



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



BEEF TRIM



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

November 2012

Southwest Region

How Long Should You Milk Her?

When this question comes to mind do you have a plan or strategy in place? An exception would be an emergency cull- (marketing the cow immediately due to a health or locomotion issue). In your daily management you need a solid measurement or an established set of criteria when to cull or you may be playing Russian Roulette with your dairy beef market. Are you loosing the opportunity to make additional profits when marketing dairy beef?

As always a dairy's goal is to strengthen and build milk quality and production.

The analysis of milk production, breeding, and health records can lead you to carefully determine your top producing cows. These are the cows that have the genetics, disposition, and production history to stay in your herd as long as possible. Their daughters should be kept for replacement heifers.

SEXED SEMEN

Some producers will use sexed semen to increase the influence of their top milk producers in the herd. The use of sexed semen is a key strategy that improves your ability to fulfill your need for high quality dairy replacements.

GENOMIC TESTING

This process starts when you use your record system to identify your best cows. An additional strategy is to genome test selected heifers from your best cows. Once you have identified high quality dairy replacements you can take measured steps to improve the genetics in your milking string.

After reviewing your milking string and IDing the cows that you will not be keeping their heifers as dairy replacements it is time to consider beef semen.

TERMINAL COWS

The Dairy Quality Center calls these animals terminal cows -- their genetics will not stay in your herd. But your plans are to obtain at least one more calf and market her milk. The next recommendation would be to breed these terminal cows to a beef breed. These F1 crosses are thrifty and produce desirable carcasses, so much so, that they command a premium. Sometimes this premium is equal to the value of a day-old calf.

PROFIT

Every dairy's primary goal is to produce milk but a close second is to profit from your beef market. Yes, dairy producers are rapidly adjusting to breeding their terminal cows in the milking string for beef profits. Typically the bottom quarter of your milking string can be bred for beef! Dairy herds have the distinct ability to produce a continuous supply of beef to packers and retailers. AI has changed the dairy industry to make crossbreeding more achievable and economically practical. Breeding your dairy animals with a beef cross can develop a viable income source worthy of investigation.

RECORDS

Management and production records on your milking string are your tools to assist you in preparing income projections for your dairy. These same tools can also be used to select the cows to AI and expand into a captive beef market.

