



BeefTalk: Market Cows and Bulls Are Not Culls

The sale of market cows and bulls is no small piece of change because it accounts for more than 35 percent of the production units' marketable product.

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Fall is here and the cattle inventory is being scrutinized critically. Feed, labor and desire will be some of the criteria as next year's production herd is selected.

An overlooked impact is the value of market cows and bulls on cow/calf operations as cattle inventories are adjusted to bring in younger cows. Most people would refer to these animals as culls.

The culls will be marketed in a way similar to the calves. Once completed, the producer and herd would settle in for another production year.

Historically, the term cull should not have been used. The word cull probably was an unfortunate term that became synonymous with a known process that cattle producers do.

The term cull became well-established in the cattle business years ago. Even today, cattle producers refer to culling cattle, particularly in the fall. If one were to scan through some computer dictionaries or even open up Webster's Dictionary, the definition of the word cull is rather offensive.

Webster says that if we use the word cull as a noun, we are referring to "something rejected, especially as being inferior or worthless." The word also can be used as an action verb and means to "select from a group or to identify and remove the culls..."

The statement is true when a producer says they are culling. In today's production vernacular, the days of removing inferior and worthless culls should be a historic, not current, concept of the process.

More correctly, the cattle removed are market cattle and the livestock markets actively sort and present excellent market cows and bulls. The culls, which are those cattle that are so inferior as to be worthless, never should be marketed.

The concept may seem simple, but understanding the roots of the process means a very deeply embedded concept that has been in the cattle industry for a long time. During a recent visit with Lisa Pederson, North Dakota Beef Quality Assurance coordinator, she noted a recent publication titled "Executive Summary of the 2007 National Market Cow and Bull Beef Quality Audit" published by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

The publication refutes and challenges the use of the word cull. Furthermore, the magazine reflects the fact that producers need to and do "recognize and optimize cattle value, monitor health, market cattle in a timely and appropriate manner, prevent quality defects and are proactive to ensure beef safety and integrity."

Today, cattle producers market cows and bulls in much the same way as they market their annual production of calves. This is made possible through data collection and analysis.

Images

Marketable Product Typical ND Beef Cattle Improvement Herd		
45	Market Steers @ 565 pounds	25,425 pounds
30	Heifers @ 545 pounds	16,350 pounds
15	Market Cows @ 1,395 pounds	20,925 pounds
1	Market Bull @ 2,000 pounds	2,000 pounds

Marketable
Product
Typical ND
Beef Cattle
Improvement
Herd

Upon examination of the 2007 production benchmarks from those producers involved with the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, a producer who exposed 100 cows to the bull would have 90-plus calves in the fall. If the male-to-female ratio were 45 steers and 45 heifers, this producer would have approximately 25,425 pounds of steers (565 pounds per steer) to market and 24,525 pounds of heifers (545 pounds of heifer) available as replacements and to market at 189 days of age.

Approximately 15 percent of the cowherd inventory will be reduced, accounting for 20,925 pounds (1,395 average cow weight). The 15 replacement heifers would account for 8,175 pounds, leaving 16,350 pounds of market heifers.

If a bull also is replaced, approximately 2,000 pounds of market bull would be available for this assumed NDBCIA herd of 100 cows. If a producer marketed calves as bawling calves, approximately 41,775 pounds of calf would be available to sell and 22,925 pounds of market cows and bull would be on the auction block.

The sale of market cows and bulls is no small piece of change because it accounts for more than 35 percent of the production units' marketable product. There are no cull cows from this herd.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.BeefTalk.com>.

For more information, contact the NDBCIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

NDSU Agriculture Communication

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Attachments



PDF - Marketable Product Typical ND Beef Cattle Improvement Herd
(bt091808.pdf - 15.20 Kb)



EPS - Marketable Product
Typical ND Beef Cattle
Improvement Herd
(bt091808.eps - 207.83 Kb)