



# Bohaty Farm Bulletin

## December 2009

### Great Expectations for 2010



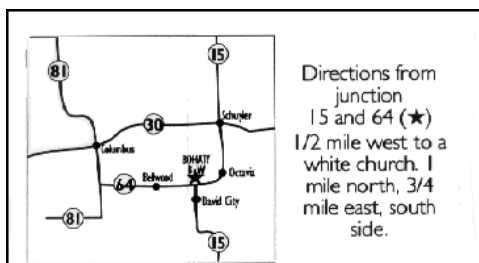
*Merry Christmas from the Bohaty's  
Diane, Walter, Nancy & Scott*

We are looking forward to 2010 and the new calf crop starting in mid March. Herd sires, Cave Creek Performance, B&B Old Jules, and B&B Cherokee, were used on the cow herd. Heifers were bred to B&B Revolution, and B&B Panda. We are expecting several calves from our heifers who were AI bred to J West's WW Doc, owned by Morris Halliburton, and maybe a few Popeye and B&B Baron AI calves out of some cows.

We are also looking forward to our 18th annual Open House and Sale in April on the third Saturday (April 17th). We haven't decided on exactly which heifers we'll be offering for sale but we have some really nice ones. Both fall and spring bred as well as some yearlings that will sell open. We have several 2 year old bulls that we'll be selling as well as the normal round of yearlings. We plan to have a catalog on line in late Feb or early March. Call for one or check our web site at [www.britishcattle.com](http://www.britishcattle.com)

*We Wish You Merry Christmas  
And A  
Marvelous New Year*

**Cowboy Logic:**  
*"No matter how hard the winter,  
spring always comes."*



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## **Making Your Calves Pay** by **Holly Foster** (*exerts from July 2009 Drovers*)

As a cow-calf producer, your investment in your current calf crop began long before the calves were on the ground. You've worked to improve the health & productivity of your cow herd, made bull selection choices that should improve the genetic merit of your calves & done everything you can to get a calf ready to wean, but is there more you can do to make your calves stand out from the crowd, & is it worth the effort?

Value-added programs that include preconditioning or special market niches such as natural or source- & age-verified programs have offered potential premiums to producers.

But is the investment worth the effort?

Video sales have emerged as a good marketing opportunity where you have the chance to advertise the "extras" that you've put into your calf crop. (*A 2005 Study analyzing 10 years of Superior Livestock Auctions show that premiums range from 99 cents to \$7.91 per hundred weight.*)

Chris Nelson, business manager for Superior Stampede, says "if a producer pursues source & age verification or some sort of third-party verification, it speaks to the reputation & management of the operation. That producer has taken some extra effort to add value to his cattle, which can separate them for buyers from "commodity class" calves."

Analyses of value-added programs have also revealed that there are premiums to be had at the auction market level for enhanced management. A 2006 study analyzing calves sold through Iowa auction markets found that third-party verification of vaccination & weaning programs added \$6.15 per hundredweight.

"The easiest calves to sell are the ones representing good management practices" says Mark Harmon of Joplin Regional Stockyard in Carthage, MO. "Being able to validate a health protocol, along with the possibility of age & source verification, makes calves worth more."

As you prepare for the 2009 marketing season, a thorough analysis of your breakevens is critical to understanding the potential benefits of various value-added alternatives. OK State University researchers have developed a partial budget analysis in a MS Excel spreadsheet. You can substitute your individual operation's production data to evaluate costs versus revenue to help guide your decision-making process.

*To read the full article go to the Drovers web site [http://www.drovers.com/news\\_editorial.asp?pgID=744&ed\\_id=4957&component\\_id=922](http://www.drovers.com/news_editorial.asp?pgID=744&ed_id=4957&component_id=922) & click on "Making Your Calves Pay" The link to the spreadsheet is here as well.*

## **Visible Signs of an Animal with Tender Meat**

***By Ridge Shinn of Rotokawa Cattle & Massachusetts Grassfed Co, Hardwick, MA (From Stockman Grass Farmer Nov. 2009)***

The most obvious visual clue to tenderness in cattle is flatness of bone. Picture a Jersey cow. "Steaks from Jersey steers were scored most tender of all breeds" says a study by the University of Tennessee and the USDA, *J Anim Sci* 22:1001-1008.

A company in Australia, Classic Livestock ([www.classiclivestock.com](http://www.classiclivestock.com)) selects cattle for slaughter by visual appraisal. In the manual they have developed for producers, they say: "Bone shape: this trait is the most direct indicator of meat tenderness...for an animal to be slaughtered." The flatness of bone is a subjective measurement but one can learn to feel it.

The jaw, ribs, and back leg are places to feel and develop a sense of flat compared to rounded bone—it will be convex in rounder boned animals and concave in flat boned animals. The rib is easy if you have animal in the squeeze chute, put your thumb or finger directly on

the 13th rib and push—does it feel flat or even indented a bit? Or does it feel rounded? The jaw is also an easy place to evaluate an animal at hand. On the leg, the easiest place to feel is on the outside of the ankle/lower leg, below the hock. Expect a kick when you are feeling this bone. The leg can be seen at some distance and is a good visual indicator if you cannot touch the animal. In general, the British breeds will be flatter; the continental breeds will have a more rounded bone and the Brahma will be rounded and generally tough.

Another visible clue is docility; docility is directly correlated to tenderness. One can see docility and certainly one gets a sense of it when moving and handling animals. A clear indicator of docility is when an animal's head is lower than its body—everyone has heard the expression "high-headed"; the high headed animal will most likely be tough.

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