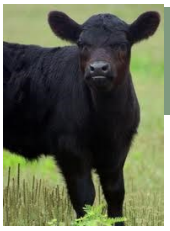
Kent County Livestock News



LIVESTOCK

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What Shape Are Your Cattle In?

There are several advantages to the rancher for knowing their cattle's nutritional shape.

Reproductive performance is the number one factor in determining the overall productivity of a cow. Evaluating your cows body condition score can help the rancher make decisions that will help the bottom line. Studies have shown that as a cow's condition improves, her reproductive performance improves. And conversely as the cow's condition declines so does reproductive rates.

A body condition scoring system has been put in place to help ranchers determine their cow's nutritional state. The score ranges on a scale from 1-9. 1 being "skin and bones" with 9 described as being extremely fat. The technical description of BCS 1 is: Bone structure of shoulder, ribs, back, hooks and pins sharp to touch and easily visible. Little evidence of fat deposits or muscling.

BCS 5: 12th and 13th ribs not visible to the eye unless animal has been shrunk. The transverse spinous processes can be felt by the touch and not noticeable to the eye. Spaces on each side of the tail head are fairly well filled and not mounded.

To gain optimal performance from cattle your goal should be around the 5-6 BCS. This allows for good reproductive performance. Smaller scores equal increased supplemental costs and/or lower conception rates. Both which are not good for your bottom line.

For more information or to see the full BCS scale you can download the publication at: http://animalscience.tamu.edu/files/2012/04/nutrition-body-condition-nutrition.pdf

Things to Remember

- Target BCS of 5-6 at calving
- Lower BCS = increased supplemetal feed costs
- Lower BCS = lower conception rates
- Easiest to change BCS after weaning of calves

Texas Beef Checkoff Referendum

Voting for State Beef Checkoff Program Set For June 2-6

At the request of Texas cattle industry associations, and in accordance with Texas law, the Texas Department of Agriculture will conduct a producer referendum that, if approved, would create a state beef checkoff program for beef promotion, marketing, research and consumer education. This proposed program, to be called the Texas Beef Checkoff, would be funded and managed by Texas beef producers.

This newsletter is brought to you by:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Kent County

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Texas Beef Checkoff Con't.

"VOTING WILL TAKE PLACE JUNE 2 THROUGH JUNE 6, 2014…. ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS CAN VOTE AT ANY TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE COUNTY OFFICE…"

Voting will take place June 2 through June 6, 2014, to approve a refundable maximum assessment of $1 per head of cattle to fund this program. If approved, the assessment will be collected at each point of ownership transfer in Texas.

Eligible producers can vote at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office during each office's regular business hours. Eligible producers are strongly encouraged to vote in person.

If an eligible producer is unable to access an extension service office a mail-in ballot may be requested from TDA between May 19 and June 2, 2014. Mail-in ballots must be postmarked no later than close of business Friday, June 6, 2014, in order to be counted.

The Texas Beef Checkoff would be funded solely through this assessment on cattle. It is not paid for by taxpayer dollars and is not a government program. If approved, any assessments collected would be refundable upon request.

The program would be managed by Texas cattlemen and women serving on the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas.

Any producer regardless of age who has owned cattle in Texas anytime between June 6, 2013 and June 6, 2014, is eligible to vote. Youth younger than 16 years of age must have a parent or guardian co-sign their ballot.

If approved, collection of the assessment will begin October 1, 2014.

For more information about the Texas Beef Checkoff and the referendum, including voting locations and hours, visit www.texasagriculture.gov.

Which side of the fence do you want to be on?

Think about stocking rates.

Measuring Forage Quality

Ranch profitability is greatly influenced by nutritional management of its cattle. Management of beef cattle nutrition should be based on forage quality and quantity. There is a relationship between forage quality and physical appearance of feces from grazing cattle. Following are a few examples.

Example 1

Example 1 shows a dropping that indicates 10 to 17 % crude protein and digestibility of 61 to 67 %. Notice the slight crater-like appearance in the center. When you get to the 10 to 13 % crude protein range you may see small folds in the droppings.

Example 2

In example 2 you see a forage crude protein level of 5% or less and digestibility of at or below 56%. This type will have distinct rings and will stack. This indicates that the forage is below maintenance requirements for all classes of beef cattle. Forage digestibility and intake may improve with protein supplementation.

For further information on this topic you can go to http://animalscience.tamu.edu/files/2012/04/beef-forage-quality-photo-guide.pdf