

OSU EXTENSION SERVICE

OQBN preparing for fall sales

Once again the Oklahoma Quality Beef Network (OQBN) is preparing for fall sales. Last winter proved to be a challenge for many in the state due to lack of rain, but thankfully many parts of the state received rainfall starting in late spring and continuing through the summer. Pasture conditions are in good shape and we have only seen a handful of days over 100 degrees. At this point many producers are deciding how to market calves this fall. With the record high cattle prices the decision to precondition calves prior to shipping will be much harder for some. Many management options exist and even with increased prices those management options are still valuable to producers and may have more value than we think.

The Oklahoma Quality Beef Network (OQBN) is available to aid producers in making preconditioning decisions and capturing value of preconditioned calves when it becomes time to market. OQBN is a program, which began in 2001, and is a joint effort by Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (OCES) and the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association. At its core, OQBN provides improved communication among producers of all segments of the beef industry and allows for increased education while providing tools to improve access to value-added programs. One way in which this is done is through the OQBN Vac-45 health verification program. Cattle meeting the management

requirements are verified through OCES and can be marketed as OQBN Vac-45 cattle. Once verified producers have the option but are not obligated to market cattle in a certified OQBN sale.

The program benefits both buyers and sellers in several ways, including reduced shrink, improved immune system, and weight gain during the weaning period increased market demands and feedlot performance. In addition to healthier, heavier calves when sold, sellers may earn higher prices per/cwt. In 2012, OQBN participants realized almost \$9/cwt premium over cattle that had no weaning or health history. Light weight calves realized a record high premium at over \$20/cwt. As cattle prices increase

so does risk and buyers are willing to spend \$60-70 more a head to decrease the risk of health problems on those calves.

For a producer to take advantage of these value-added opportunities, the cattle must be enrolled in the OQBN Vac-45 program, follow one of three health protocols, weaned by the deadline, and third party verified by extension personnel. A sale date has been set for the McAlester Stockyards on November 4, 2014 with a weaning date of September 20th, 2014. For more information about the OQBN program contact your local OSU Extension Office.



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