

The conference is presented under a grant from the Southern Region Risk Management Education Center with additional support from the University of Tennessee Extension, Virginia Cooperative Extension and North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

 **Extension**



 **VirginiaTech**  
*Invent the Future*



*This material is based upon work supported by USDA/CSREES under Award Number 2007-49200-03891*



Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

## Conference — September 23

Registration begins at 7:45 a.m.

The program will begin at 8:30 a.m.

## Program Topics and Speakers

### Beef Cattle Outlook and Industry Changes

- Dr. David Anderson  
Extension Economist  
Texas A&M University

### Managing Genetic Defects and Enhancing End Product

- Dr. Scott Greiner  
Extension Animal Scientist  
Virginia Tech

### Weaning Healthy Calves

- Dr. Fred Hopkins  
Extension Veterinarian  
University of Tennessee

### Cow/Calf Producer Panel

- Mike Goldwasser • Hillsville, VA
- Tim Sutphin • Dublin, VA

### Utilization of By-Product Feed in Beef Cattle Diets

- Dr. Lawton Stewart  
Beef Extension Specialist  
University of Georgia

### Decisions, Decisions: What do I do with my calf crop?

- Dr. Curt Lacy  
Extension Economist  
University of Georgia

### What to Expect from a Custom Feedlot When Retaining Ownership

- David Trowbridge  
Manager  
Gregory Feedlots, Inc.

# Tri-State Cow/Calf Conference

## Pre-Conference Tour

September 22, 2009

Sullivan County  
Washington County



**A**griculture in the Tri-State area of East Tennessee, Southwest Virginia and Western North Carolina is dominated by cow calf producers. The operations consist of several thousand full time and part time beef producers. With the reduced production of tobacco, beef producers have sought other sources of income. Some have intensified their beef operation, while others have pursued other alternatives. Cow calf producers are exposed to many forms of risk such as drought, price volatility for fertilizer, diesel, hay and cattle. In addition to these, there are risks associated with health of cows and calves, genetics, reproduction and nutrition. Some producers have by choice or necessity explored new marketing alternatives such as selling freezer beef, retaining calves to heavier feeder cattle weights or to finished slaughter weights. This conference will present information to assist cow calf producers in making decisions to reduce risk in the production and marketing from their cow herd.

On today's tour we will visit three Tennessee cow/calf operations where you will learn how these producers work to ensure success.

We will also be testing your weight guessing abilities. At one of today's tour stops we will be having a weight estimation contest. There will be prizes for those who estimate weights correctly.

### M. Cox Farms

M. Cox Farms operates a cow/calf operation consisting of 250 commercial cows of Angus influence. The farm operates on 1100 acres of owned and leased ground for 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 have a

12-month calving interval. M. Cox Farms has been emphasizing genetics in their herd for 12 years by buying bulls from the UT Extension Performance Tested Bull Sale. They concentrate on milking ability and growth traits. Since becoming involved in the Tennessee Beef Evaluation program (Retained Ownership), the farm has started placing heavy emphasis on carcass traits. The farm has received positive reports from Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity in Iowa based on the performance of their cattle in the feedlot.

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 the 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 Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity 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.

### Powerline Farms

Powerline Farms of Bristol, TN, owned by Frank Leonard and managed by Gregg Marks, operates a cow/calf operation consisting of 400 commercial cows and 20 registered Limousine cattle. The farm consists of 1250 acres of pasture, hay, corn, and some woodland. Powerline's breeding program is based on crossing their Limousine-crossed cows with local Angus and Limousine bulls. Gregg emphasizes bull soundness in addition to EPDs for milking ability, weaning weight, and carcass traits. He maintains a balance between Limousine and Angus by breeding by selecting a Angus or Limousine bull based on the cow's percentage of Limousine or Angus. Gregg maintains a 60 day

breeding season to insure a uniform group of marketable calves. The cows are worked twice each year including vaccinations, deworming, and fly tags.

The farm employs both fall and spring calving with a targeted weaning weight of 525 to 600 pounds. Calves are tagged and processed at birth in the field. Cow/calf pairs remain on grass in the summer. Hay is supplemented with corn silage in the winter. Calves are marketed each fall and spring through the Hodge Livestock Network sale in Newport, TN.

All replacements are raised on the farm. Powerline selects approximately 80 heifers each year. Heifers with a medium frame and a desirable temperament are selected.

### Hamilton Farm

Bill Hamilton's operation at Boone's Creek consists of 300 crossbred cows and a stocker operation using mostly Holstein steers running on 600 acres. Bill calves in the spring, backgrounds his calves for a period and retains ownership in a farmer owned custom feedlot in Michigan. He uses terminal sires which at the present are home raised Charolais bulls. He has a breeding soundness examination performed on his bulls and has all cows pregnancy tested, culling open cows. He stresses milking ability and temperament in his cow herd.

Bill produces ear corn, corn silage and Alfalfa hay. He buys corn gluten to mix with his home grown feeds. He tries to feed his cows and calves a little feed the year around. This keeps them accustomed to people and allows timely observation of any problems. He has his corn custom planted and harvested. Bill creep feeds his calves and de-worms frequently. He follows a strict vaccination program for the cows and calves. He also implants his calves.

Bill also purchases lightweight Holstein steers which are grazed to 700 pounds before being shipped to Michigan to be finished to slaughter weight. He manages the price risk on the feed and forward contracts the finished cattle with a packer for a definite price.