



## BeefTalk 629: Wise Marketing of Cows and Bulls is Critical

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS

#### Wise Marketing of Cows and Bulls is Critical

When culling cows and bulls remember:

- ◆ Market wisely and be smart for the benefit of the entire beef industry!
- ◆ If the cattle do not support a positive story about beef, they should not enter the market!

*The story of raising beef and providing excellent nutritional products to the consumer is a good story.*

As cows and bulls are rounded up for fall sorting, some are sorted for sale, so it is very important to remember that cull cows and bulls are market beef and should be treated as such. Market groups need to be sorted and appropriately presented to the market.

This summer, the “Executive Summary: The 2011 National Beef Quality Audit” was released by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. This audit provides a cross-sectional review of

the entire beef business. It confirms that the beef industry has been responsive to previous audits and has made product improvements.

In addition to product improvements, current management and handling of cattle reflect positive changes throughout the beef production cycle. As the industry moves forward, the audit noted the need to continue to provide consumers with a positive story about beef.

As the story unfolds, highlighted should be how the marvelous production of beef builds trust and integrity between the industry and the consumers. The story of raising beef and providing excellent nutritional products to the consumer is a good story. As producers now get set to cull the less productive portion of the herd, it is very important that these principles be applied.

An excellent document to review current management and handling of cull cows and bulls is the “Executive Summary of the 2007 National Market Cow and Bull Beef Quality Audit.” It also was published by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

The publication recognizes and highlights the need for producers to “recognize and optimize cattle value, monitor health, market cattle in a timely and appropriate manner, prevent quality defects and be proactive to ensure beef safety and integrity.”

As a producer, the process of marketing cows and bulls may seem fairly simple and may come as a quick trip to the local auction barn. However, the 2007 audit does point out several ways producers can improve the marketing of cows and



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bulls.

Producers need to keep nine points in mind. First, do not use electric prods and other aggressive driving aids when moving cattle. Allow the cattle to move quietly and naturally as they move from pasture to the working facilities. Second, cattle working facilities must have solid footing, so cattle don't slip and injure themselves. A quick review and update of the facility prior to the cattle coming home is well worth the time. Fix those items that have a history of concern before the cattle arrive.

Third, producers should obtain and read material that highlights proper animal care and handling. The Internet and your local NDSU Extension Service agent are excellent sources for animal care and handling information. Fourth, as cows and bulls come home, it is very important to promptly market your cattle before they become too thin or lame for transport. Penning cattle for later marketing means the operation is adding a confinement feeding enterprise and that means brushing up on feedlot management.

Fifth, maintain recordkeeping systems to verify your best management practices and reduce or eliminate the potential for liability surrounding food safety issues. Even the 2011 audit identified recordkeeping and more in-depth documentation of management practices that is needed throughout the industry. Sixth, recognize and optimize the value of your market cows and bulls. Cows and bulls comprise a significant portion of your farm or ranch income, so they need to be managed and marketed in ways that add value, not subtract from it.

Seventh, ensure the safety of your product. Cows and bulls must be free of chemical, pathogenic and physical hazards when you ship them for harvest. Double- and triple-check all product withdrawal times and document all product administration. Eighth, continuously monitor herd health. It's in your best interest to observe the health of your cow herd and to ensure your market cows and bulls are marketed in a timely and appropriate manner. Cattle that are showing signs of illness or discomfort need to be moved to an area dedicated to the handling of infirmed cattle.

Lastly, prevent quality defects. Any cattle that do not support the story of beef that we want to tell should not enter the market process as market cows or bulls.

In closing, market wisely and be smart for the benefit of the entire beef industry.

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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