

2007 Beef Improvement Federation 39th Annual Meeting

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Advancing With Technology

BIF committee adapted through time to advance beef cattle evaluation and further genetic improvement.

Story & photo by **Mathew Elliott**

FORT COLLINS, COLO. (June 7, 2007) — John Crouch provided a historical overview of the Live Animal, Carcass and End Product Committee as well as the use of ultrasound for evaluating carcass merit during the committee's meeting June 7 at the 2007 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) annual meeting. Crouch is executive vice president of the American Angus Association.

The committee began in 1969 as Technical Committee #3 Beef Carcass Evaluation. Since then, it has gone through several names to change with the times and its functions.

The underlying assumptions founding members used in formulating what they wanted to accomplish were profound, Crouch said. Those assumptions included:

- ▶ The beef product is the end point of all beef improvement.
- ▶ The quality of product and quantity of edible portion are basic measures of carcass merit.
- ▶ The relative value of quantity and quality are determined by consumer demand.

The committee advised carcass evaluation follow standards of the American Meat Science Institute and that USDA quality and yield grades be used as standards for comparison.

The carcass end point is important, Crouch commented, but the problem of the time was that when the carcass could be evaluated, the animal could no longer be used as a parent. Another problem the

committee faced was people not following established programs.

But the committee moved on. In the 1970s, USDA established the Beef Carcass Data Service, which gave rise to a new name for the committee, the BIF Beef Carcass Data Committee.

According to Crouch, the 1970s were about heritable traits, and during that time everything was being measured. An ad hoc linear measurements committee was formed and called for standardization of methods for gathering data, but the BIF board rejected the committee's recommendation based on lack of information.

In the late 1970s, the name of the committee was changed to the Live Animal Evaluation Committee, Crouch reported. The frame race blossomed and a subcommittee was formed to evaluate frame and make a frame score chart. It was first approved in 1984 and has been since revised several times to account for new findings.

Scrotal measurements and adjustment factors, udder scoring and disposition were also beginning to be looked at in the 1980s.

"The focus then shifted to ultrasound in the '90s," Crouch said, noting a committee name change to the Live Animal and Carcass Evaluation Committee in 1988. "Instrument grading, refinement, adaptation of standards for technician certification, and standards for evaluating body fat caused a few bumps in the road and a few sleepless nights, but are now very successful."



▶ John Crouch provides an account of how the Live Animal, Carcass and End Product Committee has changed to face the needs of the time — from standardizing reporting of growth traits to consideration of the technologies of the 21st century.

The 2000s have brought new challenges and opportunities for the committee, and many new technologies to consider, such as feed efficiency and DNA marker-assisted selection.

Crouch concluded by thanking former chairmen of the committee for the contributions they have given to the beef industry that have aided and given the industry the opportunity to move forward.



Look for the PowerPoint and audio file for this presentation in the newsroom.



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