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CHAROLAIS

edge

On the Edge Today

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Profit Oriented Cattlemen Demand Profit Oriented Calves

For these serious, profit minded producers, thick, meaty, heavy, healthy and Charolais are one in the same.

Story by Kim Holt

They're described as moderate framed, thick, deep, easy fleshing cattle with capacity—meat wagons, in fact. And it's Charolais seedstock, like that from Cobb Charolais Ranch, Inc., in Augusta, Mont., that help turn out the industry's "working calf," so to speak, for serious minded commercial cattle producers.

Cheryl Cobb assures that her family is all about raising white bulls for the commercial segment. Some 95 percent of their repeat customers are commercial breeders, some even second generation buyers, who have purchased from nearly every Cobb sale since the first in 1969. The Cobb family describes their typical customers as smart, progressive, thinkers and planners.

"They are people who want to make the most money, not just 'get by' or 'get through' another year," Mike Cobb remarks, adding they are straight shooters, profit oriented cattlemen.

In retained ownership:
performance pays

One of these long time customers is Orville Skogen, a cow-calf producer and cattle buyer from Ft. Shaw, Mont. He has used Charolais bulls for greater than 20 years, all purchased from the Cobb family.

Skogen and his wife, Arlene, have large commercial and registered Angus herds. They breed some 600 commercials to Charolais bulls and use this breed exclusively to clean up both herds. They feed in the Midwest and retain ownership on all calves.

He says, "These good, heavy muscled Charolais bulls on these black cows produce big buckskin and smoky colored calves.

They just blow the lid off the packinghouse for us. These cattle do extremely well."

This Montana cattleman says he goes out of his way to buy calves like these. "We not only buy a lot of Cobb bred calves, but an awful lot of Charolais calves through the industry." He says they're not hard for him to find.

"We have some tremendously good Charolais breeders here in the state of Montana," he says, adding that the Cobbs are a "household name" within the industry he works. "The Charolais-cross calves work really well for us." And he would know, given he has at least 20 years of carcass data records.

"Great feedlot efficiency, early maturity, coupled with a pile of high quality red meat—all of this is truly what the industry demands and needs," Skogen assures. And from seedstock breeders like the Cobbs, who are "great people to do business with."

Desired: thick and meaty carcasses

Over in southeastern South Dakota, near Woonsocket, about 30 miles from Mitchell, Olson Farms is another long time buyer of Charolais bulls from the Cobbs.

Interestingly, neither Gary nor Dale Olson have set foot on the Cobb Ranch, 900 miles away, but have exclusively used their bulls for some 20 years.

"I want something that's thick and has meat in it," Gary relays, and this is the type of bull his sale representative has purchased and sent him over the years. The Olsons found the Cobb family through a cattle feeder friend some years ago who was impressed when in Montana and looking over a set of feeder calves sired by their Charolais bulls.

Years earlier, it was a consensus between Olson partners, including the brothers and

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Beef Quality Audit

Who knew how important it would be?

As you probably know by now, the 2011 version of the National Beef Quality Audit (NBQA) has been released. The audit, conducted every five years, began as an industry assessment targeting a particular set of problems. From the beginning, the initiative was championed by a few individuals representing specific industry segments experiencing the problems.

Injection sites and drug residues had become a real problem. The problems were not the result of negligence, but simply following accepted practices. What happened after an initial contact from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to a few feedlots in the Texas Panhandle seems rather benign today. However, those letters served as a wake-up call. Those feedlots and their veterinarians began a remarkable process of discovery leading to the realization that something more foundational, science based and backed by a force that could influence broad change was necessary.

The first NBQA, released in 1991, set forth an assessment of the problems, but more importantly, a process for remedying the problems—solutions. As with every audit released since 1991, the solutions proposed are comprehensive and are specific to every segment of beef production.

The audits have led to the development of Beef Quality Assurance (BQA), a national program that provides guidelines for beef cattle production. BQA, under the National Cattlemen's Beef Association auspices, provides best practice guidelines leading to better management, increased profitability and heightened consumer confidence.

At their simplest, the National Beef Quality Audits have served as a road map for product improvement. However, standing back and truly realizing the value of the



By J. Neil Orth
AICA Executive Vice President

road map is almost incalculable. For instance, before NBQA and BQA, the beef industry, as a best practice model, did not follow a structured preweaning or postweaning health protocol. Sure, many progressive producers had some type of preweaning or postweaning health procedure. But, since all cattle were sold on a cash basis, and since there was no paper trail to accompany calves selling, there was no differentiation or added value for healthier calves. Many producers simply determined the increased input costs provided insufficient return.

Through the years, under the research and guidance of beef quality audits, the policies and procedures have, in part, contributed to a value based marketing system that truly rewards better management and healthier cattle. As an industry, we've improved genetics and now have the potential to produce a consistently higher valued end product. BQA has provided a process to address injection site blemishes, too much fat, hide problems related to branding, safe handling, animal welfare and a host of other costly industry issues.

The most recent audit takes yet another giant leap forward by even more closely connecting beef production to the con-

sumer. Incorporating the information set forth in the beef quality audits is and always has been voluntary. NCBA's Beef Quality Assurance program is voluntary.

Tom Field, director of the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program at the University of Nebraska recently said, "Our industry will take this information and make significant changes in the way it views delivery of product, integrity, eating satisfaction and telling the story in a more proactive way." Field went on to say, "We either get it right or watch cow numbers slide. As cow numbers slide, there are undesirable consequences that ripple across our industry, related industries and through our society."

Dr. Dan Thomson, MS, PhD, DVM, Kansas State University, like most all of the beef industry opinion leaders, also sees the broader, far reaching rewards of using this important information to improve our product, increase the potential for profitability and improve our credibility with the consumer. "BQA started out as the quality assurance of beef products and has evolved into the assurance of quality beef for the consumer."

Food animal production has taken center stage in our society. Every single nuance of our meat animal protein delivery system is under scrutiny. Laying hen crates to gestation stalls to confinement feeding are merely the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Consumers with little or no connection to agriculture are being persuaded by misinformation by those motivated to dismantle an incredibly efficient and sustainable system. If we don't use the resources available to communicate the benefits of our own agricultural society, inform the consumer with factual information and deliver a safe, consistent product every-day, who will?



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Profit Oriented Cattle...

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their late father, to try white bulls. Gary says they did try the "black deal" for awhile, but it just wasn't a good fit for them. "We stayed with the Charolais because we like them," he relays, and the impressive results they've consistently seen in their feedlot and received back from the packer.

The Olsons use Charolais bulls on moderate framed commercial Angus cows, annually adding some 12 to 14 head of yearling bulls to their herd. They calve between April 1 and June 1 because Gary says they're more concerned with a live calf versus a heavier weaning weight. Still, weaning in October brings back average weights of 580-600 pounds (lbs.) on dry native and tame grasses for "excellent" weaning weights, he relays.

Calving problems are minimal and almost always the result of an infrequent abnormal presentation, the same as any producer gets on occasion, he reports, but not many otherwise. "Very seldom do we have them oversized." He adds, "I was a little disgusted when the Cobb bulls first showed up. They were pretty thick, pretty big, and I thought, 'o man this is going to be a wreck trying to calve.' But we haven't

had any trouble. The Cobbs said they'd be alright and I took their word for it."

The Olsons retain ownership of all calves and finish them in their feedlot on home-grown feedstuffs. They also buy cattle and prefer to feed Charolais-crosses. Their

calves are age- and source-verified and sent onto JBS where they're marketed on a JBS formula. According to Gary, they usually bring back a \$50-\$75 premium over regular cattle because of their carcasses.

"They're meat wagons. We don't want to sell anything else," he assures.

He says their typical live weights are in the high 1,300s at 12 to 13 1/2 months of age, with usually a 62 to 63

percent yield. Their final set of calves harvested this past summer were 1,338 lbs. at 13 months with a quality grade of 80 percent Choice.

"What I like about these cattle are their carcasses. They have the meat in them.

Thick and meaty, that's what you want." Aside from the performance and cutability the Charolais-cross cattle offer, Gary also recognizes the hybrid vigor and profitability benefits with cross-breeding, which help keep his family in the ranching business.

He comments, "Everybody in this country is breaking out their pastures and farming. We're not. When we started, we couldn't do much without a cow. They brought us to the dance. The

cows have been there when times are tough, and they'll always be there."

Extra pounds: they do add up

Similar to Skogen and the Olson brothers, Bruce Rowser of Henefer, Utah, has also discovered the value of quality Charolais genetics. He, too, is a Cobb repeat customer, and each spring travels eight hours north to Great Falls, from his northeastern Utah commercial ranch, for their spring bull sale.

Rowser especially likes the calves these bulls turn out, and so do his feedlot customers. He comments the Cobbs have both a good name for marketing with feeder calf buyers and for "a carcass on their stock." He adds, "They are just really genuinely nice people I really like dealing with. They treat you well."

This Utah cattle producer considers multiple factors when he selects herd sires, including performance, muscle and eye appeal. "I go deeper than a lot of people into performance," he says, analyzing sire and dam past performance, in addition to birth, weaning and yearling weights. "I believe if a bull's performance is good, he will sire calves that perform likewise."

Rowser crosses Charolais bulls on an Angus-based herd of which most are

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Typical Compton Bull

Cut Costs with Alternative Feeds

By Heather Smith Thomas

When traditional feeds are in short supply or expensive, stockmen often consider alternatives. There are a number of nontraditional feeds that can be used, and a growing number of producers are becoming innovative in utilizing the resources in their own region. Chris and Robert Bianchi raise registered and commercial cattle, mainly Charolais, in Gilroy, California. They are making use of bell peppers during the summer months from June through October, and waste barley (brewers grain) year round.

"We get some peppers that are locally processed midsummer, but others we get from as far away as Bakersfield. Some are just the cores and stems. One of the pepper processing plants hauls the cores and stems to us to get rid of them. The peppers we get in June are whole (the culls), and we pick them up from a couple different places. These processing plants are within three miles from where we summer our cows, so it's a short haul," says Chris.

The cattle readily eat the peppers. "Early in the season it's green peppers, but later we get some reds and yellows. Those must be a little sweeter because the cattle will eat the yellows, the reds, and then the greens," she explains.

The brewers grain from beer making they pick up in 40 to 50 gallon barrels. Most of it comes from San Jose, about a half hour drive. "We pick up barley from about five breweries, and get about 15 to 18 barrels at a time," Chris says.

When feeding peppers they use a truck and two trailers. "The truck puts them out in a row behind it, such as on top of a hay windrow. It's an old feed truck we modified to feed out the back instead of out the side. The trailers dump and we spread the peppers in small piles out on the pasture," she says.

The barley is fed to bulls. "We feed some to our older herd bulls during summer as a supplement. This year we have a lot of young bulls we are backgrounding so we feed them barley in feeders," says Chris.

Their ranch operation has been using barley for about 15 years. The breweries need to get rid of it after they've processed the grain. "It's wet and heavy and would be a major disposal problem so they are happy that we take it. We've been feeding the bell peppers about seven years," she says.

She and Robert run 450 cows, some of them purebred Charolais, Hereford and Red Angus, and about 300 commercial cows. They feed the peppers to the commercial

cows. They started feeding peppers because the plant managers needed to get rid of them. "Years ago there were more dairies in the area and some of them used the cull peppers. My father-in-law used to have a dairy and he fed a lot of cull lettuce, etc. Now the vegetable processors don't have the dairies to take these. We've never fed lettuce or garlic but we have a neighbor who feeds a lot of garlic peels. They dump it out in the pasture and the cows eat those really well," she says.

"We started using the peppers to help stretch our pastures farther. Anything we can do to cheapen our feed expenses is a big help. The pastures where we feed the peppers is planted to winter forage (a seed mixture that contains wheat, oats and barley). We plant this in late fall and then we cut and windrow it for the cattle in May or early June. The peppers are fed with that so the cows have a lot of roughage to go along with the peppers which are very moist and palatable."

A nearby producer feeds artichokes and the cows really like those, too. Other producers have fed cull almonds, carrots, and almost anything that has food value for the cattle. "Dairies have fed these by-products for a long time, but it's more of a new thing for beef producers. The dairies have feed mangers and can put these various feed-stuffs in their mixer truck," says Chris.

The Bianchi cattle run on about 6,000 acres in the foothills, and the bull calves run in the hills with their mothers. "We winter them in the hills, and seldom get snow. The cattle graze through most of the winter. The peppers help stretch those pastures," she explains.

The barley is not high protein, but enough to be a good supplement for the



older bulls and keep them in good shape without having the expense of feeding a grain product. The only expense is hauling it home and the time involved.

Think outside the box

There are a number of nontraditional feeds that can be used for beef cattle, according to David Bohnert, Beef Extension Specialist and Ruminant Nutritionist, Oregon State University. The biggest factor in whether or not an alternative feed is feasible is how far it has to be hauled.

"Some of the common alternative feeds in our region include grass seed straw, distillers grains (which have been shown to be a good energy/protein supplement), and cornstalks. The cornstalks can be grazed, and some people bale them to transport them to where they must be fed, but there is a lot of waste with baled cornstalks. Cull onions, turnips, potatoes, carrots, dry beans and other vegetables are available in some areas. Vegetable waste from food processing can be useful, depending on where you are located and how you might feed it," he says.

Bakery waste and other foods can some-

times be added into cattle rations if you're near a bread making factory, or a manufacturer of cookies or candy bars. "Food companies have to get rid of cull products occasionally and stockmen have fed these. You have to be careful how much you feed, and balance the diet appropriately, but these are all things that can be utilized. A nutritionist here in Oregon once created a ration using cherry pies, candy bars, and corn flakes as part of the energy base, and the cattle did fine on it," says Bohnert.

"When looking at possibilities, we need to think outside the box. A beef cow has the advantage of a large rumen. As long as there are no toxins in feeds, rumen microbes can ferment and use nearly anything as a source of energy or protein. If a product is fed in appropriate amounts, and not so much that it might cause digestive distress, it can work. We can take advantage of the ruminant's ability to digest just about anything. Cattle are also wonderful harvesters of low quality forages that otherwise would never get used, but these often need to be supplemented with protein and/or energy," he says.

"There are numerous things that can be fed. Some of the liquid 'syrup' from distillers grains, or from making alcohol, can be useful if you figure out a way to feed it. One producer used old bathtubs. Just because you haven't done it in the past doesn't mean it can't be done." There are ways to use nearly any kind of feedstuff if you are creative.

"Alternative feeds can help lower feed costs. The main thing that limits their use is location. You must be fairly close to where they are produced or it will cost too much to transport them to your place, especially the ones that have high moisture content like cull potatoes or onions. Otherwise you are paying a lot for hauling water," he says.

Make sure it's cost effective and nutritionally adequate

During drought, cattle producers often



have to be innovative to try to match feed needs with what might be available. Glenn Nader, Extension Livestock and Natural Resources Adviser in California (Butte, Sutter and Yuba counties), says many stockmen in his area have been using rice straw, since there's a lot of rice produced locally. It's a low quality feed, but there's a wide variability in forage quality and in some instances it can work if used in conjunction with a good protein source.

"Protein level in rice straw is related to how much nitrogen the farmer applies. Protein content can vary from as low as two percent to as high as almost eight percent. Test the stack before you buy it, or at least talk with the grower to find out how much the crop was fertilized. If it was on the high end of fertilization, or fertilized late, you can anticipate more protein in the straw. Dry cows need seven to eight percent protein; a high quality rice straw might be adequate but anything less will need supplementation," he says.

"The other variation in this type of straw is acid detergent fiber (ADF). This type of analysis is our cheapest way of looking at digestibility; the higher the number, the worse it is for digestibility. Some rice straw is as high as 56 ADF and some as low as 44, which is a huge difference," explains

Nader. If you buy the lowest quality rice straw you'll end up paying more to balance it with a supplement than you'd pay for high priced good hay.

The digestibility of rice straw is also dependent on how it's harvested and baled. "If it's baled soon after the rice is harvested, at about 13 to 15 percent moisture, where it still has some green color and good aroma and not too dried out, it's much better. If it's baled right behind the harvester, it is as digestible and has the nutrient quality of low end alfalfa. But within 48 hours it drops dramatically and turns into very poor quality forage," he says.

"In studies where we've fed it to cattle green chopped right out of the field, intake and performance increases. No one feeds green chop rice straw or silage to cattle however, because of the cost of hauling the low quality forage (too much volume). So, it must be baled. But, if it can be cut and baled with high moisture, the cows are more interested in it," says Nader. As one rancher says, "Put it up like hay and it feeds like hay; put it up like straw and it feeds like straw."

Another alternative feed, with the increase in ethanol plants, is corn stalks. In drought situations, some ranchers are hauling baled cornstalks from nearby farming

regions. But it's expensive to haul very far, for the nutrient value you get, and care must be taken in feeding big bales to minimize waste.



"You have to put them in bale feeders, and may have to pitch the bigger stalks out that the cattle won't clean up." He warns producers that cornstalks also need to be tested to check nitrate levels.

"Cornstalks have a little higher nutrient level than rice straw—about 5.9 percent

protein. It's a little better feed but you need to have a better handle on it to feed it. Like rice straw, the faster you can bale it after harvest, the better it is. The more times it gets rained on, the quality is leached out of it," he says.

"When forages become high priced, ranchers must look at their total costs. It's easy to buy an alternative forage and purchase supplement. Concentrated energy is still cheaper to ship, but not many ranchers want to go out and feed cattle every day," he says.

"We will probably see more canola meal shipped in from Canada since they are growing more. It's often brought by rail, and pelleted. Otherwise it becomes compacted in the railroad cars and difficult to get out. The freight on this is cheaper by rail than by truck,

with high costs of diesel," he says.

"The last time we had a serious drought one rancher bought an old conveyer belt from a Nevada gold mine and used it to feed on. It was four feet wide and very long.

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Injection Techniques—Routes of Administration

By Heather Smith Thomas

Fall is often a time of working cattle including giving preweaning vaccinations to calves and semiannual vaccines to cows. An occasional animal may also need to be treated for foot rot, pinkeye or a respiratory disease. Knowing how to administer injectable products through proper dosage and location, is crucial for optimum efficacy and for animal safety.



Intramuscular injections

Intramuscular (IM) injections require a needle long enough to go deep into muscle. For an adult animal use a needle at least 1.5 inches long and two inches is better. Use a 16-gauge needle large enough to go through a cow's thick skin without bending or breaking. Anything larger than 16 has more risk for tissue damage and leakage. For a calf use a smaller needle; 18 gauge, 1 to 1.5 inches long, works best.

The biggest mistake people make when vaccinating, especially when running a lot of cattle through the chute, is not taking time to do a good job. This may result in some animals not being adequately vaccinated, some of the product leaks out, and increases risk of tissue damage, abscesses and reactions. To reduce leakage, keep the needle inserted for at least two seconds after the injection before removing it from the muscle.

Another way to prevent leakage is to pull the skin taut across the injection site with one hand while you inject with the other,

then release the skin after you remove the needle. The skin then moves over the hole and closes it. You can also rub the injection site briefly, to help distribute the product within the muscle and reduce pressure so it's less apt to ooze back out.

When using a trigger-type syringe for IM shots, thrust the needle into muscle and pull the trigger. When using a smaller or disposable syringe, detach the needle and press your hand firmly against the skin to desensitize the site so the animal won't jump when you insert the needle. Then thrust it in quickly and forcefully. A new, sharp needle goes in easier and causes less pain and damage than a dull one. If the animal jumps, wait until she settles down before attaching the syringe to the inserted needle and giving the injection. If the needle starts to ooze blood, take it out and try a different spot. Never inject intramuscular products into a blood vessel.

Subcutaneous injections

Originally, subcutaneous injections were used because a particular product was irritating to muscle tissue or designed for slower rate of absorption. Today, due to concerns about carcass quality and avoiding IM shots where possible, more injectables are approved for subcutaneous use. When you have a choice, according to label directions, inject under the skin rather than into muscle. IM shots are more likely to develop a serious abscess if a needle is dirty.

Infection introduced by a subcutaneous shot is merely beneath the skin and an abscess more readily breaks open to drain.

For a subcutaneous injection, lift a fold of skin on neck or shoulder where skin is loosest, and slip the needle in between skin and muscle. If using a trigger-type syringe, aim it alongside the animal so the needle goes under the skin and not into muscle. For a small calf, it may be easiest to give a subcutaneous injection under the loose skin of the shoulder, and if there's a local reaction it won't make his neck sore, which may hinder nursing.

Giving injections subcutaneous rather than IM allows you to use a shorter needle ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch if using a trigger type syringe, or up to one inch if using both hands to tent the skin and slip the needle underneath) so it's less likely to bend or break. In the confined space of some chutes, insert the needle at an angle so you can use a one handed technique with a syringe gun, rather than both hands to tent the skin. There's less risk of getting your hand jammed between the

animal and the chute or accidentally hitting yourself with the needle.

Some of the new antibiotics can be injected subcutaneously at the back of the ear. This is a way to avoid tissue reactions, scarring and other problems than could affect the carcass. The animal must be adequately restrained to minimize risk of going too deep or accidentally injecting into a vein.

Intravenous injections

Some medications are more effective by acting faster and more readily absorbed if given intravenously (IV). Some are irritating to muscle tissue and must be given IV. These injections must be done properly. Chances for problems are greater, as is the speed with which a serious problem may develop, so you must know which products can be given IV (follow label directions). Large volumes of fluid or medications given too swiftly can put too much load on the heart and some drugs speed up the heart. Heart rate should be monitored when giving fluids or certain IV medications and rate of administration adjusted accordingly.

Any large vein will work for an IV injection, including the large veins under the tail, the big milk vein ahead of the udder on a lactating cow, or the jugular vein on either side of the neck in the groove above windpipe and esophagus. A large needle, at least 16 gauge and two inches long or longer, works best for adults.

Needles must be sterile. The animal must be restrained. If using the jugular vein, press on it with fingers or fist to build up pressure between your hand and the animal's head so the vein stands up and is easier to inject. Still pressing on the vein, insert the needle at a point between your hand and the animal's head, then move the needle a little forward inside the vein parallel with the neck. If blood flows freely from the needle, it's in the vein. You can then attach your syringe or tubing, if giving fluid.

The most common problem is pushing the needle too far, clear through the vein. Sometimes the animal moves and the needle slips out of the vein. Don't assume it's in the vein just because you see blood. Blood will flow rapidly and steadily from the needle if it's actually in the vein. Make sure the needle stays in the vein when you give the injection. Some products can cause severe irritation, stress and sometimes death if they leak into the tissues around the vein. If the needle slips out of the vein while giving fluid, tissues around the vein start to swell. Take it out and start over. If giving fluid, it's best to use an IV catheter, which is longer than a needle and more flexible, and stays in the vein better.

Cut Costs With Alternative Feeds...

(continued from page 5)

He drug it around his rangeland and augered feed onto the belt from his feed wagon. There was some waste, but it was still cheaper than building a drylot for the cattle. He hooked onto the belt with a tractor and moved it to a new place each day so the cattle wouldn't beat up the rangeland, and the belt kept the feed from being trampled in the dirt," explains Nader.

Almond hulls are another alternative in some regions. "But as the price of corn has risen, all the other alternatives have risen as well. With almond hulls, some people dump them in the pasture and use electric fence to limit what cattle eat each day, moving the fence farther into the pile. There is some waste this way, and when almond hulls were \$48 to \$56 a ton delivered, this was ok. But now they are over \$100 a ton and you don't want to waste that much."

Traditionally it was cheaper to move cattle to the feed than to haul feed to the cattle in a drought situation, but not anymore. Transportation costs dictate using something close, even rain damaged alfalfa. "A study at University of Nevada (Reno) found you can actually keep rumen protein levels the same if you feed alfalfa every other day and poor quality grass hay every day," he says.

"The problem when feeding a small amount every day (like three pounds per head) is that the dominant cows eat all of it because you're not feeding enough to really spread it out. Feeding seven pounds every other day gives all of them more chance at it. The rumen protein levels stay high enough to keep the microbes working," he says.

"It's hard to beat alfalfa as a supplement, even if it's more than \$250 a ton. For what you get, it's still the best feed to balance poor quality forage. The problem with feeding straight alfalfa is that it's inefficient cost wise. Cows easily meet their protein requirements and start burning the excess protein to make energy. And this is a very expensive source of energy. That's why you want to use just a small amount of alfalfa and look at other forage alternative to meet the energy demands of the cow. If good alfalfa is 20 percent protein, you don't need to be feeding that as the full diet," says Nader.

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2007 CHAROLAIS ADVANTAGE

Profit Oriented Cattle...

(continued from page 3)

Angus-Simmental-crosses. He also breeds white bulls to Red Angus-cross cows, and has this to say: "They give me great calves. Those buckskin calves all look alike. You get them the same color and they really look good."

"I think uniformity affects your marketing, definitely," he says. "I strictly run black and red cows and Charolais bulls. Everything I have is the same and it sure looks nice when they look through a pen and you can tell they're all Charolais-cross calves." Rowser markets calves typically on video in mid-October after a 45-day wean on meadow grass.

He's found the Cobb calves look a lot like their sires. "I do like their calves; they're really heavy muscled and perform well." He adds, "They're linebred so when you cross them on these cows, you get a pretty uniform set of calves."

Turning out performance based, linebred Charolais has been a specialty of the Cobb family's for more than 50 years. Today, the tradition is continued by Cheryl and John

Cobb and Sarah and Mike Cobb on their north central Montana ranch.

Their white breed was established by John and Mike's father, Buddy, who started using performance records early on as a basis for herd

selection. He is known as a true pioneer of the Charolais breed itself in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and of the performance movement which blossomed into the Beef Improvement Federation.

Performance numbers on the Cobb cattle actually trace back to 1956. Today, John, Mike and their families continue the Cobb linebreeding legacy and the philosophy held by their father: the key to making money in the cattle business lies in getting the animal from birth to slaughter in the shortest time possible; early maturity combined with feed efficiency, carcass quality and cutability.

To carry this out, the Cobb family stays

"We're selling by the pound . . . if you get an added 50 lbs. on a calf at \$1.50 or better, that's \$75 a head difference. That adds up."

– Bruce Rowser
Utah commercial producer

away from trends. John describes their Charolais as the real thing—thick, deep, long, muscular, and early maturing. Linebreeding assists in keeping the breed's best traits and contributes to herd uniformity while they

also select for an animal that is suited to their rocky, mountainous environment. Mike assures their environment selects their female.

The Cobbs host two bull sales a year, one in April and another in November. Only selling their best, they strive to provide customers with a product that not only fits today's industry, but gives them an "edge" to compete in today's aggressive marketplace, with added pounds at weaning and harvest, efficiencies of feed conversion and gains and high quality carcasses.

Rowser, himself, has used Charolais bulls for some 20 years, but just exclusively the last 10 years. He's discovered a number of differences when he's compared white to black, namely in health and performance.

Healthwise, he's found the Charolais

sired calves to be more vigorous, something important for his northern climate. "When they're born, they'll get up and going faster than the black calves." He adds that last year's feeder didn't lose a single calf he fed from the group he purchased from Rowser.

Just as importantly, the scale has shown him the added performance value of Charolais on pay day. He explains, "I used to buy some white bulls to mix in with the blacks. I figured out the white bulls were outperforming the black bulls by quite a bit."

"We've sorted and weighed up both sets of calves at sale time and these white calves will be 30 to 50 lbs. heavier on average than the black calves. Each year we were doing so much better with the white bulls and that was the big selling point to us to switch over to the white bulls."

He reminds, "We're selling by the pound. We always get a good price out of our calves because we have quality calves, so I might as well have the extra pounds. If you get an added 50 lbs. on a calf at \$1.50 or better, that's \$75 a head difference. That adds up."

"As long as the buyers are happy and paying the good prices they're paying for calves, there's no reason for me not to use Charolais bulls."

Watch Withdrawal Times Carefully

Steer clear of residue by choosing the right treatment later in the feeding period

Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) can strike at any time. When BRD develops later in the feeding period, producers should pay careful attention to the withdrawal time of the selected antimicrobial treatment helping keep cattle healthy and operations profitable.

"It is critical that producers pay close attention to withdrawal times for all products and have double check systems in place to avoid a residue occurrence," says Lee Bob Harper, DVM, Managing Veterinarian, Feedlot Veterinary Operations with Pfizer Animal Health Cattle and Equine Technical Services. "Residues have the potential to place our food supply at risk and can result in consequences to the producer."

Antimicrobial treatments with shorter withdrawal times are well matched to fight disease later in the feeding period, Dr. Harper notes. Shorter withdrawal times give feedlots flexibility if animals are diagnosed with BRD.

"If a 1,200-pound steer is diagnosed with BRD 10 days before scheduled slaughter, it is important to have a product with a withdrawal less than 10 days so that animal will be clear to ship on schedule

when recovery occurs," Dr. Harper says.

When selecting a product for later in the feeding period, producers should review options with their veterinarian to choose a product that will be effective and is suitable for use in the given timeframe.

ADVOCIN™ (*danofloxacin mesylate*) offers the shortest withdrawal time, four days prior to slaughter, among all single dose products available for cattle.

Along with selecting the appropriate treatment, accurate record keeping is critical to confirming cattle have met the appropriate withdrawal time stated on the product label, Dr. Harper says.

"Choosing the right product with the help of your veterinarian is half the battle when deciding on late treatment options," Dr. Harper notes. "The final step is accurate record keeping to confirm withdrawal time indications have been met. Whatever system works best for the operation, record keeping is an important final step to ensure we are all doing our part to produce safe and wholesome beef."

Important Safety Information: Federal law prohibits the extra-label use of all fluoroquinolones including ADVOCIN in food producing animals. Not for use in cattle intended for dairy production or in calves to be processed for veal. ADVOCIN has a pre-slaughter withdrawal time of four days.

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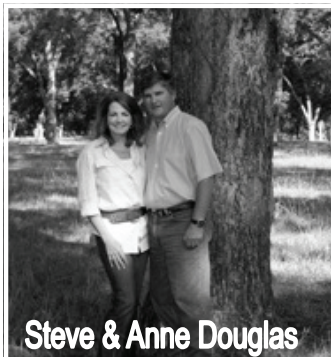
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