

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association—Productivity and Quality



Upcoming events:

- January 20—Mississippi BCIA Spring Bull Sale nomination deadline
- February 6—MBCIA Annual Membership Meeting, Trade Mart, Jackson, MS, 1:00 P.M.
- February 10—Cattlemen's Exchange Producer Sale consignment deadline for April 2009 sale
- March 5—Hinds CC Bull Test Sale and Mississippi BCIA Spring Bull Sale, Hinds Community College Bull Sale Facility, Raymond, MS
- March 12-14—MSU Extension Service Artificial Insemination School, Mississippi State, MS
- April 7—Cattlemen's Exchange Producer Sale (feeder calf board sale), E E Ranches, Winona, MS
- April 30-May 3—Beef Improvement Federation Annual Convention, Sacramento Convention Center, Sacramento, CA

Mississippi BCIA 2008 Fall Bull Sale Results

The Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association wrapped up its 40th Annual Fall Bull Sale on November 13, 2008. It featured 18 performance-backed bulls from breeders across the state. Thank you to all of the consignors and buyers for supporting the Fall 2008 Mississippi BCIA Bull Sale.



The top-selling lot was S A V 004 Traveler 670, an Angus bull. S A V 004 Traveler 670 was consigned by Golden J Farm of Tupelo, Mississippi and sold for \$4,300. Other breeders marketing bulls in the MBCIA sale included Clear Water Cattle, Harvey Farms, Lakeview Angus, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Monogram Farms, Phil Slay Farms, and Southern Shine Pastures. Sale receipts on eighteen bulls totaled \$33,050 for a sale average price of \$1,836.

The objective of the Mississippi BCIA Bull Sale program is to encourage production

and identification of genetically superior bulls by purebred breeders and to encourage the purchase and use of these bulls by commercial producers. Bulls offered through this sale have passed a breeding soundness exam, met minimum growth and scrotal circumference requirements, and are backed with extensive performance information. The MBCIA Fall Bull Sale is held on the second Thursday in November, while the Spring Bull Sale is held in conjunction with the Hinds Community College Bull Test sale on the first Thursday in March.



For more information on how to nominate a bull for the upcoming spring sale, please feel free to contact a MBCIA board member or MUS Extension Service livestock personnel. Or, visit <http://msucare.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/index.html> on the web.

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	All breeds	Angus	Charolais	Hereford
Number of bulls sold	18	11	5	2
Gross receipts	\$33,050	\$22,150	\$7,950	\$2,950
Average price	\$1,836	\$2,014	\$1,590	\$1,475
High selling lot price	\$4,300	\$4,300	\$1,750	\$1,650

“...planning a day to sort and load cattle without other pressing appointments can make it easier to stick to low-stress handling and hauling principles.”

Reducing Transportation Stress

The most important concern with any type of livestock transportation is the stress applied to the animals. It is well documented that transportation stress leads to decreased immunity and increased disease shedding resulting in an overall negative impact on health and performance. There are essentially three points associated with transportation where stress can be limited: 1) loading, 2) transport and 3) unloading. First, handling immediately prior to and during loading sets the tone for the amount of stress these animals will encounter. Simply stated, handling stress for cattle comes from their fear of humans. To cattle, humans are predators and this initiates their “fight or flight” response.

Conceptually, it is easy to reduce handling stress prior to transportation by being calm while sorting and loading, reducing loud noises and yelling, limiting hits with sorting sticks and prods and having solid sides on the load allies and ramps. As easy as it may seem, putting these principles into practice takes patience and planning. Therefore, planning a day to sort and load cattle without other pressing appointments can make it easier to stick to low-stress handling and hauling principles. Make sure that a loading plan has been discussed with the driver. An effective loading plan will consider number and size of the animals to appropriately distribute weight in a manner that does not group large and small cattle together.

The second logical phase that presents an opportunity to limit stress is during the actual transport. If hiring someone to ship cattle over a long distance, find a reputable hauler. As with any other management decisions, consult with neighbors and other producers that have used several different haulers and settled with one company or person they are comfortable using. Some of the things to look for while evaluating haulers include cleanliness of equipment, willingness to explain loading procedures, timeliness and cost. Ask the hauler a few questions such as how and how often they clean their equipment, how long they have been operating, if they have an emergency plan, how they address bio-security and how they plan to load your specific group of cattle.

Make sure to ask if the haulers have been trained through the Master Cattle Transporter material published by the National Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program. If the hauler is certified, they will likely follow guidelines for safe driving that reduces stress. Guidelines such as checking weather and road conditions (for the entire route) prior to departure, making special plans for extreme hot or cold temperature; avoiding excessive starting, stopping and turning; and checking the cattle after the first two hours and every subsequent four hours.



Finally, the third step where stress can be limited is unloading. Cattle should be unloaded within no more than one hour after arrival but sooner in extreme weather conditions. Many of the low-stress handling procedures hold true for both loading and unloading. The trailer should be square with the ramp to prevent jumping or trapping legs and hooves. Again, loud noises, yelling, crowding and excessive striking should be minimized. For many stocker producers in the southeast, unloading is less important as transfer of ownership has already taken place. However, the perceived reputation of a producer can be strengthened if the cattle arrive in good shape and require less treatment for poor health due to shipping stress. Furthermore, if ownership of the cattle is to be retained, unloading is equally as important as loading and transport.

These points for reducing transportation stress are equally critical for local transport of calves and/or cows. Reducing some of the negative impacts of hauling can decrease pregnancy loss in bred cows and eliminate performance setbacks in growing cattle.



Pros and Cons of Private Treaty Sales

Private treaty sales are direct sales from seedstock suppliers to customers. Overhead costs are generally lowest with private treaty sales compared with other marketing methods. Spending money on advertising is still warranted in many cases though.

Developing customer relationships that elevate the reputation of the operation and result in new and repeat buyers is a primary focus of private treaty sales efforts. Offering quality cattle is important in achieving this. Private treaty purchases can develop into lasting marketing relationships when the seller provides a desirable product and associated customer service to result in a repeat buyer. Some breeders also try to entice volume buyers. Volume discounts, customer service, and a large cattle offering providing more selection opportunities can attract volume sales.

A primary drawback of private treaty sales is the time investment needed to be successful. Private treaty purchases allow buyers to interact with sellers on an individual basis. The buyer can visit the seller's ranch and view the operation while asking the seller questions about individual head of cattle and the ranch management program. Seedstock operations need to have someone available and willing to visit with prospective customers throughout the year and often on short notice.

Private treaty sales require excellent knowledge of the cattle offering and current cattle

markets. Know current market conditions, the overall quality of the cattle being offered, and the recent sale history of similar genetics in the region. The seller must be able to price cattle to visitors and then close the deal on sales. There is more room for haggling with a private treaty purchase than with many other marketing alternatives. This is both an opportunity and a risk for the buyer and seller.

Sellers must be accessible to prospective buyers. Willingness to answer and return phone calls, respond to e-mail messages, and host visitors at the ranch is needed. Producers should work with customers to determine their needs and match cattle that best fit their programs. Visits to customer operations can be useful in assisting customers in finding the appropriate cattle. Some customers will also request production and marketing advice from seedstock suppliers.

The seller develops a reputation (good or bad) depending upon the experiences of potential and actual buyers. Cattle purchased private treaty will often be farm-fresh with less disease exposure than commingled cattle. Special arrangements can sometimes be made for later delivery, volume discounts, sight unseen satisfaction guarantees, and many other marketing possibilities. Sale terms and conditions should be discussed and understood by both parties in detail to avoid future confusion or related problems.

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Arthrogryposis Multiplex

Arthrogryposis Multiplex (AM) is the proper name of the genetic mutation more commonly referred to as Curly Calf Syndrome. By now, most producers that utilize Angus genetics have, at very least, heard about this issue. The American Angus Association (AAA) has aggressively addressed the concerns. They have posted press releases and informational material on their website and worked with molecular geneticists to develop a test for the recessive mutation.

Major semen suppliers throughout the world have used a preliminary test to determine

which, if any, of their bulls are carriers of the mutation. The test should soon be commercially available to assist Angus seedstock suppliers in making breeding decisions.

There are several options for cows that test positive as an AM carrier. These include committing to test all offspring retained for breeding, using carrier cows as ET recipients or maintaining carriers in a commercial herd and marketing offspring for terminal use.

With these tools and concepts, the AM mutation can be successfully managed to limit revenue loss.

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Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Assn.
Box 9815
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Phones: 662-325-7466, 662-325-7465
Fax: 662-325-8873

Email: jparish@ads.msstate.edu
jrhinehart@ads.msstate.edu



Send questions or comments to Jane Parish or
Justin Rhinehart, Extension Beef Specialists,
Mississippi State University
Extension Service



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Visit MBCIA online at
[http://msucares.com/
livestock/beef/mbcia/](http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/)

MBCIA Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

County: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

(Check one) Seedstock: Commercial:

Cattle breed(s): _____

Completed applications and \$5 annual dues or \$100 life-
time dues payable to Mississippi BCIA should be mailed to:

Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association
Jane Parish, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist
Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762

BCIA Genetic Profit Tips – December 2008

Two-Breed Rotation

A two-breed rotation is a simple crossbreeding system requiring two breeds and two breeding pastures. The two-breed rotational crossbreeding system is initiated by breeding cows of breed A to bulls of breed B. The resulting progeny (A*B) chosen as replacement females would then be mated to bulls of breed A for the duration of their lifetime. Note the service sire is the opposite breed of the female's own sire. These progeny are then one-quarter breed A and three-quarters breed B. Since these animals were sired by breed B bulls, they are mated to breed A bulls. Each succeeding generation of replacement females is mated to the opposite breed of their sire. Initially only one breed of sire is required. Following the second year of mating, two breeds of sire are required.

After several generations, the amount of retained heterosis stabilizes at about 67% of the maximum heterosis, resulting in an expected 16% increase in the pounds of calf weaning weight per cow exposed above the average of the parent breeds (Ritchie et al., 1999). This system is sometimes called a crisscross.

Requirements. A minimum of two breeding pastures is required for a two-breed rotational system if natural service is utilized exclusively. Replacement females must be identified by breed of sire to ensure proper matings. A simple ear tagging system may be implemented to aid in identification. All calves sired by breed A bulls should be tagged with one color (e.g., red), and the calves sired by bulls of breed

B should be tagged with a different color (e.g., blue). Then at mating time, all the cows with red tags (sire breed A) should be mated to breed B bulls, and vice-versa.

Considerations. The minimum herd size is approximately 50 cows with each half being serviced by one bull of each breed. Scaling of herd size should be done in approximately 50 cow units to make the best use of service sires, assuming one bull per 25 cows. Replacement females are mated to herd bulls in this system, so extra caution is merited in sire selection for calving ease to minimize calving difficulty. Be sure to purchase bulls or semen from sires with acceptable calving ease (preferably) or birth weight EPD for mating to heifers. Alternatively, a calving ease sire(s) could be purchased to breed exclusively to first calf heifers regardless of their breed type. The progeny produced from these matings that do not conform to the breed type of the herd should all be marketed.

Breeds used in rotational systems should be of similar biological type to avoid large swings in progeny phenotype due to changes in breed composition. The breeds included have similar genetic potential for calving ease, mature weight and frame size, and lactation potential to prevent excessive variation in nutrient and management requirements of the herd. Using breeds of similar biological type and color pattern will produce a more uniform calf crop, which is more desirable at marketing time. If animals of divergent type or color pattern are used, additional management inputs and sorting of progeny at marketing time to produce uniform groups may be required.

Source: National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium. 2006. *Beef Sire Selection Manual*.