K-State's Wildcat Steer Futurity set to debut in October

The first-ever Kansas State University (K-State) Wildcat Steer Futurity has been announced, and nominations are due Oct. 17.

The K-State Wildcat Steer Futurity is an educational feeding program that allows beef cattle producers to learn about the cattle feeding industry and provides producers with an information feedback system regarding the performance and carcass composition of their cattle.

For more information about the program or to receive a nomination form, contact Justin Waggoner at 620-275-9164 or jwaggon@ksu.edu; Karl Harborth at 620-431-1530 or harborth@ksu.edu; or Larry Hollis, K-State Extension beef veterinarian, at 785-532-1246 or lhollis@ksu.edu.

McNeese State University Heifer Enhancement and Development Program

McNeese State University has put together a program to help producers select replacement heifers in a program that allows heifers to be performance tested against their contemporaries. Heifers are fed a balanced diet meeting all nutrient requirements for young, growing replacement heifers. They are evaluated for average daily gain (ADG), temperament and carcass merit. Also, heifers are examined for reproductive tract score, and producers are given the opportunity to sign up their heifers in the optional artificial insemination (AI) program following the performance test.

The test data is compiled monthly and mailed to producers so that they may keep track of how their heifers are performing. Once the test is completed, the producer can use this information to select the better-performing heifers for herd replacements.

To date, 278 heifers of various pure and mixed breeds have been through the program, which is now in its third year.

The university also benefits from the data collected. Students are involved in data collection, and the data is published to help producers in the Southeast better understand how to manage their cattle. For instance, the research has further emphasized that variations in ADG can be related to breeding, temperament and ambient temperature. Heifers classified as extremely nervous or excitable have gained less weight during the last two years and were less likely to become pregnant to timed AI last year. Cattle heavily influenced by Brahman breeding gained less during the mild Louisiana winters.

Last year the heifers were evaluated with ultrasound measurement of ribeye area, rib fat and intramuscular fat (IMF) and AI was offered as an option. This year, the program hopes to add reproductive tract scoring to the tests conducted at the farm. This data is meant to help the producer select heifers that will improve performance and maternal traits within their herd.

The 2008 program will accept heifers Oct. 14. Spring-born heifer calves weighing between 400 lb. and 600 lb. are eligible for entry in the four-month program. Acceptance into the program will be first-come first-serve, based on availability of silage and feedlot space. Contact Bill Storer at 225-266-1821 for reservations.

►Sign-up prior to Oct. 1, 2008
►Drop off heifers Oct. 14, 2008
►Feeding trial starts Nov. 1, 2008
►Weights recorded monthly Nov. 4, 2008-March 3, 2009
►Ultrasound for carcass data and reproductive tract score Feb. 10, 2009
►End feeding trial March 3, 2009
►AI program begins March 1, 2009

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