



Regional Beef Notes

Fall 2013

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Do I Have Any Rejects?

Jessica Morgan, Extension Agent, Anson County Center

It's a common question heard around the stockyard on feeder calf sale days. Farmers call in or come in before the sale starts and ask if they had any that didn't quite make the cut. Feeder calves are not rejected because they aren't pretty enough, there are specific reasons *why* these calves were not accepted. As a pair of eyes that sees every calf that runs through the Norwood sale barn on feeder calf sales, there are a lot of variables that can lead to a rejected calf. Certainly a few reasons are more common than others.

Stag/Bull: The most common reason a calf is rejected deals with whether they were properly castrated. All male calves must be properly castrated and healed when they enter the sale barn. When a calf comes into the grading ring showing obvious "bully" signs, a large neck, super thick muscling due to continued testosterone production, and aggressiveness, it immediately causes a second look. A lot of times, when using banding as a castration method, both testicles are not encompassed by the band, leaving one operating testicle, or a stag, which can exhibit these bull-like characteristics. Cutting is the easiest way to ensure that you have gotten both testicles out of a bull calf. It's as easy as counting, one, two. Remember that these are feeder calves and are heading to the feedlot. Feedlots cannot afford to

let a bull that will be aggressive and trying to breed into their lots. The calves' job at the feedlot is to eat and gain weight. Many folks are under the impression that intact bull calves will grow more rapidly than steer calves therefore they delay castration. Studies have shown that calves castrated near birth had the same average daily gain over their lifetime as those castrated after weaning. Additionally, researchers in Nebraska have shown that as age of castration increases, weight loss resulting from the procedure increases. Take home message is castrate early!

#3 Muscling: Number 3 muscled calves are considered thrifty in the highest regard of the word. They have limited amount of muscling, less than a calf that grades thin. They are thin throughout the forequarter and the back and loin have a sunken appearance. The legs are set close together, and are narrow throughout their frame. They may carry various degrees of fat, but have limited muscling all over. These generally are not calves that just have not had enough to eat. Genetically, the potential for muscle production is not present.

To understand this reason for rejection, producers need to look at the reason why we have feeder calf sales. Feeder calf sales are used to group like

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animals together, to sell a group of animals with similar traits. The purpose of the feeder calf sales is to sell feeder calves, those that go for meat production. Animals with this poor genetic quality of muscling will not perform well, nor will they produce a quality beef product. The take home message is if you have had rejects that were because of #3 muscling, think long and hard about the genetics of your herd. A new bull and culling some old cows can make a difference.

Rat Tails: Rat-tail calves have short, curly, malformed, sometimes sparse hair and lack tail switch development. Calves are typically a mousy-gray color and are created by crossing Continental breeds that have the diluter gene with cattle that are black in color. Simmental x Angus & Simmental x Holstein are the most common crosses but also can be found when crossing Gelbvieh and Charolais. Research has shown that feedlot performance is typically lower for rat-tail cattle, therefore feedlots have discriminated against these calves and markets have stopped accepting them altogether. Rat tail calves were found to have significantly lower rates of gain during winter months from weaning to yearling, resulting in significantly lighter yearling weights. To prevent rat-tails in a cross breeding program, identify and cull cows that have or have had rat-tail calves. Buy only bulls that are found to not carry the diluter gene. Most breed associations have worked to identify bulls that are diluter gene free.

Bad Eyes: A common issue during summer months, bad eyes generally refer to lasting effects of pink eye that was left untreated.

Calves that have eye problems will not be able to adjust to different environments as well, leading to less weight gains. If you notice a problem with calves, a vaccination protocol might be helpful. The most important thing is to stay diligent checking calves. Pink eye can be treated as long as you stay on top of it.

Other Reasons: These might be obvious but any calf that has a physical injury, whether it happened on the trailer over, will be rejected. A small cut, a soft limp can be overlooked if it was obviously a new injury, however you would be surprised by the condition of some calves when it is

obvious that they have had the injury for a while. Other obvious traits that will get a calf rejected are calves that are too light. The minimum weight is 300 lbs, and let's be honest, if you have a cow that can't produce a 300 lb calf, you need to re-evaluate your culling management. A calf that is too old is another issue that can lead to rejection. These are feeder calf sales: emphasis on the calf. A 1000 lb heifer is obviously a cull that didn't get bred, and is probably not under a year old. Speaking of heifers, any female that is starting to have a swollen udder will be called as bred. Feeder calves should not have had any opportunity to be bred, and should confidently be

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**2013 NC Southern Piedmont
Area Beef Cattle Conference**
December 5, 2013
Stanly County Livestock Market

Schedule of Events

- 1:30 pm** BQA Certification (*Pre-Registration requested*)
Cost for BQA Cert- \$15 for Members of NC Cattlemen's Association
\$40 for Non Members of NCCA
 - 3:00 pm** Feeder Cattle Grading Demonstration &
Market Cow Evaluation
Interactive session lets producers see the differences and why calves are graded the way they are. Also learn the differences in cull cows and why some bring more than others.
 - 5:00 pm** Artificial Insemination Opportunities with ABS
 - 5:30 pm** Supper (*Pre-Registration Required*)
 - 6:30 pm** Feeder Cattle Sales Program Meeting
Opportunity to voice your opinion as a producer for next year's Norwood Area Cattle sales.
- Feel free to attend the sessions that apply to you.**

Sponsors:

Stanly County
Livestock Market

Mid-Atlantic Cattle Sales

ABS Genetics

To Register
Call 704-983-3987

Or
Contact your Local Cooperative
Extension office

Pre-Register For
Meal and BQA Certification

Stanly County Livestock Market Location
13215 Indian Mound Road
Norwood, NC

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open at the sale. Any horned calves need to be dehorned and healed before the sale. This also applies to heavy scurs. Calves whose polls have not healed, or long scurs will not be accepted.

These are just brief explanations of why most cattle are rejected at feeder calf sales. If you do have rejects, work with your local Extension Agent to combat the problems, as most are avoidable. To learn more about feeder cattle sales and the way they are graded please attend the Winter Beef Conference held on December 5, 2013 at the Stanly County Livestock Market in

Norwood.

Carter, Boone, Clay P. Mathis, Clint Loest, and John Wenzel. *Castrating Beef Calves: Age and Method*. New Mexico State University. April 2011. http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_b/b-227/
Peck, Clint. *Right Up Your Alley: Rat-tail Riddle*. Beef Magazine. March 2001.

http://beefmagazine.com/mag/beef_right_alley_2
U.S. Standards for Grades of Feeder Cattle. United States

Department of Agriculture. 2000. <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3066980>

Ten Point Winter Feeding Plan for Beef Cattle

Jamie Warner, Extension Agent, Anson County Center

Doctors Poore, Capucille and Moisan (NCSU) developed the following 10-point plan for beef cattle producers to help them successfully winterize their operation in a cost-effective manner. The following is just a summary of the article. For the full article, contact your local extension office or visit the NCSU Department of Animal Science's Extension webpage at www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/index.html, then click on Ruminant Nutrition and Management.

1. Analyze hay for feeding value and develop a supplementation program to meet energy, protein and mineral requirements.
2. Keep hay or adequate pasture available for cows at all times.
3. Record body condition scores on cows.
4. Make sure there is enough feed on hand for the winter season to feed the number of cattle on the farm.
5. Separate heifers, thin cows and old cows from the main cow herd for feeding purposes and separate lactating cows from dry cows.
6. Re-group the cattle during the winter as needed so that cattle that get thin can be fed separately.
7. Cull chronically thin cattle, old cows, and cattle with dental or health problems.
8. Adjust rations as calving season approaches to provide more energy and protein.
9. Provide minerals at all times based on requirements for the local area.
10. Provide adequate shelter from wet or cold weather.

4-H Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit Winners

Tiffanee Conrad, Extension Agent, Richmond County Center



LeeAnn Harward, Senior Showmanship Circuit Winner

Results for The 4-H Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit will be announced at the banquet in Hoke County. These youth accumulated points for their placings in showmanship at a series of shows in the South Central District in North Carolina this fall. If you know any of these young people, please congratulate them for all their hard work and accomplishments. If you have a child, grandchild, or neighbor who may be interested in competing in our Circuit, please call your local Livestock or 4-H Agent for help.

The 4-H Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit is for youth showing lambs, heifers, and goats. There are three divisions for all species. First place in each division will win a belt buckle and a banner ribbon, second place will win a banner ribbon, and third place through fifth place will win a tri-

fold ribbon. Cape Fear Farm Credit and Carolina Farm Credit proudly sponsor the Circuit, providing the funding to operate it. Each youth participant received a Circuit tee shirt.

Upcoming Events

<i>2013 NC Southern Piedmont Beef Cattle Conference.....</i>	December 5
<i>Union County Bull Sale.....</i>	December 7
<i>Anson County Cattlemen’s Association Christmas Meeting.....</i>	December 10
<i>Stanly County Cattlemen Annual Meeting</i>	January 3
<i>Stanly Select Bull Sale.....</i>	January 4
<i>NC Forage & Grassland Council Winter Conference Series</i>	January 28-30

Persons with disability or persons with limited English proficiency can request accommodations by contacting Jessica Morgan, Agriculture Agent, 704.694.2415, Fax 704.694.2248, or e-mail jessica_morgan@ncsu.edu at least five days prior to any event listed in this newsletter.

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