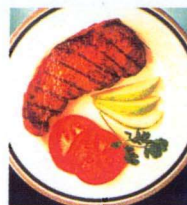


# THE Fantasy BEEF QUALITY CHALLENGE



# RESULTS

Good and bad cattle come in all shapes, sizes and colors. As you can see from the Top 5 net return steers (pictured as finished animals at right) and the Bottom 5 net return steers (on page 3), no one type of cattle always comes to the top or falls to the bottom. There are seven different breeds that make up the Top 5 steers, and seven breeds that make up the Bottom 5 steers (Table 1).

What's the lesson? That it's tough to predict cattle by visual appraisal. While visual appraisal is important, both buyers' and sellers' chances of success can be tremendously enhanced by dealing in cattle of known background and health history. Individual animal identification and management is the key.

Net return was calculated by subtracting the total feedyard expenses and cost of the initial feeder calf from the total income received from selling the steer to the packer on a carcass grid basis (Table 2). All 24 steers were fed in the same pen in the Ranch To Rail Program coordinated by Joe Paschal, livestock specialist for the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

## The Top Five

All Top 5 steers were shipped out of the pen to the packer in the first group (161 days on feed). Steer Nos. 21 and 15 had the highest net return of the 24 steers. These two steers had the best average daily gain (ADG 4.3) and produced USDA Choice, Yield Grade 1 carcasses. Steer No. 21 ranks higher than Steer No. 15 because it had a higher dressing percent (65.6% vs. 63.4%). Steer No. 12 also had excellent feedyard and carcass statistics, but fell to third primarily because its initial feeder calf price was \$66/cwt. compared to \$62/cwt. paid initially for Steer Nos. 21 and 15.

Steer No. 20 produced a USDA Choice, Yield Grade 2.3 carcass and had an above average daily gain and dressing percent. The fifth highest net return steer (No. 24) quality graded USDA Select, showing that USDA Quality grade is only one portion of the net return equation. As long as the steer produces an acceptable carcass, the feedyard performance often impacts the bottom line the most.

Steer No. 24 was one of the least selected calves by Fantasy Beef Quality Challenge participants, most likely because of some preconceived ideas about certain cattle types. Most often those preconceived ideas work against you when trying to visually appraise cattle value.

## We Are The Champions!

### The Official Score Card

The Top 5 draft picks were:  
**21, 15, 12, 20 and 24**

1. What percent of your pen of five steers will grade USDA Choice? **80%**

2. What percent of your pen of five steers will grade USDA Yield Grade 1 or 2? **100%**

All photos are of finished cattle. See feeder calf photos in September issue.



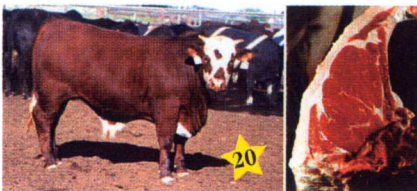
Net Return .....	\$322.93
Initial Feeder Calf .....	\$62/cwt.
ADG .....	4.3
Dressing Percent .....	65.6%
USDA Quality Grade .....	Choice—
USDA Yield Grade .....	1.8



Net Return .....	\$292.73
Initial Feeder Calf .....	\$62/cwt.
ADG .....	4.3
Dressing Percent .....	63.4%
USDA Quality Grade .....	Choice—
USDA Yield Grade .....	1.9



Net Return .....	\$210.45
Initial Feeder Calf .....	\$66/cwt.
ADG .....	3.5
Dressing Percent .....	65.9%
USDA Quality Grade .....	Choice—
USDA Yield Grade .....	1.4



Net Return .....	\$193.67
Initial Feeder Calf .....	\$62/cwt.
ADG .....	3.4
Dressing Percent .....	64.7%
USDA Quality Grade .....	Choice—
USDA Yield Grade .....	2.3



Net Return .....	\$184.10
Initial Feeder Calf .....	\$62/cwt.
ADG .....	3.7
Dressing Percent .....	65.5%
USDA Quality Grade .....	Select—
USDA Yield Grade .....	1.4

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# These Are The Washouts!



Net Return ..... \$(105.30)  
Initial Feeder Calf ..... \$67/cwt.  
ADG ..... 2.5  
Due to sickness Steer No. 6 was railed before the rest of the pen.



Net Return ..... \$(15.56)  
Initial Feeder Calf ..... \$61/cwt.  
ADG ..... 2.4  
Dressing Percent ..... 60%  
USDA Quality Grade ..... Select —  
USDA Yield Grade ..... 1.4



Net Return ..... \$48.17  
Initial Feeder Calf ..... \$64/cwt.  
ADG ..... 2.6  
Dressing Percent ..... 65.1%  
USDA Quality Grade ..... Select +  
USDA Yield Grade ..... 2.4

## The Bottom Five

The Bottom 5 steers had either inferior feedyard performance, carcass merit or both. Steer No. 6 had the lowest net return of the 24 steers (— \$105.30). Because of a chronic condition, this steer required added health expenses and was “railed” to the packer before the rest of pen, producing a light weight carcass. Meanwhile, Steer No. 6 was weaned immediately prior to being shipped to the feedyard. Steer No. 6 also had the highest initial calf feeder price of the 24 (\$67/cwt. live), primarily due to the initial feeder calf weight of 428 lbs.

Three steers required additional medical treatment (Steer Nos. 6, 22 and 23). Two of the three ended up on the Bottom 5 list. Cattle that get sick often not only result in added health care expenses, but also have inferior feedyard performance and below average carcass merit. All of the Bottom 5 steers had ADG in the feedyard less than 3 lbs./day and produced USDA Select carcasses. Additionally, Steer Nos. 18, 23 and 19 had lower than average dressing percentages (<63.5%).

By examining the Top 5 and the Bottom 5 net return steers, it is evident that cattle value and quality are more than black and red or big and small. Cattle value is influenced by animal health status, ADG, feed efficiency, initial feeder calf price, USDA Quality Grade, USDA Yield Grade, dressing percent and other carcass traits (i.e., carcass



Net Return ..... \$55.24  
Initial Feeder Calf ..... \$62/cwt.  
ADG ..... 2.9  
Dressing Percent ..... 62.4%  
USDA Quality Grade ..... Select —  
USDA Yield Grade ..... 2.1



Net Return ..... \$62.85  
Initial Feeder Calf ..... \$61/cwt.  
ADG ..... 2.7  
Dressing Percent ..... 62.2%  
USDA Quality Grade ..... Select +  
USDA Yield Grade ..... 1.1

weight and dark cutters). Finally, for those who are looking for a particular breed or breed type, note that many breed types are represented in both the Top 5 and Bottom 5 steers.

**Feedyard Stats** — As a group, the contest's 24 steers performed well in the feedyard (average daily gain 3.3 lbs.) and had a low cost of gain (COG). (See Table 1.)

The steers fed 196 days in the feedyard pen had a substantially lower ADG, resulting in a higher COG than those fed 161 days. The range in ADG was 4.3 lbs. to 2.4 lbs./day and the COG ranged from 35¢ to 66¢/lb. Feedyard performance is a major factor in determining the value of market cattle.

Breed types of steers in this field varied widely. This kind of variability in a feedyard pen is the norm, not the exception. These cattle were sorted

according to initial feeder calf weight and frame size upon entry into the feedyard. The Ranch to Rail program attempts to sort cattle according to projected final market weight. Most feedyard cattle are not sorted upon entry to the feedyard. Therefore, this pen of cattle was less variable than what often is found in most unsorted pens of market cattle. At the beginning of the feeding period there was a 188-lb. range in initial feeder calf weight and a 414-lb. range in the final finished market steer weight.

**Carcass Stats** — Wide ranges were also found among the carcasses. One-third of the cattle produced USDA Choice carcasses and 88% were USDA Yield Grades 1 or 2. (See Table 2.)

Industry recognized carcass targets are helpful in evaluating the carcass merit of a pen of cattle. Here are some of the targets identified by packers: Carcass Weight, 600-900 lbs.; USDA Quality Grade, Select, Choice or Prime; USDA Yield Grade 1, 2, or 3A (3.0-3.5); Ribeye Area, 11 to 16 sq. in.; and free from abnormalities, such as dark cutters, blood splash or hard bone. Very few of the carcasses in this contest failed to hit these targets. In the real world, according to the 1995 National Beef Quality Audit, 5-20% of the fed beef cattle carcasses fail to meet one or more of these carcass targets.

**Money Stats** — The average steer in this pen made \$118.19 with a range in net return of \$428.23 (\$322.93 to — \$105.30) Table 2. The Top 5 steers had an average net return of \$240.78 and the Bottom 5 steers had an average net return of \$9.08. Therefore, the Bottom 5 steers created a significant monetary drag on the rest of the pen. Often tremendous monetary gains can be achieved if the bottom 10% of a pen could be identified and eliminated before ever coming into the feedyard. ✓

*Dan Hale is project leader and a meat scientist; Joe Paschal is a professor and Rob Maddock is an Extension associate, all at Texas A&M University.*

**Table 1. Feedlot Performance By Breed Type**

Steer No.	Sire Breed	Dam Breed	Initial Feedlot Wt.	Final Feedlot Wt.	Days in the Feedlot	Average Daily Gain	Cost Of Gain
1	SIMBRAH	SIMBRAH	546	1,135	161	3.7	\$0.41
2	SIMBRAH	SIMBRAH	520	1,117	161	3.7	\$0.41
3	RED BRANGUS	RED BRANGUS	516	1,029	161	3.2	\$0.47
4	CHAROLAIS	BRAFORD	514	1,110	196	3.0	\$0.49
5	ANGUS	ANGUS	528	1,091	161	3.5	\$0.43
6	HEREFORD	HEREFORD CROSS	428	797	146	2.5	\$0.64
7	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	510	931	161	2.6	\$0.58
8	BRANGUS	BRANGUS	484	1,031	161	3.4	\$0.45
9	BEEFMASTER	BEEFMASTER	524	1,079	161	3.5	\$0.44
10	HEREFORD	BRAHMAN	492	993	196	2.6	\$0.58
11	BEEFMASTER	BEEFMASTER	504	1,098	161	3.7	\$0.41
12	BRANGUS	BRANGUS	500	1,062	161	3.5	\$0.43
13	BRAHMAN	BRAHMAN	402	960	161	3.5	\$0.44
14	BRANGUS	BRAHMAN X ANGUS	532	1,033	196	2.6	\$0.58
15	LIMOUSIN	HEREFORD	526	1,214	161	4.3	\$0.35
16	BRANGUS	BRANGUS	518	1,083	161	3.5	\$0.43
17	BEEFMASTER	BEEFMASTER	542	1,064	161	3.2	\$0.47
18	ANGUS	BRAFORD	590	970	161	2.4	\$0.66
19	CHAROLAIS	HEREFORD X ANGUS	552	1,081	196	2.7	\$0.55
20	HEREFORD	SANTA GERTRUDIS	480	1,023	161	3.4	\$0.45
21	SIMBRAH	SIMBRAH	508	1,200	161	4.3	\$0.35
22	ANGUS	ANGUS	454	1,033	196	3.0	\$0.53
23	SANTA GERTRUDIS	SANTA GERTRUDIS	506	1,064	196	2.9	\$0.55
24	SIMBRAH	SIMBRAH	518	1,110	161	3.7	\$0.41
Average			508	1,055	169	3.3	\$0.48



**Table 2. Carcass Results And Net Return**

Steer No.	Hot Carcass Weight	Dress %	Ribeye Area	REA Per Cwt.	12th Rib Adj. Fat	Quality Grade	Yield Grade	Carcass Grid Price/Cwt.	Total Income from Carcass	Total Expenses	Initial Steer Calf Price	Net Return	Net Return Ranking
1	677	59.6	13.0	1.9	0.20	Select-	1.8	\$103.00	\$697.31	\$243.55	\$322.14	\$131.62	9
2	658	58.9	15.3	2.3	0.28	Choice-	1.2	\$112.00	\$736.96	\$243.55	\$332.80	\$160.61	6
3	643	62.5	12.2	1.9	0.56	Select-	2.9	\$101.00	\$649.43	\$243.55	\$319.92	\$85.96	17
4	727	65.5	15.1	2.1	0.32	Select+	1.8	\$103.00	\$748.81	\$292.59	\$318.68	\$137.54	7
5	650	59.6	15.5	2.4	0.40	Select-	1.4	\$103.00	\$669.50	\$243.55	\$327.36	\$98.59	16
6	Railed - Harvested Early with No Data Collected							\$83.00	\$416.75	\$235.29	\$286.76	\$(105.30)	24
7	606	65.1	11.5	1.9	0.32	Select+	2.4	\$102.00	\$618.12	\$243.55	\$326.40	\$48.17	22
8	623	60.4	10.7	1.7	0.52	Choice-	3.1	\$109.00	\$679.07	\$243.55	\$319.44	\$116.08	12
9	651	60.3	12.7	2.0	0.56	Select+	2.6	\$101.00	\$657.51	\$243.55	\$309.16	\$104.80	15
10	645	65.0	13.1	2.0	0.24	Choice-	1.9	\$112.00	\$722.40	\$292.59	\$309.96	\$119.85	11
11	691	62.9	11.0	1.6	0.52	Select-	3.3	\$100.00	\$691.00	\$243.55	\$312.48	\$134.97	8
12	700	65.9	16.0	2.3	0.40	Choice-	1.4	\$112.00	\$784.00	\$243.55	\$330.00	\$210.45	3
13	600	62.5	10.2	1.7	0.60	Select-	3.4	\$100.00	\$600.00	\$243.55	\$249.24	\$107.21	14
14	680	65.8	15.5	2.3	0.32	Select+	1.4	\$103.00	\$700.40	\$292.59	\$329.84	\$77.97	18
15	770	63.4	14.3	1.9	0.28	Choice-	1.9	\$112.00	\$862.40	\$243.55	\$326.12	\$292.73	2
16	631	58.3	11.6	1.8	0.40	Select-	2.6	\$101.00	\$637.31	\$243.55	\$321.16	\$72.60	19
17	654	61.5	16.0	2.5	0.32	Select+	1.1	\$103.00	\$673.62	\$243.55	\$319.78	\$110.29	13
18	582	60.0	11.9	2.0	0.12	Select-	1.4	\$102.00	\$593.64	\$249.30	\$359.90	\$(15.56)	23
19	672	62.2	15.1	2.3	0.24	Select+	1.1	\$103.00	\$692.16	\$292.59	\$336.72	\$62.85	20
20	662	64.7	13.3	2.0	0.48	Choice-	2.3	\$111.00	\$734.82	\$243.55	\$297.60	\$193.67	4
21	787	65.6	15.0	1.9	0.28	Choice-	1.8	\$112.00	\$881.44	\$243.55	\$314.96	\$322.93	1
22	642	62.1	14.3	2.2	0.40	Choice-	1.9	\$112.00	\$719.04	\$308.32	\$281.48	\$129.24	10
23	664	62.4	13.1	2.0	0.32	Select-	2.1	\$102.00	\$677.28	\$308.32	\$313.72	\$55.24	21
24	727	65.5	14.9	2.1	0.16	Select-	1.4	\$103.00	\$748.81	\$243.55	\$321.16	\$184.10	5
Average	667	62.60	13.5	2.0	0.36	Select +	2.0						

## How Did They Do On The Grid?

All of the Top 5 steers made more money on a grid pricing system than on a live cash basis, and four of the Bottom 5 steers would have made more money on a live cash basis. Grid selling is most often beneficial for high quality cattle. The Top 5 steers in this contest not only had excellent feedyard performance, but also performed well in the cooler.

The live cash price offered for this pen of cattle was \$66/cwt. on a live weight basis. The Top 5 steers were valued on the grid at \$73/cwt. on a live basis (total carcass grid income divided by per hundred pounds of live weight), while the Bottom 5 were values on the grid at \$58/cwt. on a live basis (Table 3). It becomes apparent that selling cattle on an average price does not allow for identification of high or poor quality steers. In fact, selling on averages penalizes the good cattle and rewards the poor cattle.

When comparing this pen of 24 steers in the Fantasy Beef Quality Challenge, selling on a live cash basis vs. a carcass grid basis, the entire pen of 24 steers lost 62¢/cwt. of carcass weight selling on a carcass grid basis or \$99.25 in total losses. If we remove steer No. 6, which was railed early, live cash selling and carcass grid selling would have come out even.

The primary reason these steers as a pen did not make money on the grid, aside from steer No. 6, is because the pen had only 33% USDA Choice carcasses and a dressing percent of 62.6%. The quality grade and dressing percent targets to make money on the grid is often 60% USDA Choice or greater and a 63.5% dressing percent. The reason these steers did not lose more money was that the pen produced 87% USDA Yield Grade 1 or 2 carcasses, and had very few carcass outliers (i.e., Yield Grade 4&5, Dark Cutter, USDA Standard).

Finally, determining whether to sell on a live or grid basis through visual appraisal is difficult if not impossible. Based on visual appearance steer No. 10 (at right) often would be judged to have an inferior carcass, when in fact it had one of the highest mar-

bling scores of the pen and the third highest carcass grid value on a live basis (\$72.75/cwt.). Further demonstrating that information is critical in making marketing decisions. ✓



Net Return	\$119.85
Initial Feeder Calf	\$63/cwt.
ADG	.26
USDA Quality Grade	Choice-
USDA yield Grade	1.9
Dressing Percent	.65%

**Table 4. Grid Premiums And Discounts**

Live Pricing		Value 1180-Lb. Steer	
Live price (\$/cwt.)	\$66.00		\$778.80
Carcass pricing		750-Lb. Carcass/63.5 Dressing Percent	
Base carcass price(\$/cwt.)			
Base is a USDA Choice			
Yield Grade 3.0 - 3.5			
and 600-900 Lb. Carcass		\$109.00	750 lb. carcass \$817.50
Carcass Premiums/Discounts	(+/- \$/cwt.)	Total Premium/Discount	Carcass Value
<b>Quality</b>			
Prime	\$6.00	\$45.00	\$862.50
Top Choice	\$3.50	\$26.25	\$843.75
Low Choice	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$817.50
Select	(\$9.00)	(\$67.50)	\$750.00
Standard	(\$11.00)	(\$82.50)	\$735.00
Dark Cutter	(\$37.00)	(\$277.50)	\$540.00
<b>Cutability</b>			
YG 1	\$3.00	\$22.50	\$840.00
YG 2A (2.0-2.5)	\$2.00	\$15.00	\$832.50
YG 2B (3.0-3.5)	\$1.00	\$7.50	\$825.00
YG 3A (3.0-3.5)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$817.50
YG 3B (3.6-3.9)	(\$1.00)	(\$7.50)	\$810.00
YG 4	(\$19.00)	(\$142.50)	\$675.00
YG 5	(\$25.00)	(\$187.50)	\$630.00
<b>Carcass Weight</b>			
500-550 lbs.	(\$20.00)	(\$150.00)	\$667.50
550-600 lbs.	(\$1.00)	(\$7.50)	\$810.00

**Table 3. Live Cash Price Vs. Grid Basis**

Steer No.	Live Cash Price Per Cwt. Live	Total Live Cash Price	Carcass Grid Price Per Cwt. Carcass	Income from Carcass On A Grid Basis	Grid Price Income On A Per Cwt. Live	Total Grid Price Minus Total Live Cash Price	Better To Sell On A Live Cash Or Carcass Grid Basis?
1	\$66.00	\$749.10	\$103.00	\$697.31	\$61.44	\$(51.79)	Live
2	\$66.00	\$737.22	\$112.00	\$736.96	\$65.98	\$(0.26)	Live
3	\$66.00	\$679.14	\$101.00	\$649.43	\$63.11	\$(29.71)	Live
4	\$66.00	\$732.60	\$103.00	\$748.81	\$67.46	\$16.21	Grid
5	\$66.00	\$720.06	\$103.00	\$669.50	\$61.37	\$(60.56)	Live
6	\$66.00	\$526.02	\$83.00	\$416.75	\$52.29	\$(109.27)	Live
7	\$66.00	\$614.46	\$102.00	\$618.12	\$66.39	\$3.66	Grid
8	\$66.00	\$680.46	\$109.00	\$679.07	\$65.87	\$(1.39)	Live
9	\$66.00	\$712.14	\$101.00	\$657.51	\$60.94	\$(54.63)	Live
10	\$66.00	\$655.38	\$112.00	\$722.40	\$72.75	\$67.02	Grid
11	\$66.00	\$724.68	\$100.00	\$691.00	\$62.53	\$(33.68)	Live
12	\$66.00	\$700.92	\$112.00	\$784.00	\$73.82	\$83.08	Grid
13	\$66.00	\$633.60	\$100.00	\$600.00	\$62.50	\$(33.60)	Live
14	\$66.00	\$681.78	\$103.00	\$700.40	\$67.80	\$18.62	Grid
15	\$66.00	\$801.24	\$112.00	\$862.40	\$71.04	\$61.16	Grid
16	\$66.00	\$714.78	\$101.00	\$637.31	\$58.85	\$(77.47)	Live
17	\$66.00	\$702.24	\$103.00	\$673.62	\$63.31	\$(28.62)	Live
18	\$66.00	\$640.20	\$102.00	\$593.64	\$61.20	\$(46.56)	Live
19	\$66.00	\$713.46	\$103.00	\$692.16	\$64.03	\$(21.30)	Live
20	\$66.00	\$675.18	\$111.00	\$734.82	\$71.83	\$59.64	Grid
21	\$66.00	\$792.00	\$112.00	\$881.44	\$73.45	\$89.44	Grid
22	\$66.00	\$681.78	\$112.00	\$719.04	\$69.61	\$37.26	Grid
23	\$66.00	\$702.24	\$102.00	\$677.28	\$63.65	\$(24.96)	Live
24	\$66.00	\$732.60	\$103.00	\$748.81	\$67.46	\$16.21	Grid
Average	\$66.00	\$695.97	\$104.38	\$691.32	\$65.38	\$(4.65)	Live



# Managing Cattle One By One

***“We need  
to remove  
freeloaders ...  
that’s impossible  
without individual  
animal management.”***

Now you know the Top 5 and the Bottom 5. What the Fantasy Beef Quality Challenge demonstrates is the inefficiencies that occur when cattle are managed and marketed on averages. The contest steers came out of the 1999 Texas Ranch To Rail program, an information feedback program that helps cattle producers collect feedyard and carcass information on their cattle.

The 24 contest steers were sorted according to weight upon entry into the feedyard and sorted at the end into two different slaughter days (161 days and 196 days), according to projected carcass merit. These cattle were sorted two more times than the typical feedyard pen of cattle. Even with this sorting, these cattle still show significant variation in feedyard performance and carcass merit (Table 5). These ranges show that the next level of efficiency can only be achieved by managing each animal as an individual unit instead as a part of a 200-head pen. The average is eating us alive.

Cattle feeders have depended on the average of a pen to keep them in business. Feeding and marketing cattle on average has enabled feeders to handle

implant time enabled us to identify poor performers. Culling those poor performers at re-implant time and selling them, made the owner money with one exception, when the feeder cattle market declined significantly between the date the cattle were put in the feedyard and the day they were re-implanted.

The potential profit created by just this one application can pay for individual animal management tools and significantly reward the cattle feeder. This application works for feeders who sell on a live basis as well as those who sell on a carcass merit basis. Poor performers cost everyone money regardless of how they’re marketed at the end of the feeding period. In most cases, the sooner you identify and sell them, the better off you’ll be financially.

Being able to do meaningful sorting, either initially or at re-implant time, allows a feedyard to produce a pen of cattle with more uniform weights at slaughter so as to minimize the amount of underfeeding and overfeeding in the pen, and leads to more accurate breakevens and risk management.

The obvious disadvantage is that many lots of cattle cannot be divided equally to fill pens, thus efficiently utilizing pen space may be a problem, especially when sorting at re-implant time.

However, using various colors of visual ear tags to identify different weights of cattle will work to fill a pen and enable a feeder to sort by ear tag color at marketing time which reduces the time a pen is not fully stocked.

## Health Makes A Difference – Each

year, we analyze data from the Texas Ranch To Rail program and look at the impact health has on performance, profits and carcass quality.

Table 6 details our findings on more than 12,500 head. With a value difference of \$93.20 between sick and healthy cattle, it won’t take long to pay for an individual animal management system. While these Ranch to Rail cattle aren’t high quality grading cattle, we’ve still seen a 10% increase in percent Choice in our healthy vs. sick calves. Using a typical, year-long average \$7 Choice/Select spread, producing 10% more Choice carcasses will pay for a system in a hurry.

Individual cattle management has its greatest application in feedyards that sell cattle on a carcass merit basis and need to improve their ability to sell on the grid. It almost goes without saying that providing data to cow/calf customers will increase alliance and select supplier opportunities. The greatest monetary benefit will be in reducing the discounts in a pen of cattle when sold on the grid.

Remember, the Bottom 5 steers in the Fantasy Beef Quality Challenge created a significant monetary drag on the rest of the cattle because of both feedyard and carcass performance.

As an industry, we have to remove “freeloaders” from our feedbunks, but that is practically impossible without some type of individual animal management system. ✓

*Bill Mies is a professor in the Department of Animal Science at Texas A&M University.*

**Table 5. Variation In Feedlot And Carcass Performance**

Trait	Range	Difference
Initial Feedyard Weight	402-590 lbs.	188 lbs.
Final Feedyard Weight	797-1214 lbs.	417 lbs.
Average Daily Gain	2.4-4.3 lbs./day	1.9 lbs./day
Carcass Weight	582-770 lbs.	188 lbs.
Dressing Percent	58.3-65.9%	7.60%
12th Rib Adjusted Fat Thickness	0.12-0.60 in.	0.48 in.
Ribeye Area	10.7-16.0 sq. in.	5.3 sq. in.

large numbers of cattle in a hurry with minimal recordkeeping requirements. The margins made in cattle feeding exceeded the cost of the few poor performers that hide behind the average in each pen.

That will not work in the future as it has in the past. Today, margins in cattle feeding do not allow for cattle to remain hidden and rob us of profit without our knowledge.

Individual animal management allows for both short- and long-term gains in cattle feeding. In the short-term, individual weights and identification used only in the feedyard will allow cattle feeders to remove poor performing cattle at re-implant time

and not have to suffer their sub-standard performance through the complete feeding period.

In analyzing numerous lots of cattle we’ve worked with, taking individual weights at the beginning of the feeding period and again at re-

**Table 6. Performance Of Healthy Vs. Sick Calves**

Trait	Sick	Healthy
Number of Steers	3,202	9,393
Death Loss	3.40%	0.50%
Average Daily Gain (lb.)	2.78	2.96
Total Cost of Gain, (\$/cwt.)	\$65.96	\$56.68
Medicine Cost/head	\$31.33	\$0
Net Return/head	(\$31.97)	\$61.23
Choice	29%	39%
Select	63%	56%
Standard	8%	5%