



M I S S I S S I P P I

BCIA

BEEF CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

- January 12 —BQA Training: New Albany
- January 20—Spring Bull Sale Nominations Due
- February 12-13—MS Cattlemen's Assn. Convention: Jackson
- March 2—BCIA Annual Meeting and Supper
- March 3—Hinds Bull Test and BCIA Bull Sale
- March 14-15— Fed Beef Challenge
- March 15— BEEF 101
- March 17-19— Spring AI School
- April 8—Beef Cattle Boot Camp, Prairie
- April 15—Beef Cattle Boot Camp, TBD

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Giving Your Herd a Performance Review

For the last few weeks, faculty and staff at Mississippi State University have been working on annual reports in preparation for our annual review. While they sometimes can seem cumbersome and redundant, it gives everyone an opportunity to reflect upon their last year, set tangible goals for the new year, and determine ways to reach the goals within a timeline. During the Christmas break, I had some chances to work on my report as I was getting caught up on submitting performance data and registering calves. As I worked through the data and analyzed the EPDs on the calves, I thought about giving our cattle an annual review.

Phenotypic Review

The first question to ask yourself is: does this cow have a functional phenotype? Many phenotypic attributes are important when you are talking about function: structure, teat/udder quality, and body condition score are three that come to mind. Assessing structure by observing the cattle move. Look for cattle that may have been injured during breeding and remember that structural injuries worsen as gestation prolongs. Consider culling any animal that is not sound enough to forage and raise another calf. At weaning, it is tough to evaluate udder quality as at that point calves are able to take milk out poorly designed udders. This is where record keeping comes into play. If she had balloon teats when she calved, you can bet that she'll have them again this next lactation— and they will probably be more severe. Poor udders set up a calf for a rough start to life. Unless your management can handle a recurring bad udder —sell her. The next question in evaluating her phenotype relates to her body condition score: is she too thin?

Body Condition Score Review

For most operations, body condition scores are noticed on a daily basis, subconsciously. We are always quick to find the outlier cows that are getting thin. The question to ask ourselves is why? Is she a hard-doer who will bounce back after her calf is weaned? Are we not meeting her nutritional needs? Is their an underlying cause to poor BCS—like hardware disease, lack of teeth or gut problem? Once the cause of the low BCS is determined, decide if she has the capability to improve. In the cases of old age, poor teeth, and declining structure, it is unlikely she will improve.

Performance of Calf

Two of the best tools we have to include on a cow's performance review are calving interval and adjusted weaning weight ratios. A simple spreadsheet can help you calculate both. I always give cows with below average weaning weight ratios a hard look when determining who to cull.

Is she re-bred?

Culling an open cow is easy. We know she will not contribute to our herd's revenue next year. However, if we only focus on bred vs. open at pregnancy check, we could potentially miss some problems. Some would say this should be first on the criteria for a performance review. While I would not argue, with that point—I personally think of the evaluation starting the day she drops her calf (much like the start to our new year). Keeping good records allow us to make decisions easy and management tools allow us to solidify our decisions. I hope everyone fares well on their performance reviews this year!

Olivia Rutherford

News that Impacts You

Federal Appropriations Bill Passes; Holds Key Provisions for Cattle Producers

(Dec. 18, 2015) – With bipartisan support, Congress passed the \$1.15 trillion Omnibus Appropriations Bill today, which funds much of the government through fiscal year 2016. [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) President Philip Ellis said the bill contained several victories for cattlemen and women.

Coming within days of facing retaliation from two of our largest trading partners, the bill repeals mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling for beef; a significant victory for America's cattle producers.

“COOL has plagued our industry for many years now, costing us millions and driving us to the brink of retaliation from two of our largest trading partners,” said Ellis. “Cattle producers have had to bear the cost of this failed program for far too long, and we commend the leadership of Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway and Representative Jim Costa (D-Calif.) for ensuring the United States is brought back into compliance with our trade obligations.”

The omnibus maintains Congressional oversight to ensure the *2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* remain within the scope of nutrition and health and are based on the latest nutritional evidence. Kristina Butts, senior executive director of government affairs, said the guidelines serve as the foundation for federal nutrition policy and that it is critical the recommendations are based on the latest science.

“Americans should enjoy a well-balanced diet with foods they enjoy,” said Butts. “Beef is an excellent source of several key nutrients like zinc, iron and protein, and numerous studies have shown positive benefits of lean beef in the diet. We're pleased Congress continues to be engaged in the process. It is important the role of the Dietary Guidelines continues as Congress intended – to provide nutrition advice based on sound science.”

Additionally, Ellis said the bill requires a more stringent regulatory process for allowing beef imports from regions with a history of animal disease outbreaks.

“America's cattle producers are strong supporters of trade,” said Ellis, “but we must have strong safeguards in place and do our due-diligence to ensure the health and well-being of our domestic herd is not sacrificed.”

Continued assurance on several environmental regulations is also maintained in the bill. Specifically, the bill keeps the

overzealous Environmental Protection Agency in check by continuing to prohibit the agency from requiring livestock producers to obtain Clean Air Act permits or report greenhouse gas emissions on livestock operations. Unfortunately, EPA's “Waters of the United States” rule is not addressed in the omnibus. However, the nation-wide stay is still in place currently, and NCBA will continue to push back on the rule through the courts.

Brenda Richards, [Public Lands Council](#) president, said the increase in wildfire management funds is critical as the recent drought and lack of federal forest management has ignited several massive fires this year.

“Wildfires are a significant threat to our forests and rangelands as well as our homes and lives,” said Richards. “When a fire does break out, however, we need the appropriate resources to put it out. Additionally, we appreciate the continued blocking of the Sage Grouse listing, which will give producers more flexibility to address prescriptive Resource Management Plans. Livestock grazing is one of the best management tools we have to maintain healthy landscapes, reducing the risk of wildfire and allowing our natural resources to thrive.”

Richards added the bill also continues to block the Secretarial Order 3310, preventing the Department of Interior from designating de facto wilderness areas, which diminishes multiple-use on our nation's public lands.

Also key for cattlemen and women is passage of tax extenders legislation, passed in the House on Thursday and the Senate today. Section 179 is permanently extended at \$500,000, up from \$25,000 previously. Bonus depreciation is set at 50 percent for property acquired during 2015, 2016 and 2017 and phases down, with 40 percent in 2018, and 30 percent in 2019. Additionally, the conservation easement tax credit is made permanent.

“These provisions are vital to providing a stable environment for farmers and ranchers like myself to plan for the future,” said Ellis, a Wyoming rancher. “We have had to rely heavily on last-minute tax extender legislation over the past several years, but making these provisions permanent will allow businesses to invest in equipment and property with the financial certainty required.”

The comprehensive bill passed by both the House and Senate is positive news for the cattle industry. NCBA and PLC urge President Obama to sign the omnibus bill without delay.

Note: The bill was signed by President Obama on 12/18/15,

Spring 2016 Events

BCIA Spring Bull Sale Nominations Due

Reminder that nominations for the Spring 2016 BCIA Bull Sale are due by January 20, 2016. The sale will be held in conjunction with the Hinds Community College Bull Test Sale. Mississippi BCIA continues to offer high quality beef cattle genetics through its annual BCIA Bull Sales. These bulls have passed breeding soundness exams and met minimum growth, scrotal circumference, and data reporting requirements. For more information, please contact Brandi Karisch at 662-325-7465 or Cobie Rutherford at 662-325-4344.

Annual Meeting Announcement

Mississippi BCIA will host its annual membership meeting at the sale site starting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, 2016. A sponsored meal and educational program will be provided along with an opportunity to view the sale cattle. The supper and program are open to the public. Please RSVP to Mari Quinn at 662-325-3516 or m.quinn@msstate.edu if you plan to attend the Wednesday evening activities.

Fed Beef Challenge March 14-15 – Limited to 12 head

The Fed Beef Challenge will be held at the Ballew Hall (Meats Lab) on March 14th and 15th. This would be a great chance to obtain carcass data back on your freezer beef steers or your FFA/4-H market animals. Carcasses will be evaluated on USDA Quality Grade, Yield Grade, and current pricing. There is an entry fee of \$50. 50% of the entry fees collected will be awarded to the producer who has the champion carcass, while the producer with the reserve carcass will receive a premium of 25% of the entry fees. Contact Cobie for more information.



BEEF 101

Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences are teaming up to offer BEEF 101 on March 15, 2016 at Ballew Hall on the Mississippi State University campus. The one day event will take a beef carcass from the rail to the plate. Participants will learn the basics of carcass grading, the muscles beef, and how a carcass is fabricated into wholesale and retail cuts. Pre-registration is required and space is limited to the first 30 who register. An online registration form can be found at msucares.com/livestock/beef.

Spring A.I. School

We have several openings available for the spring Artificial Insemination School that will be held March 17-19. A.I. School is a chance for 1 on 1 instruction and multiple opportunities to palpate cattle. Pre-registration is required.

January 2016 – Management Calendar

GENERAL

Continue the winter-feeding program. Watch body condition, and utilize winter-feeding groups according to cattle nutritional demands and feed and forage supplies. Lush winter grazing may work well for stockers, heifers, and fall pairs. Manage winter annual pastures to maintain at least four inches of stubble height to keep from limiting winter production. Keep proper free-choice minerals available for cattle at all times. High magnesium mineral supplements should be used for cows on lush winter pastures to prevent grass tetany. Vitamin A supplementation should be an important part of the nutritional program, particularly if frosted grass, weathered hay or by-products are the primary feedstuffs. Start gathering records for tax purposes, continuing good production and financial record keeping. Now is a good time to set yearly and long-term goals for the farm.

SPRING CALVING—January, February, March

Continue supplementation of pregnant females so that they will be in good condition at calving. Have calving supplies on hand including calving record books, ear tags, obstetric equipment, disinfectants, calf scales, and colostrum. Check expected calving dates, and observe bred cattle closely as calving approaches, giving heifers extra attention. Make sure calves receive colostrum during the first six hours of life. If calves do not

nurse, administer colostrum with a bottle or stomach tube. Separate lactating cows from dry cows after calving to feed more efficiently. After calving, move pairs to clean pasture, and watch calves for scours. Consult with a veterinarian for advise on scours prevention and treatment. Tag, castrate, dehorn, and implant calves as appropriate. Always maintain good calving records including calf birth weights. Consult with a veterinarian to schedule pre-breeding vaccinations or order vaccines. Gather information about bulls at central test stations and in purebred herds to locate potential herd sires. Check sale dates and review bull performance information. Line up breeding soundness evaluations, and make sure bulls are in good condition prior to the breeding season.

FALL CALVING—October, November, December

Fall calving season should be completed. Calculate fall calving percentage. Cow nutrient needs increase dramatically after calving, so use the best hay and feeds for lactating cows now. A forage analysis allows more precise matching of feed nutrients and cattle nutrient needs. Monitor breeding activities in herds exposed for fall calving, and be prepared to remove bulls after a controlled breeding season. If a high percentage of cows return to heat after 40 days of breeding, have bulls rechecked for breeding soundness, consult with a veterinarian on possible reproductive disease problems, and re-evaluate the nutritional program.




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 www.youtube.com/user/MSUBeefCattle
 www.facebook.com/MSStateExtBeef

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 lifetime dues payable to Mississippi BCIA should be mailed to:

*Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association
 Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762*



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