

# *NEW YORK* **Beef Producer**



**NEW YORK BEEF**  
PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION

September/October 2020

Volume 36 - No. 5

Official Publication of New York Beef Producers' Association  
and New York Junior Beef Producer's Association



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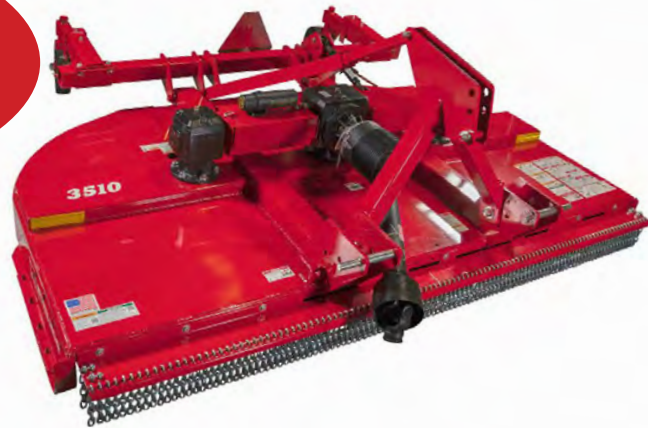
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## September

September 3, 10 & 17-

Fall Pasture Management Series  
See website for registration.

September 19 - Trowbridge Family Affair

Online Sale, Ghent, NY - See back cover.

## October

October 1 - Newsletter Ads & Articles Due

October 3 - Feeder Calf Sale at Pavilion

Livestock Market Rt. 19, Pavilion

October 11- Locust Lane Hereford

Online Sale see page 19

October 24 - Feeder Calf Sale at FLLE

Canandaigua, NY

October 24 - Vermont Waygu Sale

see page 24

October 31- YON Family Farm Fall Sale

Ridge Springs, SC see page 9



Check out our web site -

[www.nybpa.org](http://www.nybpa.org) Facebook -

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## The NEW YORK BEEF PRODUCER

is Published, bimonthly by the

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**Deadline for next issue is October 1st.**

This will be firm so newsletter gets out on time.

For more information contact:

**Brenda Bippert- cell- 716-870-2777**

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## **IMPORTANT UPCOMING INFORMATION**

- \*\* CFAP Application Deadline Extended - Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) has been extended to September 11.
- \*\* Fall Feeder Calf Sales - Preconditioning and Verification Forms available on the web site.
- \*\* Seeking Nominations for NYBPA Officers for 2021.  
Submit to NYBPA Executive Secretary via mail or email by Nov. 1
- \*\* Please submit nominations for NYBPA Annual Awards (on website) to Regional Chairperson by November 1st.
- \*\* NYBPA Scholarship information is available online.  
Deadline for Scholarship Applications is November 1, 2020
- \*\* Photo Contest will be held again this year we will be looking for 7 Photos as 2021 is a Directory Year. Info to come on web site.
- \*\* APHIS Seeks Public Comment on Transition to RFID Official Identification Tags at-  
[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa\\_by\\_date/sa-2020/sa-07/rfid-eartags](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2020/sa-07/rfid-eartags)
- \*\* Annual Winter Conference- Help us, Serve you.  
Please fill out the upcoming email survey with important questions for the upcoming 2021 Annual Winter Conference.

**PLEASE STAY CONNECTED BETWEEN NEWSLETTER ISSUES  
BY THE WEBSITE [WWW.NYBPA.ORG](http://WWW.NYBPA.ORG) AND FACEBOOK**

# Try Working Together



Hi Folks,

Writing this sitting in our office in the top of our sale barn. Things sure have been interesting this year we have seen all kinds of weather, the political atmosphere is different, and Covid, all these things are testing us, no one has ever seen things like this before.

My suggestion is we all try to work together in many aspects, we as farmers have learned to adapt and I think we can take that knowledge and use it to make the world a better place, as we as a group, are some of the most resilient folks going.

As we go into the fall it is time to start vaccinating and weaning calves, preconditioned sales will start soon all across our state, lets get those calves ready, if you have questions please go to our website NYBPA.com there is all kinds of info there or contact one of us. Another great resource is your local Veterinarian or someone that has been in the beef business for awhile.

Lets put a positive look on our face, as we influence so many folks just by our actions. Try to make time to enjoy family and friends they are the most important resource we have.

I would like to extend our Congratulations to Kaitlyn Broughton, the 2019 Youth Award Winner. Kaitlyn is a Junior at Letchworth Schools and involved in 4-H, Jr. Beef and working with the NYBC at events.

Thanks, Phil



## NYBPA 2019-2020 DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS

The new NYBPA 2019-2020 Directory is out and more copies are available, contact nybeefproducers@aol.com. If you did not receive one please contact Brenda Bippert.

Below are corrections:

**Page 65- Tim Helfter - not Jim**

## **Cover Photo - Picture From Photo Contest By: Tom Miller**

Tom Miller and his wife Betty have an Angus Farm in Lockport, NY.

Tom was Region 1 Chairman for 4 years and a very active member of the Association for 18 years. You can also see him showing cattle at various County Fairs and the Great NY State Fair.

Tom sells bulls, feeder calves and hay.

## **WELCOME 2020 NYBPA NEW MEMBERS**

12- Russell Rist, Ristvale Farm, 33 Crawford Lane, Hudson Falls, NY 12839 518-410-6731

2- Keith Fairbank, 6260 Randolph Road, Ashville, NY 14710 krfairbank@gmail.com

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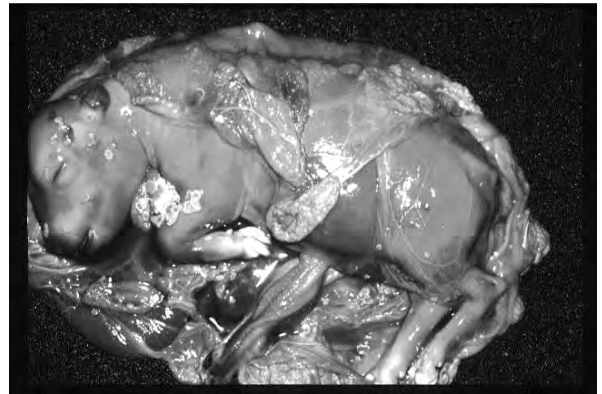
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# Abortions in Beef Cattle

By Dr. Melanie Hemenway, DVM

Abortions often result from some incident that occurred weeks to months before the actual abortion. As a result, the cause is probably undetectable at the time of the abortion itself. In fact, many causes of abortions are unknown and the success rate for accurate bovine abortion diagnosis is only in the range of 25-35% so not every abortion needs a work-up for a potential diagnosis. However, if the abortion rate exceeds 3-5% per year or per month it is time to be concerned and to contact your veterinarian. If the rate exceeds 10% then it is considered an abortion storm.



Abortion can be from non-infectious causes such as genetic factors, nutrition, heat stress, and toxins which can be difficult to diagnosis. Abortion is also caused by infectious agents. The list of infectious causes is very numerous, but here are some common causes and what to look for if you animals have a higher than normal rate of abortion or infertility.

*Neospora caninum* can be found worldwide and is the most common cause of abortion in cattle in parts of the USA. Dogs and coyotes can carry *N caninum* and can be the source of infection. Abortion occurs between 4 and 6 months of gestation and can be associated with sporadic abortions or abortion storms. The fetus is usually autolyzed and rarely has gross lesions. Diagnosis can be made from tissue samples of the kidneys, brain, heart and muscle tissue.

BVD is the most commonly diagnosed virus in bovine abortion cases and is very complex in how the disease affects the developing fetus. Infection before insemination or during the first 40 days of pregnancy results in infertility or embryonic death. Infection between 40 and 125 days of pregnancy results in a persistently infected calf (PI) if the fetus survives. Infection between 100 – 150 days may result in congenital malformations and after 125 days of gestation infection can lead to abortion. Diagnosis can be done through blood and tissue samples.

Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR, Bovine Herpesvirus 1) is a major cause of viral abortion in the world, with abortion rates of 5-60% in nonvaccinated herds. The virus is widespread and when a pregnant animal is infected it causes a placentitis over 2 weeks to 4 months which then infects and kills the fetus. Many times, there are no gross lesions in the placenta or fetus, however, microscopically, there are signs of inflammation in the placenta, liver, kidney, and other organs.

Mycotic or fungal placentitis can cause sporadic abortions which occur from 4 months to term. It is believed the fungi or mycotoxins gain entry through the oral or respiratory tracts most likely from moldy feed and travel to the placenta via the blood supply. The placenta is thickened and necrotic. Fungi can be isolated from the fetus and placenta.



Leptospirosis usually cause abortions in the last trimester, 2-6 weeks after maternal infection. There are many serovars, however, Hardjo is host adapted to cattle and can establish lifelong infections in the kidneys and reproductive tracts and can also reduce conception rates in carrier cows and cows bred to carrier bulls.

(Continued on page 11)





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## *Food and Agriculture Law Conducts Survey on Farm and Ranch Estate Plans*

Cari Rincker, the Principal Attorney at Rincker Law, PLLC, is conducting a survey for farmers and ranchers on their estate, succession and business plans. She is collecting data for a video series on the topic and plans on providing the information to the industry.

“One of the biggest threats to multi-generational farm families is a lack of planning on how the operation will be passed down to future generations,” said Rincker, who has offices both in Illinois and New York. “This is more than just a Last Will and Testament. A proper succession plan should also incorporate a business plan and a road map on how managerial knowledge will be passed down to the heir.”

Rincker is conducting a survey using Survey Monkey that is 30 questions long and takes approximately five minutes to complete. The survey is located at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/farmestateplanning>.

The survey questions range from estate planning documents that are in place, type of business entity, prenuptial agreements, and life insurance. The survey even touches on family communication about the topic.

“So far, exactly 50% of the surveys taken stated that their family had not had the ability to discuss this topic openly and honestly,” notes Rincker, who grew up on a cattle farm near Shelbyville, Illinois. “This is a major problem in the agriculture industry. We have to figure out a way to make conversation starters more natural. This should be an ongoing conversation among the family members.”

The more information collected from farmers, ranchers and agribusiness owners, the more accurate and useful the data will be to the industry. “I hope this information can better serve the agriculture community,” says Rincker.

For more information about the survey or her survey results, Rincker can be contacted at [cari@rinckerlaw.com](mailto:cari@rinckerlaw.com).

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## YOUR BEEF CHECKOFF

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### United We Steak Campaign Celebrates Summer Grilling Season



NYBC, with support from state partner, South Dakota Beef Industry Council, joined forces with social influencer @WishesNDishes to celebrate Summer Grilling season with an extension of the Beef It's What's For Dinner "United We Steak" campaign. The promotion culminated with the giveaway of a grill and a LIVE backyard grilling party between New York Beef Council, @WishNDishes and fellow social influencers @SpicedBlog and @JerseyGirlCooks. The promotion had a total reach of 269,018 with 18,682 engagements and 6,800 video views.

### Video Series Brings Real World, Beef Farm STEM Concepts to Classrooms

NYBC and New York Agriculture in the Classroom have partnered to develop a video series highlighting STEM concepts that are utilized on beef farms daily. The videos are designed to provide real-world examples of how science, technology, engineering, and math drive beef farm practices and decision making. The videos cover essential technologies and production practices used on beef farms across NY and the United States including genetic improvement through selective breeding, artificial insemination and embryo transfer. The videos also highlight the symbiotic relationship between farmers and their animals, and land through land management including rotational grazing. The videos were developed to align with learning standards for each age level and lessons developed by NYAITC staff will be released with the videos to further assist teachers while integrating these resources into their classroom teaching.

### Virtual Cooking Parties Increase Consumers' Confidence in Cooking with Beef



In August NYBC collaborated with 5 social influencers to provide a select group of their most active followers with the opportunity for a virtual cooking class. Each influencer chose one beef recipe to demonstrate while their followers cooked along in their home kitchens. Throughout each session NYBC shared beef information and cooking tips. One attendee of the cooking party hosted by @ItsaKeeper shared, "I hardly ever cook beef at home (generally splurge on a filet at a restaurant for a special occasion), it was so quick and easy I would be more inclined to cook it at home now."

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# Abortions In Beef Cattle

(Continued from page 6)

Most abortions occur in healthy cattle with abortion rates from 5%-40% or more. The leptospirae cause a diffuse placentitis, killing the fetus which is then expelled in 1-2 days. Placenta and fetus samples are useful for antibody staining and PCR testing.

Here are some key questions to work through with your herd veterinarian if you experience an elevated abortion rate in your herd.

What is the problem? Is it a failure to conceive or were the fetuses aborted? Were the cattle pregnancy-checked? Pregnancy failure rate in cows and heifers should be less than 5% as a production-loss goal.

Which animals are involved? What is the difference between the groups of cows that conceived and calved and those that did not? Were the cows home-raised or were new animals brought into the herd? Are the cows in good or poor body condition?

What age groups are affected? What is their vaccination status? Were modified live or killed vaccines used?

What are they fed? Type, quality and condition of feed are all important factors to consider in abortion prevention. Moldy feed causes 3 to 10% of all abortions. Remember, the inhalation of mold spores is just as dangerous as the consumption of them. Vitamin A deficiency may also cause abortions.

What bulls were the cows exposed to? Consistency of performance throughout the breeding season and the exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are issues that should be looked at, especially if the animals were on a community pasture. STDs that cause abortions include Brucellosis, Listeriosis and Trichomoniasis.

When did the problem occur?

Were the fetuses lost at a certain stage of gestation? A loss in the last month of pregnancy could be due to nitrates in the feed. Handling, trucking or any kind of stress may also trigger abortions.

Did it occur on pastures or when their feed was changed? Was this feed tested? Was the feed free of nitrates? Abortion due to nitrates is accompanied or preceded by some evidence of nitrate problems in the adult animal, including chocolate-colored blood and bluish discoloration of non-pigmented areas of the skin or mucous membranes.

Were many cows affected suddenly, or did the problem pass through the herd slowly? Typical abortions occur at low levels of about 2% and are usually seen at the beginning of calving.

Where did the problem occur? Did affected and unaffected animals reside in different pastures, paddocks or ranges? What were the field conditions and the stocking densities?

If you find evidence of increased abortions, identify the cow(s) that aborted and isolate them. Recover the aborted fetus and membranes, if possible, and place them in double set of heavy-duty plastic bags and pack in ice (do not freeze). Call your veterinarian as soon as possible to begin a plan to identify possible issues and strategies for mitigation and prevention.

# Adding Value to Cull Cows

By : Stephen Boyles, OSU Extension Beef Specialist



Approximately 10 to 20 percent of the returns to a cow-calf operation are from selling cull cows in the fall. There are four factors that need to be considered to obtain profit from feeding cull cows. First, the cows have to be thin but healthy. Second, the buy/sell margin should be positive. Third, cost of gain should be relatively cheap. The odds of a profit are increased whenever these three conditions are present. The final requirement needed involves financial solvency. Only producers that can absorb financial risk should feed cull cows for short time periods.

## **Factor 1: Cows Should Be Thin But Healthy**

Cows often lose up to 20 percent of their weight during periods of under-nutrition. Cows culled during a drought may have even greater weight losses. Thin cows offer an opportunity to add weight rapidly through compensatory gain. Healthy, thin cows gain weight faster than normal condition cows. Compensatory gain from thin cows should result in the highest conversion rate and gain, thus reducing the cost of gain.

Some thin cull cows are young and still growing. Most have weaned a calf and are thin due to the demands of lactation. However, some thin cows may not be able to return to slaughter cow composition for several reasons. Cows that have lung damage may appear thin and unthrifty. Cows with heavy parasite loads will be less efficient unless treated. Cows with infectious conditions such as lumpy jaw should be avoided. Older cows (greater than 4 year old) can be fed but expect the rate of gain to be less than that of younger cows. Information on the use of ionophores and implants in cull cows is limited.

Weight loss of animals is normally a composite of fat and protein with protein normally regained at a slower rate than fat. Cows that are in normal or higher condition

will tend to add more fat as weight gain, resulting in lowered feed conversions. Economy of weight gains will vary inversely with initial cow condition. As cows improve in body condition, economy of gains will decline. Once cows have regained a “normal” body condition, further feeding and weight gains become increasingly less efficient because of the increasing proportion of fat deposited.

Knowing when to quit feeding cull beef cows is important because of the dramatic changes occurring in the economy of gains. Outlets for exces-

sively fat cow carcasses is and has always been very limited. Based on Kansas research, most beef cows are fat enough for slaughter once they attain a body weight of 22 pounds per inch height at the cow’s withers. While this simple formula may not precisely describe the most optimum end point for feeding and slaughter for every type of genetic combination of cow, it is reasonably appropriate for the great majority of cull beef cows being fed to slaughter. Monitoring the weight-to-height ratio of a random sample of cows during the feeding period and periodically body condition scoring the group will prevent excessively fat cows from becoming a problem.

Sometimes the cattle feeder who has not seen the market rise sufficiently, by the time the cows are ready to sell will hold onto the cows, awaiting a market improvement. Rarely, however, is such an upswing adequate to recover the extremely high cost of gain for the over-finished cows.

## **Factor 2: The Buy/Sell Margin**

Most cows are culled in the fall of the year at weaning time, so they usually are worth less per pound than at other times of the year. Prices usually rise from the fall selling period of October- December into the winter and spring periods. Prices peak in March-May and decrease throughout the summer. This price pattern is based on historical averages. Feeders, however, need to evaluate profit potentials every year that cull cow feeding is being considered.

Approximately half of the profit potential will be determined the day cull cows are bought or started on feed and will be based on the purchase price, body condition, and health of the cows. Cow feeding experience dictates that a neutral buy/sell margin (purchase price=selling price) or a positive feeding margin (sell cows for more

*(Continued on page 14)*

# My Charolais Jr. Nationals Experience

By Evie Groom

This past July I attended Charolais Jr. Nationals in Brookings, South Dakota. I took two head of cattle, one fall heifer calf, and one fall bull calf.

During this trip we traveled about 4000 miles, round trip, and we spent 47 hours driving.

During the week of Jr. Nationals I competed in the poster, art, photo, and prepared speech contests. I also competed in group contests such as Quiz Bowl, and Team Fitting. Along with those contests I competed in the Weaver Leather Livestock Showmanship contest, and both the Bred and Owned and Owned shows with my calves.

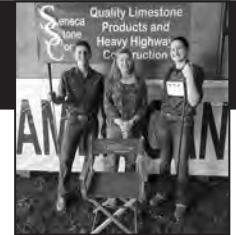
I am so grateful I got to experience this awesome show, and travel across the country to do what I love most, showing cattle and promoting the livestock industry.



## Summer Youth Beef Shows



On several weekends this past summer, cattle shows organized, inspired and driven by Phil Paradis and Jeanne White of Simme Valley, Groton, NY happened in three areas of New York.



On Saturday June 20th youth exhibitors and their families gathered at Tullyfergus Farm in Lyons, NY for the first of the shows. July 12th at Ann Phillips and Tyler Stubs, Shining Star Cattle Company in North Collins, NY. Followed by one at New Penn Farm, Jeanetta Laudermilk, Truxton, NY on July 18th.

Judges were- Cindi Shelley, Cobleskill, NY, Ryan Mattocks, Guys Mills, PA and Mike Sinon Poughkeepsie, NY.

Huge thanks to our many sponsors of all three shows. These are from the First show at Tullyfergus Farm-

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And many others who donated on the day. Special thanks to Skip Lear for steer weigh in and line up.

Paige Henderson for handing out prizes. Matt Henderson and Phil Paradis ring men.

Jeanne White and Evie Groom for check-in. Linda Groom for food and refreshments.

My apologies to anyone I have missed in this report, please know your help and input was essential to the smooth running of the show.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Groom

# Adding Value to Cull Cows

*(Continued from page 12)*

than was paid for them) is essential to show a profit from feeding purchased thin cows.

The ideal situation for feeding cull cows is if Utility cow prices are relatively high and feed prices are relatively low.

This offers the potential of costs of gain being lower than selling price. Normally, costs of gain are higher than selling price and a positive buy/sell margin is needed to make a profit. If costs of gain are less than selling price, you can have a negative buy/sell margin and possibly still make a profit.

Other livestock costs such as veterinary and medical expenses farm utilities, power and fuel and marketing expenses can be around 10 cents per pound of gain. Interest cost on the purchase price of the cows can add another 6 cents per pound of gain. Excluding labor, management and facility, costs per pound of gain can run in the 45 to 50 cent range.

Another method of feeding cull cows is to initially feed high roughage rations through the winter. Gain per day is lower than if started on a grain-based diet. However, cost of gain can be relatively low if hay or grazing resources do not otherwise have a ready market value.

Slaughter cow prices vary not only over time but also with quality grades. The best prices are normally attained for Commercial grade. Since mature cows may come off pasture in poor condition, they may sell as Cannors or Cutters at substantial price discounts to Utility grade. Cows in thin condition are capable of higher gains, which can also raise quality grade. The producer must calculate the difference between any expected increase in value and cost of feeding to determine profitability. If cows come off pasture in good condition, no quality enhancement is expected, cost of maintenance may be high and revenue comes only from price increase.

### **Factor 3: Feed To Gain Cheaply**

Feeding cull cows grain-based diets for only 30 days will result in the most rapid and efficient gains. However, the producer is subject to very short-term price changes. If the price situation is unfavorable, thin cull cows can be fed for a longer period of time. Feeding for approximately two months should also reduce the number of Cutter grade carcasses and increase the number of Utility grade carcasses. Increasing the gain within this 2 month time period will further improve carcass quality and reduce cost of gain. Longer feeding of grain-based diets should further reduce the incidence of yellow fat. There is a hypothesis that feeding barley (lower carotene content) instead of corn (higher carotene content) will further "whiten" the carcass fat.

Feeding cull cows grain-based diets much longer than 2 months will significantly increase feed cost per pound of gain. Also, marbling score and quality grade may not significantly improve after 2 months on feed. However, this must be balanced against the historical increase in cow prices that occurs over the period from October-November to March-April. The length of time that cull cows can be efficiently fed grain-based diets at an economical cost of gain will vary depending upon their initial body condition. Assuming the cows are healthy and not debilitated, thin cows can be fed longer than fleshier cows. In one study, cull cows were fed for 108 days with no significant drop in feedlot performance. Based upon previous research, it would appear that this time period may range from 2 to 4 months.

The most profitable feeding management scheme is affected by the cost of feed inputs. Slower gains over the winter may be profitable if the cost of hay or grazing resources are relatively cheap. Expect the dry matter intake of cows fed grain-based diets to be approximately 2.5 to 3.0 percent of body weight. Normally, there should be at least 60 to 80 percent concentrate in a grain-based diet. One can expect gains of 3 pounds or better if the diet contains 80 percent grain and compensatory gain is expected. The feed to gain ratio will be under or near 10 when shorter days on feed and higher grain diets are utilized.

The protein requirement of cull cows does not appear to be particularly high. Crude protein levels of 9.5 to 11 percent are probably adequate. Keep in mind that the mineral supplementation program for grain-based diets and roughage-based diets are not the same. Calcium supplementation will be higher than phosphorus supplementation if feeding a high grain ration.

### **Factor 4: Financial Solvency**

Cow-calf producers might consider feeding their cull cows through the winter to produce a "value added product". A common practice is to feed roughage-based diets through the winter and then feed grain 30 to 50 days in the spring. This scheme is a viable option if hay or grazing resources are sufficiently cheap and the extended time of ownership can be justified. The alternative is short-term feeding of grain-based diets to cows after being culled from the herd.

In economic terms, short-term cow feeding is a high risk enterprise. A feeder is typically in and out of the market within 50-90 days. There is virtually no way to pass the financial risk to anyone else. The advice to any potential cull cow feeder is that if financial risk can be absorbed, feed cull cows.



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DOSAGE TABLE			
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150	1.5 ml	-	-
200	2 ml	-	-
300	3 ml	-	-
400	4 ml	-	-
500	5 ml	-	-
600	6 ml	-	-
700	7 ml	-	-
800	-	5.3 ml	-
900	-	6 ml	-
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## **A VIEW FROM THE TRACTOR SEAT** By Paul Trowbridge

A long hot summer, this summer has been longer than any summer I can remember and hotter than any in history. Well maybe I had one longer the summer before I left for college we had finished up hay early in 1964 I was leaving home for the first time leaving my parents and 8 sibs behind. I owned a 1957 Chevy and was ready to conquer the world but that last month on the farm seemed to just drag on.

Well, this summer with the COVID -19 our summer is going slower than that even as I get older and time seems to slip by this summer has been the pits. Not a county fair, Tractor pull or rodeo, and believe me there is no one to blame but we should have all learned a valuable lesson to live every day to the fullest, and thank God we are healthy and well- and that we should not take any day for granted.

I found that sitting in our garden with a salt shaker and red ripe tomatoes is so relaxing and give yourself time to think about life, I was always in a hurry I felt if I wasn't hurrying I wasn't getting everything done but after this summer if I sit in our garden and eat tomatoes for an hour the sun was still going to rise and fall and I was not changing what had to be done on the farm.

Sometimes we need to step back and reevaluate what the most important things in our lives are and focus on them. My focus now is what Granpa always preached to me if a problem can be fixed with money it is not a problem but a hurdle if the problem can't be fixed with money than it is a problem and you better start praying.

Thanx For Readn

Paul

P.S. Start everyday with a kind word and a hug



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The New York Junior Hereford Association held a Certified Hereford Meat Raffle, as a fundraiser, this past summer and the winner was to be picked at NY State Fair at the conclusion of the Open Hereford Show. Well as we know that did not happen.

The Juniors still sold their tickets and the drawing was held at Genesee County Fairgrounds by Jr. Advisor Heather Sugg and Co-Advisor Brenda Dermody.

The winner of the New York Junior Hereford meat raffle for 2020 was-

**Jim Moore III. Baker, NY.**

Nya Johnson, Baker, NY sold the winning ticket. Congratulations Jim on winning \$425 worth of great Hereford beef!!!!

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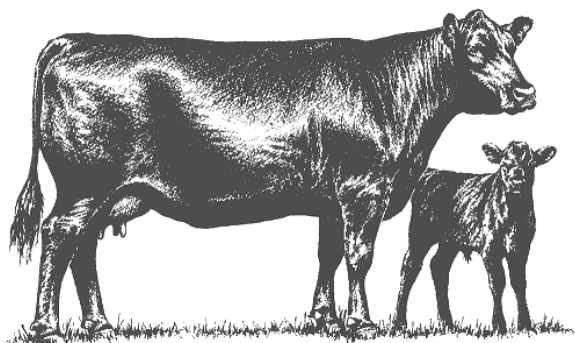
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# Backgrounding; A Phase of Growing Calves in Preparation for the Feedlot

By: Steve Boyles

Backgrounding is a term used to describe a phase of growing calves being prepared for feedlot placement. As compared to wintering programs, backgrounding emphasizes a faster rate of gain, with relatively more grain and less roughage.

An example of a typical backgrounding operation would be to feed 400 to 500 pound steer calves to a weight of 600 to 700 pounds. If the feeding period was to be about 120 days, a ration and management program that produces an average daily gain of 1.5-2.5 would provide the desired sales weight.

## **Advantages of Backgrounded Feeder Calves**

Provide a market for homegrown grain and roughage that might otherwise have little market value.

Calves are efficient converters of good quality feeds.

Avoid the stress and resulting health problems associated with shipping of young calves through the marketing system. Because of the potential death loss and health problems associated with handling and shipping of young calves, the cow herd owner has an advantage over those who purchase their calves through the marketing system.

Avoids the seasonal fall market glut and targets sales during seasonally strong feeder prices.

Provides more flexibility to spread marketings and choose among potentially profitable alternatives.

Provides additional flexibility for marketing heifers either as feeders or as herd replacements.

A study at the University of Nebraska in 2018 exhibits the advantages of first placing calves on a grower diet as opposed to placing them directly on a finishing diet.

It was observed for calves that went directly to finishing diets (FINISH) to consume more feed daily compared to calves placed on grower diets (GROW); however, GROW calves were on feed for 60 more days. Calves in the FINISH treatment also had greater average daily gain and improved feed efficiency. When evaluating growing and finishing performance independently, GROW calves had daily gains of 2.76 and 3.29 pounds per day during the growing and finishing phase, respectively. Although overall ADG was less, GROW calves still finished

with 71 lb. greater final body weight. Twelfth rib fat thickness, calculated yield grade, and Loin Eye Area area did not differ between treatments. Calves fed the grower diet prior to the finishing phase had 45 pounds more carcass weight and greater marbling compared to calves in the FINISH treatment. Calves that were adapted to the finishing diet following weaning were finished in fewer days, but had lighter final body weight and carcass weight. Feeding a grower diet for 76 days prior to the finishing phase allowed additional time for skeletal growth as evidenced by the 71 lb. increase in final BW and 45 lb. greater carcass weight when cattle were harvested at similar back fat.

## **Feeding Alternatives**

There is not a golden rule but in general, purchased calves should be fed long enough to gain at least 150 pounds on a backgrounding program. Initial costs of gain tend to be relatively high as calves recover from the stress of movement and handling, a new environment and, most likely, a new ration.

Most feeder cattle will not be placed on a full-feed ration until they reach the 700-800 pound range. And, many feedlots specialize in finishing cattle from the full-feed stage only.

## **Feed Requirements**

Faster gains are more efficient and usually more economical because a smaller proportion of total feed consumed is used for maintenance. With faster gains, the same total gain can be put on a calf in less time, reducing interest, labor and yardage costs due to the shorter feeding time.

When calves are being fed to slaughter weights under single ownership, the most rapid gains are usually the most profitable. Where animals are being grown to sell to other parties for final finishing, however, maximum gains may not be most profitable. Maximum gains will frequently result in a greater degree of fattening than is desired by the feeder, who will tend to discount the price on excessively fleshy calves. There is also a trend for lowered prices with increased calf weights. Heifer calves ordinarily gain approximately 10 percent slower than steer calves fed on the same ration.



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## *Economist Reviews Shocks To Beef Industry*

By : Glynn Tonsor, K-State Research and Extension

MANHATTAN, Kan. – The beef cattle industry has already experienced three big “shocks” this year and the effects are ongoing, but have been blunted to some extent, according to a Kansas State University agricultural economist.

The first jolt came in mid-March when the COVID-19 pandemic sparked stay-at-home orders in most states.

“That had big implications for food consumption,” said Glynn Tonsor, a livestock market specialist with K-State Research and Extension. Those implications included restaurant and school closures – two large outlets for U.S. beef. As that happened, demand for beef shifted to grocery stores which were allowed to stay open. The actions disrupted the long-established flow of the beef supply chain.

The second shock happened soon after when clusters of COVID-19 cases began cropping up among employees in meat processing facilities, forcing some to shut down temporarily to control the spread of the virus, said Tonsor, presenting his Beef Cattle Outlook at the recent virtual 2020 K-State Risk & Profit Conference.

That left market-ready cattle and other livestock in some areas with no market to go to. The effect was a bottleneck, with a backlog of market-ready animals growing for a time, but fewer processing facilities to handle them. Tonsor estimated that cattle and hog processing dropped by as much as 40% during the spring.

As that bottleneck was developing, so too were disruptions to export channels, which have become increasingly important to the beef industry in recent years. The worst of the “pinch point,” Tonsor said, was the last week in April.

Though some characterized that time as a developing meat shortage, Tonsor said that’s not accurate: “There was no shortage of animals. There was a disruption in the flow and at times the variety of products that consumers could get. But for the calendar year, we not only expect beef production to be higher, but also domestic beef consumption to be up.”

The third shock stemmed from the first two. When consumers knew they would be staying at home and limited in their movements and also learned of meat processing slowdowns, some bought up large quantities of beef and other food and goods, which was characterized as a hoarding situation.

“The shift to more at-home consumption highlighted that not all meat is equal,” Tonsor said, noting that demand for ground beef products strengthened while demand for steaks and related cuts – those normally sold to restaurants – weakened.



The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the beef supply chain and consumer beef demand but the industry is working through a backlog of market-ready animals.

Despite disruptions to beef exports, overall international trade has helped temper the negative effects of the pandemic on the U.S. beef industry, Tonsor said, warning that a growing protectionism sentiment in the United States will work against the marketing of beef exports.

As of June 1, Tonsor said there were about 1 million head of cattle backed up in the supply chain because of packing plant closures and marketing chain disruptions. By Labor Day, however, he believes much of the backlog will be processed.

“We’re getting much more current,” he said, but cautioned, “these plants have been running quite hard. We can’t take labor availability for granted. I don’t anticipate another situation where we have a 40% decline in production like we did in April, but we could still have some dips.”

He shared the most recent live cattle price outlook released by the Livestock Marketing Information Center which estimated the average slaughter steer price for the third quarter this year at \$99 to \$102 per hundredweight (cwt), which would be down 7.1% from a year ago.

Fourth quarter prices are expected to average \$108 to \$112 per cwt, down 7.5% from a year earlier, partly owing to heavier cattle and more beef as a result of working through the backlog. The overall average price for 2020 was estimated at \$107 to \$109, a decrease of 7.5% from 2019.

LMIC projections for next year indicate an increase in prices, with first quarter 2021 steer prices averaging \$113 to \$118; second quarter averaging \$116 to \$122; third quarter at \$114 to \$121 and fourth quarter at \$117 to \$125. Prices for 2021 overall were estimated at \$117-\$120, which would be 9.7% higher than 2020.

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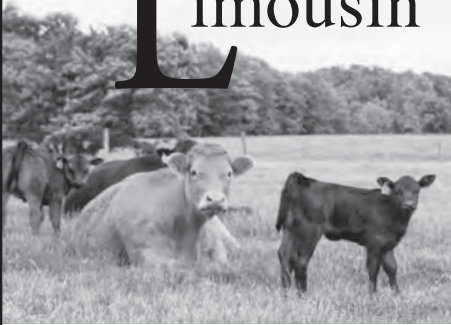
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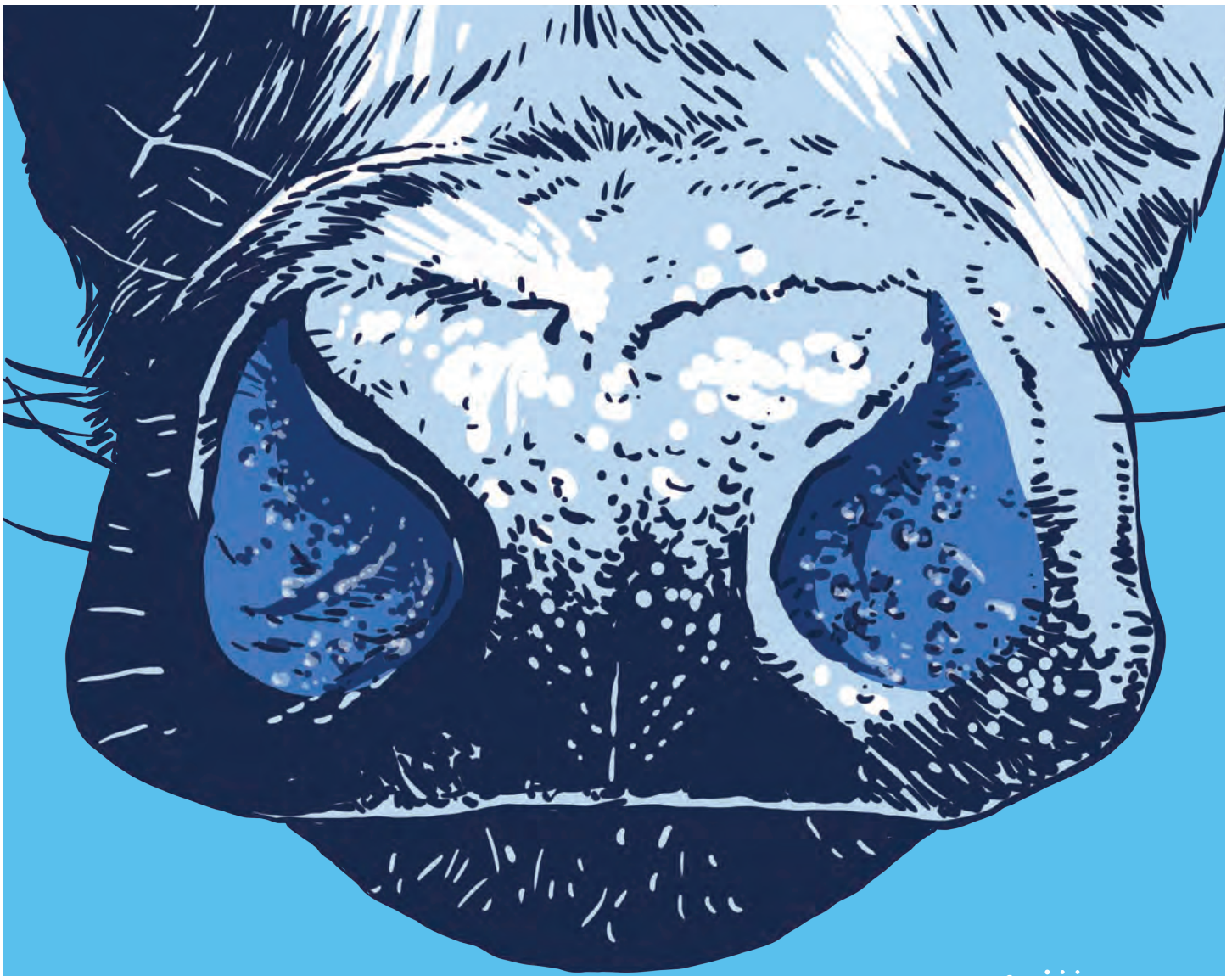
## ***Why is 45 day weaning important to feeder calf health??***

By : Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

The “Value-Added” calf sales will begin in October and continue in the fall months. Therefore some of the required weaning dates may already be here, and others are only a few days away. Most of the “Value-Added” calf sales require that the calves are weaned at least 45 days prior to sale date. Some cow calf producers may wonder why the post-weaning period needs to be so lengthy.

Data from Iowa (Faber, et al. 1999 Iowa State University Beef Research Report) from over a nine year period in a couple of their feedout tests compared the health status of calves weaned less than 30 days to calves weaned longer than 30 days. Data from over 2000 calves were summarized. Calves that had been sent to a feedlot at a time less than 30 days had a higher incidence of bovine respiratory disease (28%) compared to calves weaned longer than 30 days (13%). The percentage of calves that required 3 or more treatments also was significantly different (6% versus 1%) in favor of calves that had been weaned more than 30 days. In fact the calves weaned less than 30 days were not different in health attributes than calves that were weaned on the way to the feedlot.

A summary of this lengthy study can be found on line at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/ansci/beefreports/asl-1648.pdf>. Vac-45 calves apparently have a real advantage in terms of health compared to calves weaned for less than a month or those weaned on the way to the livestock market for sale date. Certainly part of the “value” in value-added calves can be attributed to properly applied vaccinations. However, there is little doubt that a portion of the improved health is due to the length of time between weaning and the movement of calves to the next owner.



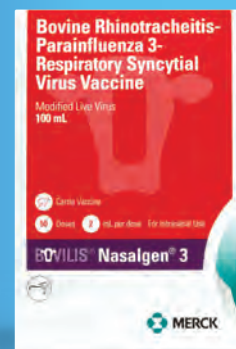
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