html>.

Cattle Nutrition Short Course Planned for August

The Mississippi State University Extension Service will conduct a Cattle Nutrition Short Course for beef and dairy producers next month. This day and a half long short course will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 17 and from 8:00 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, August 18. It will be broadcast over interactive video from Mississippi State University to distance education sites throughout Mississippi. Topics will include understanding the ruminant digestive system, overview of nutrients, feed ingredients, feed analysis, understanding feed tags, cattle nutrient requirements, nutritional dis-

orders, and management decisions. Featured speakers will be Dr. Robert Stewart, Extension Beef Specialist at the University of Georgia, and Dr. Jim Tomlinson, former MSU Extension Specialist. The registration deadline is August 10.



The Cattle Nutrition Short Course will help producers plan forage and feeding programs

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Name: _____ Number attending: _____

Address: _____

Select preferred distance education site (circle one):

Bost Extension Center, MSU	Central MS R&E Center, Raymond
North MS R&E Center, Verona	Forrest Co. Extension Office, Hattiesburg
Tate Co. Extension Office, Senatobia	Pike Co. Extension Office, Magnolia
Newton Co. Extension Office, Decatur	

Phone: _____ Registration fee enclosed: \$_____ (\$5 per person)

Please make checks payable to *Cattle Nutrition Short Course* and send along with this registration form to: **Cattle Nutrition Short Course, Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762.**



1st Place – STEER #6
 Start weight = 696 lbs.
 Start value = \$633.36
 Total cost = \$1,017.15
 Feedlot ADG = 3.63 lbs.
 Carcass weight = 910 lbs.
 Quality Grade = Choice –
 Yield Grade = 3.00
 Carcass Value = \$1,227.77
Profit from feeding = \$210.62



2nd Place – STEER #4
 Start weight = 766 lbs.
 Start value = \$651.10
 Total cost = \$965.08
 Feedlot ADG = 3.86 lbs.
 Carcass weight = 846 lbs.
 Quality Grade = Choice –
 Yield Grade = 2.90
 Carcass Value = \$1,167.82
Profit from feeding = \$202.74



3rd Place – STEER #8
 Start weight = 772 lbs.
 Start value = \$656.20
 Total cost = \$970.18
 Feedlot ADG = 3.29 lbs.
 Carcass weight = 825 lbs.
 Quality Grade = Choice –
 Yield Grade = 2.90
 Carcass Value = \$1,138.83
Profit from feeding = \$168.65

Farm to Feedlot Contest Results

Earlier this year, Mississippi beef producers were challenged to predict which three calves in the Farm to Feedlot Contest would be most profitable beyond the farm gate. Pictures, weights, and live prices for 10 randomly selected steers in the 2003-2004 Mississippi Farm to Feedlot program appeared in the January and April issues of *Cattle Business in Mississippi* along with contest guidelines. The results were pretty interesting.

Grids

For contest purposes, fed cattle were priced on a grid basis. In actuality, the cattle enrolled in Farm to Feedlot were sold on a live weight basis to try to make the most money for consignors based on market conditions. The contest grids favored cattle grading USDA Choice or higher and USDA Yield Grade 3 or less. Discounts were imposed for any USDA Select and Standard Quality Grades, USDA Yield Grades 4 and higher, dark cutters, hard bones, and out weights. Among the 10 contest steers, there were no dark cutters, hard bones or cattle hanging carcasses weighing less than 550 lbs. or over 950 lbs.

The grids used for the contest were representative of actual industry grid pricing at the time of each closeout. Cattle were harvested on four dates this year: March 25, April 19, April 30, and May 20. The grids changed quite a bit from late March to late May 2004. Discounts for Yield Grade 4's and 5's were \$6.36/cwt. and \$6.42/cwt. larger, respectively, in May than March. The choice-select spread moved from \$10.50/cwt. to \$20.00/cwt. from March to May as well.

Performance and Profitability

Feedlot average daily gains (ADG) ranged from 2.99 lbs. to 4.11 lbs. for the 10 contest steers. Dressing percentage ranged from 62.3% to 65.4% with the average being 63.8%. Carcass weights ranged from 740 lbs. to 929 lbs. and averaged 829 lbs. Calves with higher growth performance in the feedlot also tended to have higher carcass weights. All 10 steers graded Choice or Select. The average Yield Grade for the cattle grading Select was 1.68, while the average Yield Grade for the cattle grading Choice

was 2.81. The general trend was for cattle with higher Quality Grades to have higher (less desirable) Yield Grades and vice-versa, but there were some exceptions. STEER #7 graded mid-Choice and had a Yield Grade of 1.97. Not bad. Yet STEER #7 was ranked 8th for feedlot ADG and hung the lightest carcass of the group. In terms of profitability, STEER #7 ranked just 7th among the 10 contest steers.

Only two of the 10 contest steers lost money: STEER #3 and STEER #9. These two steers had the lowest feedlot average daily gains and were among the bottom three steers for carcass weight. STEER #3 and STEER #9 also had the two highest total costs and the two lowest carcass values. Neither steer graded Choice. What does this tell us? Cost, carcass weight, and Quality Grade were important factors in determining feeding profitability.

The Bottom Line

Picking out those cattle that will be the most profitable through a finishing phase just by looking and knowing a starting weight turned out to be quite challenging as evidenced by the wide variety of answers submitted on the 10 contest steers. Did perceived breed composition influence predictions of which calves would be the most profitable? Would it have made a difference if health histories of the calves were part of the initial information? Would knowing a little bit more about the genetic potential of the calves up front have helped in identifying the more desirable calves to feed? Finally, how well do you know the genetic and profit potential of the calves on your own farm? The Farm to Feedlot program is just one of many opportunities for beef producers to learn more about cattle performance in the feedlot and on the rail.

Thank you to all of the participants in the 2003-2004 Farm to Feedlot Contest, and congratulations to the winners: Duane Gunn of Corinth, MS in the adult division and Ben Bishop of Rosehill, MS in the youth division. They each won their divisions outright with no need to go to the tiebreaker questions and will each receive a whole beef tenderloin, complements of the Mississippi Cattle-men's Association.

Stocker Cents

Beginning with the June/July issue of *Cattle Business in Mississippi*, the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association added a new article to their magazine. The new "Stocker Cents" articles will focus on improving the profitability of stocker cattle production in Mississippi. Contributors are from Animal and Dairy Sciences, the College of Veterinary Medicine, Plant and Soil Sciences, and Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University. These articles are also available online at http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mca_articles.html.

Stocker cattle are generally considered young, lightweight calves developed primarily on forage-based diets until they reach a desired weight. These calves are usually then placed in a feedlot or used as replacements for cow herds. Mississippi is primarily a cow-calf state with over 20,000 beef producers. A substantial number of producers retain their calves and/or purchase calves for stockering before shipment to the

feedlot. In a recent survey, Mississippi producers indicated that they retained/purchased over 195,000 calves for stockering each year. Calves were purchased in all months, with over 60% of the calves purchased in the third and fourth quarter of the year. Producers indicated calves were purchased at an average weight of 409 pounds and sold at an average weight of 679 pounds after a 145-day stockering period. The increased value of production from stockering exceeded \$29 million dollars annually. Stockering is a vital part of Mississippi's beef industry and economy.

Over the coming months, "Stocker Cents" articles will address topics relevant to producers actively involved in or considering stockering calves in Mississippi. Forages, nutrition, health, management, marketing, and economics are just some of the areas that will be covered. The goal is to make sense of stockering issues to make cents add up for Mississippi beef producers.

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BCIA Seeks 2004 Fall Bull Sale Consignments

Plans are being made for the 2004 Mississippi BCIA Fall Bull Sale. The sale is scheduled for Thursday, November 11, 2004 at 12:00 noon at the Hinds Community College Sales Facility in Raymond, Mississippi. The objective of the Fall BCIA Bull Sale program is to encourage production and identification of genetically superior bulls by purebred breeders and to encourage the purchase

and use of these bulls by commercial producers. The deadline for nominations is September 1. If you are interested in consigning bulls to the BCIA sale, contact your local Extension office for rules and regulations and nomination forms. Bull sale information is also posted on the BCIA website at http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/bcia_bullsale.html.

Cattlemen's Field and Hay Day to be Held at Brown Loam

The Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Mississippi State University Extension Service, Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and Mississippi Cattlemen's Association will host a Cattlemen's Field and Hay Day at the Brown Loam Branch Experiment Station near Raymond, MS. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. on August 14. Producers will have the opportunity to visit commercial exhibits throughout the day. Dr. Terry Engelken will

present a Beef Quality Assurance injection site lesion demonstration in cooperation with Elanco Animal Health. Heifer development, summer annual grazing, and hay quality are among the topics to be discussed at the field day. The event will wrap up with equipment demonstrations of hay mowers, rakes, tedders, and balers. For more information about the field day, contact Dr. Rhonda Vann at 601-857-5952.



A Cattlemen's Field and Hay Day is set for the Brown Loam Branch Station in August.

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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—July 2004

GENERAL

Stay on top of summer weed and brush control. Rotationally graze summer pastures, clipping overgrown pastures or harvesting excess for hay. Watch dallisgrass pastures for ergot contamination, and clip seedheads if necessary. Avoid grazing heavily nitrogen fertilized sudangrass, sorghum-sudan hybrid, or pearl millet pastures during drought or cool, cloudy weather. If cattle are grazed on these pastures, they should be observed carefully for signs of nitrate poisoning. Continue harvesting bermudagrass hay at 4-5 week intervals for optimum forage maturity and quality. Fertilize hay fields between cuttings or on a regular interval to replace soil nutrients removed by hay production and improve hay yield and quality. Continue recording hay yields and forage testing each cutting. Store hay to minimize storage losses and allow matching of forage test results with individual lots of hay for use in hay feeding and supplementation decisions. Keep proper free-choice minerals, adequate shade, and fresh water available for cattle at all times. At 90°F a mature cow needs about 20 gallons of water per day. Continue fly control program keeping a close eye on fly numbers. Remove fly tags as they become ineffective, and implement additional fly control methods. Check cattle for cancer eye, pinkeye, and foot rot. Maintain a complete herd health program in consultation with a veterinarian including internal and external parasite control and vaccinations. Continue good production and financial record keeping.

SPRING CALVING—January, February, March

Remove bulls from breeding pastures if not done already. Keep bulls in a small pasture traps on an adequate nutritional program, and market bulls that will not be used in future breeding seasons. Maintain lactating cows on the best pastures. Consider creep feeding calves depending on marketing plans and pasture conditions. Plan to pregnancy check herd females about 60 days after the end of the breeding season. Establish permanent identification (tattoos or brands) for bred heifers that will remain in the herd, and make plans to market open heifers.

FALL CALVING—October, November, December

Wean calves based on market and pasture conditions using weaning strategies that minimize calf stress. Monitor herd performance and nutritional status by recording weights and cow body condition scores at weaning. Assess weaning percentage (calves weaned/cows exposed to breeding) and cow efficiency (calf weight/cow weight). After weaning, cull cows based on pregnancy status, soundness (eyes, udders, feet, legs, teeth), and performance records. Market cull cows based on market conditions and cow body condition. Select replacement heifers based on performance. Put a heifer development program in action to reach target breeding weights by the start of the next breeding season. Implement calf preconditioning, marketing, or retained ownership plans as appropriate.