

# 2004 grilling campaign designed to boost beef demand

By Charlene Schuster, Executive Director, Montana Beef Council



Responding to a blaze of beef sales last summer, America's beef producers are heating up the summer of 2004 with an aggressive promotional campaign designed to increase beef demand.

The national promotion will run through Labor Day and receive radio support in 44 major U.S. markets. This year's summer grilling promotion also will help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the hamburger, widely reported to first make its public appearance at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904.

The Montana Beef Council will enhance the national radio advertising promotion with over 950 radio spots targeting consumers in-state. The promotion is funded by cattlemen through their \$1-per-head Beef Checkoff Program. Building on the success of the 2003 grilling campaign, this summer's program will focus on all cuts of beef, including the chuck and round, and will carry the tagline, "Beef. It's What's For Dinner.®"

Keeping in mind that last year's promotion took place in a period of time—May to Labor Day—of reduced supplies and higher prices than the year before, beef dollar sales volume increased 3.4 percent and grilling cuts sales volume increased 4.2 percent. This certainly indicates that this campaign is vital for cattle producers in order to keep beef on Americans' plates.

Other state beef councils will again play a major role both in rollout of the campaign and expansion of messages within their own states and regions. Thirty state beef councils ordered in-store, point-of-sale materials in 2003, and it is



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# The Canadian Beef Situation

by Dr. Gary Brester and Dr. John Marsh, Professors in the MSU Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics

I submitted five questions to Drs. Brester and Marsh and asked their opinions about beef trade with Canada. The following are my questions and their answers. —John Paterson, Editor

**Q: The U.S. has allowed certain beef imports from Canada during the past few months. Would allowing Canada to export cattle to the U.S. have a major influence on U.S. cattle prices?**

**Brester:** We first have to recognize that all beef importing countries barred imports from Canada following the single case of BSE that occurred in Canada last spring. In effect, this significantly reduced the world's supply of grain-fed beef at a time of relatively low supplies and rising demand. This multilateral action contributed to approximately 20% of the increase in U.S. beef prices during 2003. A unilateral decision by the U.S. to import Canadian beef increases the supply of beef to U.S. consumers, and will lower beef and cattle prices. Of course, the markets have already adjusted given that the U.S. is importing some beef from Canada. Thus, it makes little difference whether the U.S. imports Canadian beef or Canadian cattle. A decision to import Canadian cattle could certainly cause a short term reduction in cattle prices—especially if imports are allowed at a time when U.S. packing plants are operating at capacity. Conversely, if Canadian cattle imports resume during a time of relatively short fed cattle supplies, then one would expect only a small, short term price impact. Recall that Canadian cattle imports represent only 4% of U.S. cattle slaughter. In fact, if Canadian cattle imports help U.S. packing plants operate at more efficient levels, this is a positive outcome for the U.S. cattle industry. In addition, futures markets appear to have already anticipated the resumption of normal trade activity between the U.S., Canada, and importing countries.

Nonetheless, if a producer has cattle on showlists at the time of a “short term” negative price effect, losses can be devastating. Thus, it is important that producers manage price risk in anticipation of such events. Fortunately, the near and long term futures and options markets are providing solid price risk management opportunities. Tom Urban, former CEO of Pioneer Hybrid, once explained risk

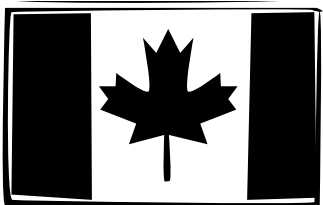
management to me in the following way. He said that you can choose to manage risk through negotiation, insurance, and futures markets. However, if you decide to forego the use of such tools to manage risk, then you must be willing to live with both the positive and negative consequences of the gamble that you have willingly taken. In either case, the worst thing you can do is ignore risk.

**Q: Some have argued that U.S. imports of Canadian beef and cattle should be banned for seven years so that Canada can demonstrate that their system is BSE-free. What would the ramifications of such an action be?**

**Marsh:** After the BSE outbreak in the United Kingdom, Canada and the U.S. instituted similar programs to minimize the risks of BSE transmission. To a great extent, it is much more important to consider the world's reaction to U.S. and Canadian efforts to minimize this risk. Although Canada is much more dependent on beef exports than is the U.S., both countries need healthy export markets. For example, Canada has historically been the third or fourth largest export market for U.S. beef. The continuation of a ban by the U.S. on imports of Canadian beef and cattle would not have much of an effect on U.S. prices if the rest of the world would decide to import Canadian beef.

**Q: If the U.S. refuses to open our borders to imports of Canadian beef and cattle, could this have implications with respect to the World Trade Organization?**

**Brester:** Participating countries have developed the WTO to establish and enforce trade rules so that member countries do not unfairly invoke trade restrictions. However, all WTO member countries retain the right to ensure that imports are safe. This, of course, is the heart of the beef trade disagreement between the U.S. and the E.U. regarding the use of growth hormones. Scientific evidence is used in trade disputes to determine whether or not consumers are at risk. If the rest of the world decides that the Canadian industry has a safe beef system, then the U.S. would have to prove that Canadian beef is unsafe if we were to continue a unilateral trade ban.



**Q: Some have argued that the ban on U.S. imports of Canadian cattle and beef that occurred in 2003 was the major reason for record cattle prices last year. Was this the major reason?**

**Marsh:** Without a doubt, the world's trade embargo was a catalyst for record prices in 2003. Nonetheless, U.S. fed and feeder cattle prices were already 20% higher in May 2003 than in October 2002 because of supply and demand fundamentals. My research has shown that about 20% of 2003 price increases was the result of the U.S. ban on Canadian cattle and beef imports. The majority of the price increase (70%) was the result of strong consumer demand, reduced domestic supplies, lower slaughter weights, and increased by-product values. Another 10% of the price increase was caused by lower worldwide beef supplies. More importantly, if only the U.S. had banned Canadian beef imports, the impact on U.S. cattle prices would have been even smaller than the 20% increase suggested by my research.

**Q: Why is there so much animosity and divisiveness in the cattle business? What started it and can it be moderated?**

**Brester:** First, part of the answer to the question centers on trade. For over 200 years, economists have recognized that trade is beneficial for societies. However, we also recognize that trade is not likely beneficial for every group within a society. Second, it is often convenient for some to think about "U.S. imports" or "Canadian exports," but in reality, neither "country" directly imports or exports beef. It is companies within those countries that choose to import or export so that they can operate profitable enterprises. Third, in many respects, the beef industry is much like other industries in which many segments exist between the raw input and retail levels. For example, high feeder cattle prices are good for feeder cattle producers, but gnaw away at feedlot profits—much like high steel and labor prices reduce the profitability of tractor manufacturers. Fourth, some individuals and groups will often use the "trade" issue as a means to further personal, political, and group agendas. Often, the stated goals of these agendas are thinly veiled and inconsistent with proposed actions. Fifth, economists agree that competition within and across economic sectors increases the availability of goods and services and reduces prices to consumers. So, much like a basketball game in which spectators enjoy viewing competition and appreciating its outcome, that enjoyment would be greatly reduced if spectators were forced to participate in that competition—that is, which of us would like to be on the receiving end of a Shaquille O'Neal elbow?



# Managing for Change

*by Douglas L. Steele, Vice Provost and  
Director of Extension*



**Dr. Steele began as Extension Director on Jan. 1, 2004—Eds.**

Some of my earliest memories of raising and exhibiting livestock were centered around the word "change." It seemed that we were always changing feed rations, changing management practices and, yes, even changing the bedding. When I became a county Extension for Agriculture/4-H Livestock in the early 1980's, the theme of change continued as I now assisted with the selection of keep/cull animals, practiced different grooming techniques and gave advice on finishing or fitting animals for show or market. Change followed me wherever I went!

All you have to do is pick up a newspaper or read a newsletter on a regular basis to quickly discover that change is happening in every area of our economy, and it is probably as apparent in the beef industry as anywhere else. From the markets to BSE, from animal identification to country of origination labeling, from grazing to transportation, opportunities abound for producers to make decisions that will have a direct impact on their bottom dollar. Through the work of the Montana State University Extension Service, the College of Agriculture, and the Agricultural Experiment Stations, our goal is to provide research-based, non-biased information to assist individuals when making decisions about their operations. This information must be provided in a timely, relevant manner on which educated decisions can be based.

While we don't always have to agree with the changes that are taking place across the globe, it is important that change is recognized and acknowledged. As the new Director for the Extension Service, I pledge that we will continue our efforts to support the beef industry across Montana and provide access to education that will enable producers to make informed decisions. This is not an easy task in our fast-paced society, but those in the "know" will be the ones to make change an ally for prosperity.



# Early Weaning Beef Calves During Drought Conditions

by Greg Lardy, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, NDSU Animal and Range Sciences Department, and Russ Danielson, Associate Professor, NDSU Animal and Range Sciences Department

Traditionally, calves are weaned at six to seven months of age. In typical spring calving herds in the northern Great Plains, this is usually October or November. However, during drought, forage is generally limiting and early weaning should be considered as a management tool. Time of weaning will have impacts on cow and calf performance as well as health and productivity of the native range or pasture.

## Advantages of Early Weaning

- **Improved cow body condition.** Lactating cows can lose body condition due to the increased nutrient requirements associated with lactation. When drought conditions exist, this situation is usually made worse by lack of forage in drought stressed pastures. By weaning early, the cow's nutrient requirements for lactation are eliminated and cows are able to maintain or increase body condition prior to the fall and winter feeding period.
- **Improved calf performance.** During a drought, calves may not be able to successfully compete with cows for adequate forage. By weaning early and providing a highly nutritious diet, calves can reach their growth potential. Early weaning, coupled with feeding a high concentrate diet, has resulted in increased quality grade a slaughter, according to research conducted at several universities.
- **Improved conception rates.** Weaning early can result in improved conception rates, provided the calves are weaned during the breeding season. This would require weaning calves at a very young age (calves need to be weaned at 45 to 105 days of age to allow increased conception rates). When weaned early enough, cows have a greater opportunity to rebreed in an optimum time frame and an increase in conception rate can be expected.
- **Improved forage availability for the cow.** Early weaning reduces the cows dry matter intake and also eliminates the demand on the forage from the calf. Consequently, the cows remaining on the

pasture have access to more forage and demands on the pasture are reduced, which can enhance sustainability and forage production in the future.

## Disadvantages of Early Weaning

- **Increased attention to management is required.** Early weaning requires greater attention to proper health, nutrition, and management practices.
- **Increased cash costs.** Weaning calves earlier will result in increased cash costs for the rancher or beef cattle producer. Instead of pasture and their mother's milk, early weaned calves will eat high quality grains, hays, protein supplements and/or commercially prepared feeds. In addition, beef cattle producers must have facilities to feed calves or hire a custom backgrounder or feedlot to do this work.

## Reducing Nutrient Requirements of the Cow Herd

Lactation represents the greatest nutrient demand for cows during a year-long production cycle. Lactation increases demand for energy, protein, and other nutrients. One of the simplest ways to reduce nutrient requirements is to wean the calf. This practice can cut nutrient requirements by one-third to one-half depending on milk production of the cow. Early weaned calves can achieve adequate rates of growth if given access to a high quality ration. By the time calves are 3 to 4 months of age, they are consuming significant amounts of forage. At 6 to 7 months of age, calves will consume approximately half the amount of forage as a mature cow. Following weaning, dry cows will eat less forage than lactating cows, further reducing demand placed on the pasture. By removing the demands of lactation, acceptable pregnancy rates and calving season length can usually be maintained.

Producers may consider early weaning only a portion of the herd. In that case, logical candidates for early weaning are cows nursing their first and second calves. These animals have nutrient requirements for growth in addition to maintenance and lactation.

The nutrient requirements for lactation and growth are given higher priority than the need to reproduce. By removing the demands of lactation on nutrient requirements, growth and reproduction will receive a greater proportion of the nutrients available. Producers may also consider early weaning for cows that are in thin or poor condition.

### How Early Can Calves Be Weaned?

Calves have been successfully weaned as early as two months of age. However, this is not practical under most ranch conditions. Weaning March and April born calves in late July or early August is generally preferable to earlier time frames.

### Special Health Considerations

To ensure the health and well being of early weaned calves beef cattle producers must provide an excellent health and vaccination program. Be sure to work with your local veterinarian to properly design a health program which will work on your ranch. The following are general recommendations to follow:

- Castrate, dehorn and brand calves 10 to 14 days prior to weaning.
- Vaccinate for clostridial (7-way) and viral (4-way) infections. Work with your local veterinarian to develop a specific program. Follow the label recommendations and re-vaccinate if necessary. Administer all vaccinations in the neck area to avoid injections site blemishes.
- Treat for internal and external parasites.
- Provide protection from flies.
- Provide a good quality trace mineral and vitamin (A, D, E) supplement to all calves.
- Consider using growth implants. They will increase weight gain and improve feed efficiency. Do not implant potential replacement heifers.
- Provide access to adequate quantities of good quality, clean water. Clean watering equipment on a regular basis.
- Monitor calves daily for symptoms of respiratory disease, digestive disturbances, scours, coccidiosis, and intake level.

### Bunk Management—What's Best for the Calf

Early weaned calves should consume 2.75 to 3.25% of their body weight in dry feed daily. Rations should be palatable and free of dust. The most nutritious rations won't work effectively if calves don't consume them.

Offering a creep feed three to four weeks prior to weaning will help the calves adjust to eating

processed feeds and make the weaning transition period less stressful. Commercial creep feeds, byproducts such as wheat middlings, barley malt sprouts, soyhulls, or whole oats all make excellent creep feeds.

Initially, calves should be offered long stem grass hay. Top dress the commercial feed or concentrate mix over the long stem hay for the first three to five days. Once the calves are consuming these feeds readily, begin offering mixed rations. Gradually adjust the calves to greater levels of grain and/or concentrates. Adding a liquid supplement such as molasses, condensed distillers solubles, or commercial liquid supplements will help control dust, improve palatability, and reduce sorting.

Do not start calves on silages and other fermented feedstuffs. The fermented odor and flavor of these feeds can cause feed aversion in freshly weaned calves. Wait until the calves are consuming the ration adequately and then begin blending in these feeds.

### Facility Requirements

Place calves in a small, secure, well-sheltered pen or pasture after weaning. If possible, sort calves by weight into smaller pens so that small calves and large calves are not competing for the same feed and water.

During extremely dry conditions, dust can become a problem. Consider using sprinklers to control dust in pens if necessary.

Waterers and feed bunks should be placed along the fence line to allow calves to find feed and water easily. Freshly weaned calves will tend to walk the fence line. Placement of feed and water in the center of the pen make it more difficult to find.

### Summary

Drought conditions are a periodic occurrence in the northern Great Plains. Early weaning is one management option which should be considered during drought. Early weaning will be more successful and less stressful when adequate attention to nutrition, health, management, and facilities is considered. Early weaning should be considered as part of a normal drought management strategy.

For more information see these extension bulletins:

- <http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/ansci/beef/as1160w.htm>
- <http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/ansci/beef/as1154w.htm>
- <http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/ansci/beef/as1158w.htm>



# Grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets outlook and management options for 2004



Sue Blodgett

by Sue Blodgett, Extension Entomologist, Montana State University

Grasshoppers and Mormon crickets are native components of the rangeland ecosystem and are voracious feeders, consuming approximately one-half of their body weight in green forage per day. There are about 12 grasshopper species (called the Dirty Dozen) that are responsible for damage to rangelands. Their populations can reach outbreak levels and cause serious economic losses, especially when accompanied by a drought.

Judging by the Grasshopper Hazard Map for Montana, this year will be an important one for managing grasshoppers in rangeland and cropland around the state. We are seeing grasshopper and Mormon cricket infestations about three weeks earlier than usual this year. The Insect Diagnostic Lab has received reports of grasshopper and Mormon Cricket hatch this year.

Fifteen to 20 grasshopper nymphs per square yard in rangeland or pastures is considered the economic threshold. This number is considered to equate to eight to 10 adults. However, the economic threshold can be modified by weather conditions. If moisture is adequate regrowth of the consumed or destroyed rangeland vegetation may offset the damage. Estimates of daily dry matter intake for grasshoppers range from 30 to 250 percent of body weight compared to 1.5 to 2.5 percent for beef cattle. A 1250 pound cow would consume 19 to 31 pounds of herbage each day. The same amount of herbage could be consumed by 80 - 104 pounds of grasshoppers in a single day.

## **Management:**

The RAATs program developed at the University of Wyoming is an economical method of treating rangeland for grasshoppers in which both the insecticide rate of insecticide and acreage treated is reduced by alternating untreated and treated swaths. There are savings both in the acreage treated and in the amount of product used.

Pesticides in treated swaths kill grasshoppers directly and also provide control as hoppers move from treated to untreated swaths. Predators and parasites are preserved in untreated swaths so that

they can suppress grasshopper populations. Recent insecticide trials in Wyoming indicate that reduced rates of carbaryl (Sevin) both in the amount of pesticide and area treated of about 50 percent only reduced control from 85 to 79 percent. This reduction in pesticide would reduce control costs by 60 percent. This IPM approach can reduce the cost of control and the amount of insecticide used.

RAATs grasshopper control obtained in Wyoming studies found 80-95 percent of a standard, high chemical rate, blanket treatment with 50% cost reduction per acre. This approach is a win-win for rangeland managers by reducing costs, reducing pesticide use and resulting in effective control. A brochure on using this method is available on the web <http://www.sdvc.uwyo.edu/grasshopper/>. The RAATS chemical options include carbaryl (Sevin XLR), an insect growth regulator called Diflubenzuron (Dimilin 2L) and malathion. Dimilin interferes with the hopper's ability to molt and must be applied to 2nd - 3rd stage grasshoppers. It has been found to be very effective but signs of control may take several days (until hoppers molt). It is not effective once the grasshopper population has reached adult stage.

## **Insecticide Options**

Rangeland grasshopper control options are covered in detail in the High Plains IPM Guide located on the web at <http://highplainsipm.org>. Both carbaryl (several formulations of Sevin available) and malathion are available for later season applications, once grasshoppers have reached the adult stage. However, their effectiveness is directly related to residual activity of the product because of the movement and re-infestation potential of adult grasshoppers (residual: carbaryl, 14 days; malathion, 1 day).

## **Rotational Grazing (from Jerry Onsager):**

A long-term strategy to reduce frequency and intensity of grasshopper outbreaks was developed by Dr. Jerry Onsager, USDA, ARS, retired. He examined

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# Tips for Dealing with Drought on Range

by John Lacey, former Extension Range Management Specialist, Montana State University

Drought is a serious obstacle to successful range livestock management. Producers must understand how drought affects plants, grazing animals, and livestock management, and what options exist.

- Forage production is decreased dramatically, but reductions are less on ranges in good and excellent ecological condition.
- Ability of perennial plants to recover after drought is closely related to their vigor before and during the drought. Excessive grazing (more than 60 percent of current year's growth) decreases the ability of some plants to recover. Moderate use (25 to 55 percent) does not seem to affect the recovery rate.
- Livestock numbers must be reduced according to forage supply. Yearlings should be marketed early, while calves should be weaned early and fed at home, at another feedlot, or sold. Cull low-producing cows.
- Retaining a rotational grazing system during drought is recommended over continuous grazing. Periodic rests help plants maintain vigor. Plants are not able to regrow if grazed repeatedly.
- Concentrating more animals into a single herd is recommended over having several smaller herds. By having more animals in a pasture, the entire pasture will be grazed more uniformly, and more use will be made of the less-preferred plants.
- Supplement low-quality feed. Feed supplements can often be used to correct low forage quality. However, feed supplements are usually not an economical substitute for range forage.
- Try not to buy, or put up, weed-infested hay. The future cost of feeding weed-infested hay far outweighs its feed value in the short-run. If weedy hay must be fed, feed in an area or holding pasture that is removed from streams, riparian areas, and wooded areas. Be sure to keep your stock confined for several days after feeding the bad hay to prevent them from spreading viable seed through their digestive tract. Observe holding pastures and feeding areas closely, and treat weed infestations.
- Try to take advantage of areas dominated with annual species. They should be grazed early in the season when their nutrient value is high. This will allow grazing deferment on the higher-condition range dominated with perennial plants.
- Graze crested wheatgrass early and longer than normal. It is one of our plants most tolerant of grazing.
- Keep cattle on subirrigated sites longer than usual. Fertilizer could be used to increase forage production on many of these sites. However, fertilizer is a cash cost, and soils should be tested before fertilizer is applied.
- If irrigation water is less than usual, concentrate it on your best-producing hay meadows. Graze the rest.
- Keep accurate cost data during normal years. Management decisions are easier to make if production costs during a drought year can be compared to the normal situation.
- You must maintain adequate water for the livestock. Dry cows use less water than lactating cows and will graze farther from water. In some areas you may be able to develop a spring or seep (a flow of 1/2 gallon per minute amounts to 720 gallons per day). Consider the possibility of installing a larger storage tank and piping water to troughs. You may need to install highpressure plastic pipe to carry water from a central source. Although expensive initially, pipelines will prove useful for many years. Hauling stock water is expensive. However, it may be a viable strategy in some situations.
- Do not restock until you are certain that your range has recovered. 

## On-line drought resources

The MSU Extension Service has compiled several drought resources for agricultural producers, homeowners and consumers at:  
<http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/drought/>

Also see a four-state drought resource page at:  
<http://www.4statebackgrounding.montana.edu/links/drought.htm>

# Industry leaders step up to help Steer-A-Year

## Program re-institutes contests for 2004-05



by Mike Tess, MSU Animal & Range Sciences department head

The Steer-A-Year Program has a rich legacy of helping students at MSU. Now, with the help of volunteers from the livestock industry, SAY is looking to take a big step towards an even brighter future. The newly formed SAY Steering Committee is helping the Animal and Range Sciences Department and the College of Agriculture guide and promote the program. Chaired by Dean Peterson (**Judith Gap**), the committee is composed of donors from several segments of the beef industry, plus faculty and staff from MSU: Gary Adams (**Billings**), Harry Allen (**Custer**), Caren Coffee (**Miles City**), Rob Fraser (**Miles City**), Tim Gill (**Helena**), Les Graham (**Bozeman**), Kevin Halverson (**Big Timber**), Byron Hould (MSU), Marc King (MSU), Jay Meyer (**Stevensville**), Kevin Pearce (**Sheridan**), Bob Redland (**Hysham**), Mike Thompson (MSU), and Josh Wanago (MSU).

In keeping with the tradition of SAY, steer contests have returned to the program, including Best Initial Steer, Top Rate of Gain, and Best Carcass (see below).

### **Q: What is the mission of MSU Steer-A-Year Program (SAY)?**

The MSU SAY program's primary focus is to provide opportunities for students by securing funds for academic excellence.

### **Q: Who benefits from SAY?**

Proceeds from SAY support student scholarships and student activities at MSU. Donors may designate their gifts to one or more of the following MSU student programs: MSU College of Agriculture, MSU Athletic Scholarship Association, and MSU Rodeo Team.

### **Q: What programs in the College of Agriculture benefit from SAY?**

The highest priority is the MSU Judging Team. SAY is the primary means of support for the Judging Team. Donors may also specify other student programs.



Some members of the MSU livestock judging team (left to right): Cody Wilsey of Big Timber, Nicole Griffin of Miles City, Scott Perkins of Deer Lodge, Kelsey Rolfe of Bozeman, Lisa Perzay of Deer Lodge and Gary Todd of Big Timber. The team is coached by Marc King of Big Timber.

### **Q: What programs in MSU Athletics benefit from SAY?**

Proceeds from SAY help provide scholarships for student-athletes in all sports.

### **Q: What are the goals of SAY?**

SAY is a student-focused program. Students benefit financially via scholarships and support of student activities. In addition, donated steers are used in several beef cattle courses on campus dealing with various aspects of beef cattle management and marketing. Students are involved in collecting performance data. The SAY Steering Committee has set a target of 150 donations for 2004.

### **Q: How may people make donations to SAY?**

Donations to SAY may be made several ways:

- Live steer (the traditional and most popular)
- Cash donation
- Proceeds from an auction market sale.
- Gifts of feed grain or forage.

**Q: How can auction market sales benefit SAY?**

With the help of the Montana Association of Livestock Auction Markets (MALAM), producers may sell livestock of any class (e.g., cattle, sheep, horses, pigs; any age or gender) at a cooperating MALAM auction market and have the proceeds of one or more animals designated to the SAY Program. Forms also are available at the “chute house” at each cooperating MALAM auction market. Donors can designate which animals contribute to SAY, and which MSU programs benefit from the proceeds.

**Q: How may agricultural businesses help the SAY program?**

Businesses may participate in several ways. Donations of vaccine, feed, supplements, pharmaceuticals, trucking, or cash help increase the value of SAY to students.

**Q: What are the criteria for steer contests?**

Steers can compete in three contests: Best Initial Steer, Top Rate of Gain, and Best Carcass. Best Initial Steers will be determined by the MSU Judging Team. Steers will be ranked based on predicted feedlot and carcass performance at the MSU campus during MSU’s Ag Appreciation Weekend, November 12-13, 2004.

To be eligible for the Best Carcass Contest steers must arrive on campus prior to the steer judging (on or before November 12). Steers must be judged to have excellent initial feeder quality and weigh at least 550 lb upon arrival at MSU. Carcass data from these steers will be communicated back to donors.

To be eligible for the Rate of Gain Contest steers must arrive on campus during a three-week time frame (November 6 through November 27) and weight at least 500 lb.

Steers in the Rate of Gain contest that do not qualify for the Carcass contest may be marketed after the gain test (75 days). Steers that do not qualify for either contest may be sold at the discretion of MSU.


**Q: How are steers delivered to MSU?**

Donors may deliver their steers or work with MSU to arrange delivery. A variety of options are available. Call the contacts listed below for help.



*Lisa Duffey, who is the Montana Beef Network coordinator and former coordinator for Steer-A-Year, judges two steers donated to the program.*

**Q: Who should I contact for more information?**

To receive a brochure and additional information on the Steer-A-Year Program contact Mike Tess or Debbie Wiley in the Department of Animal and Range Sciences, MSU. Phone: 406-994-3721. 

**Have you seen these people on your ranch???**

**Montana Beef Network staffers Travis Standley, Lisa Duffey, Kim Skinner and Brian Rainey were among the College of Agriculture graduates who received their diplomas May 8.**



## Jacobsen named Ag Dean

Jeff Jacobsen, who since June 2003 has been interim dean of the Montana State University College of Agriculture and interim director of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, was named Monday as its permanent dean and director effective July 1.

Jacobsen, a soil scientist, was head of MSU's Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences from 1994-2003 and a member of that department's faculty and the Extension Service since 1986.

"This is a critical leadership position at MSU and in the state, and we are very pleased that we have the skill and expertise that Jeff Jacobsen brings to this position," said MSU's President Geoff Gamble.

Jacobsen said that his first task will be to solidify the leadership within the college, since there is a "domino effect" caused by his leaving the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences.

"Then we'll identify the program elements that are uniquely important to our teaching and research missions and work to grow those. With those as priorities, we will look to integrate the College and Experiment Station's needs for the future."

Jacobsen said he accepted the position because of the unique position of the College and Experiment Station to the university and the quality of faculty, staff and students.

"The College of Agriculture and Experiment Station are the foundations of MSU. With that as both historical fact and a future reality, this was too good an opportunity to pass up," he said. "Our teaching and research activities are very good, and we will continue to have a goal of always getting better."

Jacobsen earned his bachelor's degree in soil science from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, a master's degree in agronomy from Colorado State University in Fort Collins and a doctorate in soil science—specifically fertility and plant nutrition in winter wheat—from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. Jacobsen says he grew up "all over the world as a military child." His father grew up in Chinook, Mont.

Jacobsen replaces Sharron Quisenberry, who quit in 2003 to pursue an opportunity at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



Jeff Jacobsen

## From the Editors

This issue marks the end of the tenth year that I (Suzi Taylor) have worked with John Paterson to produce *Beef: Questions & Answers*. That means I've been hanging out with John longer than I've been married!

In all my work for the MSU Extension Service, *Beef: Q&A* is one of my favorite projects, because I believe it embodies the spirit of Extension and Montana State University's land-grant mission: to deliver practical, trustworthy information that makes it easier for people to run their operations and live their lives. I hope you enjoy this publication as much as John and I do.

When we started in the Fall of 1995, we hadn't yet seen BSE in North America, and feeder cattle prices were predicted to be \$59-\$64/cwt for the Fall of '96. One of our first articles was "What can producers do to market their cattle during tough times?" We also discussed retained ownership, rangeland weed management, hay tonnage and quality, mineral supplements, wildlife on the ranch, and developing replacement heifers—all topics that are still very important to our readers.

I hope you have a wonderful summer! Thank you for reading *Beef: Questions & Answers*.

—Suzi and John



Partners in publication: John and Suzi

## New Extension Publications

Visit [www.montana.edu/publications](http://www.montana.edu/publications) to view:

**Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Parenting the Next Generation**

**Understanding Grief**

**Soil Carbon Sequestration: Farm Management Practices Can Affect Greenhouse Gases**

**What to do when you lose your job** (Revision)

**Pesticide Labels** (Revision)

**Field Care of Harvested Big Game** (newly posted on-line)

## Grasshopper outlook, continued


twice-over rotational grazing compared with traditional season-long grazing for grasshopper outbreak control. Some of his results include:

| Rotational Grazing                                 | Season-long Grazing   |
|--|---|
| No difference in grasshopper species               |   |
| Nymphs develop slower                              | Nymphs develop more rapidly                                     |
| Survival rates by stage were lower, less variable  | Survival rates higher   |
| Fewer adults produced                              | More adults produced - 3.3 more hoppers than rotational grazing |
| Adults appeared later in season                    | Adults appeared earlier in season – more time for egg lay       |
| Forage consumption 10 - 23% (compared with cattle) | Forage consumption 91 – 168% (compared with cattle)             |
| Outbreak hopper species remained low               | 3 hopper species contributed to outbreak                        |

## Large-Scale Grasshopper Spray Programs

USDA APHIS has funds to match large-scale grasshopper treatment. Federal rangeland eligible for cooperative grasshopper suppression treatments from APHIS includes: rangeland blocks of more than 10,000 acres that would protect forage as well as prevent re-infestation if treated; incipient populations, or hot spots of grasshoppers, that, if treated, would prevent a wider spread of outbreaks; and federal or trust land borders that, if treated, would prevent the movement of economically threatening populations of grasshoppers to adjacent private agricultural lands. Cost-sharing includes 100% on federal lands, 50% on state lands and 33% on private lands with the remainder paid for by the landowner.

In many years, federal funds put aside for this type of program are spent or allocated in states to the south before the need for rangeland grasshopper treatment is reached in Montana. However, this year, Gary Adams, Director, USDA, APHIS Montana is putting together programs early so that Montana ranchers and landowners can take advantage of federal matching funds.

Gary Adams can be contacted at: 406- 449-5210 or Gary.D.Adams@usda.gov 



## We're outta here!

**On May 8, the MSU College of Agriculture held its graduation ceremonies. Sen. Conrad Burns was the guest speaker.**

## Beef Checkoff, continued from p. 1

anticipated that at least that many will be participating again this year.

One of the most powerful elements of the program is development of a strategic promotion partnership with A-1 Steak Sauce and Marinades. In 2004, A-1 will offer coupons for \$1 off the price of beef with the purchase of A-1 at retail locations across the country. In addition, A-1 will fund two national freestanding insert ads in the Sunday edition of daily newspapers in more than 50 major markets. Each insert will reach a total of 35 million readers on May 16 (pre-Memorial Day) and again on June 20 (pre-Fourth of July). The coupon support—completely funded by partner participation—will seek to drive consumers to purchase more beef.

Other key elements of the summer grilling promotion include extensive radio advertising, in conjunction with retailers in 44 major markets, plus national public relations support with special added-value promotional opportunities and various point-of-sale materials.

With our aggressive 2004 summer promotion efforts, we anticipate increased sales of all fresh beef, resulting in yet another successful summer for grocery retailers and the beef industry. The ability to build on our experiences from 2003 has allowed us to create an effective, targeted promotion and reach a greater number of consumers with key messages.

For more information about the 2004 Summer Grilling Promotion, visit the checkoff-funded Web site at [www.BeeftsWhatsForDinner.com](http://www.BeeftsWhatsForDinner.com).

*Beef: Questions & Answers is a joint project between MSU Extension and the Montana Beef Council. This column informs producers about current consumer education, promotion and research projects funded through the \$1 per head checkoff. For more information, contact the Montana Beef Council at (406) 442-5111 or at [beefcncl@mt.net](mailto:beefcncl@mt.net)*



## Upcoming Events

**MSGA Mid-year meeting**, Lewistown, June 10-11.

**Central Ag Research Center Forage Research & Hay Day**, Moccasin, June 22

**Southern Ag Research Center Field Day**, Huntley, July 6

**Northwestern Ag Research Center Field Day**, Creston, July 9

**Eastern Ag Research Center Field Day**, Sidney, July 13

**Central Ag Research Center Grain Tour**, Moccasin, July 14

**Northern Ag Research Center Field Day**, Havre, July 15

**Four-state beef consortium meeting**, Drought and marketing calves. Billings, Aug 3. Call (406) 994-3415 for information.

**Fort Keogh laboratory dedication**, Miles City, Aug. 10

**Fort Keogh field day**, Miles City, Aug. 11

# Have a great summer!



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