

# COW HERD APPRAISAL PERFORMANCE SOFTWARE

# CHAPS 2000



Official Publication, North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association - September 2002 -- Vol. 7, No. 2

## SMARTCOWS™

### Fall pre-weaning trial package: beef producers get facilities, labor

Beef cattle producers in North Dakota will be able to utilize an abridged program of the SmartCows™ program this fall to prepare their calves for weaning and/or sale, according to Dr. Kris Ringwall, executive secretary of the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association. The full SmartCows™ program involves total beef cattle production management from breeding to harvest.

Ringwall said the NDBCIA Board of Directors, at its July meeting, approved the abridged plan to assist producers with two major issues that create bottlenecks at this time of the year: labor and facilities. SmartCows™ was developed to eliminate, or at least minimize, these two issues. Our team brings the equipment and professionals to work the cattle quietly and quickly. In most cases, the SmartCows™ team can work about 40-70 calves per hour. And, when the team is done, the facilities are on the road to another site to help another producer. †

Ringwall called the SmartCows™ Pre-Weaning Program a test



The fall pre-weaning packages for SmartCows™ will bring the facilities and labor to the pasture. This purpose is to expose more beef producers to performance testing and pre-weaning conditioning programs.

*James Odermann Photo*

pilot project to help producers collect data on their calves and prepare their calves for whatever management protocol they will use this fall. The NDBCIA is especially interested in helping producers find ways to utilize the data to keep the beef business profitable. †

The 2002 fall shortened version of the SmartCows™ was

(Continued on back page)

#### **NDBCIA BOARD MEETING**

Thursday, Sept. 26, 2002 -- Royal Fork, Bismarek, ND  
Social -- 11:30; Lunch: 12 noon  
Meeting: 1:00 p.m.

#### **SOUTHWEST FEEDERS PROJECT**

Calves needed for 2002-03 season.  
Contact: Dr. Chip Poland  
701-483-2078 -- [chaps@ndsuxt.nodak.edu](mailto:chaps@ndsuxt.nodak.edu)

# SMARTCOWS™ is year round management assistance tool

A new program for North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association members could offer a new avenue for herd management and health, marketing, genetics and record keeping for members, according to Chad Ellingson, past president of the NDBCIA

Ellingson, Dave Dockter, also a former NDBCIA president, and Jon DeKrey, current NDBCIA president, collaborated with the NDBCIA Board of Directors, Executive Secretary Dr. Kris Ringwall, Dickinson Research Extension Center Range Specialist Dr. Lee Manske and Odermann Communications Company Owner James Odermann to develop a systems management program, entitled SmartCows™. The program will be a beef cattle management relationship between the NDBCIA, the Dickinson Research Extension Center, private sponsors and individual beef producers.

The program was initially written early in 2002 and marketing plans to enroll participants will move into full speed this fall and winter. The systems management concept is designed to help producers evaluate all phases of their beef operation.

We will provide source verification, performance records and health protocol on all animals to assist producers evaluate cow families and the genetic base within their herd, Ellingson told the North Dakota Stockmen's Association board of directors earlier this

year in Bismarck. iSmartCows™ is an affordable program that may create additional cash flow opportunities within beef cattle operations by evaluating data and adopting different management styles.†

The systems approach to beef cattle management,† Ellingson said, is to give producers a chance to measure growth of cows and calves from vaccination to weaning--and the SmartCows™ consultants will do the work. All the producer has to do is supply the animals.†

In addition, SmartCows™ will give producers an opportunity to evaluate their forage conditions as animals in the program will be weighed at different times throughout the growing season.

The NDBCIA Board of Directors, at its July meeting, approved the implementation of an abridged pre-weaning phase for this fall to lay the groundwork for the full year round program. (See story on front page of this issue.)

Producers may be able to capture additional income by having genetically superior cattle that are source verified with consistent health protocols and uniformly fed, developed and marketed.

SmartCows™ is divided into two phases: the cow/heifer phase and the calf phase, Dockter pointed out. Each phase takes place at different times of the year and all data is recorded in the CHAPS 2000 program. The data collected will include but is not limited to

# SMARTCOWS™

### SMARTCOWS™ SELECTIONS

- ✓ Breed(s) To Use  
Breeder's Choice  
Angus  
Charolais  
Gelbvieh  
Hereford  
Limousin  
Red Angus  
Simmental  
Other
- ✓ Sire(s) To Use
- ✓ Reserve Semen For Purchase

### INITIATE SMARTCOWS™ COW/HEIFER PHASE

**\$49.00/PAIR (PILOT YEAR)    \$39.00/HEIFER (PILOT YEAR)**

Includes: electronic ear tags, calf vaccination pharmaceuticals, breeding prep pharmaceuticals, semen and custom timed AI breeding of selected females, records processing and analysis of each animal in the SmartCows™, professional assistance in forage evaluation and marketing, continuing education in forage management, market development and plan for next production year and labor and professional consultation. (All producer needs to do is get cattle into corral and sort calves from cows and/or heifers; Minimums apply.)

### COMPLETE SMARTCOWS™ COW/HEIFER PHASE

Includes: calf pre-conditioning, pregnancy check cows, continue records processing, grass management and forage consultation and analysis and marketing decisions

### ESTABLISH SMARTCOWS™ TIMETABLE

- ✓ Calving
- ✓ Breeding
- ✓ Pre-Weaning
- ✓ Pregnancy Check
- ✓ Weaning
- ✓ Pooling
- ✓ Sell/Retain Ownership
- ✓ Heifer Development

### SMARTCOWS™ HELPLINE

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Breed choice <sup>1</sup>												
ID <sup>2</sup>	✓	✓	✓									
Vaccinations	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>			✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>		✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	
Breeding <sup>6</sup>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Measure <sup>7</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Forage system <sup>8</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre-Weaning <sup>9</sup>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sell or Pool <sup>10</sup>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sell or Finish <sup>11, 12</sup>							✓ <sup>11, 12</sup>	✓ <sup>11</sup>	✓ <sup>11</sup>	✓ <sup>11</sup>	✓ <sup>11</sup>	✓ <sup>12</sup>
Evaluation <sup>13</sup>							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

1 -- Evaluate breeding program and select sires for breeding season; 2 -- electronically ID animals; 3 -- vaccinate calves for spring pasture; 4 -- vaccinate calves for pre-weaning; 5 -- vaccinate cows for disease prevention at calving, breeding; 6 -- prepare cows for breeding and breed cows; 7 -- record birth-dates and weights at time of handling; 8 -- evaluate forage to maximize growth potential for herd members; 9 -- pre-weaning measurements and shots; 10 -- decision time, sell calves off cow, pool in background lot, place heifers in NDBCIA Heifer Development Project; 11 -- decision time, sell calves from pool or retain ownership to finish lot; 12 -- sell heifers or return to owner operation; 13 -- review data, continue to plan

### IMPLEMENT SMARTCOWS™ CALF PHASE

Options:

- ✓ sell calves off cows at SmartCows™ special sale, Stockmen's Livestock, Dickinson, ND.
- ✓ Pool unweaned calves to the DREC Ranch, Manning, ND, for background feeding for 45-50 days
- ✓ After backgrounding period, owner can sell or select finish lot as part of retained ownership program
- ✓ Heifer development program

Producers retain ownership throughout calf phase.

### SMARTCOWS™ FORAGE OPTIONS

Forage management and beef production are synonymous. SmartCows™ networks producers with range and forage management specialists who can provide complete and thorough analysis of forage options throughout the entire year. This includes guaranteed acceptance into range and forage management systems continuing education schools.

### SMARTCOWS™ EVALUATION

Analyze and evaluate management practices and outcomes with reports from the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association & CHAPS 2000 and consultation with SmartCows™ team members.

### REAFFIRM SMARTCOWS™ PROGRAM

**PRODUCER APPLIES TO SMARTCOWS™ PROGRAM**  
**ND BEEF CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**  
 1133 STATE AVENUE  
 DICKINSON, ND 58601  
 701-483-2045  
 chaps@ndsuext.nodak.edu  
**NDBCIA SMARTCOWS™ COMMITTEE WILL SELECT PARTICIPANTS FOR PILOT YEAR.**

North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association members can apply to participate in the SmartCows™ pilot program for the

2003 breeding season. The program is a comprehensive management program for beef producers.

individual cow and calf records, summary reports and benchmark comparisons with other NDBCIA herds, he said.

Dockter said the cow/heifer phase begins in the spring with calf hood vaccinations and breeding preparation and continues through pre-weaning and pregnancy checking, mid September to October 1. The calf phase begins at weaning time and continues as long as the producer wants to retain ownership of the calves.

The cost of the SmartCows™ cow-heifer phase is \$49 per pair and \$39 for virgin heifers. Producers will receive electronic herd identification for cows and calves, herd health protocol, including calf hood and pre-weaning vaccination, cow herd breeding preparation, semen, artificial insemination and pregnancy checking.

"This is a cooperative arrangement," DeKrey said. "The producer and the SmartCows™ team will meet with the producer management team to select things like calving dates for the following year, breed to use and sires. In essence, the SmartCows™ team is an extension of the labor and management force for the producer."

The SmartCows™ consultation team will provide equipment and record keeping. "The team will bring a crowding tub, working alley, chute, scale, headgate and other equipment necessary to collect the data and provide the services outlined," Ringwall said.

The NDBCIA is investigating some options relative to artificial insemination and substituting DNA testing or other similar management options as part of the program. Further discussion will take place in future board meetings.

Minimums for numbers and producer participation will also be discussed.

Forage management is a major component of the program. Manske, who pioneered the twice-over grazing method and has done original research on forage quality of Northern Great Plains plants, said SmartCows™ Cow/Heifer Phase offers some unique opportunities for producers. "Many times we have mistaken genetics as the only contributor of increased

performance," he said, "but our research has shown that by properly managing forage we can increase carrying capacity, reduce costs and improve performance. All this translates into more dollars for the producer."

Research conducted at the DREC has shown properly managed forage (grazing and hay harvesting) can cut production costs (by as much as 50%), increase carrying capacity (by as much as 33%-45%), and increase average daily gain of the calf (by a minimum of 33%). SmartCows™ participants will learn principles in range ecology, livestock nutrition and forage production that can directly affect gains, carrying capacity and costs associated with cow-calf production," Manske said.

In addition to the forage consultation, participants in the SmartCows™ program will be guaranteed placement in continuing education classes offered through the DREC.

The Calf Phase involves opportunities for producers to expand marketing options by selling calves off the cow, pooling feeder calves to central locations for sale, finishing calves or developing sales or replacement heifers and/or bred heifers.

Data collection is a major criterion for successful beef operations. All data will be analyzed through the CHAPS 2000/DATALINE™ system. "Individual producer data is confidential, however, benchmark values for beef cattle production will be summarized using data from all North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association members and CHAPS 2000/DATALINE™ users," Ringwall said.

NDBCIA President DeKrey named a SmartCows™ committee to review applications for participation in the pilot year program. Committee members include Ellingson, Dockter, Ringwall and Doug Hille.

Producers who want to participate in the 2003 production year should contact the NDBCIA office as soon as possible: call 701-483-2045 or email, [chaps@ndsuxet.nodak.edu](mailto:chaps@ndsuxet.nodak.edu).

## NDBCIA, eMerge join forces

DICKINSON, ND -- The North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, in concert with NDSU and the Dickinson Research Extension Center), joined forces with eMerge Interactive's CattleLog™ Pro to provide individual animal data collection and management. The relationship means NDBCIA members who use the Cow Herd Appraisal Performance Software (CHAPS) program may have access to the company's data management solution concepts.

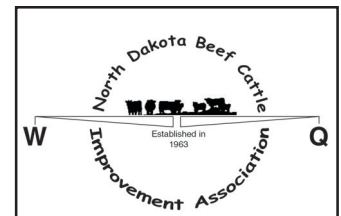
Dr. Kris Ringwall, executive secretary of the NDBCIA and director of the DREC, said CattleLog Pro™ will help producers and university and extension personnel collect and manage detailed data for the statewide CHAPS program.

Ringwall said the program has already been used at the DREC herd, which includes over 300 mother cows. He said the Center was involved because as a

research center it is our obligation to try to be one step ahead and try things that people cannot try. We need to try things that take us where nobody else has gone, to see if it works."

The relationship between the NDBCIA, DREC, NDSU and eMerge is preparatory to the future needs of the beef industry, according to Ringwall. "Electronic data transfer, what does it mean?" Ringwall said. "It really keys in on source verification. If source verification becomes a reality we are trying techniques that might help to streamline that process."

Tim Niedecken, eMerge Interactive director of information systems, hailed the decision as progressive, noting in a press release that North Dakota, which ranks 10th largest in the United States in cow inventory, "has long been fertile ground for progressive management practices."



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(Continued from front page)

designed to give producers an opportunity to get involved in the calf phase of the program and expose them to the full SmartCows™ program for future enrollment of their herd, according to Ringwall.

Ringwall urged NDBCIA members to contact neighbors in their area to encourage them to become part of the program. We would like to get 300-400 calves in an area together to work. He stressed scheduling will be critical. We will do everything we can to accommodate producers; however, due to lack of time not everybody will get served. It is important to make reservations as soon as possible so we can set the schedule.

The program is designed to work cattle in the pasture. Once producers take their cattle into the yard, they are doing what they always do. SmartCows™ Pre-Weaning Program is designed to process the calves, ideally two weeks before weaning, and get their calving books completed, he said.

The SmartCows™ team brings the working pen, the scale and crowding alley to completely precondition calves. The producer costs include



**Pre-weaning vaccinations and calf weights are two of the tasks that will be completed as part of the SmartCows™ fall pre-weaning program.**

*Photo*

*James Odermann*

a \$1.00 fee for working the calves, according to Ringwall. Additionally, if the SmartCows™ team has to sort the calves from cows there will be an additional \$1.00 per head charge. Incidental charges for vaccines are the responsibility of the producer.

This project will continue through October, Ringwall said. Participation is limited this year. Contact the NDBCIA office to schedule a time to precondition calves for fall

weaning and/or sales.

Requirements to participate are minimal, according to Ringwall. An up to date calving book and individual calf identification is all that is needed to get into the program, he said.

The expected outcomes from 2002 fall participation include individual calf weaning weights adjusted to 205 days of age, pre-weaning vaccination shots, record analysis of calves relative to herd, preliminary evaluation of forage management issues and potential to participate in the year round SmartCows™ program.

Ringwall said vaccinations performed during the program must be administered by a Beef Quality Assurance certified person.

An individual phone call or email prior to October 2, 2002, is the best way to secure pilot project participation in the 2002 SmartCows™ Pre-Weaning program. Because of limited space, Ringwall urged individual producers to make their reservation as soon as possible by phone at 701-483-2045 or email, [chaps@ndsuxet.nodak.edu](mailto:chaps@ndsuxet.nodak.edu).