

2007 Beef Improvement Federation 39th Annual Meeting

Coverage by Angus Productions Inc

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Evaluating Udders

Committee proposes teat and udder scoring guidelines.

Story & photo by **Mathew Elliott**

FORT COLLINS, COLO. (June 7, 2007) — During Thursday afternoon's Live Animal, Carcass and End Product Committee meeting, Lauren Hyde presented proposed Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Guidelines for teat and udder scoring in beef cattle. Hyde is director of performance programs for the North American Limousin Foundation (NALF).

"Udder soundness was first thought to be a convenience trait," Hyde said. Now some scientists and researchers are citing it as one of the most important functional traits in a beef cow.

Hyde continued by explaining that udder and teat size can directly affect calf performance and cow longevity.

"If a cow's teats are too small, there will be reduced milk flow and the calf will not receive as much milk," Hyde said. "If the teats are too big, the calf will be unable to nurse. Also, if a cow's udder is too big, there is a larger chance that the cow will have injury or mastitis and a deterioration of quality to the udder over time."

Seven of the eight major beef breeds in the United States and Canada that use some

form of udder grading system have a two-score system in which they give both a score for teat size and shape and a score for udder suspension. The problem is that there are several scoring systems being used by different breed associations.



► Seven of eight major beef breed associations in North America use a two-score system for evaluating teats and udders, explained Lauren Hyde, NALF director of performance programs. However, they all use different scoring systems.

"In all the systems we've looked at, the lower scores are for big or bottle teats and the higher scores are for the small teats," Hyde said. For udder suspension, low scores indicate a pendulous udder, while high scores indicate a higher, tighter udder.

A study was conducted to compare the 10-point scales vs. the 50-point scales that were being used. It was determined that the 10-point scale was easier to distinguish and that producers were more likely to use it.

Hyde recommended to the committee that BIF accept separate teat size and udder suspension scores, the scores be on a 1-to-9 scale, and that scores must be established within 24 hours after calving.

The motion was seconded and passed in committee. It was to be presented before the BIF Board Meeting later in the week.

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



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