

2007 Beef Improvement Federation 39th Annual Meeting

Coverage by Angus Productions Inc

www.bifconference.com



The Ideal Animal

Story & photo by **Troy Smith**

FORT COLLINS, COLO. (June 7, 2007) — Before cattle breeders can build the ideal beef animal, they must decide what “ideal” is. However, according to University of Kentucky (UK) animal scientist Darrh Bullock, settling on a definition is difficult because there is no consensus. That fact was clearly illustrated June 8 as Bullock summarized audience members’ answers to questions related to animal type and production priorities during the 2007 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) annual meeting.

Producers’ opinions varied with regard to breed preference, optimum animal size and the importance of traits relative to the production environment. Bullock said response suggested a majority of producers agreed that nutrition was a limiting factor in their operations, and that their cows were too big. They generally agreed that input costs were too high to maintain acceptable reproductive performance.

“That tells me,” Bullock stated, “that we’re not doing a good job of fitting cows to the environment.”



► UK animal scientist Darrh Bullock considered audience members’ answers to questions about animal type and production priorities.

According to Bullock, identification of a production target also depends on what kind of beef product consumers will want in the future. Will they prefer high-quality or lean

beef? Will consumers want all-natural or organically grown beef? It is likely, he said, that varying consumer preferences will create demand for all of the above.

“Can we build an ideal beef animal? Absolutely. We have the ability to build ideal animals that fit different production systems and serve different markets,” Bullock offered.

However, the concept of “ideal” will be regionally dependent, varying according to the environment. It will be management dependent as producers use different selection criteria and management practices to meet their production goals. It will be market dependent as product specifications influence those goals.

“And it will be technology dependent,” Bullock added, “with new technologies helping us manage the things we can’t select for.”



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



Editor’s Note: This article was written under contract or by staff of Angus Productions Inc. (API), which claims copyright to this material. It may not be published or distributed without the express permission of Angus Productions Inc. (API). To request reprint permission and guidelines, contact Shauna Rose Hermel, editor, at (816) 383-5270 or shermel@angusjournal.com.



Editor's Note: *This article was written under contract or by staff of Angus Productions Inc. (API), which claims copyright to this material. It may not be published or distributed without the express permission of Angus Productions Inc. (API). To request reprint permission and guidelines, contact Shauna Rose Hermel, editor, at (816) 383-5270 or shermel@angusjournal.com.*