

BOOK REVIEW

Fundamentals of Beef Management. By David J. Drake and Ralph L. Phillips, Technical Editors. 2006. University of California and Natural Resources Communication Services, Oakland, CA. 140 p. US\$18.00 paper. ISBN-13: 978-1-879906-73-0.

Authors and contributors to this publication include Sheila Barry, Gary Beall, Mike Connor, Daniel J. Drake, Jim Farley, Rhonda Gildersleeve, Nancy Hinkle, Bill Kvasnicka, John Maas, Glenn A. Nader, James W. Oltjen, Ralph L. Phillips, Ron Torell, and Bill Weitkamp.

Fundamentals of Beef Management is written as a technical resource guide for new producers in California. As the editors explain in the introduction, “success in the cattle business requires more than securing some pasture and buying a few cows or steers; you will need land, time, money, and knowledge about the many aspects of beef production,” and “advances in beef cattle production are increasingly more technical.” This book contains information that would be beneficial to new producers across the nation, covering everything from breeds and genetics, handling facilities and equipment, fencing, and transportation to nutrition and calving.

Chapter 7, “Animal Health,” does a good job of discussing infectious disease agents that affect cattle in the United States. Chapter 12, “Irrigated Pasture,” is a very well-written, well-organized, thought-provoking overview of using irrigated pasture to produce forage for beef cattle. This chapter covers carrying capacity, stocking rate, the forage production cycle, water management, and the cost effectiveness of irrigated pasture in a direct and easy-to-understand writing style. A beef cattle producer just starting a business in the state of California will appreciate Chapter 19, “Regulations,” as well as Appendix B, “Branding and Inspection of Beef Cattle.”

I would have preferred a more comprehensive discourse on the subjects of range management and economics. Although the book would be difficult to use as a reference because of its chapter organization and format, it does contain useful information for producers.

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