



BT 597: The Winner-the Heavier-conditioned, Large Steer with No Muscle

SUPPORTING MATERIALS



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What does it mean when the highest total dollar value received per carcass from a set of steers goes to the steer with the least muscle? He wins the class, despite his heavier-conditioned, overly large carcass with poor muscle, but he graded choice.

Paul Revere is well known as one who could spread an alert effectively. Upon receiving word of impending British troop movements, he alerted colonists of the activity. The colonists, in turn, were able to implement a response, and we know the rest of the story.

In any business or life in general, it is key to read the signs that are offered and then respond, just like Paul Revere. Although not always obvious, these signs need to be evaluated, discussed and reacted to appropriately. For the most part, these signs are called data. From the data, various trends can be developed and studied.



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The reaction time may not be immediate, but the important point is that an acknowledgement is generated that will create future thinking. Thus the question: What does it mean when the highest total dollar value received per carcass from a set of steers goes to the steer with the least muscle?

Recently, the Dickinson Research Extension Center started the final phases of harvesting the 2010 steers. These steers were involved in various production scenarios and the carcass data are utilized to evaluate those scenarios.

Although all the data needs to be studied, one steer certainly caught my eye. The steer was not always a steer. The center purchased the steer as a yearling bull and had intended to use the bull for breeding the conventional cow herd at the center.

The center uses a lot of bulls and, as the bulls are gathered and prepared for the breeding season, all the bulls are re-

evaluated prior to bull turnout. Four Angus bulls were purchased, and in late July, they weighed 1,255, 1,405, 1,490 and 1,265 pounds.

The bulls were evaluated for muscle by ultrasound and their rib-eye measurements were 15.12, 12.95, 15.9 and 9.99 square inches. Three of the bulls were deemed ready for breeding, but 33X1 was questionable.

Without going into a lot of depth because a lot of information is processed on each bull, in this case, the evaluation in the pen determined that bull 33X1 was not going to the breeding pastures. Instead, the bull was banded and left in the pen. Subsequently, 33X1 was shipped with a load of yearling steers to the feedlot and fed out.

As with many cattle, that would have been the end of the story. A bull was purchased but failed to develop adequately prior to bull turnout. However, the story does not end there because 33X1 was harvested and topped the day's harvest with a value of \$1,906.22. Initially, my first conclusion was the carcass weight because 33X1 weighed in at 1,704 pounds and 0.47 inch of back fat in mid-January. His live weight transferred to the rail as a heavy carcass. The hot carcass weight was 1,039 pounds, which was a weight that triggered a price discount. So what brought the value? The steer was a yield grade 4, with 12.5 square inches of rib eye. For that carcass weight, the required rib eye was 16.3 square inches, so the carcass was short by 3.8 square inches. The steer graded choice and made AngusPride.

Despite discounts, the combination of total carcass weight and grade put the carcass at the top of the class. So, the question about what it means when the highest total dollar value received per carcass from a set of steers goes to the steer with the least muscle does not need to be asked.

However, like Paul Revere, watching the little movements of those around us may not mean much, but at what point does one at least ponder the day's activity?

The data that producers acquire or are exposed to every day is significant and often overwhelming. However, at least for me today, that former bull caught my eye. I simply had to ponder the thought.

The visuals of cattle lots and judging classes floated through my mind. In all honesty, having never heard a judge proclaim the champion as the best conditioned, least muscled steer in class is something I pondered. Since I pondered, it was only fair to share my thoughts. Like Paul Revere, information shared needs to be acted on.

As already stated, those signs, although not always obvious, need to be evaluated, discussed and reacted to appropriately. The reaction time may not be immediate, but the important point is that an acknowledgement is generated that will create future thinking. Keep pondering.

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.

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