SMALL ACREAGE SERIES: CATTLE

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OVERVIEW

• Sale Barn
• Holding pens
• Animal Health
• Feeding Strategies
• Growing/finishing steer heifer
  • Breeding Cattle
• Grass management
  • Hay
  • Rotational Grazing
• Question/Answer Time
Sale Barn: Purchasing

• How it works
  • By the head or by CWT (hundred wt.)
    • Auctioneer will often call out the method.
    • Bottle calves and bred cows/heifers often by the head
    • Stocker cattle 400-900 lb. by the CWT
      • Light cattle cost more per cwt than heavier
      • Current light cattle 4 wts $200.00/cwt (~$800/head)
      • Current heavy stocker cattle 9 wts $134/cwt ($1,200/head)
    • Fed cattle (1300-1500) by the CWT (1450 choice steer: $108/cwt live)
    • Cull cows/bulls by CWT (Current cows: $50-65/cwt; bulls $75-90/cwt)
Sale Barn: Selling

- Make sure cattle are in appropriate condition for class
  - Green or less fleshy calves bring more than fat calves
  - Cull cows (moderate flesh sells for more than thin cows)
  - Bulls lean bulls sell higher than fat bulls
- Small lots get discounted
- Horns get discounted
- Intact males get discounted
- Blacktop weaned calves get discounted (manage shrink)
- Odd colors get discounted (buyers prefer solid colored)
- Unvaccinated calves get discounted
- Sell as big and as uniform group as you can
- As a small producer don’t be surprised (i.e. plan for it) if your calves sell $5-15/cwt behind big/well managed groups
Cattle Handling

• Designing a bud box
  • [MF3349 Designing a Bud Box for Cattle Handling (ksu.edu)]

• Don’t spend thousands on a chute and alleyway and permanent

• Often well designed wood or portable pens can work well.
  • Get help
  • A head-catch *really, really, really* helps.
  • Bow gate and three panels (not wire mesh cattle panels)
CATTLE HANDLING

• Simple but effective for most needs
  • Treatment
  • Breeding
  • Diagnosis/inspection

• Calving stall works good too

• Take Beef Quality Assurance program

• Lots of online resources on ‘Stockmanship’
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FEEDING STRATEGIES

• Cows:
  • 1 cow/6-8 acres
  • Rotationally graze
  • Buy Hay
  • Supplement Protein August – green grass 8 in tall
    • Hand fed ‘cubes or cake’
    • Lick tub
  • Consult Extension specialist
FEEDING STRATEGIES

• Growing calves/replacement heifers
  • Free choice good quality hay or adequate pasture
  • 1-1.5% of BW in high protein supplement (14-16% CP)
    • 4 cwt gets 4-6 lb per head per day
    • 6 cwt gets 6-8 lb per head per day
    • Expect gain of ~2 lb/head/day (60 lb/month)
    • Coop brand ‘complete feed’ 14% CP ~$8-9/50 lb.
    • Purina Pre-Con as example (pelleted complete feed, forage friendly)
Feeding Strategies

• Growing calves/replacement heifers
  • Free choice salt and mineral (don’t skimp on this)
    • If hand feeding put 2-4 oz in feed each day to make sure they get it
  • Work cattle up gradually start at half of target, increase ½ per day
• Cheap digital platform scale from Amazon or Walmart is excellent
  • (scoops or cans is a bad way to measure)
Feeding Strategies

• Finishing (900-1500)
  • 12% CP
  • Work up to 2% of BW
    • Feed twice a day; ~12 hours apart
  • Free choice hay
  • Salt and Mineral
  • Bloat is issue if not careful
  • Target ~3-3.5 lbs gain per day---
    • Conversion of 6:1 means 18-20lbs of concentrate when on full feed per DAY
GRASS MANAGEMENT

- Land is limiting resource for small land holders
- Explore cool season tame grasses
  - Fescue is a good one; takes lots of abuse
- Interseed warm season (millet, sudan)
- Rotationally graze
- Work with Ag Agent on planning; lots of options/ideas
- Water system and location important consideration

- Buy Hay, may need to put some out during summer
Herd Health

• Get to know a good vet!

• Use them frequently

• See advice!!
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS

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