

# Cattle Newsletter

Ashe County Center

February 2018



## Inside This Issue

VQA Feeder  
Cattle Marketing  
Program

If You Can't Catch  
Them, You Can't  
Manage Them



## Contact Us

North Carolina Cooperative  
Extension, Ashe County Center  
134 Government Circle, Suite 202  
Jefferson, NC 28640

Phone: (336) 846-5850  
Fax: (336) 846-5882

<http://ashe.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension agent.

## Virginia Quality Assured (VQA) Feeder Cattle Marketing Program

Sale Date	Wean By	Last Day to Vaccinate
March 19	February 10	March 13
July 16	June 9	July 10
August 20	July 14	August 14
November 5	September 29	October 30
December 3	October 27	November 27

If you are planning to participate in a VQA Sale you **MUST** contact me at the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center at (336) 846-5850 three weeks prior to the sale date.

### The Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association (AFCA) initiated the VQA Program to:

- Improve the health and genetics of feeder cattle.
- Identify feeder cattle with superior health and/or genetic history to improve their marketability and reward producers for their efforts.
- Improve the communication between buyers and sellers of feeder cattle.
- Enhance the reputation of feeder cattle.
- Allow smaller producers the opportunity to share in load-lot premiums.

### General Program Guidelines:

To partner with the AFCA in this marketing program:

- Producers will become Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Certified.
- Vaccinations will be verified by a third party (Extension Agent, Veterinarian, Feeder Cattle Association Board Member).
- Calves intended for sale **must be consigned** by the Extension Office in Washington County, Virginia—234 West Valley Street, Suite B, Abingdon, VA 24210; Phone (276) 676-6309.
- Cattle must weigh a minimum of 400 pounds.
- All calves will be dehorned and healed.
- All steers must be healed (following castration) and showing no bullish characteristics.
- Heifers are “Guaranteed Open.” Producers consigning bred heifers will reimburse the purchaser \$200 per animal. Animals found bred in the market and returned to the producer will be subject to a **\$50 per head fee** payable to the AFCA.
- Steers are “Guaranteed” to be cleanly castrated with no animals displaying “stagish” characteristics. Animals found to be stags (verified by veterinarian, Extension Agent, or livestock grading official) will be subject to a \$100 per head fee payable to the purchaser.
- Animals must be owned by the seller for a minimum of 120 days. Producers intending to market purchased animals must notify Micah Orfield, Extension Agent Agriculture, at (336) 846-5850, of marketing intentions 90 days prior to sale.

**NC COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

N.C. A&T

NC STATE

## Weaning/Vaccinating/Tags:

- Calves must be weaned a minimum of 45 days.
- All vaccinations will be given according to BQA Guidelines and product label directions in the approved region of the neck.
- Vaccinations must be given after the calves are 120 days old and at least 14 days prior to delivery.
- Calves will be vaccinated for:
  1. 7-way Clostridials
  2. Modified-Live Viruses (IBR, PI3, BRSV, BVD I & II)
  3. Pasteurella

## Vaccines Commonly Used By Participating Producers Include:

### Modified-Live Viruses with Pasteurella:



### Clostridials/Blackleg Vaccines:

- If animals have not received “Blackleg” vaccine prior to weaning, use Alpha 7/MB 1.
- If animals have been vaccinated for Clostridials prior to weaning, give a booster vaccine with the same product that was used before.

**\*\*Other vaccines are effective and acceptable for use in the program. Please discuss vaccine selections with your Veterinarian or Extension Agent prior to vaccinating cattle.\*\***



## All Animals Will Be Identified With An Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association VQA Ear Tag:

- Tags are purchased from your local Extension Agent.
- Tags are \$2.00 each.
- Place tags in the animal’s **LEFT EAR**.
- **TAKE ALL HOME TAGS OUT.**

Gold tags are for use in cattle for which the vaccinations are certified. Purple tags are for use in cattle for which the vaccinations and genetics are certified. Discuss with your Extension Agent which tag color most accurately describes your herd.

### **Grading/Evaluation:**

1. Animals will be evaluated on-farm by VDACS Livestock Marketing Representatives.
2. **Marketable Weights**—In most instances we can market steers that weigh between 400 and 975 pounds. We can easily market heifers in a weight range of 400 to 850 pounds. If you plan on marketing in the VQA Program, evaluate animals and choose a sale date in which your animals will fit in the marketable weight ranges.
3. Only Large and Medium Frame 1's and 2's will be sold. No small frame or #3 muscle cattle will be accepted.
4. Breeds/colors accepted will include black, black-white face, and Charolais-X (no pink noses).
5. Animals graded on the farm will be reevaluated on "Take-up Day" at the Livestock Market. Animals with defects and/or do not match their respective group **will be removed** by the Graders. **It is the responsibility of the producer** to check with the Livestock Market to be sure that all of the calves are acceptable.
6. Producers with animals that are ineligible for sale left at the market after weigh-up is completed will receive a phone call reminder to pick them up.

### **Delivery/Take-Up Day:**

- Animals will be delivered to Tri-State Livestock Market in Abingdon, VA.
- Producers will provide a mailing address and phone number.
- Animals will be weighed individually on a first-come first serve basis.
- Weighing will begin at 7:00 a.m. unless other announcements are made.
- Producers are encouraged to get animals to the market as soon as possible (no later than 2:00 p.m.).
- Producers are responsible for determining if all animals were sale eligible. This information can be obtained at the market office. Ineligible animals will be penned awaiting their owners return.
- Checks will be available the day following the sale.

### **General Management Tips:**

- **Feeding**—A general recommendation for feeding/backgrounding calves is to feed grain at 1 1/2% of the animal's body weight (Ex:400 pound calf will get 6#'s grain, 500 pound calf will get 7.5#'s). It is the responsibility of the producer not to **excessively fill** animals prior to weighing. Animals that appear to be "filled" will be subject to rejection (**removed from the sale**) at final grading.
- **Tail Trimming**—If you choose to trim an animals tail, please do not cut it off level/even. Tail trimming is often used by "traders" to make animals look younger, and this is making the buyers suspicious as to whether the calves are home raised.
- **Castration**—It is important to get calves castrated early. Delayed castration is more stressful, it allows calves to develop "bullish features" (head and neck), and it results in the dropping of the pink covering of the penis (often generating the comment— "stag calf"). To prevent rejects on delivery day and to minimize buyer complaints, please castrate calves early.
- **Implants**—Producers are encouraged to implant calves (especially at mid-summer).

*For additional information regarding the VQA Feeder Cattle Sales, please contact the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center at (336) 846-5850.*

# If You Can't Catch Them, You Can't Manage Them

"If you can't catch them, then you can't manage them," if you don't have facilities, or facilities that work well, then you are less likely to provide important money making management techniques to your herd. Beef handling facilities can improve the profitability of an operation. Every cattleman needs a way to safely catch and restrain their cattle. A handling facility can contribute to both saving and making money. Handling facilities offer the opportunity for added value by carrying out practices, such as pregnancy checking, giving vaccines, applying dewormers to control external and internal parasites, giving implants, castrating and dehorning, that could add \$50 - \$100 per calf. That is a lot of money to gain and to put back into facilities.

Facilities do not have to be fancy or expensive. They should be strong, safe, and easy to use. When designing facilities or improving your existing one, remember cattle don't like going where they can't see an escape route. Avoid dead ends as cattle come through the chute, make sure there isn't a gate or wall in front of the head gate. This will cause them to try and return where they came from. Avoid taking them from bright lit areas to dark areas. Avoid any shadows that may fall along the area you want them to go. Keep any clothing or trash away from the chute. The chute, if built on a hill should have the cattle going up the hill instead of down. Build the chute so the cattle will not have to travel directly into the sun. It's easier to have an animal go forward if it can see another one in front. The herd instinct is stronger than the fear of confinement. Design or rework chutes so cattle can see other cattle where you want them to go.

A good cattle handling facility can reduce the risk of injury and stress to the animals and producer. When working cattle they become stressed, this can be lowered with good working facilities. Why is it important to eliminate stress in our cattle? Because cattle that are stressed will not gain weight as well, they will not milk as well, their immunity to diseases lowers, and it lowers the efficiency of the vaccine you may be giving. Another reason to avoid stress in cattle is to prevent dark meat. This can occur in cattle that are naturally flighty and from stress that can occur in the working facility. Stress can cause the meat to be dark colored at slaughter and the consumer prefers a bright cherry red color. Bruising is another problem for the beef industry. Back bruises are caused by gates that fall from above. Loin bruises result from horns, narrow entryways and rough handling. Shoulder bruises are caused by horns, protrusions and rough handling. I encourage you to evaluate your facility and cattle handling practices to improve your profitability, the quality of beef in Ashe County, and consumer confidence.

## Corral and Working Facility Dimensions

	To 600 lb	600-1200 lb	<1200 lb and Cow-Calf
Pen Space (sq ft/head)	14	17	20
Crowding Tub (sq ft/ head)	6	10	12
<b>Working Chute - Vertical Sides</b>			
Width (inches)	18	20-24	26-30
Minimum Length (feet)	20	20	20
<b>Working Chute - Sloping Sides</b>			
Width at Bottom (inches)	13	15	16
Width at Top (inches)	20	24	28
Minimum Length (feet)	20	20	20
<b>Working Chute Fence</b>			
Height - Minimum	45	50	60
Depth of Post - Minimum	30	30	30
<b>Corral Fence</b>			
Height	60	60	60
Depth of Posts - Minimum	30	30	30
<b>Loading Chute</b>			
Width (inches)	26	26	26-30
Length (minimum, feet)	12	12	12
Rise, in/ft	3.5	3.5	3.5



Sincerely,

Micah Orfield

Extension Agent, Agriculture