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## NEW TRICH RULES

The Texas Animal Health Commission has adopted some changes to the Trichomoniasis control program as follows:

- if a bull is sold and later found to be infected, other bulls from the herd of origin may be required to be tested if the bull was not exposed to females after its sale and prior to testing by the new owner;
- if a bull has strayed on to property not owned or managed by the bull's caretaker and is found to be infected then other

bulls from the unit of origin and bulls on the premises where the bull was last located must all be officially tested;

- the TAHC can evaluate the effectiveness of a herd control plan to monitor progress;
- all premises under a Trich Herd Certification Program must have perimeter fences adequate to control movement in and out of the premises.

[TAHC Newsletter, 11/6/14]

## EFFECTS OF EARLY WEANING

ON PERFORMANCE AND TOTAL NUTRIENT REQUIREMENTS

Calves from a group of 84 cows were weaned at 90 days of age (EW) or 205 days of age (NW). All cattle were maintained in drylot using the same ration of 60% distill-

ers grain and 40% crop residue. EW cows received 15 lb/dry matter/cow/day and EW calves had free-choice access. NW pairs were limit fed the total amount consumed by EW cows + calves.

Over the period from early to normal weaning, EW cows gained 46 lb more and were heavier at normal weaning time. However, Body Condition Score did not differ. During the early to normal weaning period, NW calves gained 22 lb more. Together, EW cows and calves consumed 23.5 lb DM/unit/day and NW pairs 22.3 lb DM/unit/day. The authors concluded this "implied similar feed utilization" and "the data suggest weaned cows and calves require the same amount of feed as pairs together and early weaning does not reduce the feed energy needed to support the pair".

[2014 Am. Soc. of Anim. Sci. Midwestern Section Abst. 101: Univ. of Nebraska]

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Portions of this newsletter are cited from the Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Browsing Newsletter, Dr. Steve Hammack.



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### Brazos Valley CEU Conference

January 30, 2015

#### Burleson County Expo Center

located on fairgrounds, State Hwy 36  
South, Caldwell

5 CEU hours

Call to register. 979.542.2753

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## EFFECT OF PRIOR MANAGEMENT ON FINISHING PERFORMANCE, CARCASS CHARACTERISTICS AND ECONOMICS

A group of 141 spring-born steers that were weaned in November and then wintered to gain < 1 lb/day was divided into three groups in early May:

- Group 1 was placed directly into a finishing program;
- Group 2 was grazed on crested wheatgrass until mid-June then moved to native range and then was placed into a finishing program in early November;
- Group 3 was grazed on crested wheatgrass until mid-June then moved to native range until late August then grazed a mixture of field peas and barley followed by unharvested corn and were then placed into a finishing program in early November.

In the comparisons discussed below, any differences or lack of differences were statistically significant.

During the six-month grazing periods, the steers in Group 3 gained more weight and were fatter at the start of finishing than those in Group 2. There was no difference in cost of gain for the grazing phase.

In the finishing program, the steers in Group 1 were fed longer, had lower ADG, were younger and lighter at slaughter, gained less efficiently, and had lighter carcass weight than either of the groups that grazed throughout the summer and fall before entering the finishing program.

For the two groups that grazed through the summer and fall, those that had access to annual pasture and unharvested corn were heavier when placed on feed, required fewer days on feed to reach finish endpoints, and were younger at slaughter. However, final weight, ADG, feed efficiency, carcass

weight, Yield Grade, and marbling were not different for the two groups.

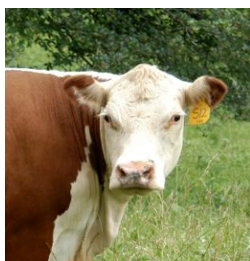
Based on taste panel evaluations, tenderness, juiciness, and flavor were not different among any of the three groups. Overall net returns were greater for the Group 3 compared to the other two groups; net returns were \$39/hd higher than group 2 and \$328/hd higher than the steers that were placed directly on feed in the spring. Returns for the group that was placed directly on feed were notably lower primarily because of lighter carcass weight and, to a lesser extent, higher expense. (NOTE: Financial returns can vary considerably depending on costs and revenue, so these returns should be viewed accordingly.)

(2013 N. Dakota St. Univ. Beef Report, p. 38)

## HOW FAST SHOULD HEIFERS BE DEVELOPED ?

Over two years, spring-born, weaned Angus heifers initially averaging 557 lb were developed for 202 days on a ration of grass-alfalfa hay with some barley supplement. Heifers were fed to reach either 55% (moderate gain, MG) or 62% (high gain, HG) of anticipated mature weight of 1400 lb. The higher rate of gain was accomplished by feeding 28% more digestible energy during the development period.

Development cost was significantly lower for MG (\$58/head or 23% less). At the end of the development period, HG weighed significantly more than MG (872 lb vs. 778 lb) and were significantly higher in BIF Frame Score, rib and rump fat cover, and internal pelvic area. At the end of development in



June, all heifers were placed on the same pasture and breeding commenced. At start of breeding, significantly more HG were cycling than MG (52% vs. 20%). MG gained significantly more than HG during summer grazing (1.83lb/day vs. 1.55 lb/day) but by pregnancy check in October HG were still significantly heavier (1054 lb vs. 990 lb) and higher in Body Condition Score (2.8 vs. 2.6 on 1-5 scale). Pregnancy rate did not significantly differ, (88% for HG and 86% for MG).

The study was continued for re-breeding as 2-yr-olds and 3-yr-olds. As 2-yr-olds, HG continued to be significantly heavier just before calving but this was not the case for 3-yr-olds. There was no significant difference in first- or second-calf birth date, % calved in first 21 days, birth weight, calving difficulty, weaning weight, cow BCS, or re-breeding %. As has been found in other recent research, development to first breeding of approximately 55-57% of anticipated mature weight is more economical and results in no reduction in performance, if nutrition is adequate during breeding.

(J. Animal Sci. 92:3116; Univ. of Saskatchewan, Univ. of Nebraska)

## WHAT DO QUALITY GRADES MEAN TO CONSUMERS?

A survey was conducted of over 1000 consumers to assess perceptions of Select, Choice and Prime. Respondents were asked to: 1) rank the three grades on leanness, 2) rank the three on juiciness, and 3) match pictures of rib eyes showing the grades with grade names or match prices of \$4/lb, \$8/lb, or \$12/lb with grade names.

Only 14% ranked leanness correctly and 57% said Prime was leanest; but 55% still ranked Prime highest on juiciness. Only 14% correctly matched pictures with grade name, an outcome, as the authors stated, “that is worse than would have occurred by purely random chance”. Also, 55% of the respondents associated Prime grade

with the lowest price category of \$4/lb. (Note: It appears that consumers tended to associate “Prime” with anything desirable to them.) When results were evaluated based on some characteristics of the respondents, the more highly educated and those with greater preference for steak were more likely to correctly match the names, pictures and price categories.

The authors suggested three possible actions:

- drop the current USDA grading system and use private or third-party systems;
- increase education on the relationship between marbling and taste;

- provide descriptions beyond grade name, such as “USDA Prime-Higher Fat, Most

Juicy”, “USDA Choice-Juicy”, and “USDA Select-Less Fat, Less Juicy”.

However, the authors indicated there are limitations with any of these suggestions that may reduce applicability and not markedly increase consumer knowledge. (Note: While USDA grades may not be well understood by many consumers, they are important for trade purposes within the beef production chain.)

[J. Animal Sci. 92:3142; Oklahoma St. Univ.]

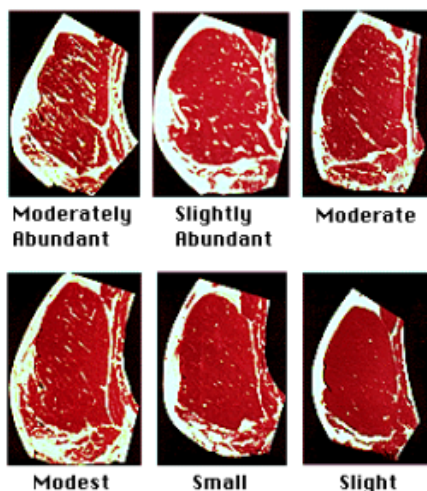
## Marbling – Just a Little Can Mean a Lot

Marbling, the flecks of fat within muscle, is the primary determinant of official USDA Quality Grade. Marbling is officially evaluated in the rib eye between the 12th and 13th ribs, i. e., where a carcass is separated into forequarter and hindquarter.

Slight marbling is the minimum required for USDA Select and Small marbling is required for USDA Choice. As can be seen above, just a few flecks di-

vide those two grades, but that can mean a lot of money. Over the last few years the average spread between Choice and Select is about \$8-9/cwt carcass, but has ranged from \$0-20/cwt. Modest marbling gets a carcass into upper 2/3 Choice, the minimum required for most branded high-quality programs such as Certified Angus Beef. The premium for CAB over Choice currently is about \$4/cwt carcass. Slightly Abundant marbling and higher results in a grade of USDA Prime. That premium currently is about \$20/cwt over CAB. However, only 3-4% of fed beef grades Prime.

How is marbling determined? Until recently it was done exclusively by an official grader’s eyeball. Now, grading is increasingly done by instrument, subject to adjustment by a grader. Properly calibrated instruments should result in the most accurate and repeatable evaluation. Regardless, higher marbling usually means higher value.



### LEAN BEEF

*are there limits ?*

The industry has been stressing leanness at least since the first Beef Quality Audit in 1991, when excess fat was identified as a major problem. Some experts are saying we’ve gone about as far as we can, or will, in reducing fat in beef. In a recent report from the Beef Board, it was noted that there are currently some 40 beef cuts that meet the USDA definition of lean, and more are appearing. In 1994 just 7 cuts met the USDA specifications for lean. And, since most beef cuts are closely trimmed these days, there is not much difference in total fat content of Select and Prime retail cuts.

(Lean Matters, mybeefcheckoff.com)

How much higher depends on the value spreads, and those still depend largely on supply and demand.

[Texas A&M University Beef Cattle Browsing Newsletter, Dr. Steve Hammack, Sept. 2014 ]

## CURBING HOLIDAY WEIGHT GAIN

It's that festive and joyful time of year again ... the Holiday Season! The holidays are a time to celebrate and spend time with family and friends alike. However, the holiday season and winter months often bring more high calorie "party" and "comfort" foods to the table and less physical activity which can result in weight gain. Weight gain associated with the holidays can contribute to overall increases in body weight as we age.

To help curb holiday weight gain, concentrate on family, friends and reasons for celebrating the holiday rather than what kind and how good the foods served will be. In other words, shift the focus of your holiday celebration away from food and more on the people you are celebrating with. Use these tips to make your holiday celebrations a little easier on your waistline:

— Plan before you feast. If you are going to a holiday party, don't go on an empty stomach. Skipping meals may cause you to overindulge on high calorie, high fat foods. Instead, eat small amounts of healthful foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, cereal, yogurt or a small wrap or sandwich before the event. Once you arrive at the party, take a look at the foods being served and decide what you will eat ahead of time. Also, consider if there will be a main meal later in the day. This will help you maintain control of your eating while still enjoying your favorite foods.

— Avoid extra calories from drinks. Alcoholic drinks and other holiday favorites, such as eggnog, may taste great but provide lots of extra calories and few nutrients. In fact, one 6 oz. glass of wine has 150 calories, while an 8 oz. glass of eggnog provides 350 calories! In addition, regular sodas contain on average 140 calories per can. Consider

skipping these high calorie beverages, or limiting yourself to just one small glass so that you can save most of your calories for the main meal or appetizers.

— Control yourself at the table. When sitting down at the table for the main meal, remember to keep your portion sizes in check. Choose small portions of the foods you want to eat, then take your time and enjoy your meal. Remember to take small bites, chew slowly and savor your food. Once you have finished eating, get up from the table. If you remain at the table, it will be easy to continue eating. Instead, offer to clean the table or put away leftovers. Once the work is done, suggest a walk outside or a fun game to take the focus off of food. Another good tip is to avoid being near the buffet table at parties which can lead to over eating as well.

— Be a healthy helper. One way to ensure that a healthy option will be available at the party is to offer to prepare and bring a dish. Your host will appreciate your help and you will have one dish that is a healthy alternative. If you are in the kitchen preparing foods, also be conscious of all of those tiny tastes you sneak when no one is looking. For example, that taste of sugar cookie dough packs 40 calories and that lick of frosting adds another 25 calories! The calories from these tiny tastes can add up quickly.

— Stick to your routine. The holiday season can be challenging for anyone trying to maintain their weight but especially so for a person trying to lose weight. Do your best to stick to your routine during the holiday season. Continue to be physically active as much as possible, ideally for 30 minutes five days per week. Maintain your healthy eating habits at home by

focusing on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein sources, and low-fat or fat-free milk products.

Use these tips to curb holiday weight gain while still enjoying your favorite foods in moderation. Remember to focus on friends and family and stick to your routine!

### *Apple Spinach Salad*

10 oz. package fresh spinach  
2 tart apples  
½ cup cashews, roasted with no salt  
¼ cup sugar or equivalent sugar substitute  
¼ cup apple cider vinegar  
¼ cup vegetable oil  
¼ tsp. garlic salt  
¼ tsp. celery salt

Combine first three ingredients.

Combine sugar and next four ingredients in a jar. Cover tightly. Shake vigorously. Pour over spinach. Toss. Chill up to 24 hours.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 6

Nutrition Facts Per Serving:

Calories: 237  
Total Fat: 15 g  
Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Sodium: 242 mg  
Total Carbohydrate: 26 g  
Protein: 3 g



## CONTROLLING ALLERGY TRIGGERS IN THE HOME

Millions of children have allergies. In fact, in the US, allergies cost children an average of 2 million missed school days each year. Does your child suffer from frequent sneezing, coughing, nasal congestion, runny nose, rash, and itchy watery eyes? Does he have dark circles or a crease across his nose from constantly rubbing it? Do the symptoms worsen when outdoors or after exposure to animals? If so, the problem may be his body's response to allergens.

An allergen is a substance that the body is exposed to that it regards as an "invader." These invaders trigger a chain of events that lead to the body's release of histamine into the bloodstream. Histamine causes the allergic symptoms that affect the eyes, nose, throat, lungs, gut, and skin. Allergic symptoms can be minimal so that they are only a nuisance. Or, they may affect a patient much more severely. Allergies are usually inherited, which means that parents can pass on genes for allergies. If one parent has allergies, there is a 40-50% risk of the child having allergies. If both parents have allergies, there is an 80% risk.

Children can experience allergies seasonally due to exposures of outdoor triggers or year-round if they are exposed to the allergen daily at home or school. Many triggers for allergies can be controlled to some degree. Children spend 8-12 hours a day in their bedrooms sleeping, so controlling measures should first focus on the bedroom.

### TRIGGERS

**DUST MITES** are one of the most common causes of allergies. They are microscopic, living creatures similar to spiders that feed off of human skin scales. Dust mites thrive in warm, humid places and are the main component of house dust. Even the cleanest house has dust mites in bedding, upholstery, curtains, carpet, and stuffed animals. Controlling measures include:

Frequently clean your home, and vacuum carpets and upholstery with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.

- Consider removing bedroom carpets/rugs.

- Keep upholstered furniture out of the bedroom.
- Wash stuffed animals in hot water, or place them in a freezer bag and freeze them overnight.
- Keep the humidity in your home about 50% in the summer and 35% in the winter.
- Cover mattresses, box springs, and pillows with allergen-impermeable covers.
- Avoid heavy curtains and damp wipe venetian blinds weekly.
- Change air filters every month during heating and air conditioning seasons.

**MOLD AND MILDEW** can grow in any warm, moist area. Mold will often grow outdoors on leaves and in standing water. Molds are frequently seen indoors in bathrooms, kitchens, and utility rooms. Controlling measures include:

- Remove piles of leaves and standing water from around the house.
- Empty pans under air conditioners and refrigerators frequently to prevent standing water in the home.
- Purchase a dehumidifier for your home, and run the air conditioner in warm climates.
- Wipe down wet shower walls with a dry cloth after use, and leave shower doors open to increase air flow.
- Throw away moldy foods, and empty the garbage frequently.
- Clean indoor mold growth; prevent future growth by controlling moisture. Keep the area clean with an anti-mold solution.

**POLLEN** is released by trees, weeds, and grasses during the plants' fertilization process. Pollen allergies are seasonal. The local weather forecast can help you determine pollen counts for your region. Controlling measures include:

- Plan indoor activities during known high-level pollen activity.

- Severe allergy and asthma patients should avoid outdoor exposure when pollen counts are high.
- Allergy and asthma patients should wear a mask while mowing the lawn or completely avoid exposure to freshly cut grass.

**ANIMAL DANDER** is a protein from the animal's skin or saliva. Pets in the home can cause a significant problem for allergic children. Cats are the most troublesome pet. Controlling measures include:

- Remove pets from the indoors. Most importantly, the bedroom should be off-limits for pets. Pet dander can persist in a home for 6 months after the pet has left.
- Shampoo pets once a week. Measures taken to control dust mites in the home will also help control dander. However, reducing dander in the home is not enough. It must be eliminated to prevent triggering an allergic response in a patient.

**COCKROACHES** can cause severe allergic responses that can lead to difficulty in controlling asthma in children. Studies show that in areas where cockroach infestation is out of control, there is a higher rate of allergies and asthma. Controlling measures include:

- Vacuum regularly.
- Keep the house clean and sanitary by wiping up spills, and keeping garbage and pet food covered and sealed.
- Keep pests out of the house by sealing cracks, repairing window screens, etc.
- Get rid of places where pests can hide such as stacks of magazines, newspapers, boxes, and clutter in general.
- Kill the pests with the least toxic method. If you have an infestation or severe problem, you may need to establish a regular schedule with a pest control company.

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INSECT bites can be painful to all people, but children with an allergy to insect venom can find themselves in a dangerous situation. The honey bee, yellow jacket, hornet, wasp, and fire ant are all capable of injecting life-threatening venom. Multiple stings or bites increase the risk of a dangerous outcome for the child; however, only a small number of children have a fatal response.

The usual sequence of events after a dangerous sting or bite is itching at the bite, nose, and eyes. This symptom(s) is then followed by nasal congestion, sneezing, coughing, wheezing, the development of hives or swelling, and then a feeling of anxiety, weakness, and difficulty breathing. One may even lose consciousness. These are symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction to the sting, and it can be deadly. Always take your child to an emergency department, or call an ambulance if she has experienced this reaction.

The child should be given a prescription for an EpiPen® - a medicine to have at home and school in the event that she is stung again by the same insect. Controlling measures include:

- Dress children in light-colored long-sleeve shirts, pants, and socks; always assure that they have on shoes when outdoors. Dark or brightly colored clothes attract insects. Playing outdoors with bare feet increase the risk of hornet stings and ant bites.
- Avoid using lotions and perfumes while outdoors. Food and drinks also attract insects, so use caution when picnicking outside. Throw away rotten fruits and vegetables from gardens.
- Be sure that garbage cans are kept clean and covered, and use care when emptying them. Playground toys and tables, as well as near-by trees, are perfect locations for hornet nests. In the spring and summer, be sure that there are no nests around your child's play area.

FOOD allergens are usually discovered in infancy. The most common food allergens are cow milk and egg. Children may

outgrow their sensitivity to milk and egg after age one. Other foods that can cause allergies for children are peanuts, other nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, and seeds.

It is possible to acquire these allergies in adulthood. As well, one may be more sensitive to the food if it is eaten in large quantity or eaten raw. Symptoms from food allergies include itchy mouth and throat, rash, hives, runny nose, nausea, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea. Asthma patients can have more severe reactions to foods because the response affects their breathing. Food allergens are another common cause for an anaphylactic reaction. Controlling measures include:

- Obviously, parents will want the child to avoid foods that cause them to have allergic reactions. However, the likely

situation is that a parent suspects a food may be causing allergies, but he has not been able to isolate which food it is. A child can undergo a blood or skin allergy test for certain foods. Or, the parent can keep a food diary of everything that the child eats for several days. Then eliminate one food or ingredient from the child's diet for one week. Be sure to read food labels on store-bought foods as some ingredients are used extensively in manufactured products. After the week is over, if the child's symptoms have not changed, reinstate the food into the child's diet. Choose another food or ingredient to eliminate. Continue this process for several weeks to see if the elimination of a certain food makes a difference in the child's allergy symptoms.

### PUTTING YOUR PLAN INTO ACTION!

Rate your child's allergy symptoms by placing a check (√) in the box never, sometimes or always.

	Never	Sometimes	Always
My child sneezes			
My child coughs			
My child is congested			
My child has a runny nose			
My child has a rash			
My child's eyes itch			
My child has dark circles under his eyes			
My child has a crease across his nose			
My child has diarrhea or stomach cramps.			
Today's Date			

Now, re-read the "controlling measures" for each allergen and check the box when the task has been accomplished. Some tasks may need regular attention, so make a calendar for these activities.

In 1-2 months, re-rate your child's symptoms to see if your child has seen any improvement. Then, tell your friends and family. Likely, they will benefit from these controlling measures as well.