

Lowline Steer Value Plus Feedlot Performance and Carcass Characteristics

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For the past three years, the Dickinson Research Extension Center has collected data from crossbred Lowline steers in finish lots. As reported last week, the results were “interesting.”

In the process of developing the weekly BeefTalk column, new thoughts came to mind. Lots 4425, 5478 and 6270 from the Dickinson Research Extension Center produced sound scientific data. This week’s BeefTalk column summarizes three years of feedlot performance from a set of smaller-framed, crossbred Lowline steers.

Lot 4425 arrived Nov. 5, 2004. These 22 head of 2003 spring-born, grass steers (long yearlings) had an average pay weight of 945 pounds and an average frame score of 4.4. The lot averaged 85 days on feed with 2.85 pounds of average daily gain (ADG), a feed efficiency of 7.6 and a harvest weight of 1,186 pounds.

On the rail, lot 4425 was 0 percent prime, 36 percent upper choice, 41 percent choice and 23 percent select. The yield grade (YG) distribution was 32 percent YG 2, 55 percent YG 3 and 14 percent YG 4. The hot carcass weight was 4.5 percent 550 to 649 pounds, 90.9 percent 650 to 850 pounds, 0 percent 851 to 950 pounds and 4.5 percent 951 to 999 pounds. The ribeye area distribution was 9.1 percent less than 11 square inches, 90.9 percent 11 to 16 square inches and 0 percent more than 16 square inches. The value on the rail was \$1,093.

Lot 5478 arrived Nov. 11, 2005. The 26 head of 2004 spring-born, grass steers had an average pay weight of 996 pounds and an average frame score of 4.7. The lot averaged 95 days on feed with 2.73 pounds ADG, a feed efficiency of 8.4 and a harvest weight of 1,297 pounds.

On the rail, lot 5478 was 8 percent prime, 68 percent upper choice, 24 percent choice and 0 percent select. The yield grade distribution was 16 percent YG 2, 60 percent YG 3, 20 percent YG 4 and 4 percent YG 5. The hot carcass weight was 0 percent 550 to 649, 64 percent 650 to 850 pounds, 32 percent 851 to 950 pounds and 4 percent 951 to 999 pounds. The ribeye area distribution

was 4 percent less than 11 square inches, 96 percent 11 to 16 square inches and 0 percent more than 16 square inches. The value on the rail was \$1,223.

Lot 6270 arrived at the feedlot on Aug. 23, 2006. The 36 head of 2005 spring-born, grass steers had an average pay weight of 823 pounds and an average frame score of 4.8. The lot averaged 110 days on feed with an ADG of 3.03 pounds, a feed efficiency of 6.4 and a harvest weight of 1,179 pounds.

On the rail, lot 6270 was 0 percent prime, 49 percent upper choice, 19 percent choice and 32 percent select. The yield grade distribution was 41 percent YG 2, 57 percent YG 3 and 3 percent YG 4. The hot carcass weight was 3 percent 550 to 649 pounds, 87 percent 650 to 850 pounds, 11 percent 851 to 950 pounds and 0 percent 951 to 999 pounds. The ribeye area distribution was 8 percent less than 11 square inches, 87 percent 11 to 16 square inches and 5 percent more than 16 square inches. The value on the rail was \$1,074.

The data shows that producers need to keep an open mind, to ask more questions and to probe deeper into various available options. This analysis will help producers utilize all the tools that are present within their toolboxes to improve their operation.

The question the center set out to probe was simple. Would smaller-framed cattle (as represented by the Lowline breed) help lower calving problems in typical northern Plains first-calf heifers and lessen the labor requirement, yet produce a calf that was marketable in today’s market? The answer is yes.

Before the phone rings too much, yes, there are other very good tools called expected progeny differences (EPDs) to aid in selecting bulls for calving ease. Yes, EPDs also work.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.Beeftalk.com>. For more information, contact the NDB-CIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

Lowline Crossbred Steers — Feedlot Performance and Carcass Values

	Lot # 4425	Lot #5478	Lot #6270
Arrival Date	Nov. 5, 2004	Nov. 11, 2005	Aug. 23, 2006
Number of Steers	22	26	38
Pay Weight	945	996	823
Frame Score	4.4	4.7	4.8
Days on Feed	85	95	110
Daily Average Gain	2.85	2.73	3.03
Harvest Weight	1,186	1,297	1,179
Percentage Choice or Higher	77%	100%	68%
Percentage YG 3 or Lower	86%	76%	97%
Harvest Value	\$1,093	\$1,223	\$1,074