

BeefTalk: What Is EDI?

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The beef industry is struggling with data and data tracking. This statement, while met with a wide range of pro and con reaction, does point to the fact that there is slippage occurring.

There is a lot of very good data collected, processed and utilized within the beef industry. When it comes to agricultural economic and marketing data, most individuals and agencies take a back seat to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and associated businesses.

Many other excellent data systems are implemented and utilized within the beef business. The industry has the ability to handle the data, but the issue appears to be the desire to apply the data for the betterment of the industry.

At a recent data discussion, the acronym EDI came up. The focus of the discussion was based on the need of sharing data and how data can move seamlessly and effectively through a system.

EDI stands for Electronic Data Interchange. EDI simply is the processes that allow different data sets to be transferred or shared among individuals or others to meet a need.

Understanding the role EDI can play in the beef industry is critical. EDI is a key component for effective business relationships among ranches, companies and governments from the area, region, state, country and world. EDI can provide a worldwide interface for potential markets.

Now let's step back a little bit and look at the beef industry. On a personal note, I can remember during my college days that the Animal Science Department was having a problem. There was this course called statistics that was causing considerable consternation among those of us trying to graduate.

A requirement of graduation, the course had a dismal track record of success within the Animal Science Department. The department chair was considering teaching the course in the department rather than exposing the students to the math or statistics department because data and these young cattle prodigies were not getting along.

Those who understand statistics realize that statistics require data and data requires management. None of these mentioned activities registered with a bunch of students who simply wanted to learn how to raise cattle.

Things have not really changed. If one were to ask a group of animal science students today, the relevance of a statistics course would seem distant. Not distant to all students, but to quite a few.

Images

	Total	Percentage
Production	5,220	
Replacement	2,247	43.0
Background	100	2.0
Feedlot	2,810	53.8
Slaughter	9	0.2
Lost	81	1.2

CalfAid
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The early university prerequisites of math are properly executed, but the connection to the students' eventual career still seems very soft. The implication and adoption of what is being taught is not being accomplished.

This has nothing to do with intelligence, ability to perform or one's capacity to learn. However, it does have everything to do with how one perceives his or her world and what to accept as reality or dismiss as incidental.

Beef producers actually own two things, which are cattle and data. Both have value and both need to be understood.

The Dickinson Research Extension Center continues to track age- and source-verified cattle. We track cattle and we manage data.

After several years, tag and data processing acceptance is improving. The center is tracking 5,220 calves from 2008. Of these calves, 98.8 percent are still in the system.

Comments, such as "I am short paper work" or "Waiting for the right premium," are more prominent than "I cut those useless tags out." However, the industry is very soft on the data and certainly struggles with managing the data for optimum value.

In reality, it may be that the statistics class would not have been so bad. Like many parts of success, it needs to be learned. For now, move aside that collection of cattle feeding, genetic, health, reproduction, management and meat books to make room for a good data book and look up EDI.

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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Attachments



PDF - CalfAid Tracking for 2008 Calves 
(bt042309.pdf - 17.66 Kb)



EPS - CalfAid Tracking for 2008 Calves
(bt042309.eps - 214.80 Kb)