

Steer Test Field Day Sets Carcass Goals

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Polled Hereford breeders were urged to aim their carcass genetics at the "retail target" during sessions at the Kansas National Polled Hereford Feedlot field day and open house recently in Great Bend, Kan.

Dr. Michael Dikeman, meats specialist from Kansas State University, told the breeders that the Polled Hereford breed will "fit" this target. He described slaughter cattle in this major carcass category as having live weights of 1,150 to 1,250 pounds, with average frame scores of 6. He recommended that breeders continue to emphasize increasing muscling with adequate marbling, while decreasing external fat.

"Ideally, they should be on feed for 100 to 120 days, with 60 to 65 percent grading Choice," Dikeman said, "with no Yield Grade 4s."

Geneticist Dr. Bob Schalles, also of Kansas State, pointed out to the breeders that changes in carcass quality can be made because of the fairly high heritability of those traits.

"To make carcass changes, you must have carcass EPDs, particularly for marbling and rib eye area," he said. "You need sufficient number of sires to sample and sufficient number of progeny — at least 20 — to get accurate estimates."

His carcass goal is one that has slight+ to small- marbling with .25 inch fat and a rib eye area of 12 to 13 square inches from a 750 pound carcass. "We need the mar-

bling," he said, "but don't let rib eye area get out of control — either too big or too small."

Bill Dulaney, owner of the feedyard where the national test is conducted, brought the group up to date on the 206 steers currently on feed. For the 112-day period ended in May, the steers have posted an average daily gain of 3.29 pounds, with a sizable percentage gaining well over four pounds per day.

Dr. John Hough, American Polled Hereford Association's director of education and research, then led the attendees through a live animal evaluation, with winners to be declared following the steers' slaughter.

Larry Heidebrecht, American Polled Hereford Association president, outlined the new Baldy program, which features comprehensive marketing and certifi-

cation plans. He explained that the innovative program should be especially popular with feedlot operators because of its emphasis on feeder cattle, as well as replacement stock.

"We'll be able to document and track the high-performing cattle, thus adding value all across the production chain," he said.

In his concluding remarks, Schalles told the attendees that

breeders attending these kinds of field days are "the ones who will be ahead in carcass improvement." He congratulated the steer consignors and strongly encouraged further development of feedlot and carcass evaluations.

For more information about the steer test or the Baldy Program, contact the American Polled Hereford Association, 11020 NW Ambassador Dr., Kansas City, MO 64153, (816) 891-8400.

Problems Complicate Dairy Promotion

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Dairy food marketing strategists may have been too successful with their "Milk is a Natural" advertising slogan, said Kristen McNutt, editor of Consumer Magazine Digest.

This success, McNutt declared, may have forced the dairy industry into a corner when it comes to getting consumers to accept milk produced by cows treated with bovine somatotropin (BST), a synthetic growth hormone that induces cows to give more milk.

McNutt spoke recently during the opening session at the 88th annual meeting of the American Dairy Science Association. Her keynote talk was sponsored by the ADSA Foundation. It was titled, "What Dairy Scientists Can Learn From Consumers."

The BST controversy is one facet of the entanglement problem facing the dairy industry today, McNutt said. "Entanglement involves issues that are broader

than just dairy products," she said. "Irradiation and the whole area of biotechnology also impact your product."

In addition, the dairy industry faces an erosion problem, McNutt said. This involves such issues as nutrition authorities and medical doctors arguing over the merits of milk in the human diet, or getting consumers to think more about dairy products.

"So what can you as dairy scientists do to improve the image of milk?" asked McNutt.

"The public will trust you. Be empathetic with consumers. Listen, and tell them what they want to know. Society always has looked up to the academic world for solving problems — not to government administrators."

McNutt noted that there are two aspects concerning BST and the whole realm of genetic engineering in the minds of consumers. One deals with religion and the other with dollars and cents.

Scientific answers do not help resolve the religious issue, she declared. But sound theology can.

"When it comes to dollars and cents," McNutt said, "consumers want to know how much they will be paying for milk after BST is adopted. A guaranteed lower price certainly could help overcome most perceived risk factors.

"How about a new marketing slogan, 'science saves you money?' Labeling BST milk would then become a moot issue."

Progress Through Ag Tour, Picnic Set

COUDERSPORT (Potter Co.) — The seventh annual "Progress Through Communications for Agriculture" tours and picnic are scheduled on Thursday, July 15.

This year, the event will be held at one location, the Smokers' Allegen Farms, Genesee. The afternoon tour program is by invi-

tation only. Hay wagons will be used to take visitors to the following tour sites on the farm: dairy, 1:45 p.m. - 3 p.m.; conservation, 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.; forest management, 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

There will also be various displays set up, including a pesticide handling and disposal safety demonstration by Gary Brown of Helena Chemical.

The picnic dinner, featuring four meats (beef, veal, pork, and lamb) is open to the public and begins at 7 p.m. Featured speaker will be Earl Ainsworth, editor, Farm Journal, Inc.

Tickets are \$5 each from any member of the committee, or by calling the Potter County Cooperative Extension Office, (814) 274-8540.

The purpose of "Progress Through Communications for Agriculture" is to improve communications between Potter County farmers and those involved in formulating agricultural policy.

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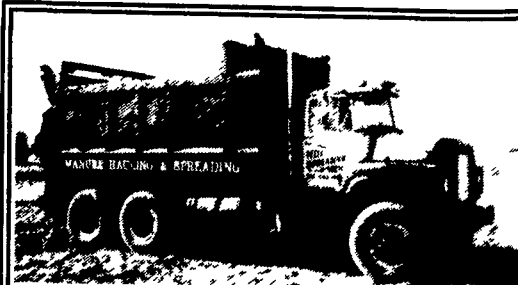
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