



The VIEW FROM HERE

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DISCLAIMER: I am not a cattle feeder or a statistician.

Which is why I am having a hard time figuring out why people a whole lot smarter than me and who have a lot of money at stake haven't started jumping up and down demanding more efficient cattle in the feedlot.

According to Cattle-Fax, the recent jump in corn prices has added \$0.25 to the cost of gain in feedlots. Assuming cattle are gaining 525 pounds while in the yard, that adds another \$130 per head to the total feeding cost. Seems to me a little dose of feed efficiency would come in pretty handy right about now.

As luck would have it, the final report from the latest Great Western Beef Expo has arrived just in time to help me illustrate my point.

In the report, a pen of steers from Hunt Limousin Ranch of Oxford, Nebraska, finished eighth in Average Daily Carcass Gain. What I found interesting was that the top-gaining pen of steers in that category only gained 0.2 more pounds of carcass per day than the Hunt pen, but it took an extra \$100 worth of feed to do it. In fact, the Hunt pen fed cheaper than any of the other top 10 gaining pens of steers. If I owned a yard full of cattle, I would take the more feed efficient cattle every-time, especially when they are converting and gaining near the top as well.

In the Feed Efficiency category, which measures how many pounds of feed it takes to gain a pound of carcass weight, a pen of steers from Coleman Limousin Ranch of Charlo, Montana, finished fourth and a Hunt Limousin Ranch pen finished sixth.

The Great Western closeout data shows it took 1.4 lbs. less feed for every pound of carcass the Hunt pen gained compared to the top-gaining pen. That data is consistent with the overall averages which showed all the Limousin entries converted at an average rate of 7.34 lbs. of feed per pound of carcass gain compared to the 8.21 lb. average calculated for the all of the steers on test. That's nearly one pound less feed for ever pound of carcass gain. No wonder the feed costs of the Limousin steers were so much cheaper.

I am sure the fact Limousin is one of the most efficient breed's in the country comes as no surprise to most of you. Our challenge is to make sure the rest of the world knows it.

In my opinion, there couldn't be a better time to promote the Limousin breed's feed efficiency advantage. To be successful, it will take a concerted effort from not only the North American Limousin Foundation, but from each and every Limousin seedstock producer. Events like the Great Western Beef Expo, bull tests and Vision's Quest are great places to start, but I happen to believe the best way to prove to cattle feeders how efficient Limousin cattle are is to show them firsthand. But to do that, they must know the cattle they are feeding are in fact Limousin. The LimMark tagging program is an excellent way to make sure feeders know when a pen contains Limousin blood. There are other ways to remind people your cattle are Limousin, but it doesn't get much easier than an ear tag.

Like I said before, I am not a statistician nor have I ever fed a pen of cattle, but I did sleep at a Holiday Inn Express the other night, and it seems to me, efficiency isn't getting nearly as much attention as it deserves.

The optimist in me thinks that with the high price of feed and fuel, that is all about to change. Let's make sure we as a breed are in a position to capitalize on it. **LW**