

## **COW/CALF PRODUCER PANEL**

**Glenn Wheeler**  
Smyth County, Virginia

Glenn Wheeler operates a cow / calf farm in the Atkins community of Smyth County, Virginia. Glenn manages 160 Angus and Angus – cross cows. Calving in the spring, he weans and backgrounds the calves October. Glenn sells load lots of preconditioned calves (Virginia Quality Assured – Purple Tags) on the Virginia Cattlemen’s Tel-O-Auction. He also sells commingled calves with producers in Virginia Quality Assured Sales sponsored by the Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association.

Glenn is a true advocate for the cattle industry. He has served as President of the Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association and is currently representing Southwest Virginia (Region 1) on the Virginia Cattlemen’s Board of Directors. When not working on the farm, Glenn works part-time for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a Livestock Marketing Representative.

**M. Cox Farms**  
Kingsport, Tennessee

M. Cox Farms operates a cow/calf operation consisting of 250 commercial cows of Angus influence. The farm operates on 1100 acres of hay and pasture. According to Mike Cox, the cows either make it on grass and a good mineral program or they hit the road. Cows must breed back, have a good udder, and breed back in 12 month intervals.

M. Cox Farms has been emphasizing genetics in their herd for 14 years by buying bulls from the UT Extension Performance Tested Bull Sale. They concentrate on milking ability and growth traits. They became interested in the Tennessee Beef Evaluation Program (retained ownership) as a tool to measure the carcass value of their calves. In the spring of 2004, they entered 5 calves in the program. After the calves were fed and harvested in Iowa, the results showed that 4 of the 5 carcasses failed to qualify as Certified Angus Beef (CAB). One of the calves was the high gaining calf at Tri-County Feeders in Iowa for that period of time, but the calf graded Select. This was unacceptable to M. Cox Farms. Since that first experience, the farm started adding carcass traits to their bull selection criteria. The farm has shown significant improvement since 2005 when only 65% graded Choice and 7% CAB. On 25 fed in 2011-2012, 92% graded Choice and 36% CAB, 36% Yield Grade 2 and 64% Yield Grade 3.

Their health program includes a spring vaccination and fall deworming program. Calves shipped receive Bovi-Shield Gold 5 and Ultrabac 7-way Clostridial with Somnus. Calves are castrated after evaluation for registered bull market. Mike and his son, Shannon Cox, believe that a good free choice mineral program is the foundation of a productive herd. They feed a complete mineral and have recently begun feeding a mineral for minimizing the negative effects of the fescue endophyte.

Calves are marketed through feeder calf sales and retained ownership with the Tennessee Beef Evaluation program in which the cattle are finished and data collected in Iowa. M. Cox Farms also has a growing bull market. Approximately 20 heifers are kept for replacements. Heifers are selected based on medium frame and the udder of the mama cow.

**Comparison of calves in TN Beef Evaluation Program**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Select -</b>	<b>Select +</b>	<b>All Select</b>	<b>Choice -</b>	<b>Choice (CAB)</b>	<b>Choice – or better</b>	<b>Total</b>
2004 – 05	3	2		8	1		14
	21%	14%	35%	57%	7%	64%	
2009	0	6		25	6		37
	0%	16.5%	16.5%	67%	16.5%	83.5%	
2012	0	2		14	9		25
	0%	8%	8%	56%	36%	92%	