Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University

VirginiaTech
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

VSU VIRGINIA STATE

Animal & Poultry Sciences (0306)
Virginia Tech, 366 Litton Reaves
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-9159 Fax: 540/231-3713
E-mail: sgreiner@vt.edu

Livestock Update

Beef - Horse - Poultry - Sheep - Swine

March/April 2012

This LIVESTOCK UPDATE contains timely subject matter on beef cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, swine, and related junior work. Use this material as you see fit for local newspapers, radio programs, newsletters, and for the formulation of recommendations.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Scott P. Greiner, Extension Project Leader
Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences

Dates to Remember

BEEF

APRIL

18–20 44th Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Meeting. Houston, TX.
Contact: Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159; email: sgreiner@vt.edu

HORSE

SEPTEMBER

13-16 VA State 4-H Horse and Pony Championship. Virginia Horse Center. Lexington. ***Contact***: Celeste Crisman, (540) 231-9162; email: ccrisman@vt.edu

SHEEP

AUGUST

25 Virginia Performance Tested Ram Lamb Sale. Shenandoah Valley AREC. Steeles Tavern.
Contact: Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159; email: sgreiner@vt.edu

March Beef Management Calendar

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Spring Calving Herds

- Move pregnant heifers and early calving cows to calving area about 2 weeks before due date
- Continue calving
- Check cows 3 to 4 times per day, heifers more often – assist early if needed
- Keep calving area clean and well drained, move healthy pairs out to large pastures 3 days after calving
- Ear tag and dehorn all calves at birth; castrate male calves in commercial herds
- Give selenium and vitamin A & D injections to newborn calves
- Feed cows extra energy after calving; some protein may be needed also
- Keep high quality, high magnesium, high selenium minerals available
- Purchase estrous synchronization supplies; line up AI technician or AI supplies
- Order fertilizer; start getting equipment ready

Fall Calving Herds

- Pull bulls to maintain a 60-75 day calving season
- Remove bulls to bull pasture and check condition
- Begin creep feeding or creep grazing calves if desired
- Plan marketing strategy for calves
- Begin feeding high magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany
- Make first selection of replacement heifers
- Order fertilizer; start getting equipment ready

April Beef Management Calendar

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Spring Calving Herds

- Finish calving
- Check cows 3 to 4 times per day, heifers more often to assist early if needed
- Keep calving area clean and well drained, move healthy pairs out to large pastures 3 days after calving
- Ear tag all calves at birth; castrate and implant male calves in commercial herds
- Give selenium and vitamin A & D injections to newborn calves
- Feed cows supplemental energy after calving; some protein may be needed also
- Keep high quality, high magnesium, high selenium minerals available
- All bulls need a breeding soundness exam at least 30 days before start of breeding season
- Fertilize pastures and hay fields according to soil tests

Fall Calving Herds

- Creep graze calves while on cows
- Give pre-weaning respiratory vaccinations IBR, PI3, BVD, BRSV, pasteurella
- Collect weaning weights on calves; weigh and body condition score cows
- Wean commercial calves based on marketing plan for calves
- Re-implant commercial calves (do not implant replacement heifers)
- Pregnancy check cows 60 days after bulls were removed
- Continue feeding high magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany

Edgewood Angus Receives
2012 Bartenslager & BCIA Premier Angus Breeder Awards

Joi Saville
Beef Extension Associate, VA Tech

Edgewood Angus, owned and operated by the Henderson family- Pete, Connie, and Peter Henderson of Williamsburg, Virginia, was recognized by Virginia BCIA with the 2012 Premier Angus Breeder Award as well as the Bartenslager Award from the Virginia Angus Association.

Edgewood Angus consigned 20 Angus bulls to the 2010-11 Virginia BCIA Culpeper and Southwest Central Bull Tests. Their consignment to the Culpeper Senior Test received the Breeder Group Award, along with the High Station Index and High Sale Order Award bull which also topped the sale. The average index of 106 on all Edgewood bulls was the highest among the 30+ Angus breeders which developed over 200 bulls through Virginia BCIA.

Edgewood Angus consists of a 200-cow registered Angus herd which has been developed since the early 1980s from a commercial herd. Edgewood Angus has been consigning bulls to the BCIA test stations for over 15 years. During that time they have developed a strong reputation for quality genetics and have had several bulls top the BCIA tests and sales. Consistent, predictable genetics has been the focus which has been accomplished through the use of proven sires. Customer service is a high priority for Edgewood Angus, and they work diligently to assess the needs of their commercial bull buyers to design genetics that will do the job for them.

Edgewood is a repeat honoree for the Bartenslager Award and Premier Angus Breeder Award, winning the awards in 2007 and 2009.

2012 Virginia BCIA
Superior Service Award Presented to Mike Henry

Joi Saville
Beef Extension Associate, VA Tech

The 2012 Virginia BCIA Superior Service Award was presented to Mike Henry from Amelia, Virginia. Through his leadership, education, and industry involvement, Mike has been dedicated to promoting the principles of BCIA by fostering genetic improvement of beef cattle in Virginia.

As the Agricultural and Natural Resources Extension Agent in Amelia County, Mike has had a profound impact on the implementation of innovative management strategies for producers in the region. Among these include selection and utilization of superior genetics through bull selection and artificial insemination, application of beef crossbreeding systems, improved herd health, and heifer development. These topics were conveyed through a variety of forums including educational sessions, field days, and applied research on cooperating producer farms. Although retired as Extension Agent, Mike continues to be a prominent influence through his role as Manager of the Amelia Area Cattlemen.

Mike provided key leadership for the formation of the Amelia Area Cattlemen, LLC producer organization which was formed in 2002. Initiated primarily as an organization to educate producers and facilitate cooperative purchasing of inputs, AAC has evolved into a strong marketing organization for feeder cattle and served as a model for other such organizations with like interests. Mike and his fellow producers were among the first in the state to background commingled calves for the VQA program and were early adopters of value-added marketing strategies. Members of the association were also some of the first in Virginia to explore retained ownership of their calves through the Virginia Retained Ownership Program. The Amelia group has also developed a replacement heifer development and marketing program using the Virginia Premium Assured Heifers (VAPAH) standard. The group now offers their VAPAH Heifers through auction twice annually.

Mike has provided leadership to several organizations, including the Virginia Forage and Grasslands Council, Amelia Farm Bureau Board, Amelia Fair Board, and served as President of the Virginia Association of Agricultural Extension Agents, Epsilon Sigma Phi President, and President of the Virginia Extension Service Association. Currently, Mike is a board member for the Virginia Cattlemen's Association and on the Extension Leadership Council for the Southern Piedmont Agriculture Research and Extension Center.

Virginia BCIA extends its gratitude to Mike Henry for his leadership, vision, and dedication toward the enhancement of Virginia's beef cattle industry

Hounshell Farms Named Virginia BCIA 2012 Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year

Joi Saville
Beef Extension Associate, VA Tech

Virginia BCIA is proud to present the 2012 Virginia Outstanding Commercial Producer Award to Hounshell Farms. Located in the western portion of Wythe County, Virginia, Hounshell Farms qualifies as a Centurion farm, dating back to the late 1700's. This farm has operated continuous through the generations. Current owners, Clayton and Buster Hounshell, father and son, created a partnership in the mid-70's that continues today. Buster's two sons, Greg and Jason (both VA Tech graduates) and their four children make up the 7th and 8th generations to work this farm of 650+ acres of owned and leased land.

From the time Buster graduated from Virginia Tech, with a degree in Animal Science in 1969, his appreciation for the Simmental breed resulted in changing their Hereford-based cattle operation into the first purebred, registered, black Simmental herd in Southwest Virginia. By utilizing artificial insemination as a priority in developing their herd, Hounshell Farms is currently comprised of 185 head of black Simmental females – approximately 110 are Simm-Angus with balance being purebred black Simmentals. Hounshell Farms calve approximately 135 cows in the fall with the balance spring-calving.

Clayton and Buster are avid users of performance information which began through the data recording with the American Simmental Association (ASA) and Virginia BCIA. Since 1980, females have been recorded with ASA and the first bulls being tested in 1987 through the Virginia BCIA. In an effort to improve the herd and enhance their data, Hounshell Farms began participating in the Virginia's Retained Ownership Program in 1997. Since 2000, all of the calves (except those used for bull development or heifer replacements) have been shipped to Circle 5 Beef Incorporated in Henderson, Nebraska. This retained ownership information serves as one of the criteria for bull selection and heifer replacement development. Retained ownership also allows Hounshell Farms to receive premiums from age and source verification and extra value created by superior genetics and management.

Hounshell Farms utilizes a forage based program and utilizes improved pastures with rotational grazing. Hay production consists of approximately 75 acres of harvested alfalfa grass hay. Corn silage is utilized for backgrounding weaned calves, bull and replacement female development, and for supplementing the 2 year old fall calving cow herd. Conservation practices are also utilized to achieve optimum yields. In 2003, Hounshell Farms was recognized as Conservationist of the Year.

Buster has contributed to the betterment of the beef industry and agriculture in Virginia in many ways. As long-time teacher of agriculture at George Wythe High School in Wytheville, Buster has impacted many students- several of which have gone on to be distinguished teachers themselves, and his students were frequently recognized at the state and national level for their excellence. Additionally, Buster has provided leadership to several organizations including VA-MD College of Veterinary Medicine Advisory Board, Chair of the Wythe County Extension Leadership Council, and two terms as a director and officer on the board of Virginia BCIA. He was the 2001 recipient of the Virginia BCIA Superior Service Award and named the Cattleman of the Year in 2001 by the Virginia Cattlemen's Association.

Glenmary Farm Named Virginia BCIA 2012 Outstanding Commercial Producer of the Year

Joi Saville
Beef Extension Associate, VA Tech

Virginia BCIA is pleased to present their 2012 Commercial Producer of the Year Award to Tom and Kim Nixon of Rapidan, Virginia. The Nixon's operate Glenmary Farm, LLC, a 4,500 acre cattle operation along the Rapidan River in Orange County.

Glenmary Farm is a diverse operation which includes 750 commercial beef cattle, three turkey houses, with supporting row crop consisting of approximately 1,800 acres and approximately 2,500 acres of pasture and hayland. Glenmary is one of the largest custom cattle feeding operations in Virginia, with facilities for backgrounding feeder cattle, finishing cattle, developing bulls and replacement females, and a cow-calf enterprise. Since 1997, Glenmary Farm has been the home to the Virginia BCIA Culpeper Bull Test. Approximately 100 bulls are developed annually through the Culpeper test at Glenmary. Tom and Kim have been instrumental in the success of the BCIA program, and are recognized for their leadership and contributions toward the improvement of beef cattle in the region. In addition to the BCIA bulls, the Nixon's also custom feed and calve out approximately 250 heifers and cows for a Pennsylvania breeder. They also operate a heifer development program breeding and marketing approximately 200 heifers a year.

Tom and Kim are recognized as leaders in the agricultural community. Tom is very active on the local Central Virginia Cattlemen's Association, serving as a founding board member and three years as president. Additionally, Tom has been a director for the Virginia Cattlemen's Association and for Orange County Farm Bureau. Kim has served as an associate director for the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District and is a volunteer leader for 4-H.

Numerous awards have been presented to the Nixons over the years. In 1991, Tom and his father received the Virginia Commercial Beef Producer of the Year award. Tom and Kim have been recognized by Virginia Farm Bureau as Young Farmer of the Year. Orange County has recognized them as Farm Family of the Year, and the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District recognized them as Conservation Farm of the Year. They also received the 2005 BCIA Superior Service Award.

Tom and Kim have a daughter, Elizabeth age 17 that plans to attend Butler College in Kansas this fall and a son Robert, age 15. Both are actively involved in 4H livestock projects, judging programs, FFA activities, and the farming operation.

Virginia BCIA is proud to recognize the Nixon's for their accomplishments, service to the industry, and for their leadership and dedication to agriculture.

Performance Feeds Recognizes Donald Osborne, Jr. With Bull Credit

Joi Saville
Beef Extension Associate, VA Tech

Performance Livestock and Feed Company of Lawsonville, NC is a family owned company. Performance Feeds was the supplier of the ration fed at the Southwest Bull Test this year, and the bulls performed very well.

Along with the selling feed, Performance Livestock and Feed Company is also in the cattle business. Since they are involved in several aspects of the cattle industry they realize the importance of superior genetics. If all producers utilized proven genetics in their herds, it would improve the overall quality of the product and be beneficial to all aspects of the industry.

With this thought in mind, Performance Livestock and Feed Company sponsored a $2000 credit towards the purchase of a bull for one Southwest Virginia beef cattle producer. This credit was applied toward the purchase of any bull selling in this year's Virginia BCIA Southwest Virginia Bull Test Sale.

This year's recipient was Donald Osborne, Jr. of Lebanon, Virginia. Mr. Osborne has a diversified farming operation that consists of cow/calf, sheep and tobacco. With the dissolution of tobacco in Southwest Virginia, Osborne became more aggressive in managing his 180 head cow herd.

With a predominately red Limousin based herd in 2003, Osborne began implementing an Angus cross-breeding program to change coat color, increase his hybrid vigor and improve his marketing options. By utilizing synchronization and AI tools on his first calf heifers, he has begun to retain his crossbred replacement females and market the rest of his calves through the Virginia Quality Assured Program.

This program is for eligible producers that own at least 20 cows, and not have purchased a performance tested bull from a Virginia BCIA bull test sale (Culpeper or Southwest station) in the past ten years. Producers are to be nominated by their county Virginia Cooperative Extension agent. The producer will be expected to use the bull for three years, at which time the producer has the option to purchase the bull at salvage value or sell the bull, with the proceeds going to the Virginia Cattlemen's Foundation to support scholarships, leadership development, and other industry activities.

The Virginia BCIA program would like to thank Scott Jessee, Extension Agent in Russell County for his nomination of Donald Osborne, Jr., as well as Performance Livestock and Feed. Without their support, Mr. Osborne would not have been able to purchase the high-station indexing junior Angus bull.

2012 Virginia BCIA Southwest Bull Test & BCIA-Influenced Virginia Premium Assured Plus Bred Heifer Sale Report

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The 33rd Annual Southwest Virginia Performance Tested Bull Sale sponsored by the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association was held Saturday, March 24, 2012 at Wytheville. The 136 bulls offered commanded a record average price of $3423 per head. Breed averages were as follows: 84 Angus averaged $3616, 10 purebred Simmental averaged $3080, 22 Simmental Hybrids $3145, 5 Charolais $3780, 4 Gelbvieh Balancers $3900, 2 purebred Gelbvieh $3700, 1 Red Angus at $2700 and 8 Polled Hereford at $2150. The BCIA-influenced Virginia Premium Assured plus Bred Heifer Sale held in conjunction with the bull sale sold 28 heifers for an average price of $1616 per head.

The top selling Angus bull was Angus Lot 79 and sold to Bobby and Martha Jackson of Draper, Virginia for $8000. This February 2011 son of GAR Prophet was bred by Lucas Farm of Blacksburg, VA. He had a test YW of 1301, ratio 108, along with +70 WW EPD, +112 YW EPD, +0.52 RE EPD, 106 REA ratio, 139 %IMF ratio, and +38.42 $W EPD. The high-indexing Senior Angus bull, Lot 27, was consigned by J & M Windy Acres, Mike Connatser of Maryville, TN and sold to Jason Cassell of Independence, VA for $6750. This calving ease son of GAR New Design 5050 had CED EPD +10, BW EPD +0.8, YW EPD +99, MB EPD +0.58, REA EPD +0.80, in addition to ADG ratio of 109, test YW ratio of 118, and REA ratio 123.

Cassell Angus Farm, Jason Cassell, of Independence, VA was recognized with the Breeder Group Award for their consignment of Angus bulls in the Junior Test. Their Lot 103 led this consignment group, selling for $4700 to Kenny Compton of North Tazewell, VA. This son of B/R Destination 928-619 posted a test YW ratio of 119 and an ADG ratio of 115, as well as +65 WW EPD, +111 YW EPD, $W +30.86 and $B +66.40. Lot 105, also a Cassell Angus Farm consignment was the high-indexing junior Angus bull and commanded $3500 from Donald Osborne of Lebanon, VA.

The strong Angus bull sale also featured Lot 2, consigned by Little Windy Hill Farm of Max Meadows, VA and selling to Bobby and Martha Jackson of Draper, VA for $6000. He was a fall-born calving ease son of Rito 7079 of Rita 5M46 OBJ. Lot 48, bred by Grassy Valley Farm in Afton, TN also commanded $6000 and sold to Anson Minton of Gate City, VA. Sired by Boyd Forward, this bull had YW EPD +112 and test ADG ratio of 125. Virginia Tech consigned Lot 109, a January-born son of B/R Ambush 28 which commanded $5500 and went to Hillwinds Farm in Dublin, VA. A strong consignment from Legacy at Pine Hill Farm in Forest, VA was led by Lot 24, an October son of SAV Mandan 5664 and selling to Richard Ruff of Goode, VA for $5400. Another Legacy at Pine Hill bull, Lot 21, a high growth son of SAV 8180 Traveler 004 sold for $5000 to Locust Legacy of Hillsboro, WV. A popular calving-ease son of MCC Daybreak consigned by Circle K Farm, Zac Ketron of Lebanon, VA commanded $5200 from Mary Quesenberry of Dugspur, VA.

Demand was very strong for the Gelbvieh and Gelbvieh Balancer bulls, which included the one of the high-selling bulls of the sale. Lot 607 consigned by Little Windy Hill Farms of Max Meadows, VA. This fall-born homozygous black, homozygous polled Balancer son of Post Rock Granite 200P2 brought $5000 and sold to Clifton Hutchison of Traphill, NC. He posted at test ADG of 3.44, ratio 111 and test YW ratio of 105, along with WW EPD of +49, YW EPD of +90, Milk EPD of +22 and carcass ratios of 108 and 113 for %IMF and REA respectively. Handfula Gelbviehs from Bland, VA consigned a homozygous black, polled purebred son of DCSF Post Rock Granite 200P2 which commanded $4400 and was sold to Tommy Shrader of Lebanon, VA. This September 2010 bull had a CE EPD of +111, BW EPD of -0.6 and Milk EPD of +20.

The strong Charolais sale was led by Lot 308, consigned by Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. This January-born son of EC No Doubt 2022P commanded $4100 from L. White Farms of Cedar Bluff, VA. He posted EPDs of +9.1 CE, +37 WW, +69 YW, +16 Milk and +0.16 MB, in addition to ratios of 116 WW and 123

MB. Another EC No Doubt 2022P son, Lot 309 also consigned by Virginia Tech, commanded $4000 and was sold to Ben Fore of Glade Spring, VA. This bull had strong maternal EPDs of +6.9 CED, +6.5 CEM, +15 Milk, as well as +0.48 REA EPD.

A solid Simmental offering was paced by the Junior high-indexing purebred bull consigned by Deer Creek Simmental of Lowesville, VA. Lot 401 was sold to Hoot Owl Hollow Farm of Amelia, VA for $4000. This high performance bull had a test YW of 1381, ratio 112 and a test ADG of 5.00, ratio of 124, in addition to EPD's of +39 WW, +74 YW and +15.0 CEM. Virginia Tech consigned the high-selling junior SimAngus bull, Lot 447, which sold to Aubra Dean of Jonesville, Virginia for $4600. This January born son of RC Club King 040R posted a test ratios of 111 YW, in addition to his +35 WW EPD, +68 YW EPD, +14.6 CEM, +0.25 RE EPD, and API and TI indexes of +134 and +76 respectively.

J & M Windy Acres, Mike Connatser and family, of Maryville, TN was recognized with the Breeder Group Award for their consignment of Simmental Hybrid bulls in the Senior Test. Their Lot 426 led this consignment group, selling for $3900 to Aubra Dean of Jonesville, VA. This homozygous black, high-growth son of PVF-J 4P14 HYB Rookie posted a test YW ratio of 119 and ADG ratio of 123, as well as +47 WW EPD, +99 YW EPD, and TI index of +81. Lot 428 commanded $3400 and was sold to Denny Jessee of Castlewood, VA. This black baldy B/R New Day 454 son posted BW EPD -2.1, +5.9 Milk EPD, MB EPD of +.065, RE EPD of +0.45, along with API and TI indexes of +131.0 and +46.0 respectively. J & M Windy Acres also had the high-indexing junior Simmental hybrid bull with Lot 432, another PVF-J 4P14 HYB Rookie son which sold to William Tally of Bear Creek, NC.

The Polled Hereford sale was led by Lot 209 consigned by Diamond W Farm, Ken Worley of Abingdon, VA. This February-born son of MSU TCF Revolution 4R brought $2900 and sold to Milton Humberd of Cleveland, TN. He posted EPDs of +57 WW, +90 YW, +0.25 MB, +0.47 RE, BMI of +$20 and CHB +$28.

The BCIA-Influenced Bred Heifer Sale consisted of 28 fall-calving commercial bred heifers. All heifers were designated as Virginia Premium Assured Plus females. Demand was strong and prices steady, as the heifers averaged $1616 per head. Virginia Tech of Blacksburg, VA consigned Lot 7 to top the sale at $1800 selling to Paul Chambers of Lebanon, VA. This pair of SimAngus heifers is due to calve in September and was bred to VPI Windstar 9W49 ET. Lot 11 from Virginia Tech sold for $1775 and went to Thomas Nelson of Pence Springs, WV. This heifer was also bred VPI Windstar 9W49 ET and due to calve in September. Another set of heifers selling for $1775 was Lot 12, consigned by Hillwinds Farm of Dublin, VA which sold to Corey Aker of Wytheville, VA. This pair of heifers was bred to Laws Final Answer X136, and is expected to calve in October.

All bulls and heifers were consigned by members of the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association. Bulls were developed at Hillwinds Farm at Dublin, VA owned and operated by Tim Sutphin. The sale was managed by Virginia BCIA and the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, and the auctioneer was Mike Jones.

Virginia BCIA and the Southwest Bull and Heifer Sale consignors would like to thank 5C Farm and Home Supply, Abingdon Equipment Company, Inc., ABS, Donald D. Baker Cattle Co., LLC, Farm Credit Country Mortgages, First Bank and Trust, G & G Livestock, LLC, Genex Cooperative Inc., Giles, Farm Bureau, Lucas Farms, Performance Livestock and Feed Company, Rudolph and Delp Construction, Snuffy's General Store, Virginia Gelbvieh Association, and Wythe County Livestock Exchange for their sponsorship.

Special thanks to all the bull and heifer buyers at the 2012 Southwest Virginia BCIA Sale:

Allen S. Cox, Independence, VA
Andrew Elmore, Jr., Fallston, NC
Andrew Jackson Arrington, Glade Spring, VA
Anson Minton, Gate City, VA
Bar-C Farm, Lebanon, VA
Barry R. Vaughn, Austinville, VA
Ben F. Fore, Glade Spring, VA
Benny Kevin Snow, Dobson, NC
Billy J. Childress, Thurmond, NC
Blake W. Horton, Ararat, VA
Bobby & Martha Jackson, Draper, VA
Bundy Farm, Lebanon, VA
C. Steven Maiden, Damascus, VA
Canaan Land Farm, True, WV
Carl & Celia Roten, Boone, NC
Charlie Wright, Galax, VA
Claude F. Steele, Pounding Mill, VA
Clifton Guy Hutchison, Traphill, NC
Cory A. Aker, Wytheville, VA
Craig H. Whittaker, Pearisburg, VA
Creighton H. Galloway, Bluff City, TN
Dallas Hubbard, Sr., Floyd, VA
Daniel R. Terry, Pearisburg, VA
Darrell W. Shrader, Christiansburg, VA
David S. Miller, II, Bland, VA
Davidson Farm, Gate City, VA
Dean Kelley Pratt, Draper, VA
Dean Living Trust, Jonesville, VA
Deer Haven Farms, Narrows, VA
Dempsey L. Goad, Hillsville, VA
Denny Jessee, Castlewood, VA
Donald T. Osborne, Jr., Lebanon, VA
Flat Creek Farms, Princeton, WV
Garner R. Jarrell, Mt. Airy, NC
George Terry Johnson, Sparta, NC
Glen Shipway, Kiawah Island, SC
H. J. Childress, Gladstone, VA
Henderson Farms, Pearisburg, VA
Hoot Owl Hollow Farm, Amelia, VA
Huckleberry Farm & Terry Slusher, Floyd, VA
J. S. Staley, Marion, VA
James E. McConnell, Nickelsville, VA
James Gary Munsey, Bland, VA
James P. Munsey, Bland, VA
Jamie Culbertson, Gate City, VA
Jason Cassell, Independence, VA
Jason O. Semones, Hillsville, VA
Jerry Lee Thompson, Bland, VA
John H. Crowgey, III, Wytheville, VA
Johnson Farms Operation, Inc., Dobson, NC
Joseph E. King, Wytheville, VA
Julie Sloop, Bland, VA
K D Farms, Broadford, VA
Kelly Kidd, Pearisburg, VA
Kerry Lee Compton, N. Tazewell, VA
L & G Circle T Farm, Christiansburg, VA
L. White Farms, Cedar Bluff, VA
Locust Legacy, Hillsboro, WV
Louis T. Clay, DeWitt, VA
M. C. Saunders, Tazewell, VA
Malcolm Boothe, Pulaski, VA
Mark Hoke, Pickaway, WV
Mark L. Grim, Floyd, VA
Mark W. Warner, Dailey, WV
Martin P. Farrier, Newport, VA
Mary B. Quesenberry, Dugspur, VA
Michael D. Cox, Kingsport, TN
Milton Humberd, Jr., Cleveland, TN
Nathan Rosenberger, Jeffersonton, VA
Noah Martin, Sugar Grove, VA
Oatie E. Leath, Galax, VA
Old Dominion Farm, Scottsville, VA
Paul Chambers, Lebanon, VA
Preston Dale Robinson, Woodlawn, VA
Radford Cattle Company, Floyd, VA
Randy P. Largen, Hillsville, VA
Raymond A. Campbell, Saltville, VA
Richard H. Ruff, Goode, VA
Ridgewood Simmentals, Boone, NC
Riverview Farms Cattle, LLC, Louisa, VA
Robert Corell, Tazewell, VA
Robert E. Tate, Red Oak, VA
Robert F. McKenna, Bristol, VA
Robert J. Campbell, Saltville, VA
Rocky Creek Farm, Hillsville, VA
Rusty and Cara Henson, Boone, NC
S. Roger Meek, Marion, VA
Seth Ryan Umbarger, Marion, VA
Shannon Cox, Fall Branch, TN
Spring Hollow Farms, Java, VA
Spruce Gap Farm, LLC, Eggleston, VA
Sun Valley Farms, Lerona, WV
Ted J. Holyfield, Elkin, NC
Terrell W. Smith, Abingdon, VA
Thomas G. Nelson, Pence Springs, WV
Tilson Hollow, Chilhowie, VA
Timothy Sutphin, Dublin, VA
Tom Covey, Radford, VA
Tommy Shrader, Lebanon, VA
William C. Bowen, Wytheville, VA
William T. Tally, Bear Creek, NC

Virginia BCIA Central Bull Test Program Summary 2011-12

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The 54th year of the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association's state central bull test program proved to be another historic one, with bull value at all-time program highs. The 2011-12 test and sale year included the development of 273 total bulls, with 184 bulls selling through two sales for a record average price of $3318. This average price exceeds the previous program records of $2560 received in 2010-11 and $2506 in 2004-05.

A bull test program near Culpeper has been operated for 54 consecutive years, and is currently conducted at Glenmary Farm, Tom and Kim Nixon owners, of Rapidan. In the fall-born Senior group at Culpeper, 85 bulls were developed and had an ADG of 3.54 and an adjusted yearling weight of 1128. The Southwest Bull Test was in operation for the 33rd year, with development of the bulls provided by Hillwinds Farm, Tim and Cathy Sutphin of Dublin. The bulls evaluated at the Southwest station included 68 fall-born Senior bulls and 120 spring-born Juniors. The Senior bulls recorded a test ADG of 3.81 with an adjusted yearling weight of 1132, while the Junior bulls had a 3.92 ADG and 1207 pound adjusted yearling weight. The 273 bulls evaluated included 188 Angus, 13 Purebred Simmental, 37 Simmental Hybrids, 8 Gelbvieh, 4 Gelbvieh Balancers, 7 Charolais, 15 Polled Hereford, and 1 Red Angus.

Two sales were held for eligible bulls. The Culpeper Senior sale was held in mid-December and the Southwest sale at Wytheville in late March. The following table presents sale averages by breed. Of the 184 bulls sold, 155 were purchased by Virginia buyers and 29 (16%) sold out of state to cattlemen in North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, South Carolina and Florida.

2011-2012 VA BCIA Central Bull Test Station Sale and Breed Averages

	Culpeper Sr.		**SW Virginia**		**TOTAL**	
Angus	41	$3,083	84	$3,616	**125**	**$3,441**
Charolais		------	5	$3,600	**5**	**$3,600**
Gelbvieh	2	$2,800	2	$3,700	**4**	**$3,250**
Gelbvieh Bal.		------	4	$3,900	**4**	**$3,900**
Polled Hereford	3	$2,467	8	$2,150	**11**	**$2,236**
Red Angus		------	1	$2,700	**1**	**$2,700**
Simmental		------	10	$3,080	**10**	**$3,080**
Simm. Hybrid	2	$2,750	22	$3,145	**24**	**$3,113**
2011-12 Totals	**48**	**$3,019**	**136**	**$3,423**	**184**	**$3,318**

Average total test and sale costs for bulls fed and sold during the 2011-12 season was $1192 (all-inclusive from delivery through sale), for an average return of $2126 per head after all expenses to the consignor. Partitioning total costs, test costs averaged $696 (126-day feeding period) and post-test/sale costs averaged $496 per head (sale expenses averaged 7.8% of sale price).

A total of 53 breeders participated in the Central Bull Test Station program in 2011-12. There were 42 Virginia breeders, and a total of 11 from the surrounding states of North Carolina, Tennessee, District of Columbia, and West Virginia.

All bulls tested and sold were consigned by breeders who are members of the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association. Virginia BCIA was the first state beef cattle improvement association organized in 1955. For a more detailed summary of this information, or consignment details for the upcoming Virginia BCIA Central Bull Test Station program contact the Virginia BCIA office at (540) 231-9163 or visit http://www.bcia.apsc.vt.edu.

The 44th Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Research Symposium and Annual Meeting

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Chris Shivers
American Brahman Breeders Association
713.349.0854
cshivers@brahman.org

Joe C. Paschal
Texas A&M University
361.265.9203
j-paschal@tamu.edu

TAMU AgriLife Extension, American Brahman Breeders Association to host BIF

HOUSTON - The 44th Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Research Symposium and annual meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Houston on April 18 – 20, 2012. This year's meeting is hosted by Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Animal Science and the American Brahman Breeders Association (ABBA). The symposium's focus is the impact of Bos indicus genetics in the U.S.

On the evening of Wednesday, April 18, the symposium will hold an opening night reception, as well as have presentations on the influence of Bos indicus genetics in the global beef industry. The symposium will host a variety of events on Thursday, April 19 and Friday, April 20, including presentations on current beef issues, committee sessions to discuss current research, an educational event hosted by the American Breeds Coalition, and the Seedstock and Commercial Producer Award nominees will be announced.

Registration for the event is $185, but will increase to $285 after March 25. Rooms can be reserved at a rate of $119 per night. Those who choose to remain in Houston over the weekend have the choice of three optional bus tours to South Central and Gulf Coast ranches for an additional cost of $50.

Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Animal Science and the American Brahman Breeders Association are proud to co-host the 2012 Beef Improvement Federation Research Symposium and annual meeting. To register for the 2012 BIF meeting, go to agriliferegister.tamu.edu and enter *Beef Improvement*. For hotel information and to book a room call 1-800-627-6461. For more information on the BIF, contact Joe C. Paschal at 361-265-9203, j-paschal@tamu.edu, or Chris Shivers 713-349-0854, chivers@brahman.org.

###

Management of the Flock for Spring Breeding Success

Drs. Scott P. Greiner and Mark A. McCann
Extension Animal Scientists, VA Tech

Interest among sheep producers to have fall-born lambs is on the rise. Fall-born lambs typically are well-suited to take advantage of strong early-spring market prices. Additionally, there is strong demand for fall-born lambs to meet the needs of youth which have spring market lamb shows. Favorable weather and forage production associated with fall lambing compliment these marketing opportunities. However, with sheep being very seasonal in their reproduction, fall-lambing is limited by the ability to get ewes pregnant in the spring. There are several options producers have to enhance the opportunity for spring breeding to be successful.

Most successful spring breeding programs utilize genetics that have out-of-season capability. Breeds noted for this ability include Dorset, Polypay, Rambouillet, Finnsheep, potentially hair breeds (Katahdin, St. Croix, Blackbelly), and crosses of these breeds. Considerable variation exists within these breeds for fall lambing potential, and selection for this trait needs to be a priority for operations that utilize an extended breeding season.

Genetics, coupled with proper nutrition and management are key components for spring breeding success. One such management practice- the "ram effect" is commonly utilized to induce ovulation in anestrous ewes that have been previously isolated from rams. The ram effect is an effective, inexpensive, practical means to increase percentage of ewes lambing out of season. Utilization of the ram effect requires ewe isolation from rams for a minimum of one month, and preferably longer. Isolation from rams needs to be complete by avoiding fenceline contact and any association with rams (sight, smell, touch). Upon joining rams with ewes that have been previously isolated, ewes will ovulate within 7 days after introduction of the rams. However, less than 20% of the ewes will be in heat during these first 7 days (silent heat). Active estrus (heat) and ovulation will occur 17 to 24 days after introduction of rams, resulting in pregnancy. Breed of ewe is an important factor in response to the ram effect. Ewes will be more responsive to the ram effect as they reach the end of anestrous (are ready to start cycling), and therefore ewes with the genetic propensity to breed out-of-season respond most favorably to the ram effect in the spring. Vasectomized teaser rams are frequently used during the first two weeks since there is a delay in estrus with the ram effect. Fertile rams need to be placed with the ewes after 14 days. Aggressive rams (both fertile rams and teasers) with high libido are most effective in eliciting a response in the ewe. It is important that rams receive a breeding soundness exam prior to spring breeding to ensure fertility.

Hormonal control of the estrous cycle has been used for several years to induce ovulation in ewes. Until recently, however, protocols and products approved specifically for sheep have been a limiting factor for wide-spread application. The sheep EAZI-BREED CIDR is now approved for use in the U.S. and provides sheep producers an additional tool for spring breeding. The CIDR is a vaginal insert which releases progesterone, and is labeled to induce estrus in ewes during seasonal anestrus. The CIDR is a simple, easy-to-use device that is inserted into the ewe for five days, with ram introduction to immediately follow. Similar to the use of the ram effect, it is important that ewes not be exposed to rams prior to synchronization. Additionally, since a large number of ewes will exhibit estrus simultaneously through, the ewe:ram ratio should not

exceed 18:1 and may need to be lower depending on the age and capacity of the ram. Consequently, pre-planning is warranted when using CIDRs to insert and remove the devices on staggered days if a large number of ewes are synchronized.

On-farm research with CIDRs was conducted at Virginia Tech and a cooperating flock in Spring 2011. At Virginia Tech, two groups of registered Dorset ewes were synchronized with CIDRs. Group 1 consisted of 43 ewes which lambed fall 2010, or mid-January through early February 2011 (weaned on March 29). Ewes were administered CIDRs on April 29 and introduced to one of 3 Dorset rams in single-sire breeding pastures. CIDRs were removed at either 5 or 7 days following insertion. A control group of 32 ewes were introduced to rams the same day as the synchronized ewes. These control ewes lambed fall 2010 (n = 11) or lambed along with the previously described set of ewes in Jan/Feb (n = 21). Control ewes received no CIDR. All rams had passed a breeding soundness exam and also determined to be active breeders through a libido test (placed with ewes in estrus to determine mating behavior). Ewes had been isolated from rams since lambing. A second group of 16 ewes which lambed mid-February through early March, 2011 and weaned on April 19 were also synchronized. CIDRs were inserted May 26, removed after 5 or 7 days, and ewes were placed in 2 of the same single-sire breeding groups mentioned previously. All ewes were in single sire breeding groups until June 13 at which time they were placed with Suffolk rams in multiple-sire breeding groups. Subsequent lambing records were analyzed and results are presented below.

Table 1. Pregnancy and lambing rate for synchronized and control ewes as impacted by service sire.

	All Service Sires		Service Sire A		Service Sire B		Service Sire C	
	CIDR[a]	Control	CIDR[a]	Control	CIDR[a]	Control	CIDR[a]	Control
Number ewes	59	32	23	13	15	8	21	11
Number ewes lambing (%)	35 (59%)	14 (44%)	16 (70%)	9 (69%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	17 (81%)	5 (45%)
Lambs born/Ewe lambing	1.44	1.23	1.38	1.44	2.00	0.00	1.53	1.60
Lambs born/ewe exposed	0.88	0.67	0.96	1.00	0.27	0.00	1.24	0.73

[a] Includes ewes receiving CIDR for 5 or 7 days.

As shown above, overall pregnancy rate for ewes synchronized with CIDRs was 59% compared to 44% for control ewes. Lambs born per ewe lambing was similar for synchronized vs. control ewes, however lambs born per ewe exposed favored synchronized ewes due to higher pregnancy rates. Evaluation of the effect of service sire revealed one sire group (Sire B) had much lower pregnancy rates as a result of poor ram performance. Excluding ewes exposed to Sire B, overall pregnancy rate was 75% (33 of 44 ewes) for ewes receiving CIDR and 58% (14 of 24) for control ewes.

Comparing the impact of CIDR removal after 5 vs. 7 days, pregnancy rates were slightly higher for ewes receiving the 5-day CIDR, with lambing rate similar between the two treatments. CIDR

removal was staggered to reduce the number of ewes expected to be in estrus at any one time in the single sire breeding groups (avoid too many ewes in heat at one time).

Table 2. Pregnancy and lambing rate for ewes synchronized in April vs. May.

	CIDR late April	CIDR late May
Number ewes	28	16
Number ewes lambing (%)	23 (82%)	10 (63%)
Lambs born/ewe lambing	1.39	1.60
Lambs born/ewe exposed	1.14	1.00

Table 2 compares data from ewes synchronized in late April vs. those synchronized in late May (both sets of ewes were exposed to common service sires). The higher pregnancy rate for ewes synchronized in late April may partially be attributed to ewe age, as this set of ewes was primarily mature ewes compared to the group synchronized in late May which had a higher proportion of yearling ewes. The post-weaning interval was similar for both sets of ewes (~35 days). Further analysis of the data revealed that only 42% of yearling ewes lambed (both CIDR and controls) compared to 58% for 2-year olds and 56% for ewes 3 years and older across all service sire groups. There were no ewe lambs included in the project. Both fall and spring lambing ewes were utilized in this study. Response to CIDR was similar for ewes which had lambed the previous fall to those which lambed in the winter and were synchronized 30-40 days after weaning. There was also no difference in pregnancy rate among control ewes based on season of previous lambing. However, there were a limited number of ewes which had not successfully lambed for over a year prior to this study. Of this group, only 29% lambed, which is much lower than the 58% overall pregnancy rate achieved by all other ewes included in the study.

At a cooperator flock located in Giles County, Virginia a total of 25 Hampshire x Suffolk crossbred ewes were synchronized. These ewes lambed late January through February, 2011. Ewes were weaned in late April. This flock had never exposed ewes for fall lambs. Ewes were synchronized using a CIDR removed at 6 days (n = 8), 8 days (n = 8) or 10 days (n = 9). Ewes were placed in single-sire breeding pasture with Hampshire x Suffolk crossbred ram at the time CIDR removal (late May). The ram was subjected to a breeding soundness exam prior to placing with ewes. Ewes remained with the ram for ~20 days. Ewes were shorn on July 4th and pregnancy was determined by ultrasound on August 14. Ewes lambed 10/23-10/30. Results are presented below.

				Lambs born per	
	Ewes Marked	Ewes Pregnant	Ewes Open	Ewe Lambing	Ewe Exposed
CIDR (6, 8 or 10 d)	19 (76%)	10 (40%)	15 (60%)	1.4	0.56

The cost of synchronization is associated with the cost of the CIDR as well as additional labor and management required. Assuming a CIDR cost of $5 each, cost per pregnancy for

synchronized ewes was $8.43 and $12.50 at Virginia Tech and the cooperator flock, respectively (CIDR cost only considered).

Collectively, these on-farm experiences underline several key points when synchronizing ewes for spring breeding:

- Whiteface/Dorset ewes will probably respond more favorably to spring synchronization than blackface ewes
- Ram fertility and libido is critical, conduct BSE on rams and observe closely; use of a marking harness will increase accuracy of monitoring
- Ewe:ram ratio should not exceed 18:1 and may need to be lower depending on the age and capacity of the ram. Single ram flocks should stagger CIDR removal (every 2-3d) to avoid overworking the ram
- Ewes should be in good body condition, weaned and recovered from the weaning process
- Ewes should not be exposed to rams prior to synchronization
- Minimize stress on ewes during and immediately following breeding season (heat, transportation)

Finally, similar to fall breeding, basic management practices will enhance the success of spring breeding. Ewes need to be in good body condition, and need to be weaned and recovered from the weaning process prior to spring breeding. A solid nutrition and mineral program, along with flock health program are also key.

Sheep Update

Dr. Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Consignments Being Accepted for 2012 Virginia Ram Lamb Performance Test

Consignments are currently being accepted for the 2012 Virginia Ram Lamb Performance Test to be conducted at the Virginia Sheep Evaluation Station located at the Shenandoah Valley Agriculture Research and Extension Center near Steeles Tavern. Rams will be delivered to the test station May 1 and, after a two week adjustment period, will be performance tested for 63 days. In addition to measurement of growth performance, rams will be evaluated for carcass traits with ultrasound during the test, and DNA genotyping will be conducted for spider syndrome and scrapie resistance. Eligible rams will sell August 25. Rams born September 1, 2011 to February 29, 2012 are eligible. For rules and regulations, as well as entry forms contact Scott Greiner at 540-231-9163 or visit http://www.apsc.vt.edu/extension/sheep/index.html .

Virginia Performance Ram Lamb Test- Historical Test and Sale Expense Summary

TEST & SALE EXPENSES	2011	2010	2009
Test Costs			
Feed	$111.95	$86.00	$80.21
Yardage	$8.00	$8.00	$8.00
Codon 171/Spider Genotyping	$11.00	$11.00	$16.00
Vet/Medical	$1.21	$4.10	$3.23
Misc.	$6.78	$2.03	$4.45
Total Test Costs	**$138.94**	**$111.13**	**$111.89**
Sale Costs			
Shearing	$5.50	$5.50	$5.50
Sale advertising, Auctioneer, mailings, etc.	$9.98	$8.08	$5.34
Registration Transfer	$5.00	$6.00	$5.00
VA Check-off	$0.50	$0.50	$0.50
Total Sale Expenses	**$20.98**	**$20.08**	**$16.34**
Average Sale Price	**$540.78**	**$432.93**	**$286.67**
Average Total Test & Sale Expenses	**$159.92**	**$131.21**	**$128.23**
Average Net to Consignor	**$380.86**	**$301.72**	**$158.44**

SALE RESULTS	2011		2010		2009	
Breed Group	**No. Rams**	**Avg.**	**No. Rams**	**Avg.**	**No. Rams**	**Avg.**
Winter Suffolk	22	$530	20	$459	22	$289
Fall Suffolk	1	$520				
Fall Dorsets	5	$597	6	$478	5	$314
Winter Dorsets	5	$443	6	$382	2	$225
Winter Hampshire	2	$380			1	$220
Fall Katahdin						
Winter Katahdins	2	$718	3	$303		
Winter White Dorper	1	$650	2	$250		
Winter NC Cheviot	3	$517	2	$603		
Winter NC x Suff Cross	4	$639	2	$400		
Total Rams	45	$541	41	$433	30	$287
Commercial Ewe Lambs	26	$340	26	$272		

Virginia Tech Southwest AREC 2012 Ram Test

This summer, the Virginia Tech Southwest Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Glade Spring, Virginia will be conducting a pasture- based hair sheep ram test. The goal of the program is to evaluate rams for growth performance and parasite resistance and serve as an educational tool for the industry. The Southwest AREC has recently constructed new facilities conducive to hosting this activity- including a new barn and adjacent forage paddocks. Ram development will be conducted predominantly on pasture, with supplemental grain provided to ensure target growth rates. Rams will also be challenged with a controlled parasite load to evaluate resistance levels. Ultrasound estimates of loin muscle and fatness will also be conducted. Ram lambs born December 15, 2011 to February 29, 2012, weighing a minimum of 40 pounds, and weaned a minimum of 3 weeks as of June 1, 2012 are eligible to participate. Rams must either be registered or recorded with a breed registry. There is a 3 head minimum consignment per producer, and sire groups of two or more lambs with the same sire are encouraged. Consignment entries will be due May 1. Ram lamb delivery to the station will be in early June. A 21-day adjustment period will precede the 70-day test period. At the conclusion of the evaluation, an educational field day will be hosted at the facility to review results of the program and share information with the industry. For more information and to consign rams, please review the complete guidelines at http://www.apsc.vt.edu/extension/sheep/ or contact Lee Wright at (276) 944-2200, e-mail lrite@vt.edu , or Dr. Scott Greiner at (540) 231-9159, e-mail sgreiner@vt.edu .