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The Kansas Beef Cattle Improvement Program

Abstract

The Kansas Beef Cattle Improvement Program is to help improve beef cow herds in Kansas and to provide information that will be valuable to producers in selecting breeding animals and making management decisions. The program is not to encourage competition among herds. Environmental conditions vary from herd to herd so competitive among herds cannot be "under the same rules"?

Keywords

Cattlemen's Day, 1968; Report of progress (Kansas State University. Agricultural Experiment Station); 518; Beef; Management; Environment conditions; Performance

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The Kansas Beef Cattle Improvement Program

H. W. Westmeyer and K. O. Zoellner

The Kansas Beef Cattle Improvement Program is to help improve beef cow herds in Kansas and to provide information that will be valuable to producers in selecting breeding animals and making management decisions. The program is not to encourage competition among herds. Environmental conditions vary from herd to herd so competition among herds cannot be "under the same rules".

Performance testing is simply a systematic method of recording differences in certain economical traits among animals. Traits important in producing beef cattle as related to carcass desirability and structural soundness, mothering ability, and rate of growth.

Performance Testing Objectives

1. To improve over-all management.
2. To improve growth rate and quality of calves.
3. To select bulls and heifers with desirable conformation, superior growth rates, that produce cattle with a high proportion of quality lean to fat.
4. To cull poor producing cows and bulls.

Kansas Beef Cattle Improvement Program forms, records and assistance also are available to those who do not desire to participate in breed programs.

How do you get started?

See your County Extension Agricultural Agent. He will help. He has complete information and can help you enroll in your breed program or in the Kansas Beef Cattle Improvement Program.

How does the program work?

Calf Program:

1. Identify each cow and herd sire with a number. The identifying number of the animal should not be changed or duplicated in the herd. It may be by hot iron, freeze brand, horn brand, neck chain, brisket tag, or ear tag and tattoo.
2. Identify each calf at birth with tattoo, ear tag or other positive means. Record calf identification, birth date, sex, dam's mother, and sire's number if known.
3. At weaning (between 160-250 days of age), weigh each calf and record the weight. In most herds weighing twice a year takes care of all calves born during a 12-month period.

4. Give each calf a conformation score when weighed. When possible, use a three-man grading committee. Average and record the committee grades.
5. Fill out necessary columns on the calf work sheet and it is ready to be processed.

Yearling Program:

1. Group-feed the calves at least 140 days. The ration should be a good growing ration so the animals may express ability to gain. The ration should not be a finishing ration that likely would over condition the animals for breeding.
2. Weigh each animal if possible between 350 and 400 days of age. Record weight on Yearling worksheet.
3. Grade and give conformation score to each animal as it is weighed. Record the score on the Yearling worksheet and complete information in appropriate columns. The Yearling worksheet then is ready to be processed.

Progeny Testing Program:

1. Select 8-10 calves sired by one bull for slaughter. At least half of the them should be steers. If the necessary number is not available from the

first calf crop, slaughter others from the next calf crop.

2. Full feed until steers weigh 975 to 1,025 pounds, and heifers 800 to 850 pounds. Cattle should have enough finish to grade choice and normally would have been fed 200 to 250 days.
3. Record initial weight and final weight.
4. Arrange for slaughter of cattle in packing plant with a U.S.D.A. meat grader.

How do you use the records?

1. To select herd sires.
2. To select replacement heifers.
3. To cull poor producers.
4. To improve gaining ability and to get more muscular carcasses.
5. To improve your management of the cow herd.

Table 38

Prices Used In Computing Costs of Rations, 1967-68

	<u>Per ton</u>
Dry rolled sorghum grain	\$ 36.00
Sorghum silage	8.00
Alfalfa hay	25.00
Prairie hay	20.00
Dry rolled shelled corn	46.00
Dry rolled wheat	50.00
Salt	20.00
Urea	110.00
Ground limestone	22.00
Dehydrated alfalfa	64.00
Soybean oilmeal	96.00
Dicalcium phosphate	110.00
	<u>Per lb.</u>
Stilbestrol premix (1 gram per lb.)	\$.55
Aurofac 10 (10 grams chlortetracycline per lb.)	.65
Vitamin A. premix (10,000 I.U. per gram)	.28
Trace mineral premix	.10