

# Two conferences may trigger purebred turning-point

Back-to-back conferences on specification beef, seedstock genetics, and the blending of the two lend a historical significance to beef directions this spring. The annual Beef Improvement Federation Convention will resume its provocative airing of targeted beef production. Applying predictable genetics to the new challenge will be the focus, continuing the discussion that was opened last year. BIF will meet May 12-14 at the Albuquerque Marriott in Albuquerque, N.M.

Speakers include Dr. A.L. Eller Jr., VPI & SU; Dr. E.J. Pollack, Cornell University; Dr. D.E. Wilson, Iowa State University; Dr. D.R. Notter, VPI & SU; Dr. L.L. Benyshek, University of Georgia; and Dr. R.L. Quass, Cornell University. These leading scientists will discuss in detail how genetic predictions are done for growth, maternal, reproductive and carcass traits and how this information can be incorporated into breeding programs to produce for specification markets.

## A.I. will be featured

Following these speakers will be a panel consisting of Roy Wallace, Select Sires Inc.; Craig Ludwig, American Hereford Assn.; Wayne Vanderwert, American Limousin Foundation; John Crouch, American Angus Assn.; and Keith Vandervelde, American Breeders Service. They will discuss the role of breed associations and A.I. organizations in helping producers shift to specification breeding programs. They will address questions that are frequently posed to them and clarify some of the misconceptions about the use of genetic prediction in breeding programs.

The Friday morning session will be devoted to specification programs and examination of the use of live animal evaluation in determining carcass traits conducted by Dr. Robert Long, Texas Tech University.

The morning will conclude with a debate between packer/feeder personnel and a producer panel. The packer/feeder panel will consist of Dr. Gary Smith, Texas A&M University; Rod Boling, Monfort Packing Co.; Del Allen, Excel Corp.; and Leon Miller of Alta Verde Industries.

Arguing the case from the producer's point of view will be Dr. Robert Long; Ron Baker, Hermiston, Oregon; Leonard Wulf, Morris, Minnesota; and Dallas Horton of Colorado.

The convention will be wrapped up on Saturday with tours of a feetlot, commercial and purebred herds, and a stocker operation using the Savory grazing system. Lunch will be enjoyed on the movie set where *Silverado* was filmed.

For a copy of the printed program, write to BIF, N.C. State University, Box 7621, Raleigh, NC 27695, or call (919) 737-2761.

## Bringing purebred and commercial together

The future of the purebred cattle industry may be altered at a May 23-24 national meeting sponsored by Oklahoma State University.

So believes Bob Kropp, OSU animal scientist and one of the planners for the event.

"This isn't pipe dreams," Kropp says. "We're pulling in many of the leading beef cattle experts and cattle judges in the nation. We're trying to get some continuity in the purebred industry and get it in line with the commercial industry's needs."

OSU planners have dubbed the meeting the "National Beef Cattle Conference: A Blueprint for the Right Kind."

Conference planners intend to come away from the event with a better understanding of what type cattle are feasible for purebred and commercial producers to raise, and a new plan for the type of beef cattle that will win purebred shows,

OSU's Bob Totusek, animal science department head, explains: "We feel a problem has developed in the beef industry. As a result of almost single-trait selection in recent years for frame size, purebred cattle breeders have decreased their selection emphasis on fertility, structural soundness, natural muscling, and body composition-traits that are essential for survival in the commercial industry."

"The commercial cow-calf producers are looking to the purebred industry for bulls to meet their needs," Totusek adds. "But many commercial producers feel that the purebred industry has gone too far in frame and disregarded traits more economically important to them."

"There needs to be some dialogue," he concludes.

The conference begins with a discussion of what the retail market and the packers are demanding of cattle. Conference participants will look at cattle and hear them described from the viewpoint of two different packing plant philosophies-Excel's and Iowa Beef Processors'.

Representatives of the cow-calf industry will voice their opinions about economically important traits to members of the packing industry. The hope is to find some common ground, Kropp says.

The group will look at how purebred cattle specifications can meet the needs of all phases of the cattle industry. And they will consider the relationship of carcass traits to traits economically important from the commercial producer's standpoint.

"Once everyone has been heard, we'll try to set down standards for the purebred industry to follow in the coming years," Kropp says.

"Beef producers, especially purebred producers, have a vested interest in this meeting," he adds. "I hope we'll have good attendance."

The National Beef Cattle Conference is May 23-24 at the Sunmark Hotel and Convention Center in Stillwater. Registration before May 16 costs \$75, and \$90 after that date. Payment can be made with Mastercard and Visa. Send registrations to Frank Evans, 430 Student Union, OSU, Stillwater, Okla. 74078, or call (405) 624-6489. Hotel accommodations must be made separately at the Sunmark or another local hotel.

