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NEWS

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Photos available at:

http://www.cabpartners.com/news/photos/Frank_Hinkson2.jpg

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Carcass Data Project sets 71% CAB pace

You could say there were no losers, but room for more winners in the Kansas Angus Association (KAA) 2011 Carcass Data Project (CDP) pen.

“The cattle just did phenomenally—everybody’s did,” said Landon Shaw, assistant manager at McPherson County Feeders, a *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand partner yard near Marquette, Kan.

In the pen were just 39 steers fed from early January to late May and owned by DeGrande Farms, Gardner, Kan.; Hobbs Ranch, Penokee, Kan.; Nemaha Valley Angus, Bern, Kan.; and Hinkson Angus Ranch, Cottonwood Falls, Kan., which won the CAB-sponsored prize for top carcass quality.

With a group average daily gain (ADG) of 4.4 pounds (lb.) and 100% grading Choice or better, no wonder Shaw was impressed.

“If a guy knew in advance that he could buy cattle of this quality he could afford to pay a heck of a lot more,” he commented.

This was the first year for the feeding project at McPherson County, but the CDP started 15 years ago at Montezuma, and later Scott City, Kan., feedyards, aiming to get carcass data back to anyone using registered Angus bulls.

Anne Lampe, KAA manager, said moving to McPherson offered a more central location that allowed for less average trucking expense across the state.

“When we started this project, grid marketing was not popular,” she said. “People couldn’t just send five head to a feedyard, and even a whole pen could not easily get carcass data back.”

Now as then, as few as five head entered lets a producer see where their herd genetics stand in comparison with others across Kansas.

“It’s a pretty good risk to retain all your calves and put them into a feedyard, depending on cattle or commodity prices, so you have your whole calf crop on the line,” Shaw noted. “If you just want to know how your breeding decisions have been on a representative group of five or 10, this is the perfect opportunity.”

Hinkson's top honors came from having five of their seven steers qualify for the CAB brand. They did that with a 4.75-lb. ADG, setting two of the high marks for the CDP.

"We were extremely pleased with the way the cattle fed," Frank Hinkson said. "The ADG was more than we had hoped for."

The year before, a group of 21 Hinkson steers not in the CDP achieved the same 71% CAB at McPherson, so the quality was on target. Past groups have even gone 20% CAB Prime, but they were four months older, 16 months, he said. "At the age of these seven head, you couldn't ask for any better performance."

Neal Haverkamp of Nemaha Valley Angus operates a CAB partner feedlot on his farm, where he usually finishes the steers. "They've done well in our feedlot, but I just wanted to compare them in a commercial feedlot setting," he said.

The 12 steers did well, with 42% CAB and second-best ADG at nearly 4.5 lb. Of course, everyone was pleased with the feedlot performance.

"The rate of gain was good, especially on a group of steers out of first-calf heifers, mostly sired by N Bar Prime Time," said Terry Hobbs, noting the sire was known for moderate growth but the calves still exceeded 4 lb. ADG.

Hobbs Ranch came in second in the CAB quality contest with six of the 10 entries making CAB.

Most of the breeders were more interested in the data received than the contest outcome, and this was the first year that the CDP included CAB-sponsored cash prizes, \$300 for first and \$200 for second to the top carcass value pens.

"We wanted to see where we were by putting together a group sired by different bulls we have," said Shelly DeGrande. Her family's 10 steers represented four sire groups and came in with the best calculated Yield Grade at 3.01.

Everybody learned more about their cattle, validating success and inviting further improvement. "It's just a huge point to try and get out there to let producers know how good of a job they are doing," Shaw said.

Lampe wants to see more CDP participation from across the state with commercial Angus producers as bull customers of KAA members enter steers along with purebred breeders.

"We hope it grows," she said. "With the results they got this year, people can get excited about this and see it as a good venue for their programs."

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