

# Learning Which Bull is Best

**Bruce Taylor**

Current emphasis by beef producers and feeders in improving their product — beef — prompted this study. It is a cooperative trial in which the Circle Bar Ranch of Bueyeros, New Mexico, furnished the feeder calves and the Animal Science department of the University is testing the feedlot performance and carcass merit of steers by several sires used in the Circle Bar herd of Herefords.

The first trial of a four year study has been completed. The steers were slaughtered in the university's meats laboratory after being fed for 195 days in the experimental feedlot. Steers by four sires were

included in the study. The steers were 14 to 15 months of age when slaughtered and weighed from 800 to 1000 pounds.

## Too Much Tallow

Steer calves from Sire A graded highest as feeder calves, as slaughter cattle, and yielded the highest grading carcasses. In other words, they finished quickly and are a good safe bet. These steers, however, had less lean meat with more fat in the carcass than those from sire B.

Steers by sire B exceeded in rate of gain in the feedlot, but graded only high good in the carcass. They had less fat cover, less waste fat, a larger ribeye and greater value of trimmed retail cuts. Steers by this sire more nearly fit the current ideal

of the so-called "meat type" steer. The problem with this kind is that they have to be fed longer to reach choice grade and currently choice is the goal of the western cattle feeders.

Our table lists the actual data for the sire groups and present recognized goals for the traits mentioned.

A study of the table reveals differences which one cannot see in the live cattle. The evidence suggests that sire B produces calves which match today's goals best and in fact very well.

## How to Make the Best Better

Breeders such as the Circle Bar Ranch are ready, willing and anxious to produce a better product. Information such as is revealed in this study points the way to improvement in the breeding of modern beef cattle. Every sire represented in this test had something we need. Sire A had quality and ease of fattening. Sire B gives us lean meat and minimum waste. Sire C produced the heaviest feeder calves and greatest yield of carcass beef per day of age, while Sire D<sub>1-2</sub> produces calves with a ribeye equal to tomorrow's goal. The Circle Bar Ranch now will seek to mate the sons and daughters of each sire in an effort to make tomorrow's cattle better than today's.

**Carcass Characteristics of Steers by Four Sires**

	Ribeye area (sq. in.)	Fat thickness (in.)	Carcass per day of age (lbs.)	Trimmed retail cut value (\$/100 lbs.)
Suggested goal - - - -	2.00	.13	1.3	None
Sire A - - - - -	1.71	.17	1.23	25.63
Sire B - - - - -	1.80	.14	2.28	26.80
Sire C - - - - -	1.56	.15	1.30	26.15
Sire D <sub>1-2</sub> - - - - -	2.08	.18	1.14	24.50

Dr. Taylor is head of the Animal Science Department. Readers who wish a detailed report on this project will get it in the annual Cattle Feeders' Day Report available at the Feeders' Day at UA Tucson farms next May 5. Those who can't attend can get a copy of the report afterward by writing to the College of Agriculture, University of Arizona.

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creosotebush "inhibited" the growth of seedlings either of the same species or of other plants. The seeds of both creosotebush and perennial grasses germinated as well when watered with wash water from creosotebush leaves and seeds as when watered with tap or distilled water. It appears, therefore, that the sparsity of vegetation often observed in stands of this shrub are due perhaps to competition for moisture, but not to any toxic effect of the plants themselves.

## Not Controlled by Fire

Although fire was found to kill a rather large number of the plants of all ages, it is questionable whether fire ever played much of a part in restricting their

spread. The bushes do grow to some extent in grasslands but for the most part they occur in low rainfall, desert areas where there is too little fuel to carry a fire.

Although creosotebush seems to have no particular value it is useful as an indicator of the potential value of some areas. In contrast with such plants as mesquite and burroweed, which are valuable indicators of potential grassland and of sites that can be reseeded to perennial grasses, creosotebush often indicates just the opposite.

Most typical creosotebush flats will not grow perennial grasses in sufficient amounts to make reseeding feasible. The creosotebush thus becomes valuable as an indicator of areas that cannot be reseeded, just as mesquite and burroweed indicate areas that can be.

## Act Creating USDA Was Signed By Lincoln



"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there is hereby established at the seat of Government of the United States a Department of Agriculture, the general designs and duties of which shall be to acquire and to diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of that word . . ."

—From the Act Approved  
May 15, 1862, by  
**PRESIDENT LINCOLN**