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IN THIS EDITION
News Releases specific to NE Iowa:
• Learn about Feeding Dairy Beef at Northeast Iowa Programs

Previous Editions:
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News Release
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Learn about Feeding Dairy Beef at Northeast Iowa Programs

The Jan. 1 USDA cattle inventory report showed only 89.3 million cattle and calves in the U.S., down 1.6% from 2012, and the smallest since 1952. That resulted in only 34.2 million calves born in 2012 available for feeding and market in 2013 and 2014, almost 3% less than a year ago.

To compensate for fewer calves available to feed, cattlemen are feeding cattle to heavier weights to attempt to maintain beef production, and are utilizing growth-promoting technologies such as beta-agonists to increase the red meat production potential.

Some cattle feeders are looking for dairy calves to keep their yards full. According to the 2011 National Animal Health Monitoring System survey, 6% of the feedlots with fewer than 1000 head and 17% of the feedlots with more than 1000 head fed both dairy and beef steers. To address this increasing interest in feeding dairy beef animals, two programs are planned in northeast Iowa. Differences in feeding dairy steers will be the focus of Iowa State University Extension programs in Monticello at the Jones County Extension Office on Aug. 6 and at the Howard County Extension Office in Cresco on Aug. 7. Both programs will run from 9:15 a.m. to about 3 p.m.

Speakers will present current research findings, record analysis and performance data at both locations. Keynote speaker Steven Rust, Michigan State University, will describe MSU’s research and experience in feeding Holstein steers for the beef market. This research includes feeding systems, rations, and housing for Holstein beef steers. Shawn Walter, Professional Cattle Consultants (PCC) at Hydro, Oklahoma, will share some of their closeout and performance data comparing Holsteins to beef cattle. PCC has more than 35 years of feedlot data with more than 120 million head of cattle in its database. The company currently represents more than 2.5 million head of feeding capacity from more than one hundred feed yards. Darren Katzung, Southwest Vet Services in Wisconsin, specializes in dairy calf health and will share his experiences with calf health and its impact on feed yard performance.

ISU Extension livestock economist Lee Schulz will discuss current feeder calf availability including both beef and dairy calves, and share his outlook on the fed cattle market and profitability in the feedlot industry. ISU beef specialist Dan Loy will explain the use of growth-promoting technologies such as implants, ionophores and beta-
agonists in dairy beef steers, and the impacts of those technologies on marketing options. The day will be capped off with a panel discussing dairy beef marketing options.

Registration for either location is $20, which covers lunch and materials, and is requested by August 2. Support from sponsors Merck Animal Health, Big Gain Feed, Iowa Beef Center, Innovative Ag Services, Silver Edge Coop, Cargill Feeds, CUS Bank and Cresco State Bank help defray speaker expenses. To register for the Aug. 6 Monticello program, contact the Benton County Extension office at 319-472-4739. To register for the Aug. 7 Cresco program, contact the Howard County Extension office at 563-547-3001.

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