

September Beef Cattle Browsing

Edited by: Dr. Stephen P. Hammack, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist Emeritus, Stephenville, and Dr. Joe C. Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist, Corpus Christi.

Coronavirus Food Assistance Program CFAP2

The second round of financial assistance for agricultural producers began September 11 and is now open through your local Farm Services Agency (FSA) office or online at farmers.gov/cfap. Livestock producers and others are eligible for relief funds on the highest number of *nonbreeding animals* in their herds or flocks between April 16 through August 31, 2020. Rates vary by livestock species. Applications will be accepted through December 11, 2020. Contact your local FSA office for more information.

What Do Consumers Want These Days?

Every year a national survey is conducted of food consumers to assess their preferences. Some of the more notable findings of the most recent survey were:

- > Sales were up about 1% over the previous year.
- > Smaller portions are being consumed and fewer people go back for more.
- > Plant-based alternatives continued to increase in volume sold but their market penetration (of total meat, poultry, and alternatives) is still small.
- > More hybrid vegetable/meat blends have come on the market.
- > Time-saving meals are now more important to more consumers. Even fewer meals are cooked at home than before.
- > Sales continued to grow for products labeled organic, grass fed and/or no antibiotics ever. But consumers trust such claims only moderately.
- > Signs in stores are the top means (surpassing print sources for the first time last year) of finding price specials.
- > The vast majority of consumers buy just a few cuts at a time.
- > Consumers under 40 years of age are not as confident in their ability to prepare new cuts and in predicting how they will taste after they cook them.
- > Supermarkets continue to be the primary source of meat and poultry.
- > About 40% of consumers have ordered groceries but only about 20% have ordered meat or poultry, mostly processed and ground products.
- > Buyers, particularly younger, are influenced by labeling, especially regarding nutrition, food safety, animal care, and environmental impact. These were important to from 40% to 60% of survey respondents.

> About two-thirds of meat and poultry buyers want to know how and where animals were raised. And they want that information on packages, the product's website, and social media. (You may agree or not whether the latter is a good source.)

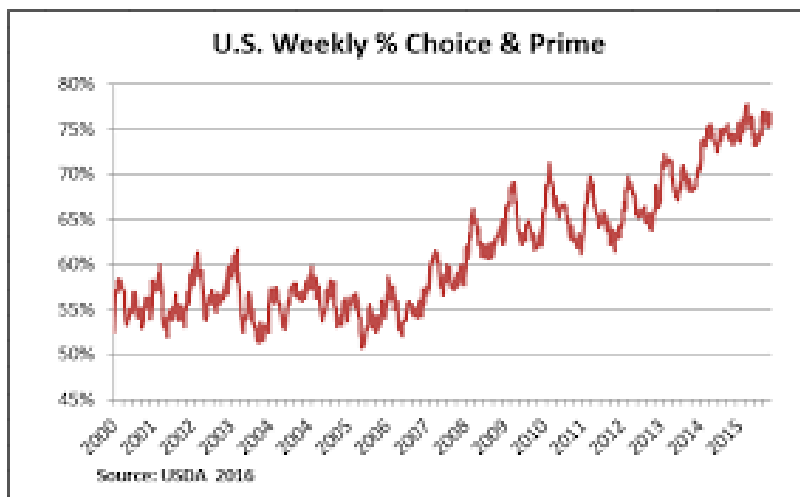
> Approximately ½ think animal agriculture does not adversely affect the planet, if done properly. Younger people were more likely to disagree.

NOTE: This survey was conducted before the pandemic arrived, so it was not influenced by its effects.

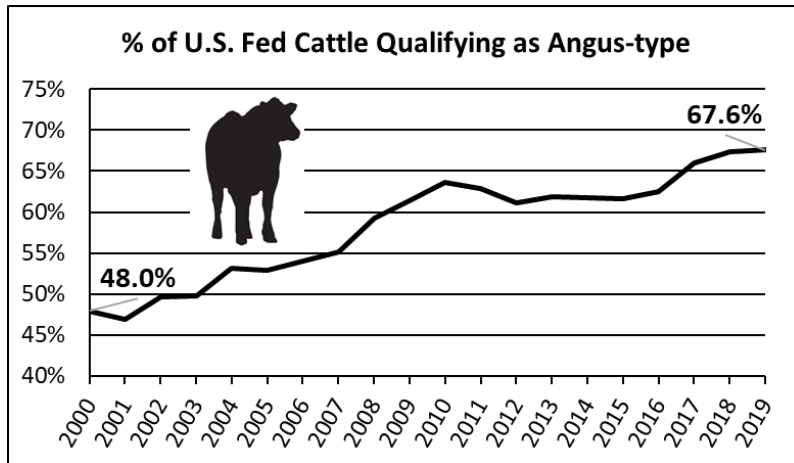
(Power of Meat, Published by the Foundation of Meat & Poultry Research & Education and The Food Industry Association)

Trends in High Quality Branded Beef

Branded programs represent an ever-increasing portion of beef production from finished cattle. As shown in the graph below, the percentage of carcasses grading Low Choice or higher was relatively flat from 2000 to 2008, ranging from about 50% to 60%. Then, from 2008 to 2016 that percentage steadily increased to about 75%. That trend has continued such that the percentage recently was near 85%.

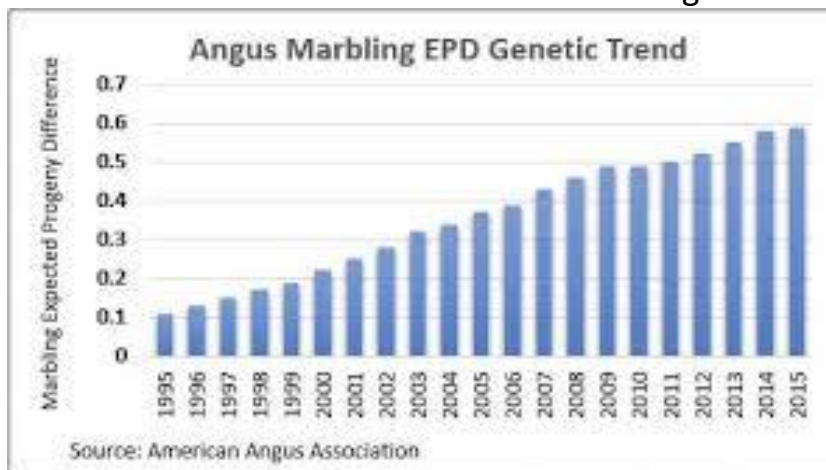


Part of that increase is due to the climb in the percentage of finished cattle initially qualifying for Certified Angus Beef® (CAB), the largest high-quality branded beef program. To initially qualify for CAB, cattle presented for slaughter must be predominantly black hided. As the slide below shows, the percentage of live fed cattle initially qualifying rose from 48.0% in 2000 to 67.6% in 2019.



In the carcass, there are 10 factors that determine final eligibility for CAB, the most important being USDA Quality Grade of mid-Choice or higher. In 2000, the percentage of carcasses meeting CAB quality specifications was only about 18% of those qualifying live. Since the percentage of fed cattle initially qualifying live that year was 48%, that means less than 10% of fed cattle eventually could have made CAB. But in 2019, 35% of cattle qualifying live met carcass requirements. So, since the percent qualifying live was 67.6%, almost 25% of fed cattle could have qualified. Not all cattle with majority black hides are submitted for the program. But a large part is submitted.

Level of marbling is the primary factor in quality grade. Most of the reason that higher percentages now qualify for CAB is increased levels of marbling. The Angus breed has continued to reach higher levels of genetic capability to marble. The graph below shows the breed-wide average Expected Progeny Difference (EPD) from 1995 to 2015. And it has continued to go up since then. Most other major breeds also have shown increases in marbling.



Today, the percentage of graded beef not reaching Low Choice or higher is only about 15%. It is true that a number of carcasses not grading Low Choice or higher (that is, USDA Select or lower) are not officially graded. The industry often finds better ways to use those carcasses without being officially graded. Regardless, there is definitely more high-quality beef available today to consumers, including through the many high-quality branded programs. And this is a good thing for cattle producers.

(CAB data used by permission of Paul Dykstra, Asst. Director, Supply Management and Analysis, Certified Angus Beef LLC, CABcattle.com)

Reproductive Performance in Young *Bos indicus* Halfblood Cows and Longevity

At the 2020 TAMU Beef Cattle Short Course in the Beef Cattle Research in Texas session, Dr. A. D. Herring, Professor, Animal Science, TAMU, discussed research on reproductive performance using reciprocal crosses of Angus (A) x Nellore (N) F₁ sires and dams. A total of 296 offspring were produced representing ANAN, ANNA, NAAN, and NANA F₂ crosses. Data representing two different sets of cattle and years. Cycle 1 were F₂ ET NA females born 2003-2008 and Cycle 2 were reciprocal cross females born 2008-2015. Heifers from both cycles calved between 2 and 2.5 years of age. A few failed to breed and were given the opportunity to calve at 3 years. Females were culled the second time they did not calve or for health reasons. Longevity was evaluated by comparing the birth of the heifer's first calf in sequential 21-day periods.

Numerically, young cows that calved in the first 21-day period had higher stayability rates regardless of age (92%, 83%, and 73% for 3, 5 and 7-year old cows, respectively). These percentages were reduced with later calvings. Heifers that calved early became cows with lower calving intervals and higher lifetime (up to 8 years of age) calf weaning weight per cow. Timing of first calf was associated with future calvings at later ages. Timing of a beef heifer's first calf appears to be an important factor in predicting reproductive longevity in *Bos taurus*-*Bos indicus* crosses. The authors concluded that half-blood *Bos indicus* females calving as 2-year olds in the first 42 days of their first calving season have a much greater potential to remain reproductively successful at later ages and this is likely to be universal across all breed types and crosses of cattle.

Herring, A.D., et. al. (2020) Reproductive Performance in Young Bos Indicus Half Blood Cows Related to Longevity. TAMU Beef Cattle Short Course Proceedings, 5 pp.

New Tick Species Identified in the US

A species of tick native to the Asia-Pacific region that potentially poses a disease threat to humans is now in 10 different states. The Asian Long-horned tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*), was identified in New Jersey in August 2017 and was the first new tick species found in 50 years according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Since then, the Long-horned tick has been found in nine other states including Arkansas, Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and most recently Rhode Island.

The tick has been found “on a variety of hosts, including people, wildlife, domestic animals, and in environmental samples” according to the CDC. “In contrast to most tick species, Long-horned female ticks are parthenogenic (males are not needed to reproduce) and produce thousands of eggs at a time. As a result, hundreds or thousands of ticks can be found on a single animal, person, or in the environment,” the CDC stated. This tick species is “an aggressive biter” and “frequently builds intense infestations on animals causing great stress, reduced growth and production, and blood loss.”

Another new introduced tick, the Red Sheep tick (*Haemaphysalis punctata*) was also discovered in Rhode Island at the same time. The Red Sheep tick is a native of Asia, Europe, and England but not North America. It affects all livestock, horses, dogs, and humans (not just sheep) and can cause tick paralysis and can transmit Anaplasmosis, Brucellosis, Theileria, Babesia, and Tularemia among other diseases.

Officials recommend the following guidelines to prevent ticks:

- Apply tick repellents to exposed skin and clothing.
- Spray permethrin-containing products on outer clothing, including shoes. Permethrin should not be used directly on skin.
- Check clothing and exposed skin prior to moving from one area to another.
- Wear light colored long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

- Conduct body checks immediately after returning from outdoor activities in tick-infested areas.

"If ticks are found, remove them by using fine-tipped tweezers, wash the affected area with soap and water, and disinfect the bite site," the agency said. "To protect hunting dogs, hunters should check with their veterinarian about an appropriate topical or systemic tick-control treatment for their dog."

<https://www.foxnews.com/science/rhode-island-exotic-tick-asian-longhorned-tick-disease-carrying> and <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/integumentary-system/ticks/haemaphysalis-spp> Accessed 9/30/20.

BQA Tip for October

Dr. Jason Banta, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Overton

When giving injections it is helpful to consider how the squeeze chute is designed, so that the best access to the neck of the animal is available. Some chutes are designed to provide access to the neck in front of the headgate (e.g. squeeze chutes with neck bars), while with others the neck is best accessed from behind the headgate. After closing the headgate make sure the animal is in the best position to access the neck with the chute being used before squeezing. This may mean waiting a few seconds to allow the animal to step back or forward before squeezing.