

Professional Producers Show Meaning of "Here's the Beef"

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The North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association held its 40th annual meeting Jan. 24 in Minot. Like most annual meetings, if the food isn't plentiful and the agenda short, the likelihood of success goes down quickly. The addition of knowledgeable speakers adds to the success of any event, plus the anticipation of a better next year. The meeting was great.

My favorite activity that coincides with the annual event is the selection of the outstanding producer. In November of each year, the NDBCIA board selects a couple of variables to evaluate the main database in search of our outstanding producer. The questions always have a numerical answer based on production data. This year, the board searched for the herd with the greatest pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed while keeping replacement rate below 20 percent for three consecutive years.

After several data sorts, the line was drawn. Data from four herds submitted to the selection committee for final consideration were impressive. (Hang on to your hats; this is actual, verified production.)

- ◆ Herd A averaged a 16.2 percent replacement rate and 616 pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed.
- ◆ Herd B averaged a 15.5 percent replacement rate and 580 pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed.
- ◆ Herd C averaged a 15.8 percent replacement rate and 574 pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed.
- ◆ Herd D averaged a 15.3 percent replacement rate and 574 pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed.

Many observers in the industry have stated reaching 500 pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed was unattainable. Herds in the Cow Herd Appraisal and Performance Software (CHAPS) program have consistently broken production goals and survived the changing climate of the beef world. A quick review of these four herds indicates good consistent production.

In reviewing additional CHAPS data on the four herds, the average pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed was 586 pounds. In other words, for every cow that was exposed to a bull in the spring, 586 pounds of

calf were marketed. The average herd size for the four herds was 147 cows, so each herd would have had just under 43 tons of weaned calf to market. If a good-sized gooseneck can haul 6 tons, eight gooseneck trailers would be needed to haul home the production from the 147 cows. That's a lot of beef.

Other production landmarks included 93.8 percent of the cows conceived to the bull and 91.5 percent weaned a live calf in the fall of the year. The average actual calf weight for all the living calves was 644 pounds at 208 days of age. These four beef producers are truly in the beef business.

There are as many definitions of good cow management as there are cow producers, but what is consistent among producers of top-notch, heavy-weight calves is their ability to put together the small pieces of the puzzle and to form a big picture. Many times, I receive calls from someone who wants to buy cattle from someone who seems to have the best to offer. The point that is often missed is that you can't buy the program, only the cattle.

An axiom in the beef business is "you can't manage what you can't measure". The North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association was started 40 years ago with only one goal in mind, "to measure so you can manage." The goal has never changed, only the production levels attained by the member producers. Yet, the most common comment in regards to keeping records is still "I've been going to do that, could you send me some information".

Consider it sent.

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 BT0128.

Three Year Performance of Top Four Herds*

North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association

Pregnancy rate of exposed cows	93.8 %
Weaning rate	91.5 %
Average age at weaning	208 days
Average weaning weight	644 lbs
Pounds weaned per cow exposed	586 lbs
Average replacement rate	15.7 %

* As ranked by pounds weaned per cow exposed.