

Carroll County Extension Assists *Carroll County Cattlemen's Exchange* Adopting New Marketing Technologies: "Year 1 Progress Results" (1st in a Series of News Articles)

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Carroll County *Cattlemen's Exchange* conducted a series of Value Added Beef Calf Sales, and to date 1,772 head of cattle have been marketed for a total value of **\$1,194,848**.

Through traditional marketing channels, these animals would have been worth a total of **\$1,087,420**. By marketing through the Value Added Beef Calf Sales, **beef producers in Carroll, Grayson, Patrick, and surrounding counties realized a net increase of \$60.63/head sold for a total net increase of \$107,428.00, resulting in a 9% premium captured.**

Cattlemen in Carroll, Grayson, Patrick and surrounding counties came to a consensus through *Cattlemen's Exchange* discussions to pool calves in order to market them in load lots. Primary objectives were identified and a plan was adopted emphasizing capturing increased value. Criteria were developed to achieve these objectives and consisted of: 1) Uniform same sex load lots of 50,000 pounds, 2) Calf weight range of 125 pounds or less per load lot, 3) All calves vaccinated and boosted with approved vaccination protocol, 4) All calves weaned 45-60 days, feed bunk, and water tank trained, 5) Age and Source Verified, and 6) Similar color, type, and grade.

The *Cattlemen's Exchange* members formed four working committees to research and formulate recommendations for group consideration. These committees are 1) Herd Health, 2) Nutrition, 3) Genetics, and 4) Markets/Marketing. As a Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent, my role has been three fold: 1) To facilitate meetings, 2) To provide pertinent, timely resources and information, and 3) To provide knowledgeable resource people and viable contacts necessary to help the *Cattlemen's Exchange* make informed decisions concerning maximizing added value from their respective annual calf crops.

Our *Cattlemen's Exchange* is a pro-active group and has adopted new technology by choosing to conduct the last two Value Added Beef Calf Sales via Internet/Video Auction. The Internet/Video sales were conducted through Baker Livestock at Galax, VA in July and September, 2009 with **\$53.21/head** added value in July and **\$73.97/head added value in September, respectively.** The primary advantages of selling via Internet/Video sales are the increased number of potential buyers, and the opportunity for buyers to buy without leaving their office/home computer. In addition, the producers have the flexibility to set the sale date and delivery date that best fits their schedule. Calves are weaned, feed bunk, and water tank trained at the farm and not moved from the farm until date of delivery. This significantly reduces stress on the calves, reduces shrink, and enhances weight gain, which translates into healthier, heavier calves at time of delivery.

The Carroll County *Cattlemen's Exchange* meets monthly. If you would like to consider participating in the *Cattlemen's Exchange* contact Webb Flowers at the Carroll County Extension office, 276-730-3113 or webbf@vt.edu.