



The Bull's Eye

hitting the target



McDowell County Center

August 2012

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McDowell Cattlemen's Association Meeting



The McDowell Cattlemen's Association will meet on August 21st at 6:00pm at the farm of Wayne Duncan at 1161

Oakdale Rd. From I-40 take Exit 75-Parker Padgett Road. Turn onto Parker Padgett Road, past Stuckey's stay straight to Oakdale Road and farm will be on your right. Drive is just past new metal building. The topic of the meeting will be cattle diseases and health problems seen in our area presented by our local and state vet-

erinarians. We will also have a report from John Knighten about his experience marketing cattle through the Mountain Cattle Alliance.

The meal will be sponsored by the McDowell Cattlemen's Association with door prizes from **Tractor Supply Company**.



Please call 652-7874 or email Cheryl or Greg by Thursday, August 16th so we will know how many meals to prepare. Looking forward to seeing you on the 21st.

The **66st Annual McDowell Junior Livestock Show** will be held **Saturday August 4th at the McDowell Agricultural Center**. Tell your friends about the show and come on out to see what these hard working youth have brought to the show this year. The event will start at 9:00am and usually ends around 2:00pm. The **McDowell Cattlemen's Association** will once again be cooking hamburgers and hot dogs for lunch as well as sausage biscuits for breakfast. Any help with this activity will be appreciated. Please call Dustin Laws at 442-7547 to volunteer. This is a great opportunity to support the association and help promote beef too.

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Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Castration Do's and Don'ts

by Sara Gugelmeyer

Pointers to help producers sell heavier, healthier steers



Castration of bull calves is a practice that most producers perform every year without question. And yet, there is still a percentage of feeders sold intact at a discount because they haven't been castrated. Plus, even for those producers who do castrate, it's important to be sure to use the correct technique and perform the procedure at a time when it is best for the animal's welfare and ensures you will take home more money from the sale.

The earlier, the better

Once the decision has been made to castrate, when is the best time to do it? That is one topic where animal scientists and veterinarians say there is no question: **the earlier, the better**. Daryl Strobehn, Iowa State University animal science professor, emphasizes the importance of castrating calves early in life. "The important thing to understand is the later you wait in life to castrate the greater the stress is going to be." And more stress is going to result in lost weight gain and other health problems. These problems are especially true with a knife castration method says Dr. Robert Larson, Kansas State University (K-State) College of Veterinary Medicine Professor. He explains cutting calves at a later age results in more bleeding and more stress on the calves. "It takes the calves longer to get back on full feed and resume normal activity," Larson says. Some producers theorize the longer the calf is left intact the faster he will grow, which will result in more pounds to sell at weaning. However, Larson explains, that is not necessarily true. He says if the producer is trying to stick with a natural program and not use implants, there may be some growth advantages with leaving the bulls intact. But, he says if the producer is willing to use implants, "I would much prefer to castrate early and use an implant in that 2- to 3-month-old calf to get all the advantages of growth and none of the disadvantages of castrating at a later point in life." Can you cause problems by cutting or banding too early? Not really, say Larson and Strobehn. Calves can be castrated as early as the first day of life; however, that is not usually the most efficient method for producers with more than a few calves. The best time for most producers, Larson says, is between 1 to 3 months of age. Convenience is the primary reason for most producers, and this time period is typically when spring calves are given their first round of vaccinations. Strobehn agrees that 1 to 3 months of age is ideal because the calves are young enough that stress is minimal. "The second wonderful part about doing it at that time is most people have their cattle out on grass so the complications from infections are just about zero," Strobehn says. Sometimes waiting is necessary.

The last important decision is what method to use. For hundreds of years, cattlemen have used the "cutting" technique of using a knife to surgically remove the testicles. In more recent years, however, a "banding" technique has been introduced which uses a rubber band or rubber tubing to stop the blood flow to the testicles, causing the calf to eventually slough the testicles and scrotum.

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Castration Do's and Don'ts

Which is better?

There is no clear-cut answer to give when producers ask whether cutting or banding is better, according to Larson. When it comes to helping a producer choose which method to use, Larson says, it has a lot to do with the individual's preferences, facilities and training. "Both techniques require some skill, and I don't really consider one easier than the other," Larson explains. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. A study conducted by a K-State graduate student on calves that weighed about 500 lb., Larson says, showed that banded calves did have better performance for the first few weeks after castration. At two weeks, the banded calves had less decrease in feed intake and better weight gain than the knife-cut calves. However, at three to four weeks, it flip-flopped and the knife-cut calves did better. "By three to four weeks the knife-cut calves were pretty much healed and the banded calves were just at the point when they were sloughing their scrotums," Larson says. So depending on when you measure the calves' performance after castration, the advantage could go either way.

Know your skills.

When it comes to what the producer should decide to do, Larson explains, it should be the method he is most technically skilled in. "I have seen improperly done banding castration techniques that end up causing decreased performance for the calf and animal welfare concerns, and I've seen knife cut calves that aren't done well that have the same kind of problems." Many use a scalpel or a sharp knife, and the main thing to remember, no matter the tool, is cleanliness. "You should use a bucket with disinfectant and clean whatever you are using to keep the surgery as clean as possible," Larson says. Banding is a good way to castrate with the appropriate technique, according to Larson and Strohbehn. There are two different types of banding methods, an elastrator and a high-tension bander. Young calves should be done with an elastrator, which is basically just a very small rubber band placed over the scrotum, above the testicles, which cuts off the blood flow. This can be used as early as one day of age although, Larson says, the elastrator method of banding has come under some criticism from an animal welfare perspective. The high-tension bander is designed for larger calves and offers the same concept of stopping blood flow to the testicles, except it actually uses a piece of rubber tubing which is pulled tight and clamped. No matter which type of banding you use, Strohbehn stresses the importance of making sure both testicles are below the band. "I've seen people that don't get both testicles pulled down and that doesn't result in complete castration," he says. One critical management concern when banding calves is to be sure the calves are given a tetanus vaccine.

Keep them clean, dry

No matter whether the calves are banded or cut, they need to be in clean, dry conditions to reduce the risk of infection. "I don't want to band or cut in muddy conditions," Larson explains. After banding, monitor the calves for bleeding or signs of infection. If the calf is bleeding, it's best to get the calf in the chute to examine it and try to stop the bleeding, Larson says. If there are signs of infection, it is likely something was contaminated during the castration process or the calf's environment is not ideal. Either way, the calf should be treated and kept in clean conditions away from mud. Whatever method you choose, the important thing is to castrate the calves as early as possible to ensure their welfare and help you get the most out of your product. Strohbehn stresses the importance of having a good animal health program when it comes time to sell your calves, because **in today's beef cattle business, the "normal" calf will be castrated, dehorned, weaned at least 30 days and preconditioned**. He says, "When we look at this whole routine of producing a product that we're proud of, that has a genetic background that's exceptional, and it has a health program to go along with it — that's a product we can sell in the marketplace and be competitive with. And I think we are all trying to put our best possible product out there."

Body Condition: the Key to Reproductive Efficiency

A Body Condition Score (BCS) describes the degree of fatness of a cow. A numerical range of 1 to 9 identifies varying degrees of fatness, with 1 being very thin and 9 being excessively fat. To use the BCS system effectively a producer needs to understand which areas of the cow anatomy deposit fat. Look at Figure 1 to learn where cows deposit fat. When evaluating body condition and calculating a score look over the cow's back, ribs, hooks, pins and tail head. The brisket is also a good indicator of fat deposition. When scoring cows for body condition producers need to account for pregnancy status, gut fill, hair coat and age. An average body condition is 5, so to begin the scoring process it's important to identify what a BCS 5 looks like and then score the rest of the herd accordingly. Live weight cannot be used to determine body condition. Animals can have different live weights but similar body condition scores. Likewise, animals of similar live weight may differ in body condition. The numeric system of body condition scoring is an excellent estimator of percentage body fat in beef cows. Body condition score accounted for 85 to 91 percent of the variation in stored body energy in cows. Seedstock producers can use Body

Condition Scoring at any point during the year, but it is best to select the same time each year to evaluate your herd for comparisons. Some breeders note a BCS during A.I. breeding season as the cows come through the chute. Others will make notes at weaning time while gathering mature cow weights. Body Condition Scores can be used to troubleshoot if there is a reproductive problem in the herd or to see which pedigree lines are efficient in keeping body condition.

Body Condition Score & Reproduction

One of the major constraints in the improvement of reproductive efficiency of beef cows is the duration of the post-calving anestrus period. If cows are to maintain a calving interval of one year they must conceive within 80 to 85 days after calving. Body condition at calving time determines to a great extent the re-breeding performance of beef cows in the subsequent breeding season. Research of mature and young cows in several studies showed cows that maintain body weight, and therefore ample energy reserves, before parturition exhibited estrus sooner than cows that lost considerable body weight. Body weight change during pregnancy is confounded with embryo and placenta growth. Therefore the estimation of body fat through body condition scores is more useful in quantifying the energy status of beef cows. The processes of fetal development, delivering a calf, milk production and repair of the reproductive tract are all physiological stresses. These stresses require the availability and utilization of large quantities of energy to enable cows to be rebred in the required 85 days. Add to these physiological stresses, the environmental stresses of cold, wet weather on spring calving cows, and often energy intake of range beef cows is below body maintenance needs. As the intake falls short of the energy utilized, then the cow compensates by mobilizing stored energy or adipose tissue and over a period of several weeks, a noticeable change in the outward appearance of the cow takes place. This is a change in the body condition and can be monitored by assigning body condition scores to cows and quantifying the degree of change. Cows that are in a thin body condition at calving return to estrus slowly. Postpartum increases in energy intake can modify the length of the postpartum interval but research has not shown enough improvement in rebreeding rates to justify the extra energy being fed to thin cows at calving time. A two-year Oklahoma State University study shows the impact of losing body condition in the period from calving to the start of the breeding season. Seventy-five cows in Year 1 and seventy cows in Year 2 were randomly allotted to receive either two pounds (LOSE) of cottonseed meal from calving (beginning February 11) until mid-April or 5 pounds (MAINTAIN) of cottonseed meal daily. All cows had free choice access to grass hay during February and March.



BCS 9. Extremely fat, wasty and patchy. Mobility possibly impaired. Bone structure not visible. Extreme fat deposits over ribs, around tail head and brisket.

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Body Condition: the Key to Reproductive Efficiency

Cows were exposed to fertile bulls for 90 days each year starting May 1. Pregnancy rate was determined at 70 days after the breeding season. Cows that were fed to maintain body condition from calving until the beginning of the breeding season averaged 94 percent pregnant, while those that calved in similar body condition but lost nearly a full condition score were 73 percent rebred. The body condition that was maintained throughout the winter until calving time must be maintained until rebreeding to accomplish high rebreeding rates. Other data sets have shown conclusively that cows that calve in thin body condition, but regain weight and condition going into the breeding season do not rebreed at the same rate as those that calve in good condition and maintain that condition into the breeding season. Missouri researchers determined that young cows that calve in thin body condition (BCS 3 or 4) cannot gain enough body condition after calving to achieve the same rebreeding performance as cows that calve in moderate body condition (BCS 5.5) and maintain or lose only a slight amount of condition. Cows must be rebred by 85 days after calving to calve again at the same time next year. The Missouri project showed that none of the averages for cows calving in thin body condition were recycling in time to maintain a 12-month calving interval. Cows with BCS of 5, 6 or 7 have been shown to be at the optimum level for reproductive performance.

Source: Ohio State University and Oklahoma State University fact sheets



BCS 2. Poor condition with muscle atrophy and no detectable fat. Tail head and ribs prominent.



BCS 4. Borderline condition. Outline of spine slightly visible. Outline of 3 to 5 ribs visible. Some fat over ribs and hips.



BCS 5. Moderate, good overall appearance. Outline of spine no longer visible. Outline of 1-2 ribs visible. Fat over hips but still visible.



BCS 6. High moderate condition. Ribs and spine no longer visible. Pressure applied to feel bone structure. Some fat in brisket and flanks.



BCS 7. Good, fleshy appearance. Hips slightly visible but ribs and spine not visible. Fat in brisket and flanks with slight udder and tail head fat.



BCS 8. Fat, fleshy and over conditioned. Bone structure not visible. Large patchy fat deposits over ribs, around tail head and brisket.

McDowell 4-H Livestock Judging Team Competes at State Contest

The McDowell 4-H Livestock Judging Team had a successful trip to the State Contest.

The junior team of John Eric Ellis, Hanna Ellis, Skyler Murray, and Haylee Laws won first in judging sheep, fifth in beef and was the fifth high junior team overall.

Individually Haylee Laws placed eighth in sheep, with John Eric Ellis placing second in sheep and being the fifth high junior individual overall.

The senior team of Brooklyn Murray, Megan Lawing, Angle Schunke, Jamie Schunke, Zac Schunke, and Sydney Lytle was fifth in meat goats, third in sheep, third in beef, and was the third high overall senior team.

Megan Lawing placed eighth in sheep and Brooklyn Murray was seventh in beef cattle judging. Brooklyn finished fifteenth overall with Angel and Jamie Schunke placing nineteenth and twentieth.



Fiery Beef Satay Skewers

Marinade time: 20 minutes Total recipe time: 20 minutes Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

1-1/2 pounds boneless beef top sirloin steak, cut 1-1/2 inches thick
5 to 6 green onions, white part only, cut into 1-inch pieces

Marinade:

1/2 cup country Dijon-style mustard
1/2 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup honey
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
4 teaspoons bottled minced or fresh crushed garlic
1 tablespoon ground red pepper

Instructions

In large shallow bowl, combine marinade ingredients; whisk until blended. Remove and reserve 1/2 cup for basting. Trim fat from beef steak; cut into 1-1/2-inch cubes. Add beef to remaining marinade in bowl; toss to coat. Cover and marinate in refrigerator 20 minutes. Remove beef from marinade; discard marinade. Alternately thread an equal amount of beef and green onion pieces onto each of four 12-inch metal skewers. Place skewers on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, uncovered, 10 to 12 minutes for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, basting frequently with reserved 1/2 cup marinade and turning occasionally. Serve immediately.

Nutritional Information Per Serving

Nutrition information per serving: 335 calories; 8 g fat (3 g saturated fat; 3 g monounsaturated fat); 74 mg cholesterol; 1977 mg sodium; 22 g carbohydrate; 0.7 g fiber; 45 g protein; 11.8 mg niacin; 0.9 mg vitamin B₆; 2.2 mcg vitamin B₁₂; 3.2 mg iron; 46.1 mcg selenium; 7.5 mg zinc.

This recipe is an excellent source of protein, niacin, vitamin B₆, vitamin B₁₂, selenium and zinc; and a good source of iron.



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Livestock Market Report

WNC Regional Livestock Center, Canton, NC

Report for Monday July 23, 2012



Feeder Steers

Medium and Large 1 - 2

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price
6	350-395	380	132.50-150.00	141.59
4	400-420	413	132.50-142.50	136.18
1	455-455	455	127.50	127.50
6	500-540	522	118.00-130.00	123.71
2	550-580	565	110.00-115.00	112.43
1	615-615	615	116.00	116.00
2	675-675	675	118.00	118.00
1	760-760	760	105.00	105.00

Feeder Heifers

Medium and Large 1 - 2

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price
2	310-325	318	145.00-146.00	145.49
4	370-390	380	127.50-132.50	128.86
7	420-440	430	120.00-137.50	124.82
1	450-450	450	116.00	116.00
6	515-545	526	113.00-128.00	117.43
3	550-575	565	112.00-122.00	116.66
5	610-645	623	105.00-119.00	112.51
1	650-650	650	105.00	105.00

Feeder Bulls

Medium and Large 1 - 2

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price
3	400-440	417	130.00-140.00	136.80
5	450-495	463	115.00-137.50	127.33
2	525-530	528	119.00-125.00	121.99
8	555-595	574	110.00-117.50	113.30
6	600-630	615	105.00-111.00	108.16
1	680-680	680	103.00	103.00

Bred Cows

Medium and Large 1 - 2 Young

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price
1	945-945	945	875.00	875.00 Per Head 1-3 Months Bred
1	1040-1040	1040	999.00-1000.00	1000.00 Per Head 4-6 Months Bred
3	1270-1435	1327	999.00-1200.00	1080.12 Per Head 4-6 Months Bred
2	1000-1175	1088	999.00-1100.00	1059.48 Per Head 7-9 Months Bred
1	1385-1385	1385	999.00-1300.00	1300.00 Per Head 7-9 Months Bred

Slaughter Bulls

Yield Grade 1-2

Head	Wt Range	Avg Wt	Price Range	Avg Price
1	1465-1465	1465	98.00	98.00
1	1220-1220	1220	88.00	88.00 Low Dressing
6	1605-2120	1831	95.00-99.00	96.95
6	1570-2010	1761	100.00-106.00	101.71 High Dressing

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For up-to-date event schedule
check our Events page at:
<http://mcdowell.ces.ncsu.edu>

Mark Your
Calendar!



PLACES TO BE

- August 4 - McDowell Junior Livestock Show, Marion, NC
- August 16 - RSVP for McDowell Cattlemen's Association Meeting
- August 17 - BQA Training WNC Regional Livestock Center, Canton, NC
- August 21 - McDowell Cattlemen's Association Meeting
- September 7-16 - Mountain State Fair, Fletcher, NC
- September 20 - Feeder Calf Sale, Statesville, NC
- September 27 - Feeder Calf Sale, North Wilkesboro, NC
- October 11-21 - NC State Fair, Raleigh, NC
- October 25 - McDowell Cattlemen's Association Meeting

For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the McDowell County Center at
828-652-7874, no later than five business days before the event.