



VPP Beef Niche Market Cow earns a premium - BCS #3

DQC
Dairy Quality Center
a division of Agri-Education, Inc.

BEEF TRIM



Unworthy of selling into the VPP Beef Niche Market - BCS #1

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Southwest Region

Managing Your Future

How much thought do you give to culling dairy cows each day? Does your heifer supply push your cows out of the milking string? Or, must you nurse a cow along, long after you would like to move her down the road, waiting for a replacement heifer? Do you manage your milking string to the extent that you know a year in advance if you will keep a particular cow, or breed her or sell her within the next few days?

Profitable dairies constantly manage their print outs to identify ways to maximize their income. A great find is a way to capture more income without any cost!

Maximum culling flexibility comes from having extra or at least an adequate number of high producing heifers ready to enter the milking string.

A low-cost start is to keep every heifer born alive and in good health. What about testing your colostrum and blood testing your calves to make sure your calf management is in order?

Sexed semen and genomic testing are two advanced management techniques available to you to increase milk production.

Are you in line for milk quality bonuses for low SCC, high fat, low coliform, yield goals, etc? Are you able to market extra dairy replacements to boost your income? Any leads on marketing your bull calves for a premium?

How does a dairy producer who is focused on milk get a larger piece of the meat premium pie?

What steps can you do on your dairy to increase your premiums?

A "terminal cow," for the sake of this discussion, is a cow from which no replacement heifers will enter your herd.

Our Verified Premium Plus Beef program helps you to qualify for premiums at Caviness. That's a plus!

To increase your income, we challenge you to review and reorganize the end results of your culling process.

Where to start . . . know as much as possible about your cows, and then determine your expectations for each of them. Your software records can do this for you.

1. Do you know how much milk each cow is giving per day? Do you have standard timelines or predicted milk production goals for each cow? If she drops off in her production sooner than expected, what steps do you take? Can you compare milk income with her feed costs?

2. Do you know her health history? Has she been a problem with being open or not calving successfully? What health issues has she experienced?

3. Do you score each cow for body condition and locomotion on a regular basis? Have there been any marked changes?

4. Whose daughter is she and what genes or traits has she contributed to your herd? Is she just filling a spot on the milking string or is she enabling you to build your milking string with her desired high milk production qualities in her heifers?

5. Studying each of your cows provides you with options early to make wise decisions. Score each cow on the above factors; will she stay for 2 or more lactations? Can you determine if she will be bred only one more time (terminal cow) or is this her last lactation? Is she a high milk producer, but you will not save her daughters?

Skillful management of your culling practices can refine your marketing to increase income. Breeding and culling with "goals" empowers you to manage your future. Does your future include early identification and breeding to beef semen? More on the use of beef semen in our next issue.