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University Extension

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For Immediate Release

Project Evaluates Sire Traits Affecting Profitability

LEWIS, Iowa - - The Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity (TCSCF) Cooperative, which provides cow-calf producers information on feedlot performance, continues to research and evaluate feeder cattle to assist producers in changing breeding and management programs to improve profitability and performance. A new report from TCSCF and Iowa State University (ISU) evaluating sires will assist producers in making genetic selections and breeding decisions.

In 2003, TCSCF teamed up with the Iowa Beef Center at ISU to calculate sire profitability by comparing genetic contributions from sires to progeny, and how those genetic contributions resulted in profitability in terms of traits such as carcass weight, rib eye area, marbling score, and feed efficiency.

The project, called the Iowa Sire Profit Comparison, grew rapidly from 35 sires evaluated in 2003 to 289 sires in 2005, resulting in the assessment of more than 8600 progeny. Darrell Busby, ISU extension livestock specialist, says that "interest in comparing genetic contributions from sires is growing among producers, and the analysis of this project showed the relationships between traits and profitability in the grid marketplace."

The project looked at the correlation of twelve different traits, including final weight, feed-to-gain efficiency, average daily gain (ADG), carcass weight, dress percentage, rib eye area, fat cover, marbling score, percentage of Choice and above, health treatment cost, cost of gain, and calf value. Traits having major impact with profitability were end product output, muscling and feedlot gain. Other traits having impact were quality grade, health in the feedlot and feed-to-gain efficiency.

Daryl Strohbehn, professor in animal science at ISU, notes that the top 25%-scoring bulls did not reach that rating for all the same reasons. "Some sires were in the top 25%

with superior growth and end product weight, while others did it with moderate growth and superior quality attributes," he notes.

Even with all the research completed and so many sires evaluated, Strohbehn cautions that there is no 'magic bullet' sire that does everything with perfection. "Look for the deficiencies in your program and try to plug those holes with sires that excel in those deficient areas," he advises.

"Producers have been benefiting from these results because they quickly point out the strengths and weaknesses in their cattle genetics," says Busby. "In some cases growth and efficiency may be in great shape, but carcass quality or end product red meat yield is lacking. Each producer learns that their situation is different, thus requiring that they emphasize traits to varying degrees."

For more information about the project, visit <http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/content/sireprofitcomparison.htm>.

For more information about TCSCF, visit www.tcscf.com.