



Extension

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NEWS RELEASE

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OPTIMIZING VALUE OF DAIRY BEEF CROSS CATTLE FROM BIRTH TO HARVEST WEBINAR SERIES TO BE HELD BY UW-MADISON EXTENSION

Sparta, WI – Many dairy farms have adopted the practice of breeding a portion of their herd to beef bulls to produce calves for the beef production. This has allowed dairy farms to better manage replacement heifer inventories, and in some cases receive market premiums over straight bred baby bull calves. As this practice has become more common, some dairy farms are interested in determining the practicality and profitability of retaining their beef x dairy calves to market as feeder or fed cattle versus marketing as baby calves.

Current observations from cattle feeders and meat packers indicate that these dairy x beef cross animals can be extremely variable in health, growth, performance, and carcass traits, which creates problems for feeders and packers. Survey data indicates that many dairy farms select bulls to be used solely on coat color, semen cost and calving ease with no regard to seeking bulls with complementary genetic traits to dairy cows that will improve carcass qualities and feedlot performance of these calves.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension will be hosting a webinar series in March to present information on practices that can help optimize the value of dairy beef cross animals. The workshops are slated for March 8 and March 22, 2022 with two discussion sessions each day. There is no charge to participate in the webinar series, but registration is necessary and can be done at <https://livestock.extension.wisc.edu/events/>

Both workshops will have the same format with a topic session from 11 a.m. to noon, and a second topic session from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Each of the sessions will be a moderated panel format with opportunities for participants to submit questions to the panelists.

On Tuesday March 8, the first discussion will address selecting beef bulls to best compliment dairy cows to consistently produce cattle with desirable carcass and feedlot performance traits. The second discussion (which will also be translated in Spanish) will address how the quality of post-partum and early age calf care impact their health, growth, and performance for their entire lives. Presenters include Denise Schwab, Iowa State Extension Regional Beef Specialist, Amanda Cauffman, Ryan Sterry, Sandy Stuttgen, Jackie McCarville, Matt Lippert, Sarah Grotjan, Ashley Olsen, and Heather Schlessler, UW-Madison Extension Educators from around the state. Wisconsin BQA certified participants attending the calf care session can receive one Wisconsin BQA continuing education credit.

On Tuesday March 22, the first discussion will address feeding and managing dairy beef cross cattle from 400 lbs to finish. The second discussion will present information on marketing options for dairy beef cross cattle. Presenters include Jerad Jeborak, Michigan State Feedlot Specialist, Dan Schaefer, UW-Madison Professor Emeritus Beef Nutrition, Brenda Boetel, Extension and UW-River Falls Livestock Economist and Bill Halfman, UW-Madison Extension Agriculture Agent. Wisconsin BQA certified participants attending the feeding and management session can receive one Wisconsin BQA continuing education credit.

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