

## **Cattle Business in Mississippi – January 2012 “Stocker Cents” article**

### **Cattlemen’s Exchange Feeder Calf Board Sale Scheduled for April 3, 2012**

*Dr. Brandi Bourg – Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Mississippi State University*

The fourth annual “Cattlemen’s Exchange Producer Sale” will be held April 3, 2012 at Winona, MS. The nomination deadline is February 24, 2012. This sale offers tremendous opportunities for beef producers in Mississippi to add value to their calves through a unique marketing strategy. Cattle are offered in load-lots, with descriptions and videos provided to buyers. Cattle are then sold and loaded at a pre-determined future date.

The first Cattlemen’s Exchange Board Sale was held in April 2009 in Winona, MS, and was an effort to provide a new marketing option for Mississippi feeder cattle. Begun in 2008, as a collaborative effort of the Mississippi Cattlemen’s Association, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, Mississippi State University Extension Service, and Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association, two board sales are held each year, one in Hattiesburg (Home Place Producer’s Sale) in August, and the Cattlemen’s Exchange Board Sale each April. Since 2008, more than 14,900 head of cattle in 236 truckload lots have been marketed in these board sales. Together, the receipts from these sales exceeded \$10.6 million. For over 80% of the cattle in these sales to date, price premiums were achieved above Mississippi average market prices when the cattle were loaded out.

A distinct advantage of these sales, in addition to added premiums for Mississippi producers, is the ability to accommodate a large number of feeder calves while not having the cattle at the sale site, with the added flexibility of arranging delivery dates in the future. In addition, shrink, cattle handling, and comingling of animals prior to the sale are all reduced. Cattle are consigned from throughout the state and loads are assembled from single or multiple consignors. Each lot is represented by video and descriptive information, provided to buyers via the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Farm Bureau websites. Buyers are also provided with detailed descriptions of cattle weight, type, and management. Buyers and sellers negotiate a delivery date and time after the sale. The sales are coordinated through local livestock auctions, providing added value to Mississippi auction markets as well. The Cattlemen’s Exchange Sale is coordinated through the Winona Stockyards, although producers may choose to have their own lot managed through their local stockyard. This includes local sale barns in the profit share as well.

Although cattle are offered in load lots (49,000 lbs), the sales are not limited to large producers, who can assemble single consignor loads. These sales also offer an opportunity for producers to work together to assemble loads of cattle of similar type and weight. County Cattlemen’s Associations or neighbors offer good options for

assembling multiple consignor loads. However, now is the time to start considering putting together loads for the sale. It is important that cattle within a load are as uniform as possible in terms of not only weight, but previous management as well.

It is extremely important for the integrity of these sales that all cattle are represented truthfully and accurately. It is also essential that each consigner remains committed to the sale after completing a consignment form. This commitment is not only to the management and buyers but, more importantly, to the other beef cattle producers that will be marketing in this sale. The sales are open to various breed types, cattle weights, and management systems. Implementation of quality breeding programs and best management practices are strongly encouraged for all consignors to help enhance sale results and the reputation of Mississippi feeder calves.

Health management and preconditioning are always among the primary concerns with these types of sales. Consignors are encouraged to complete Mississippi Beef Quality Assurance training. These sales do not require a single preconditioning and vaccination protocol. However, calves that have been managed similarly are grouped in the same load. For example, consignors who have vaccinated with the same products and preconditioned calves for a similar amount of time are grouped together and represented as such.

The Cattlemen's Exchange Feeder Calf Board Sale provides an opportunity for Mississippi producers to establish a reputation with buyers for cattle that perform well, and draw repeat buyers and added premiums. Last year's Cattlemen's Exchange Sale brought record high prices. Over 2,000 head of cattle were sold in less than an hour, and brought total receipts close to \$1.9 million.

For more information and nomination forms for the 2012 Cattlemen's Exchange Feeder Calf board sale visit: [msucares.com/livestock/beef/feeder\\_calf.html](http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/feeder_calf.html) or contact Lance Newman (Mississippi State Extension Area Agent) 662-234-4451 or 662-832-4586, Ray Welch (Winona Stockyards) 662-283-1652, Jon Kilgore (Mississippi Farm Bureau) 601-278-3809, Mike Howell (Mississippi State Extension Area Agent) 662-566-2201, Mike Keene (Mississippi State Extension Area Agent ) 601-545-6083, or Brandi Bourg (Mississippi State Extension Beef Cattle Specialist) 662-325-7465.