



CHAPS

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Verification increases value

Consumer demands has pushed the need for source and age verified cattle to the forefront. The acceptance—and need—is real. Jim Erickson, a managing partner in Stockmen’s Livestock in Dickinson, told the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association board at its September 17, 2009 meeting that source and age verified cattle is in the mainstream of beef production.

Erickson told those in attendance, “This is more than a want. It is a need. There are a lot of feedlots that are sending cattle to different places and they cannot unless the cattle are age and source verified.”

All animals processed by the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association through the CHAPS office are source and age verified. Each individual animal will have a Document of Record and will be verified through the CalfAID™ program, the only North Dakota based USDA Process Verified Program.

Erickson complimented the NDBCIA and its use of the CHAPS program. “Cattle have to be individually tagged to pass the test,” he agreed.

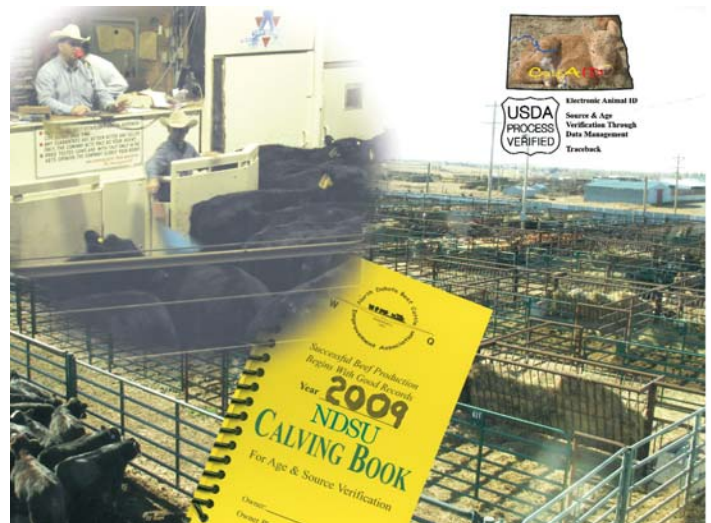
While tagging the calf is paramount to source and age verification, it is only one half of the equation.

NDBCIA Executive Director Dr. Kris Ringwall urged producers to “get the information processed. I bet over half of the producers in North Dakota have the ability to get into CalfAID™.

Ringwall explained further, “Some producers are reluctant to send in data but when they hear about potential value, the producers bring in the data and a report is issued. If you have a cow inventory and a calving book, you have as solid a system as there is. There is no question from an auditor’s perspective that you have those cattle.”

Ringwall continued, “This system is so simple. I don’t think people realize how simple it is. A calf is only age and source verified once.”

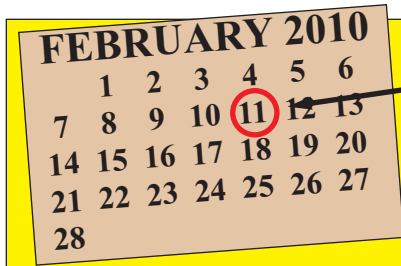
CalfAID™ is producer driven, Ringwall said. “We are the only one, or one of the very few, where the data comes from the producer and up. Most PVP systems are set where the information comes from the processor and down.”



A calving book that records the necessary data is essential to source and age verifying cattle. Source and age verified calves have many more marketing opportunities. A calving book, available free from the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, is the starting point. This graphic shows the pens at Stockmen’s Livestock in Dickinson and the inset shows Chad Stoltz selling calves in the ring. CalfAID™ is a USDA Process Verified Program. *OCC Graphic*

Erickson added, “One of the things I like about CalfAID™ is that audits are local. CalfAID™ is a nice little program and everything that I have seen is that it is good. By having all of the records, like you NDBCIA guys are doing, you are ready for the needs. Now is the time to get the ball rolling. Let’s do it now rather than be behind!”

Ringwall said, “I think we (NDBCIA, CHAPS and CalfAID™) are



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FEBRUARY 11, 2010

in the right place at the right time. We just need more producers to stand up and say what you are saying.”

At birth, each animal is given a visual identification (VID). The information is recorded in the calving book, along with the gender, dam and sire. Ideally, the calf is given an electronic identification (EID) at the time, however, some producers opt to place the EID in at weaning.

In any case, source and age verified cattle must have both a VID and an EID. This year, CalfAID™ participants must purchase their electronic tags from a vendor. In the past, the NDBCIA provided electronic tags as part of



Jim Erickson

a pilot program. Electronic tags are available from most animal supply stores.

At present, CalfAID™ producers get the complete data analysis the CHAPS computer program. “Identification at the premise and time of birth allows producers and animal health officials an early starting point should the need for an epidemiologic investigation exist,” Ringwall said.

The fee is only 50 cents for each animal record processed plus a \$5 processing fee per year.

The CalfAID™ connection, and processing through CHAPS, can offer producers the following data:

- Beef cattle records processing with the following information: sire evaluations(s),

dam reports (MPPA, etc.), birth, weaning and yearling weights, carcass analysis and summaries by gender and sire, calving intervals, % first cycle births, % second cycle births

- Age and source verification
- Data management
- Trace back

He also urged producers to get the tags in their calves as soon as possible. “This provides producers with the best data analysis possible and also creates opportunities for optimum herd management analysis. “Ultimately, the data analysis is in direct correlation to the information put into the CHAPS program,” Ringwall said. “The reports and benchmarks we can generate with the data are only made better with more detailed, accurate data collected and recorded by the producer.” ■

CalfAID™ participation involves 3-step process

The need for age and source verified cattle is real. The process of getting cattle age and source verified is simple.

To begin, calves must have a visual ear tag. Each calf also has to have an electronic identification tag. Individual calf birth dates are also necessary.

Doni Tibor, NDSU research specialist, directs CalfAID™, a USDA Process Verified Program. She said producers need to follow a simple three-step process.

Step 1: submit a registration form available from the CalfAID™ office (all CHAPS users will automatically be entered in to the CalfAID™ verification process). Individuals can obtain registration forms from the CHAPS website (www.chaps2000.com) or CHAPS Office.

Step 2: submit a copy of the calving book (first year CHAPS participants) or submit the completed calf input forms (current CHAPS users).

Step 3: submit a copy of the completed electronic identification data sheet.

Age and source verification is an extension of management practices that allow producers the opportunity to evaluate genetics and beef cattle performance through measurement.

The CalfAID™ program is the next step in marketing opportunities for producers, especially in light of a world market for North Dakota and United States produced beef.

Consumers want to know to where and how the beef they are enjoying was raised. CalfAID™ expands the tradition began in 1963 when the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association initiated performance record keeping.

The composite image illustrates the 3-step process for CalfAID™ participation. It features a cow's head in the background. Overlaid on the cow are several documents: a USDA Process Verified tag with 'Electronic Animal ID' and 'Source & Age Verification Through Data Management' text; a page from an NDBCIA Calving Book with columns for Lot Code, EID Tag Number, Visual ID Tag, Sire, Dam, Birth Date, and Weaning Date; and a 'Blank Input Form' with columns for Calf ID, Cow ID, Age, Cow Breed, Sire, Sex, Birth Date, Sire Breed, Birth Date, Calf Birth Date, Weaning Date, and various weights and scores. Red circles and arrows connect the 'W058' tag number across the tag, the calving book, and the input form, demonstrating the requirement for consistency.

Tibor explained once a producer commits to the performance record keeping process the NDBCIA becomes a partner in helping analyze data. In addition, cattle in the CalfAID™ program will be tracked as far as possible within the industry.

At present, producers submit calf records and EID numbers, which are entered into the CHAPS program. A CalfAID™ Document of Record is generated through the CHAPS software. The Document of Record is the official age and source verification for a calf.

Tibor said each CalfAID™ participant will receive a CalfAID™ letter regarding age and source verified calves. The rules for conforming cattle are simple but must be followed.

The important part is to make sure data from the calving book, input forms and EID data tag sheets match. Failure to do such will result in non-conforming calves.

She said non-conforming calves (records) can be corrected with the proper information submitted by the producers.

She cautioned producers to avoid duplicate VID tagged

calves, because such calves will be listed as non-conforming. Calf visual identification tag numbers that are listed on the EID data tag sheets and are not found in the calving book will be non-conforming calves and not certified through CalfAID™.

Kris Ringwall, executive secretary of the NDBCIA, said the goal of the NDBCIA and CHAPS is to assist producers in creating marketing opportunities.

Individuals wanting more information should contact Tibor at 701-483-2348, ext. 105 or email ndsud.chaps@ndsu.edu ■

CalfAID™ Participant Checklist

Note: As of January 2007 you are also required to submit birth and weaning data before marketing your cattle. In order to source and age verify your cattle, all data will be entered into the CHAPS Program. A CHAPS generated report will be your Document of Record for source and age verification.

- Submit Registration Form
- Submit a Copy of Calving Book
(1st Year CHAPS Participants)
- Or**
- Submit Completed Calf Input Forms
(Current CHAPS Producers)
- Submit Copy of Completed EID Data Sheets
- Report any Culls to CalfAID™ Office

Additional Rules

- EID tags are Non-transferable
- Purchased Cattle Must be Source and Age Verified through Original Producer
- Extra Tags may be Kept for Future Use
- Nonconforming Reports will Identify Animals that Cannot be Marketed as Source & Age Verified Cattle
- **Removal or Loss of CalfAID™ EID Tag**
The EID animal numbering system can only be effective if the eartag device bearing the animal's identification number remains affixed to the animal throughout the animal's lifetime, from birth to slaughter.

If an animal's tag is lost or if it is necessary to replace the EID with a new number, it is important to correlate the new official number with the previous number of the animal and report any changes to the CalfAID™ office.

**Complete Application Form On The Other Side Of This Sheet.
When Complete, Please Mail Form To The Following:**

Doni Tibor • CalfAID™ Office

1041 State Ave • Dickinson, ND 58601 • (701-483-2348 Ext. 105
madonna.tibor@ndsu.edu • chaps@ndsuxext.nodak.edu

NDBCIA sponsors 2 research projects

The North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association has unanimously approved member participation in two research projects. Both tests will begin this fall and run into 2010.

A prototype high frequency tag test is a cooperative agreement between the NDSU-Dickinson Research Extension Center, the Decatur County Feedyard, Oberlin, KS, NDBCIA members. Mick Riesinger, livestock biosecurity specialist with the Dickinson REC, is seeking "300 to 400 head of steers born in 2009."

There are no weight requirements to enter steers in the test and all steers will be trucked to Oberlin, KS, and the test will take place there.

All steers in the high frequency tag test will be part of a retained ownership. "Producers will negotiate the feed costs and contract with Decatur," Riesinger said.

While owners will be responsible for feed costs, vet fees and death losses, if any, there will be no trucking costs to move the calves to Decatur. In addition, tag and data processing fees will be handled by the project.

"We will be comparing technology, high frequency versus low frequency," Dr. Kris Ringwall, NDSU Extension Beef Specialist and NDBCIA Executive Secretary said.

Riesinger added, "We will be testing tag retention under various environmental conditions."

He said they would like calves that have been weaned at least 21 days. "We hope to start accepting steers by mid-November," he said.

Individuals wanting more information should contact Riesinger: phone, 701-483-2348, ext. 102; email: Michael.Riesinger@ndsu.edu.

The other project will involve a heifer development project. The test will run from December 1, 2009 -October 31, 2010.

DREC research specialist Teresa Dvorak said, "We (the DREC) do not have enough animals for the project. By going through the (ND)BCIA we could guarantee quality heifers and have heifers with records. There is a need for more nutrient management heifer research and it is a good fit with the DREC."

Dvorak said the heifers will be developed to help participants develop productive and profitable cow herds. The project will focus on two major areas:

- Nutrient management. The research will focus on bedding types and the different ways in which beddings can capture nutrients. In addition, there will be a companion study on composting.

- Nutritional study. The research will focus on how various nutritional inputs affect conception rates in beef cattle. The research will involve a short-term feeding period of fat around the time of artificial insemination, which research has shown may positively influence conception rate.

Dvorak said an economic analysis will be conducted each year.

The NDBCIA board unanimously approved the research project at its September meeting. Throughout the heifer development project, all animals will be routinely measured for growth rate, condition scores, frame scores, pelvic size, conformation and reproductive tract development.

AI breeding is scheduled around May 12, 2010. Angus bulls will be run for approximately a 60-day clean-up breeding period.

Heifers will be ultra-sound pregnancy tested to confirm AI or natural service conception.

Individuals wanting more information should contact Dvorak: email, teresa.dvorak@ndsu.edu or phone, 701-483-2348 ext. 108. ■



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Unruh is 2006 top producer

When Kellen Unruh’s family was selected as the recipient for the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association “Producer of the Year” he couldn’t help but feel thrilled.

“I was honored,” Unruh said. “There’s been a lot of hard work put in over the years.”

Unruh, his wife Lori and two children, Kane, 6 and Kanyon, 4, own and operate the Prairie Diamond Ranch, a Black Angus cow-calf operation north of Hebron.

The Unruhs were given the award for achieving an adjusted 205-day weight greater than 700 pounds and a high replacement rate.

Having always wanted to take over the ranch while growing up, Unruh attended North Dakota State University following high school and after receiving a degree in animal range science he took over for his father, Clarence, and began the third generation on the ranch.

Lori grew up on a ranch in northern South Dakota. For nine years, she has worked off the ranch at Hebron Brick Company but her role is an integral part of the family operation, balancing work and the chores of a young mother, ranch hand and assistant to Kellen.

Kellen said being able to raise his children on the ranch is an advantage because he can share his love of being outdoors, teach them how to ride a horse or give them the opportunity to experience several brandings.

“It’s great,” Unruh said. “It’s just a good place to raise your kids and teach them the values of the real important things in life.”

But it isn’t only Unruh’s immediate family that has a stake in how things go at the Prairie Diamond Ranch. Unruh also works closely with his brother-in-law Tim Meyer, the 2005 “Producer of the Year” award winner.

Winning the award just a year after his brother-in-law and partner, Tim Meyer, came as something of a surprise to Unruh, but he said it made sense.

“We market cattle together, feed heifers together over the winter and have a good relationship, working and family,” Unruh said. “It shows that both he and I are trying to improve our cattle in the same areas, so that we can better ourselves and better our cattle.”

A big part in that betterment of their cattle is the CHAPS program, Unruh said, “Through the CHAPS program we’ve been able to produce cattle that have extremely high weaning weights and therefore we’re able to market a lot of these calves right off the cow.”

His father Clarence utilized the CHAPS program when he ran the operation and Kellen has followed in those footsteps.

Unruh said he uses every part of the CHAPS program, including the various reports like the MPPA (most probable production ability) when making the day-to-day decisions on his ranch.

The CHAPS program has been integral to providing Unruh with the kind of production in his animals he’s looking for.

“I’m looking for a moderate framed, easy fleshing cow, that’s going to produce, whether it’s a heifer or a steer,” Unruh said. “If it’s a steer, that it be highly efficient in the feedlot and be desirable to feeders and consumers.”

The CalfAID™ program, which utilizes electronic identification tags to source and age verify the calves he raises, helps in the marketing of his herd, Unruh said.

And Unruh added that during tough financial times worldwide and in the livestock industry, having a leg-up on the competition in any way is important.

“You just have to try and cut as many corners as you can cut and try and be as efficient as you can be,” Unruh said, adding the CHAPS program and CalfAID™ help achieve that goal as well.

With the possibility of international interest from Korea in North Dakota beef, Unruh said the program places his family in a good marketing position to take advantage of the different markets that may develop.

“They’re looking for high-quality cattle, such as what my brother-in-law and I raise,” Unruh said. “If there’s any way we can get more out of our product and if that’s exporting it to another country that’s exciting to me.”

In the end, at the heart of the decisions made on a daily basis by Unruh, are hopes in providing his children with the same opportunities he had while growing up on his family ranch.

“That’s the main objective . . . is to keep paying the bills so the boys will hopefully have a place where they can also carry on the tradition,” Unruh said. “That’s what we’re working for.”



The Kellen and Lori Unruh family was selected as Producer of the Year. In front, sons Kane and Kanyon; in back, Kellen and Lori.

Range planning workshop is set Jan. 5-7, 2010

A three-day planning workshop on 12-month pasture and harvested forage management will be offered to livestock producers, land managers, and college students January 5-7, 2010. The workshop will be held at the Dickinson Research Extension Center.

Participants will learn about the biological mechanism in the grasses and the soil organisms and how to use grazing to manipulate those for beneficial results, according to DREC Range Scientist Dr. Lee Manske. Manske and Dickinson State University Associate Professor Toby Stroh will lead the class.

The information presented is the culmination of over 25 years of research on grasslands conducted by Manske.

Manske said, "These science based management strategies meet the nutrient requirements of livestock during each production period, meet the biological requirements of grass plants and soil organisms, increase the quantity of forage nutrients produced, and improve the efficiency of forage nutrient capture and its conversion into saleable animal weight commodities, resulting in generation of greater new wealth from the land's natural resources without depletion of future production."



Toby Stroh, standing, and Lee Manske, right, discuss grazing strategies with attendees from last year's range workshop, Randy Gaebe, left, and Courtney McRae.

The only non-optional cost of the workshop is a \$25.00 lab fee per person, which covers supplies used, refreshments each day, and a working supper on the second day. The regular registration fee of \$70.00 has been waived. Husband-wife, father-son, father-daughter and other partner arrangements are encouraged. "We encourage two people from a ranch setting to attend," Manske said.

A set of three textbooks is available at a

cost of \$75.00. The optional, but highly recommended, ArcGIS map set will cost \$50.00 per ranch.

If participants do not have ArcGIS maps created, they need to bring maps with each pasture and field for owned and leased land. The maps need to have acreages of each soil type in each parcel of land prior to the start of the workshop.

Manske said continuing education graduation credit from North Dakota State University will be offered at a cost of \$50 per credit hour. Participants are asked to bring calculators and notebooks. The textbook can be purchased on site.

The workshop will run from 1-9 pm. on January 5; 8 am-9 pm. on January 6; 8 am-5 pm. on January 7, 2010. Dickinson, ND is in the Mountain time zone. Participants requesting ArcGIS maps to be developed for their ranch must register by December 7.

Go to www.GrazingHandbook.com on the internet to find out more information about the workshop.

Space is limited, so those who wish to attend are encouraged to register as soon as possible. For information or to register call 701-483-2348 ext. 118. ■

Important Beef Cattle Industry News Especially For