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## Animal Science E-Newsletter, June 2018

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Department of Animal Sciences

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# Animal Science E-Newsletter

## Research Highlight: *Beef Cattle Production*

### Effects of dam age on growth performance and carcass measurements of crossbred steers

*Famous Yang, Fred Poblman, Jeremy Powell, Karen Anschutz, Elizabeth Backes, John Richeson, James Hornsby, Jana Reynolds, and Bill Lindsey*

Past research has reported that the most productive cows in a cow herd are approximately 6 years old or older. A recent study reported that dam age affected pre-weaning performance of crossbred male calves, but had minimal effect on carcass traits when steers were finished to a common compositional endpoint over three years. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect

of dam age on Angus crossbred steer performance and carcass quality measurements over a four-year period.

Calves born to cows in group Age 11+ had greater birth weight compared with the rest of the groups and Age 3 and Age 4-7 calves had the lowest birth weight. Calves from Age 7-10 had greater adjusted weaning weight than Age 4-6.

Steer carcass measurements (hot carcass weight, ribeye area, yield grade, backfat thickness, percent kidney, pelvic and heart fat, and marbling) were not different regard-

less of cow age group. The percentage of steers grading choice, select, or prime did not differ between age groups. As previous research suggested, a possible reason for these measurements being similar between treatments is because steers were fed to a common endpoint degree of finish (1/2 inch backfat).

- Dam age affected preweaning performance of crossbred male calves.
- Carcass traits and measurements were not affected by dam age. }

## University of Arkansas Hosts 72nd Annual Pasture and Forage Conference

The 72nd Southern Pasture and Forage Crop Improvement Conference (SPFCIC) took place from May 14 to May 16 at the Chancellor Hotel and North Farm in Fayetteville. The conference was attended by professionals from Auburn University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, Texas A&M University, The Noble Foundation, University of Arkansas, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Puerto Rico, University of Tennessee, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), USDA-ARS Grazinglands Research Lab, and USDA-NRCS.

The multi-day conference focused on forage production, pasture management, economics of beef production, and life cycle assessments of resources. Speakers were from the University of Arkansas, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Tyson Foods.

The first and third days of the conference consisted of talks by forage and production experts around the country, with topics such as "Agriculture in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria" by Edil Vidal Torres of the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez and "Economic challenges of Cattle Operations" by Mike Popp, professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Arkansas. Andrew Sharpley from the Crop, Soil, and En-



Pete Hornsby, Beth Kegley, and Jase Ball discuss research at the Savoy Stocker Unit.

vironmental Science Department and Greg Thoma from the Fulbright College Chemical Engineering Department highlighted soil and water quality concerns and life cycle analyses in beef production systems.

The second day of the conference was a field tour, with visits to the University of Arkansas Savoy Unit, Haak Farms, Pasture Dairy, University of Arkansas Discovery Farm, Jim Singleton's bermudagrass hay operation in Maysville, and the University of Arkansas North Farm. The field tour was the highlight of the conference, as attendees learned about the diverse agricultural enterprises in Northwest Arkansas and the challenges that come with a rapidly urbanizing landscape.

The tour was concluded with a joint dinner at AES facilities, which was attended by the new Associate Vice President of the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Jean-Francois Meullenet.

The event was primarily organized and hosted by Dirk Philipp, Associate Professor of Forages at the University of Arkansas Department of Animal Science, and Cheryl Mackowiak, this year's conference chair and Associate Professor of Nutrition Management and Water Quality at the University of Florida. }



Dirk Philipp speaks at the North Farm.

## 29th Annual 4-State Dairy Days in Bentonville

Animal Science faculty and graduate students participated in the 29th Annual 4-State Dairy Days at the Benton County Fairgrounds the first weekend in June. The four states involved are Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. A record number of cattle were exhibited this year.

The three-day event consisted of several youth activities, cattle show, and heifer sale. Youth contests included a dairy olympics, dairy ambassador, showmanship, quiz bowl, dairy judging, skill-a-thon, and fitting contest.

Animal Science graduate students helped with the skill-a-thon and conducted the quiz bowl contests. Four senior division teams and five junior teams participated in the quiz bowl competition. Winners of the senior division will attend the National Dairy Quiz Bowl at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, KY.

4-State Dairy Days is hosted by the Benton County Dairy Industry Association. }



Animal science graduate students Colton Althaber and Jamie Hawley pose with student Palmer Pittman and her calf at Dairy Days.