



CAB Corner on Quality
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April 2005

Angus genetics grow postweaning profitability

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Structured crossbreeding can add efficiency to an average herd, but that “free lunch” on the ranch may not be such a picnic in the feedlot and packing plant. That’s where consumer demand is translated to dollar bids for your calves. Recent reports suggest it pays to maintain a high level of focused Angus genetics in your herd, at least as much as heterosis.

Producers include more Angus genetics from cowherd to feedlot for many reasons, not the least being the \$50 million in annual *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) premiums packers pay for accepted cattle. New evidence says those cattle make money at every link in the production chain. Angus cattle do not always excel in Yield Grade, but Quality and performance can easily make up for it.

Records on 9,893 calves from 12 states, fed at eight Iowa feedlots during 2002-04, show those with at least 75% Angus genetics returned \$67.93/head more than those with no more than 25% Angus blood. The more straight-bred Angus cattle in the Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity (TCSCF) stood out by gaining 8% faster on feed and staying healthier in the feedlot than the low percentage Angus cattle, for starters.

Gaining faster and more efficiently added \$35.30/head to the Angus advantage. Those dollars began to snowball when the high-percentage Angus yielded more than 3.5 times more premium Choice and Prime carcasses, with about half the number of “out” than the quarter-blood Angus. These poorer growing and grading cattle were typically of high-percentage Continental breeding.

Low percentage Angus cattle in the TCSCF required treatment almost twice as often as the high percentage Angus cattle. That alone meant they returned \$2.74/head less to producers.

High-percentage Angus genetics increased incidence of Prime grade by 675%, premium Choice by 254%, and low Choice by 9.1%, decreasing Select and Standard by 70% and 86%, respectively, when compared to low-percentage Angus calves.

Net carcass merit premiums were \$29.89/head more for high- vs. low-percentage Angus, in spite of slightly higher numbers of Yield Grade (YG) 4 and YG 5 carcasses.

CAB acceptance increased from 11.4% for low- to 37.1% for high-percentage Angus calves. That was worth an average of \$4.30/cwt. carcass premium to Choice, and figured into the net carcass premiums.

In summary, cattle that are more than 75% Angus can gain faster, grade higher and net more dollars while on feed than lower-percentage crossbred cattle. Profit potential is directly affected by calf genetics, but this

dispels a myth that increased Angus influence means a loss of feedlot performance. While some crossbreds deliver part of the package, the bottom line is that Angus cattle can do both: Gain and Grade.

Calves were harvested when visually evaluated to have 0.4 inch of external fat. Dollar amounts were based on the 2003-04 average weekly grid values for Kansas and Texas, as reported by Grid-Max, a service of Cattle-Fax.

Influence of percentage Angus genetics on carcass traits and feedlot performance, Iowa Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity, 2002-2004.

	Percentage Angus		
	0 to 25	26 to 75	76 to 100
% Classification	Low	Intermediate	High
# of Head	2,925	3,673	3,295
Prime, %	0.4	1.0	3.1
Premium Choice, %	9.7	19.4	34.3
Low Choice, %	46.0	52.2	50.2
Select, %	38.3	25.0	11.7
Standard, %	5.6	2.4	0.8
Yield Grade 1 & 2, %	75.9	29.0	44.7
Yield Grade 3, %	23.1	39.5	52.3
Yield Grade 4 & 5, %	1.0	1.5	3.0
ADG, lbs.	3.05	3.12	3.29
Morbidity Rate, %	24.2	17.8	14.1

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