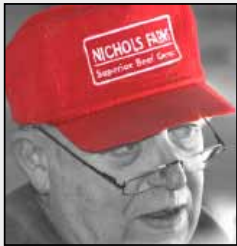




NICHOLS

NEWSLETTER

A few THOUGHTS



j. david nichols

In his recent article, my good friend, Mike Sweet, recounts the infamous Pony Express rider as he raced on horseback from St. Joseph to San Francisco; en route he passed by hundreds of wagons (pulled by horses) loaded with wood posts, fist sized glass insulators, and rolls of zinc cable”.

These were the very things that would soon replace him... The trans-continental telegraph. There is still a telegraph of sorts, Federal Express, UPS, FAX machines and computers that are wired together.

The moral of the story is, “Beware of the horseman who sees through the eyes of his horse. The only thing he will recognize in his field of vision... Is another horse.”

Speaking of vision, Tri-State Breeders has brought in Genetic Visions Inc that will measure and improve animal genetics through dna biotechnology.

When I first learned of their research I felt like the Pony Express rider riding by a telegraph line crew. That rider may not have thought much about the changes in his future, but let me assure you, I have! And Nichols Farms will be a part of this latest technology...

These were my “a few thoughts” column in the Nichols Farms Newsletter twenty eight years ago!

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Kessenich Brothers Market 900 Pound Feeder Calves



Jerry Kessenich

Mark Kessenich

BY BOB HOUGH

At the beginning of January each year, the Kessenich brothers market approximately 300 of the heaviest calves sold at the Sioux Falls Regional sale barn. The calves top the market in their weight class and nothing comes close to them in terms of total gross dollars returned. They find the keys to marketing 900 pound calves are genetics, management, nutrition and health.

Jerry and Mark Kessenich of Western Iowa run separate herds, but use the same Nichols genetics for bulls; purchase similar replacement heifers; calve and wean at the same time; have the same post weaning nutrition program; and each participates in the Iowa Green Tag preconditioning program. This allows them to market their calves at the same time at Sioux Falls Regional, providing critical mass to attract repeat buyers.

Each brother’s cattle operation is part of a larger agricultural enterprise. Mark and Jerry do a large amount of farming together on a 50-50 partnership, and then each has their own substantial custom hog feeding operation. One of the keys to the profitability of the cropping operation is the low purchased fertilizer costs due to their wise use of hog manure. Jerry then runs about 150 cows, and Mark runs close to 200 cows.

While Mark’s cattle run on a typical pasture, corn stalks and then stored



feed rotation during the year, Jerry dry lots about two-thirds

of his cows year round. With the high price of land, good cattle prices and inexpensive feed, it makes economic sense to manage his cows in a dry lot. This practice is on the rise in the mid-west, and the extension service is even running meetings to teach producers about managing their commercial cows in dry lots. For Jerry, his cow herd’s ration of corn silage, chopped stalks and protein is considerably cheaper than renting pasture.

Each operation calves in February and March and then weans around September 1st. The calves are then put on a ration that achieves the desired growth without getting them too fleshy. The calves are also enrolled in the Iowa Green Tag program, which assures the cattle have all their vaccinations for viral and bacterial respiratory disease and clostridial as well as being treated for internal and external parasites. The Green Tag must be overseen by a Veterinarian with the Vet applying the tags to assure buyers that the calves have received the preconditioning shots claimed.

Neither brother raises his own replacement heifers, opting to purchase replacements from special commercial bred heifer sales held in the area. Jerry prefers buying larger groups every two

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A few THOUGHTS

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We took ear notches from our Angus cows and Genetic Visions used their Chro-Mo-Probe® to see if the gene marker for Holsteins would predict milk yield in our cows.

It did not! But that did not prevent me from predicting... “In the decade of the 90s, biotechnology will play a leading role in determining the survivors in the seed stock business.”

I became Chairman of the Carcass Merit Project (CMP) in 1999. We collected carcass data including tenderness, on thousands of steers sired by widely used A.I. pure bred sires.

The ink wasn't even dry on results when USMARC, universities, and private companies raced to find Quantitative Trait Loci (GTL) for economic traits. Then software programs enhanced the accuracies of the Epsds in young cattle. We had both Angus and Simmental sires in the CMP project and have genomic profiles on our Angus and Simmental bulls and heifers since then.

For 65 years we've told cowpokes... We will tell you “the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly on every bull we sell.

Genomic tests currently validate: The Good— CED, growth, carcass merit etc. The Bad—lethal and sub lethal abnormalities. But, it's the breeder's responsibility to recognize and record the Ugly— deformed feet, pendulous udders/large teats, crazy dispositions, and the worst sin of all is failing to breed back every year.

Nichols cows get an udder/teats, disposition and mothering ability score every year the day they calve. They have to wean a stout soggy calf that we can sell or keep in our own herd. Our two oldest cows are 16 years old and will calve in March. 10% of our cows are over ten years old and are treasures.

We would love to show you them and their sons that are for sale. Their yearling daughters are a “site to behold” and are for sale. We believe that our cattle are as honest and hard working as the people who buy them.

BIVI Beef Bulletin

6 Practices to Reduce the Impact of Pinkeye

by Dr. Peggy Thompson

Professional Services Veterinarian, Boehringer Ingelheim



Once an animal in the herd has *Moraxella bovis* (pinkeye), it can be difficult to stop the spread of this contagious disease. Pinkeye annually effects more than 10 million calves in the United States with an estimated economic loss of more than \$150 million. The infection is important to watch for, as it significantly lowers calf growth rate, and can lead to blindness if left untreated.¹

Dr. Peggy Thompson suggests implementing the following management practices to reduce the negative impact of pinkeye in your herd.

- 1. Monitor for pinkeye regularly** – Check animals at least every other day during fly season. Cattle exhibiting abnormal clinical signs such as excessive eye tearing, blinking, squinting or drainage coming from the eye, should be examined more closely.
- 2. Provide shade** – Constant bright sunlight can cause tearing of the animal's eye. Flies carrying bacteria are more likely to hang around watering eyes, so it is important to provide a space with shade.
- 3. Separate and treat infected animals** – Pinkeye is extremely contagious, so removing infected animals from the rest of the herd and treating them as soon as possible is a key factor in breaking the disease cycle. Work with your veterinarian and follow label instructions to provide effective treatment. Applying a patch over an infected eye can aid in the healing process and prevent spread to other animals.
- 4. Check an infected animal's eye for injuries prior to treatment** – If an object causing the problem is not removed from the animal's eye, the infection may not respond to typical therapy.
- 5. Implement a vaccination program** – An optimal time to vaccinate is 30 days prior to fly season in your area with a single-dose pinkeye vaccine. While vaccination is not guaranteed to prevent pinkeye 100 percent of the time, it can significantly reduce the clinical signs and severity if an outbreak occurs.
- 6. Talk with your veterinarian** – Be sure to talk with your veterinarian to determine the best prevention and treatment protocol for your herd.



References:1 Snowden G.D., Van Vleck L.D., Cundiff L.V., Bennett G.L. Genetic and environmental factors associated with incidence of infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis in preweaned beef calves. Journal of Animal Science, 2005; 83:507-518.

Ross Havens Receives Riding for the Brand Award

Ross Havens was presented the Cass County Cattlemen Association, “Riding for the Brand” award. It recognizes an employee who has “shown great loyalty, worked hard, and rides for their bosses’ brand.”

As Dave Nichols (pictured) described it, “Ross is a key part of Team Nichols and sets an example for others on the team.”



Kessenich Brothers calve in hoop buildings that are 15 to 25 degrees warmer than outside temperatures due in part to the radiant heat from the sun



they buy to help produce the uniform calf crop they want to market.

Mark recounts when they first took notice of Nichols genetics, “There was a guy bringing calves to the sale barn that outweighed and outsold my calves. They calved at about the same time, but their calves were weighing a couple of hundred pounds more.

to three years, while Mark buys about 12 head per year. They look for Angus based heifers at local special replacement heifer sales. Black is a key criteria as Mark explains, “Buyers like black cattle, which makes black hided calves easier to market.” Mark says, “It is easy to tell the top quality heifers in a sale, which have been bred to calving ease bulls; sometimes AI. When we find the right heifers with good temperaments, each of us is willing to pay at the top of the market.”

The brothers buy approximately five Simmental bulls a year from Nichols. Calving ease is not much of a concern, so they look for homozygous black sires that are bigger frame and have the top yearling weight EPDs and average daily gain. They think Simmental is the ideal cross for the Angus based cow herd to produce cattle that will excel in heterosis, performance and top the market. They pour through the catalog sorting out bulls that meet their performance criteria and have the bloodlines they desire. They then rely on Ross Havens to buy them sight-unseen. The brothers put a high value on uniformity of the bulls

That convinced me that Nichols was the place to buy bulls.” Jerry adds, “I visited with Ross, and he gave me the confidence that their Simmental bulls would increase our pay weight. Nichols also provides us with a relationship with people we trust. In the end it is all about relationships.”

Both Jerry and Mark love farming and working with livestock. Agriculture has not only provided them with a good living, but also provided an environment to raise a successful family. With Jerry and Mark’s wives Joan and Susan, they have each raised very talented families with four children each. Although, the children have various jobs and interests, one of the threads that ties them together is they all like working with the cattle.

The Kessenich brothers are top managers in diversified farming and livestock operations, and they strive to excel in each of their enterprises. With their cattle, they take great pride that they raise the top money making calves in their area. For them, agriculture is not only a great business, but also provides them with an ideal lifestyle to raise a family.

Southwestern Community College’s Animal Breeding Genetics and Farm Lab Classes learned what makes Nichols Farms succeed in the seedstock business

North Dakota State College of Science students braved snow and ice to meet with Nichols Farms’ key team members, Ross Havens and Justin Stiens





Buying or Selling Your Calves?

We Can Help!
Nothing Succeeds like a Team Effort



Innovative Livestock Auction Markets, are adding real dollars to their customers calves that are preconditioned, vaccinated, and have source verified genetics.

Livestock Auction Markets' role in price discovery is the key to profitable cow/calf producers—especially in uncertain markets.

These Auction Markets advertise Nichols Superior Beef Genetics and the role that they play in producing cattle that gain efficiently and grade mostly choice.

These feeder cattle and replacement females are the ones that bring order buyers to the sale barns that team up with Nichols Farms.

- Anita Livestock Auction
- Bloomfield Livestock Auction
- Clarinda Livestock Auction
- Colfax Livestock Sales
- Creston Livestock Auctions
- Denison Livestock Auction
- Dunlap Livestock
- Farmers Livestock Auction
- Fort Scott Livestock Auction
- Green City Livestock
- Guthrie Livestock Auction
- Humeston Livestock Auction
- Joplin Regional Stockyards

- Keoco Auction Company, LLC
- Knoxville Regional Market
- Lamoni Livestock Auction
- Lolli Bros. Livestock Mkt. inc
- Madison County Livestock Auction
- Massena Livestock Auction
- Russell Livestock Market
- Sioux Falls Regional Livestock
- Valentine Livestock Auction

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from: Nichols Farms - Iowa

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- ◆ 10 coming two/year old and 18 month old fall yearling bulls
- ◆ 150 Yearling Bullssee page 6

from: Nichols Genetic Source Partners

- ◆ 80 Angus Cross heifers with 1st calves at side sired by Nichols Bulls - Iowa
- ◆ 20 spring yearling PB Nichols Angus heifers sired by Nichols Bulls - Iowa
- ◆ 30 spring yearling F-1 Nichols SX heifers sired by Angus and Sim Bulls - Iowa
- ◆ **Check out the full listing at— www.nicholsfarms.biz**

Cowboys You Can Count On



Phyllis Nichols says with a smile, “Dave and I will have been married 53 loong years.

She and Dave met at the Adair County Fair while helping their younger brothers and sisters fit their steers. Her brother, Lans, won Grand Champion and Dave’s sister, Evelyn, had Reserve Grand.



Phyllis exited Iowa State University in May of her Junior year because of “the best sales pitch Dave ever gave”.

For the first half of her married life she calved 150-200 first calf heifers and had her own flock of Montadale ewes. Soon after she had babies of her own, she dispersed her flock of sheep.

In 1982 Dave’s brother, Lee, died from leukemia. Soon after his death, his widow, Lillian, resigned as high school librarian and she and Phyllis became full time owner/managers at Nichols Farms

Phyllis pays the bills, pays the taxes, issues the payroll, deposits checks, prints invoices, and signs checks.

In addition to handling insurance coverage and claims, she purchases many of the cattle supplies, such as herd health products and ear tags.

Most of her time is spent in her bull barn office, but she especially enjoys interacting with the Nichols crew, customers and visitors.

Phyllis is a great cook and is Nichols Farms’ “hostess with the mostest” and is active in community service projects.





So Much More than Minerals!

By Brian Fieser, Ph.D., Beef Field Nutritionist, ADM Animal Nutrition™

Thinking back 15 years to when I was a wide-eyed graduate student, I wrote a paper on the importance of feeding minerals to correct a dietary imbalance or deficiency. During my grad school days I pictured mineral supplements in a white bag with black “MINERAL” lettering, and all of the different options were more or less the same. Basically, I thought of mineral as a commodity. Unfortunately, many cattlemen still have this view.

After over a decade of working in the cattle nutrition industry I realize how far our industry has progressed, and just how wrong I was! Thinking about ADM’s top tier line of mineral supplements—AMPT™—it’s hard to fathom the improvements that have made, truly a revolution in mineral nutrition.

Back then most of the trace minerals used were the traditional inorganics, primarily sulfates and oxides. The potential negative impacts of sulfate and oxide forms of trace minerals are now well known.

AMPT Minerals are formulated with primarily hydroxy



ADM Animal Nutrition™, AMPT™, CitriStim®, RumeNext®, and Endo-Fighter® are trademarks of Archer Daniels Midland Company.

trace minerals and very few inorganic minerals. AMPT Minerals also incorporate a highly available source of cobalt which rumen bacteria use to extract more energy from forages.

Additives, which can be delivered in a bag of minerals, are also available that have a beneficial effect on cattle stress and comfort (something we didn’t really think about back then) like CitriStim® for immune health and RumeNext® to help alleviate heat stress. Not to mention ADM’s Endo-Fighter®, a whole package that includes natural components which help counter the negative effects of fescue toxicity!

These improvements in what a “bag of mineral” can deliver weren’t even available 15 years ago! I guess it makes sense since the computer I use is smaller than the cellular phone in a bag I used 15 years ago! It’s pretty amazing how we can supply so much more than minerals in a “bag of minerals.”

LETTERS from you



From Brad Johnson, Director, Beef Genetics, GENEX, Shawano, WS

Dave and Kelly; I hope you both are doing well. This is to let you know that Nichols Stout T152 has met his semen production needs and will be sent to the sale barn shortly. At over 10 years of age, he’s sold tens of thousands of units worldwide and treated us all quite well. A bank of semen is still available, and will be marketed in the upcoming breeding seasons. Schaff Angus Valley owns possession and thus will receive the salvage value. Thank you for working with us on him and other bulls. We appreciate your friendship and cooperation over the years, and in the future.

From LeeAnn Waugh, MN

Thank you for allowing us to come out to your farm, and evaluate livestock. With your willingness, we were able to better ourselves as livestock judges.

Our team was 5th overall, at the Western National Roundup in Denver

From Glen Selk PhD, Stillwater, OK

Mr. Nichols: Thanks for the nice note regarding my day time calving article. I enjoyed reading your commentary about Gus Konefal. Bob Totusek brought to me a news clipping about Gus and his observations when I was in graduate school here at Oklahoma State. I was interested in your comments about how the Iowa study came about.

From Bill Angell, ADM Commercial Beef Specialist, Beloit, Kansas

Ross: Over the years in the Nichols Newsletter I read Mr. Nichols using the word “Soggy” as a term of endearment for Nichols farms influenced calves & feeder cattle. In fact, I have seen this term often enough that I look for it.

I think that word is such an interesting descriptive term for feeder calf condition offered for sale. Good choice of words. I think healthy, bulky, fast growing feeder cattle are ideal for Kansas feedlots.

However, many cattle buyers and feed yard managers disagree to the point that the growthier calves may not get a reasonable bid at auction. Seems like these guys just want “green yearlings”, we know why. Calves that have the potential to grow and are allowed to do so are a bargain. I hope Mr. Nichols will continue to promote soggy calves.

PS; I like toast in the morning. If I dunk it in my coffee-It weighs More, soggy.

The Jacobs Family Won All the Total Profit Champions



Montgomery County Fair— Red Oak, Iowa
Colin (left) 1st in rate of gain and 2nd in carcass. Kaylee (right) 1st and 4th carcass and 3rd rate of gain. Kaden (middle) 3rd in carcass and 2nd in rate of gain.



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