

RETAINED OWNERSHIP BACKGROUNDING GUIDELINES

- I. **45 day minimum backgrounding period** - from weaning to shipment
Targeted gain 1.5 - 2.5 lb. per day
- II. **Vaccinations (administered following Beef Quality Assurance Guidelines)**
 - A. **Respiratory viruses (IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV) modified live.**
First dose - 2 -4 weeks preweaning
Second dose - At least 28 days pre-shipment and at least 14 days after first dose.
Caution pertaining to vaccinating calves nursing pregnant cows on most modified live vaccine labels needs to be noted - especially if cows are unvaccinated for IBR or BVD. A killed product is acceptable for first dose.
 - B. **Clostridial, 7 strain** - Two doses, at least 14 days apart with the last dose administered at least 28 days pre-shipment given subcutaneously in the neck region.
 - C. **Pasteurella** – Follow specific product directions and complete at least 28 days preshipment.
 - D. **Haemophilis somnus** - Follow specific product directions and complete at least 28 days preshipment.
- III. **Parasite Control**
 - A. Grubicide - Before shipment (After August 1 and before November 1)

B. Deworming - within 3 weeks of weaning.

- IV. **Feed Bunk Trained** - Cattle trained to eat feed from a feed trough. At least 2 pounds per head per day of a concentrate mix should be fed at least the last 2 weeks before shipment. It is strongly encouraged that selenium be supplemented at 3 mg/hd.day.
- V. **Water Trough Trained** -Cattle trained to drink water from a trough. Cattle should receive only water provided via troughs or fountains the last 14 days pre-shipment.
- VI. **Other Health Issues** - Before shipment all cattle should be castrated and dehorned with wounds healed. No stags should be shipped.

It is strongly recommended that cattle undergo a backgrounding program before being shipped to the feedlot. The backgrounding program will permit calves to cope with the stress of weaning and changing from a forage to concentrate diet. This backgrounding period will facilitate the administration of vaccines for disease protection. Past results have demonstrated a significant advantage for backgrounded cattle in terms of health, reduced treatment costs, improved growth rate and ultimate profitability.

Virginia's Retained Ownership Program



**A commingled retained ownership
educational program
to assist Virginia feeder cattle producers:**

- Receive feedback about the relative feedyard and carcass performance and profitability of the cattle they are producing.
- Learn more about the larger cattle industry beyond Virginia's borders, primarily the feeding and processing sectors.
- Investigate the use of retained ownership as a marketing option.

*Coordinated by Virginia Cooperative Extension
with support from
Virginia Cattle Feeders Association
And The Virginia Cattlemen's Association*

Program Outline

Producers can consign as few as five head of feeder cattle weighing between 550 and 800 pounds.

Individual producer's cattle are commingled with other consignors' cattle then shipped and fed as one group at the feedyard. The cattle are fed in southwest Iowa to take advantage of the lower costs of gain, access to harvest facilities, and to put the cattle in the mainstream of the industry.

It is strongly recommended that steers have been weaned and started on feed for at least 30 days before shipment.

Three shipment dates are available to fit most Virginia production systems:

- Mid September
- Early December
- Late March

Other shipment dates may be arranged as interest dictates.

Take-up points are determined based upon consignor location.

At take-up, each steer is weighed and assigned a current feeder cattle value.

Participants receive information upon the arrival of the cattle at the feed yard:

- Virginia take-up weight, weight at arrival/processing in Iowa, % shrink, feeder cattle grade, and current feeder cattle value.

Progress reports on the cattle are provided at 35 days on feed and at re-implant.

Progress reports contain interim weights and performance, health status, and projected harvest dates, market conditions, and other information to keep consignors informed.

After the cattle are marketed, consignors receive the following information on their cattle as well as group summaries for the whole shipment:

Average daily gain, estimated feed conversion, detailed carcass data (carcass weight, fat thickness, ribeye area, marbling score, USDA yield grade and quality grade), cost of gain analysis (feed, yardage, medical, and miscellaneous costs), and profit/loss closeout information on each steer.

Financial transactions

1. A \$5 per head fee is paid at consignment which covers the cost of collection and weighing, with the remainder used to offset feeding costs.
2. After shipment to Iowa, all costs (including trucking) are financed through TCSCF and subtracted from the sale proceeds of each steer.
3. Final payment is made after closeout of the whole shipment of steers.
4. A \$300 per head advance is available to consignors who send ten or more steers.

Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity (TCSCF)

The Virginia Retained Ownership Program cooperates with TCSCF for cattle feeding. The TCSCF is a cooperative program that includes several feedyards in Southwest Iowa that custom feed and handle state-sponsored ROP cattle. The TCSCF is coordinated through Iowa State University Cooperative Extension, with oversight provided by a board of directors comprised of cow-calf producers, veterinarians, feedyard operators, and extension educators.

During the finishing period, cattle are individually weighed at least four times. Each pen of cattle fed will be harvested on at least two different dates five weeks apart. The cattle are sorted for sale at finishing based upon several criteria. Two factors that primarily dictate the date of cattle marketing are fat cover (target .40 inch) and estimated cost of additional gain. The sorting is designed to prevent overfeeding while optimizing total carcass value.

Steers are sold on a carcass value grid. The grid rewards both quality and cutability.

For more information, and consignment details contact:

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- *or the Virginia Cattlemen's Association; phone 540-992-1009*

