

August 23, 2001



NDSU Extension Service

BeefTalk: The Final Report Card Is Here for Last Year's Calves

By Kris Ringwall, Extension Beef Specialist,

During the last couple of weeks I've been busy traveling on business. I can't help but marvel at the diversity found within the beef industry and the ability of the industry to adapt to regional and environmental differences.

Producers need to periodically remind themselves of the vast variety of environments cattle are asked to perform in. What strikes me is the degree that the rest of world is busy making every thing the same. Those efforts stand in stark contrast to the beef cow.

Biologically speaking, when I go into a store in different regions of the country -- east, west, north or south -- the similarity of produce or plants offered is remarkable. For instance, currently I see 4-inch pots of fall yellow

mums everywhere. These will soon be replaced by other seasonal plants, in a similar degree of uniformity across the country. It's not just the mums, but the larger stores themselves that are laid out and packaged to assure uniformity of delivery and product.

In theory, those industries have succeeded in getting their product to fit the box, which fits in the counter, which fits in the aisle, which fits in the store, which fits in the chain, which. . . well, on and on. It would appear that consumers like predictability and consistency, perhaps to provide an offset to their own busy life styles. In this case, the box is the best place.

But the cow, which is the source of all beef products, has a hard time biologically meeting the demands of her environment while producing products that fit in a standard box.

Cows will never fit. Product has to fit. Now that is a true definition of a dilemma.

I will reluctantly concede that hens have been made to fit the cage, and sows to fit a crate. But not the cow. That is why I am overjoyed each year as our pen close out reports arrive from the feed lot. This is our annual report card and another chapter in the story of how we maintain the cow herd in virtual variance while fine tuning the product to reach maximum market value in the feed yard.

The last two calves of the 2000 calf crop were harvested Aug. 10. Steer 0256 weighed 1,301 pounds live and 836 pounds on the rail. The choice carcass had an 11.0 inch rib eye, 3.59 yield grade and sold for \$110.97 per hundredweight on the rail for a total of \$927.71. Steer 0134 weighed 1,246 pounds live and 804 pounds on the rail. The choice carcass had a

12.1 inch rib eye, 3.44 yield grade and sold for \$111.97 per hundredweight on the rail for a total of \$900.24.

Because the North Dakota State University Dickinson Research Extension Center maintained full interest in the cattle that it feeds, it took \$27,525.57 extra cash to feed the 118 steer calves that arrived on the feedlot on Dec. 15, 2000. This averaged out to \$233.27 expense per calf shipped. The expenses include \$318.29 interest charges against all feed yard expenses. The variable interest rate started at 10.25 percent and was 7.5 percent when the final two calves were harvested.

Keep in mind that the majority of steers were harvested in late March and April. These last two steers represent the tail end of the lot and, theoretically, should have been sorted off before shipping. However, there is no guarantee that any sort criteria would have predicted the actual performance of the last two calves or, for that matter, the first two calves or any calves in this particular lot in regard to the harvest order and actual individual calf days on feed.

The profitability of feeding last year's calves will be the topic of future columns. However, now is the time to start planning how to market this coming set of calves. Stay tuned for the full analysis.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at www.BeefTalk.com For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1133 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to www.CHAPS2000.COM on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0053.

###

Source: Kris Ringwall, (701) 483-2427, kringwal@ndsuent.nodak.edu

Editor: Tom Jirik, (701) 231-9629, tjirik@ndsuent.nodak.edu

Final Performance Report on Year 2000 Calves	
NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center	
Feeding period	December 15, 2000 to August 10, 2001
First harvest date	April 6, 2001
Last harvest date	August 10, 2001
Total head shipped	118 steers
Total head harvested	116 steers
Description of last two steers harvested	
1,274 pounds live	
820 pounds on the rail	
Graded choice, 12 in. rib eye, 3.52 yield grade	
Sold for \$ 111.47/cwt on the rail for \$ 913.98	
Total lot expenses	\$ 27,525.57
Average expenses per calf delivered	\$ 233.27

[Click here for a printable PDF version of this graphic.](#) (5KB b&w graph)

[Click here for a printable EPS version of this graphic.](#) (76KB b&w graph)

[Click here for a EPS file of the BeefTalk logo suitable for printing.](#)

(100KB b&w logo)