

Identifying Calves with Superior Growth and Carcass Traits through a Feedout Contest

K.F. Hoppe, R. Danielson and D. Hildebrandt

Identifying superior cattle genetics and providing education on their impact is the goal of the steer feeding contest. In conjunction with the North Dakota Winter Show, a Performance Steer Classic - Pen Division competition was developed for multiple consignments of three or four calves. After a feeding period where calves are fed in a common pen, the calves will be shown in groups of three at the ND Winter Show and harvested for collecting carcass data. Cattle groups are ranked based on feedlot and carcass performance.

Calves consigned to the contest are required to have a minimum of 3.0 pounds of weight per day of age at delivery to the feedlot and be born between January 1 and April 30, 1999. Steers must weigh an average of 1050 pounds at the end of the feeding period on March 1, 2000, to be included in the competition. Calves will be ultrasounded for backfat thickness, ribeye area and marbling prior to an open house on February 10, 2000, at the NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center Livestock Unit. During the open house, owners will select three calves for the pen-of-three competition.

Winners in the pen competition will be based on the best score obtained by the pen-of-three steers. Scores are determined by weight per day of age (25% of score), average daily gain on test (25% of score), retail product value per day of age (40% of score), and pen uniformity index based on variation within the pen for retail product (10% of score). The ND Winter Show will provide cash awards for the top five placing pens.

All feedlot, carcass and scoring information will be provided to the consignors. The open house and exhibition at the ND Winter Show will provide consignors and other cattle producers the opportunity to visually compare cattle against weights and ultrasound measurements.

Affiliation of coauthors and non-CREC staff: R. Danielson, NDSU Associate Professor, Department of Animal and Range Sciences, D. Hildebrandt, Manager, ND Winter Show.