



The Bull's Eye hitting the target



McDowell County Center

April 2013

Inside This Issue

- Cattlemen's Association Spring Meeting 1
- Annual Membership Dues and Drive 1
- Importance of Convenience Traits in Beef Cattle 2-3
- Get the Most Money for Your Cull Cows 3
- Brood Cow's Wishes 4
- Preventing Grass Tetany 5
- Build a Better Burger 5
- High Performance Females May Experience Longer Calving Intervals 6
- Livestock Market Report 7
- Upcoming Events 8

Cattlemen's Association Spring Meeting



I look forward to seeing each of you at our next cattlemen's meeting on **Tuesday, April 16 at 6:00pm at the Bethel Baptist Church** lo-

cated at 205 Bethel Church Road, off Mudcut Road. We had a great turnout at our last meeting and I hope you can join us again. The program will be on vaccinations and deworming of cattle. The program will be presented by

Mr. Steve McGill, Senior Sales Development Representative for **Merial**.

The meal sponsored by **Merial** and **Carolina Farm Credit**,



will follow the program. We need to have an accurate head count so please **RSVP by Thursday, April 11** to 652-7874 so Wanda will know how much food to prepare.



Contact Us

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Annual MEMBERSHIP DUES and DRIVE

McDowell Cattlemen's Association dues are \$20 and are due now, if you did not pay at the annual meeting in January.

Be sure to bring a friend to the meeting and tell them the benefits of membership, such as:

- * Meal sponsorships at meetings
- * County sponsored activities and promotions
- * Beef Producer of the Year award



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Empowering People · Providing Solutions

The Importance of Convenience Traits in Beef Cattle

Adapted from F. David Kirkpatrick Professor Animal Science Department University of Tennessee

Convenience traits are those cattle traits that contribute directly to savings in time, facilities, drugs and labor in a cow-calf enterprise. Some examples of these traits would be temperament, polledness, structural soundness, hard doing or fleshing ability, and calving ease. Many of these traits of convenience are not highly heritable but contribute to the ease of participating in and enjoyment of the beef cattle industry.

Temperament:

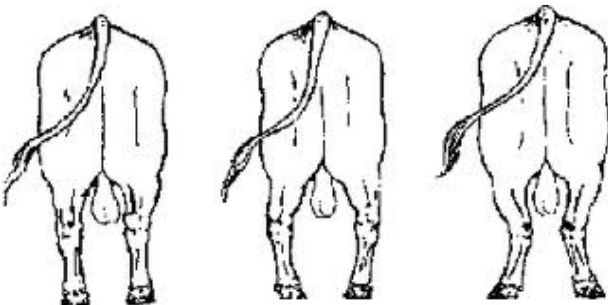
Temperament is a measure of the relative docility, wildness or aggression of an animal toward unfamiliar situations, human handlers or management interventions. Temperament reflects the ease with which animals respond to handling, treatment and routine management. Animals with bad disposition problems are a safety risk to handlers, themselves and other animals within the herd. Disposition affects handling equipment requirements, operation liability exposure, beef quality assurance, carcass quality and performance. Wild, hard to handle cattle are a danger to themselves and the people working with them. They are the ones that create handling and gathering problems. Once they are confined, they are the gate and fence crushers. They are wild eyed upon leaving the chute and exit the



headgate on the run. They may look for something to hit and when extremely agitated may look for a human being and charge. In addition those wild, unmanageable animals do not perform as well as calmer cattle in the feedlot. Research from Iowa State University has shown that these type of cattle gain nearly 1/2 pound per day less than quiet easily managed cattle and returned \$61 less profit. Also easily excited cattle tend to produce carcasses that have a higher incidence of dark cutters which are heavily discounted in market price in the packing industry. Results of a survey of cow-calf producers, conducted during three performance tested bull sales, revealed that temperament was rated 4.13 out of 5.0 as being important in sire selection. Cow-calf producers do not want a bull with a bad attitude. Heritability of temperament is moderately high and directional change can be made by selection and culling. Dr. Temple Grandin found that location of the hair whorl on the forehead in cattle is associated with temperament. Cattle with hair whorls above the midpoint of the eyes are more susceptible to excitement than cattle with hair whorls below the midpoint of the eyes. Excitability is measured when the cattle are in the chute by temperament scores assigned to them according to their response to restraint.

Structural Soundness:

Sound feet and legs are essential in order for a bulls to cover many acres of pasture for mating with cows and obtaining adequate nutrition. Structural soundness is not an all or nothing situation but expressed in various degrees. Inspect prospective sires in a systematic manner. Inspect the bulls feet, toes, heels, pasterns, knees, hocks and sheath. When viewed from the front, the feet should point straight ahead, both when the bull is standing and walking, The feet should be large and round with a deep heel and with toes that are similar in size. When viewing from the rear, the legs should be equally far apart at the hocks and pasterns and



then toe out slightly from the pasterns to the ground. The bull should move freely with each hoof striking the ground evenly.

When on the walk, a structurally sound individuals hind feet will cover the footprints made by the front feet. Short, choppy strides are usually the result of the hind leg being too straight (post legged) and/or not enough angulation to the shoulder. Bad feet, pigeon toes, excessively straight

Continued on page 3

The Importance of Convenience Traits in Beef Cattle

or sickle hocks and loose pendulous sheaths are examples of the more common structural problems. Replacement females should remain functionally sound to advanced ages. Proper foot, leg and udder structure is important in the beef cow or replacement heifer to insure longevity. A cow's udder should be well attached, level across the bottom and have small to moderate sized teats that are not excessively long or excessively large in circumference. Soundness of the udder will generally deteriorate with age. Cows with impaired mobility, unsound mouths, pendulous udders or excessively large or balloon teats are candidates for culling.

Polledness:

De-horning is a labor intense management practice that requires additional health attention. Polled cattle are less troublesome when working them the possibility of injury to both producer and animal is reduced. Cattle without horns require less time and labor. De-horning can be accomplished by selection of a polled bull since the polled gene is dominant to the horned gene.

Calving Ease:

Assistance at calving is labor intense and can be greatly reduced by selecting herd sires that have below breed average birth weight EPDs or an excellent EPD for calving ease. Also, stress incurred by the cow and calf at birth can lower the resistance of the newborn calf and make it more susceptible to disease and health problems. In addition, stress incurred by the cow during a difficult birth may delay her return to estrus following calving and lengthen the following years calving season.

Doing Ability:

Doing ability or fleshing ability is a measure of the adaptability of the cattle with their given resources on which to produce. Hard doers are those that do not adapt to their given set of resources and require extra attention or feed to produce. It also affects the longevity of the animal in question. The cow-calf industry is composed of many part-time operations that are maintained to supplement other farm enterprises or off-farm income. Labor is a limiting resource in many of these operations and there is a trend in selecting for improvement in convenience traits while maintaining optimum performance. Many of these convenience traits are not highly heritable, but by selecting for them and culling those that do not fit the producers objectives, improvement can be realized and enjoyment increased.



Get the Most Money for Your Cull Cows

Cull cows represent a significant portion of the net return in a cow-calf operation. Two primary things influence the value of cull cows - grade and time/season of marketing. Market prices were over \$7 cwt. higher for cows that graded as "Breakers" compared to those graded as "Lean." This difference is primarily body condition, with Breaker cows being fleshier and Lean cows being somewhat thin. Regarding season, cull cow prices are typically lowest during the winter (December-January) and highest May-July (~\$7 cwt. spread). Given these price differences, with proper management and timely management over \$100 in cull cow value can be attained. Sell that older cow this year while she is still in good flesh instead of giving her 1 more year and losing body condition. What if that old cow gets sick or injured, if you can get her to market you will get pennies on the dollar compared to selling her in average condition. Make cull cow marketing a planned event.

Brood Cow's Wishes

James B. Neel Professor Animal Science University of Tennessee



The following wishes were presented to a local cow-calf producer by a brood cow representative of his herd. These wishes would probably be similar to those of most cows in your herds.

1. Improve pasture production and management that will allow us to graze more. This would make me happier and more profitable for you. We were made to convert grass into feeder cattle.

2. Harvest hay at the appropriate stage so we can get the needed protein and energy to perform profitably. This would also lower your cost of winter feeding.

3. Keep 30 percent Ladino clover in the fescue pasture to reduce the effects of the fungus. Both we and our calves will perform better. Poor quality feed offers little in nutrition and is more difficult to digest.

4. Maintain a good set of working facilities so we won't get hurt and your children can watch you work me and my herd mates and our offspring without wondering what are the words you keep yelling. Your wife might also be more willing to help.

5. Keep us in "good" body condition and supplement when needed. As you know, we don't perform well when we are "too thin" and it is not profitable for you to keep us "too fat".

6. Develop a controlled, short calving season. We don't need to spend a lot of time with the bull. Sixty days, the most 90 days, are long enough for us.

7. Carry out a good health program that includes vaccinations for both respiratory and reproductive diseases. A healthy cow herd means more profit for you.

8. Check on us during calving to ensure that we make it "okay" and my calf is born with few problems, survives and does well. Do not lose the investment you have in our annual cost of maintenance.

9. Process (castrate, implant and ear tag) our male calves at birth so that they can get off to a good start and make you more money. Doing this as they get older will cause a setback in their performance.

10. Mate us to a bull that allows us to produce a high quality feeder calf that we can be proud of and will be profitable for you.

11. Before you purchase a new herd bull, consider what kind of genetics are needed to get the preceding wish done. Look at the herd's performance and make a breeding plan. We don't want to be mated with just any old bull. You should check with your neighbors and all of you develop similar breeding programs to produce calves that can be marketed together.

12. Control flies so that we can graze without being constantly irritated, our calves can perform well and neither of us develop eye problems.

13. Take better care of our daughters that you are planning for replacements. They should be fed and cared for better than us mature cows to be profitable.

14. Market our calves with their other buddies on the farm and those from neighboring farms. I have heard that "lonesome calves sell for less". You will also enjoy it better when you receive a larger check.



"I have been appointed by other cows of your herd to present our wishes to you as we enter the New Year. If you can carry out these wishes, we can produce feeder calves that would be more profitable for you and of greater value when you market them."

Our wishes are basic for successful cow-calf operations and will help us be more profitable for you.

Preventing Grass Tetany

Grass tetany is also known as magnesium tetany or grass staggers. It usually occurs in cows during early lactation, especially during cool weather in spring or fall when cool season forages come out of dormancy and grow rapidly. Although the highest risk is in spring, grass tetany can occur in the middle of winter or summer when unusual weather results in rapid growth on farms where fertility (especially nitrogen and potassium) is high.



Grass tetany usually results from a low level of magnesium in rapidly growing forages, but has also been associated with nutrients that interfere with the absorption of magnesium. Often the first sign will be a dead cow that was apparently healthy the last time she was checked. During the early stages of the disease, the cow will appear nervous, with a stiff gate and possible muscle tremors.

The cow will then become dull in appearance, and finally will go down and may thrash violently before death occurs. Grass tetany can also afflict stocker cattle, especially when grazed on small grains.

Prevention has been accomplished by feeding cattle supplemental hay or grain, fertilizing pastures with magnesium (by applying dolomitic limestone) or providing a mineral mix or supplement containing **magnesium oxide**. Supplementing with magnesium oxide during moderate or high risk periods is the most practical, and 1 oz/day will generally completely prevent or greatly reduce incidence of the disease. The magnesium oxide may be in a commercial high-mag mineral (10-14% Mg) or when an outbreak occurs, it should be mixed at 6% of a grain mix and fed at 1-2 lb/head/day.

Producers with normal fertility pastures should start feeding a high-mag mineral one month before the cows start to calve, and should continue through the end of the lush grass season in early summer. Producers with high fertility pastures (especially when poultry litter is used as fertilizer) should feed a high-mag mineral year-round.

Build a Better Burger

The burger you think you know is actually a healthy option in disguise. Burgers made with lean Ground Beef are not only an excellent source of protein but also contain nine other essential nutrients. Try these tips to build a better-for-you burger.

Start with your serving. A 3 oz cooked portion of beef is about the size of a deck of cards or a computer mouse.

Best your bun. Venture beyond the traditional white bun and bring out the best of your burger. Choose a whole grain bun to boost the flavor and nutrition.

Treat your taste buds to umami. Pair umami-rich ingredients such as tomatoes or mushrooms with beef burgers to create eight times more flavor.

Swap out the usual suspects. Skip the bacon, mayo and special sauce and choose better-for-you toppings like hummus, lettuce and cucumber to supersize the flavor without the calories.

Add flair to your plate. Make your plate a nutrient powerhouse by pairing your burger with sweet potato wedges, fruit kabobs or a side salad of vibrant vegetables.



High Performance Females May Experience Longer Calving Intervals

Cow-calf profits depend less on achieving maximum production than on maintaining optimal output within a given set of ranch resources. CowTek's recent analysis of calving intervals makes this point clear. Longer intervals between calves were consistently observed in young cows with high genetic ability for milk and growth compared to same-age females with lower growth and milk genetics. This finding is significant, because calving intervals are an important measure of reproductive efficiency. And among factors that affect the cow-calf producers' bottom line, nothing is more important than reproduction.

The research involved seven major U.S. beef breeds (including Angus). In each participating breed, females ranking in the top 40% for Milk EPD and the top 40% for Yearling Weight EPD were grouped together and compared to females in the bottom 40% for both traits. The high milk/high growth and low milk/low growth groups were then aggregated across breeds to produce a breed-neutral comparison.

Longer calving intervals among high milk/high growth females suggest that reproduction can become compromised in order to accommodate the dam's own growth and her higher milk output. Failure to re-breed during a fixed-length breeding season could be a problem as a result. High performance females may be especially vulnerable to reproductive delays and/or reproductive failure during periods of restricted feed supplies, such as during a drought.



Email Addresses Needed

Activities and events come to my attention between our scheduled meetings and this newsletter that you need to know about. It is not always possible to send out a notice, or start the phone chain. I will not be sending you junk emails or emailing you that often. If you want to be on our beef email list simply email Cheryl and let her know at:

Cheryl_Mitchell@ncsu.edu



Livestock Market Report

WNC Regional Livestock Center, Canton

Weighted Avg for Monday, March 18, 2013

Feeder Steers

Medium and Large 1 - 2

| Head | Wt Range | Avg Wt | Price Range | Avg Price |
|------|----------|--------|---------------|-----------|
| 4 | 260-290 | 273 | 147.50-165.00 | 155.85 |
| 3 | 310-320 | 315 | 165.00-180.00 | 171.72 |
| 7 | 350-395 | 374 | 142.50-160.00 | 149.56 |
| 12 | 460-495 | 481 | 138.00-155.00 | 145.80 |
| 9 | 500-545 | 517 | 136.00-153.00 | 142.35 |
| 11 | 550-575 | 566 | 133.00-139.00 | 137.82 |
| 29 | 610-646 | 633 | 121.00-132.00 | 128.45 |
| 5 | 650-660 | 655 | 110.00-119.00 | 114.40 |



Feeder Heifers

Medium and Large 1 - 2

| Head | Wt Range | Avg Wt | Price Range | Avg Price |
|------|----------|--------|---------------|-----------|
| 4 | 305-345 | 323 | 145.00-155.00 | 148.75 |
| 7 | 355-395 | 383 | 130.00-143.00 | 135.79 |
| 12 | 405-445 | 424 | 125.00-140.00 | 133.75 |
| 16 | 450-485 | 470 | 124.00-139.00 | 132.49 |
| 12 | 500-530 | 507 | 114.00-129.00 | 123.59 |
| 17 | 555-595 | 570 | 114.00-128.00 | 122.92 |
| 5 | 633-633 | 633 | 136.00 | 136.00 |
| 5 | 650-685 | 669 | 105.00-114.00 | 109.08 |
| 3 | 715-740 | 727 | 102.00-106.00 | 103.64 |

Feeder Bulls

Medium and Large 1 - 2

| Head | Wt Range | Avg Wt | Price Range | Avg Price |
|------|----------|--------|---------------|-----------|
| 11 | 400-445 | 422 | 138.00-155.00 | 142.78 |
| 7 | 450-490 | 466 | 127.00-140.00 | 135.93 |
| 10 | 500-525 | 516 | 132.50-145.00 | 139.51 |
| 8 | 550-590 | 568 | 121.00-136.00 | 128.78 |
| 5 | 600-645 | 631 | 110.00-117.00 | 112.75 |
| 2 | 655-660 | 658 | 109.00-113.00 | 111.01 |
| 3 | 735-740 | 737 | 93.00-107.00 | 98.35 |
| 3 | 750-765 | 757 | 103.00-106.00 | 105.00 |
| 1 | 805-805 | 805 | 95.00 | 95.00 |
| 1 | 885-885 | 885 | 90.00 | 90.00 |

Slaughter Cows

Breaker 75-80% Lean

| Head | Wt Range | Avg Wt | Price Range | Avg Price |
|-------------------|-----------|--------|-------------|---------------------|
| 7 | 1090-1360 | 1223 | 72.00-81.00 | 77.49 |
| 6 | 1175-1355 | 1261 | 85.00-93.00 | 88.34 High Dressing |
| 5 | 1420-1565 | 1481 | 82.00-94.00 | 86.83 High Dressing |
| Bonor 80-85% Lean | | | | |
| 3 | 855-895 | 872 | 70.00-79.00 | 74.69 |
| 2 | 870-890 | 880 | 82.00 | 82.00 High Dressing |
| 13 | 950-1355 | 1063 | 70.00-80.50 | 77.03 |
| 10 | 1025-1295 | 1146 | 82.00-92.00 | 84.90 High Dressing |
| Lean 85-90% Lean | | | | |
| 4 | 860-1015 | 959 | 60.00-69.00 | 62.28 |
| 2 | 820-830 | 825 | 46.00-56.00 | 50.97 Low Dressing |

Slaughter Bulls

Yield Grade 1-2

| Head | Wt Range | Avg Wt | Price Range | Avg Price |
|------|-----------|--------|---------------|----------------------|
| 5 | 1045-1335 | 1147 | 75.00-90.00 | 81.24 Low Dressing |
| 4 | 1640-1970 | 1791 | 91.00-99.50 | 96.81 |
| 7 | 1725-2300 | 1987 | 101.00-110.00 | 104.25 High Dressing |



McDowell County Center
60 E Court Street
Marion NC 28752

For up-to-date event schedule
check our Events page at:
<http://mcdowell.ces.ncsu.edu>

**Mark Your
Calendar!**

PLACES TO BE

- April 11 RSVP Cattlemen’s Association Meeting
- April 14 McDowell Jr. Horse Show, Marion
- April 16 McDowell Cattlemen’s Association Meeting, Bethel Baptist Church
- April 18 WNC Beef Commission Meeting, Asheville
- April 20 WNC Spring Fling Jr. Show, Fletcher
- May 16 WNC Beef Commission Meeting, Asheville
- June 1-2 NC Jr. Beef Round-Up, Raleigh
- July 9 Mountain Cattle Alliance Sale, Canton
- August 3 McDowell Jr. Livestock Show, Marion

Compiled and edited by:

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For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the McDowell County Center at 828-652-7874, no later than five business days before the event.