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Colorado beef improvement program

W. Dennis Lamm and
Gordon E. Carstens^{1/}

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Quick Facts

The Colorado Beef Improvement Program is designed to help cattle producers identify outstanding cows and bulls.

The program can be entered by contacting the local extension agent or the authors for details and materials.

Detailed data on cattle are sent to CSU for computer processing with the results showing a profile of the herd.

Data required to participate are: 1) cow identification number, 2) calf birth date, 3) calf weaning weight, and 4) calf weaning date.

Special Note: It is recommended that this fact sheet be used in conjunction with copies of forms and data sheets to which references are made; they can be obtained by contacting the authors or the local county extension agent.

The Colorado Beef Improvement Program (CBIP) was developed in 1982 to assist Colorado cattle producers in identifying genetically superior individuals in the herd and to improve the economic desirability within the herd. Genetic improvement is permanent and therefore highly useful in a cattle production system. Economic desirability is achieved by having cows breed early in the breeding season, having high conception rates, by eliminating unsoundness problems and by eliminating the low producing cows. These items affect the pounds produced and/or the price per pound received.

Purpose

The purpose of CBIP is to determine, through the use of accurate records maintained over a period of time, which animals are genetically superior and will contribute the most toward herd improvement and productivity. The CBIP establishes a permanent production record for each cow in the herd. It is based on the past performance records of the calves that cow has produced. The permanent production record is updated annually when the cow weans another calf.

The CBIP program uses actual and 205-day adjusted weaning weights as indicators of genetic superiority. Calves with higher weaning weights, when growing conditions for all calves in a given group are the same, generally can be considered to have higher genetic capability. The objective is to identify those calves, and the parent stock that produces such calves, and retain those animals in the herd. The CBIP also is valuable in characterizing the entire herd and provides useful information that will assist in management decisions.

Some of the data computed by the main CBIP include Most Probable Producing Ability (MPPA), calving interval, calving period, averages and totals by calf birth month, averages by age of dam, averages by sire, averages by sex of calf, percent calves weaned and pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed for breeding the previous year, average daily gain from birth to weaning, average weaning age and average cow age.



^{1/} W. Dennis Lamm, CSU assistant professor, animal sciences and extension beef specialist; Gordon E. Carstens, CSU graduate student, animal sciences (2/1/83)

To Participate

Cattle producers wishing to enroll in the program should contact their local county extension agent. The agent can supply the necessary herd enrollment and information forms. The agent then can send the completed forms to the CSU campus for computer processing. In addition, the agent can assist in obtaining the weaning and/or yearling weights of the stock.

Herd Identification and Records

The first step when enrolling in the program is either to identify all the cows presently in the herd or to begin identifying all replacement heifers as they are put into the herd. There can be no duplicate numbers in the herd. Up to four letters and/or numbers can be used for identification purposes.

The second step is to record calf birth dates. Individual calf birth weights are not necessary. At weaning individual calf weaning weights and dates are required.

Therefore, the four items necessary to have the weaning records processed are:

- 1) cow identification
- 2) calf birth date
- 3) calf weaning date
- 4) calf weaning weight

Optional Programs

If a producer wishes to have a numerical listing of calves in order by calf identification number, the calving information can be submitted prior to weaning. When the producer receives back the listing, the data can be checked for accuracy and the numerical listing will provide ease in recording weaning weights.

Another optional program is a yearling summary. For producers wishing to obtain yearling weights and information on their cattle this program is available if requested. Only yearlings whose calf weaning data have been processed through CBIP can be included in the yearling summary.

Computer Processing

In processing by the computer, adjusted weaning weights are calculated to 205 days and adjusted through the use of additive weight factors for age of dam, if available.

Costs

The main program that provides all the calf weaning information and cow summary costs 50 cents per calf weaned. Cows listed but not weaning calves are not charged the 50 cents.

The optional program numerically listing calves prior to weaning costs 15 cents per calf listed.

The yearling summary that also is optional costs 15 cents per yearling record processed.