

## **Arkansas Steer Feed-Out Program An Information Feedback System for the Beef Industry**

The Arkansas Steer Feed-Out Program is an educational program that provides cow-calf producers with information about the post-weaning performance and carcass characteristics of their calves. The Steer Feed-Out Program is not a contest, nor is it a retained-ownership program. It creates an opportunity for producers to determine how their calf crop fits the needs of the beef industry and provides the information needed to determine whether changes in genetics and/or management factors are warranted to be competitive in beef production.

The Arkansas Beef Improvement Program Feedlot Preconditioning Project (PDF) is designed to assist producers in properly preparing newly weaned calves for the Arkansas Feed-Out Program.

### **Program Guidelines**

- Nominations must be received by October 1, 2007.
- Five-head minimum per consignor.
- \$25 per head nomination fee.
- Cattle must weigh 500-850 pounds upon arrival to Wheeler Brothers Feed Yard in Watonga, OK, sometime in mid-November.

### **Additional Program Guidelines**

1. Vaccination with a modified live virus vaccine (IBR-P13-BVD-BRSV) is now required. Vaccination with a killed virus is not acceptable. Please consult with your local veterinarian to make sure that your steers receive the correct vaccinations. Please be sure to follow the label directions concerning vaccination protocol and timings.
2. The nomination fee will no longer cover transportation of cattle to the feed yard. This cost will be financed by the feed yard along with feed costs and other expenses. The rapid increase in trucking costs has made this change necessary.

3. Calves will receive both electronic identification and visual tags, and both of these should be placed in the left ear. Producers should place a ranch tag in the right ear.

### **Program Rules**

1. A producer may consign as many steers as desired. Each consignor must have a minimum of five head, but steers do not have to be entered in groups of five. When nominations are received, producers will be sent a background information form that must be fully completed and returned before entries are final. Only calves weighing 500–850 pounds upon arrival will be accepted.
2. An electronic identification tag and a visual tag will be mailed to the producer through the county agent. Both tags should be placed in the left ear. Each calf must have both tags in place when the calves arrive at the feed yard. Each calf should also be tagged in the right ear with a ranch ear tag. This will provide a double identification system.
3. It is strongly recommended that the calves be back grounded prior to leaving the farm. A general recommendation would be to wean 45 days prior to shipment (wean on or before September 24, 2006, to meet this recommendation). At the time of weaning, vaccinate with a modified live virus vaccine (IBR-P13-BVD-BRSV). Revaccinate two weeks after the first vaccination. Consult with your local veterinarian to assess what other health needs should be addressed.
4. Upon arrival, cattle will be processed according to standard feed yard procedure.
5. Cattle will be sorted into an appropriate number of expected-outcome groups based on weight, frame size, and flesh condition.
6. Animals that require treatment for any illness will be treated according to guidelines established by the feed yard veterinarian. Costs of treatment will be charged to the owner. The feed yard management and the Arkansas Steer Feed-Out Program management will make every effort to safeguard the health of all animals but will assume no responsibility for death, loss, or sickness.

7. After an acceptable length of time, calves that are not achieving an economic rate of gain will be sold as realizers, and the proceeds placed in escrow for disbursement at the end of the program. Owners will be notified when such calves are salvaged and when one of their calves dies.
8. Feed consumption for each pen will be determined at the time of close out. Individual calf consumption will be prorated on the in-weight and average daily gain.
9. Charges to be assessed each entry at the end of the feeding period include: (a) processing fee, (b) yardage, (c) medicine costs, (d) feed costs, (e) trucking costs, (f) items (a) thru (e) will be financed at the prevailing interest rate, and (g) Beef Check Off (\$1.00/head).
10. Entries will be marketed when individuals reach the weight and condition regarded as acceptable by the industry. The feed yard manager and Extension personnel will make this decision.
11. Calves will be weighed individually at the conclusion of the feeding period, and a 4% pencil shrink will be applied to the final weight to determine live-sale weight for calculation of feed yard performance.
12. The cattle will be sold on a carcass basis with premiums and discounts for quality grades, yield grades, and carcass weights. Fair market value for all sales will be attained, but neither the feed yard nor Arkansas Steer Feed-Out Program management guarantees the profitability of participation in the program. Proceeds will be mailed to the consignor after the expenses listed in item 11 are deducted. Disbursement of funds will be approximately four-to-six weeks after each pen is closed out.
13. Feed yard performance information to be collected: average daily gain, total cost of gain, break-even, feed conversion, and net return.
14. Carcass information to be collected: dressing percentage, carcass weight, rib-eye area, fat thickness, USDA yield grade, and USDA quality grade.
15. Producers will be sent a report after arrival at the feed yard with information on arrival weight and pen assignment.

16. At the conclusion of the feeding period, feed yard performance data and carcass information will be provided on each consignment. The information will be kept confidential for consignors to use in evaluating the cattle they are producing.

This is a good program to find out how the genetics of your cow herd is, compared to average kill data and whether you need to change your genetics and what direction you need to go. Call Carroll Prewett anytime, for more information or to discuss enrollment in this program at 870-368-4323.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.