



## The VIEW FROM HERE

*Kyle Haley*

**T**he North American Limousin Foundation (NALF) has many worthwhile programs in place. Each one has been designed to benefit the breed and its breeders in one form or another. While they each do an admirable job serving their intended purpose, for my money the Visions Quest (VQ) program ranks near the top.

When you consider not only the valuable data gathered, but the positive news regarding how Limousin and Limousin-influenced cattle perform in the feedlot and on the rail, Visions Quest is a worthy project any way you slice it.

Believe it or not, I enjoy writing this column every month—I am sure more than you enjoy reading it. However, because of space and deadline issues, we didn't have a spot for the Visions Quest 2 final results. For that reason I have decided to include portions of NALF's official press release here.

The cattle-feeding and carcass-data-collection phases of Visions Quest Round 2, NALF's cattle-feeding and carcass-discovery project with Colorado State University (CSU), concluded August 2 at the Swift and Co. packing plant in Greeley, Colorado. Data analysis recently began, and it promises to provide critical lessons for the breed's long-term success in providing the most profitable genetics and crossbreeding solutions for commercial cattle producers.

The 311 head (including a "control group" of 10 Angus steers) in the project averaged 1,316 pounds of liveweight at harvest, with an 864-pound average carcass that dressed at about 66 percent. With backfat and ribeye area (REA) averaging 0.5 inch and 15 square inches, respectively, the typical Yield Grade (YG) was 2.5. Forty-one percent of the cattle graded Choice.

Considering the harsh winter the cattle faced at the CSU Ag Research, Development and Education Center (ARDEC) north of Fort Collins, their health performance was outstanding. With no deaths, total treatment costs for VQ Round 2 were \$114.

Most of the cattle—42 percent—gained between 3 and 3.5 pounds per day, with another 19 percent performing even better than that. The 113 Lim-Flex steers led in average daily gain (ADG) at 4.5 pounds. The 27 Lim-Flex heifers averaged 4.0 pounds; the 122 Limousin steers, 3.9 pounds; and the 39 Limousin heifers, 3.7 pounds.

The Limousin steers finished the heaviest at 1,369 pounds, followed by the Lim-Flex steers (1,361 pounds), then the Limousin heifers (1,212 pounds) and the Lim-Flex heifers (1,130 pounds).

The largest share of the cattle—42 percent—finished within YG 2, and another 26 percent were YG 1. Of the Limousin heifers, 82 percent finished in the top two yield grades; and 80 percent of the Limousin steers earned that distinction. Fifty-five percent and 50 percent of the Lim-Flex steers and heifers, respectively, achieved YG 1 or 2. Only 3 percent of the animals fell into YG 4.

From the marbling perspective, the Lim-Flex heifers were the best performers, with 75 percent grading Choice. The Lim-Flex steers finished at 58 percent Choice.

NALF created VQ as follow-up to the Limousin Visions Symposium, which it conducted in December 2004. The project's primary purpose is to provide an educational experience in retained ownership and to generate critical performance and carcass data for genetic evaluation and ongoing breed improvement.

The NALF Board of Directors approved VQ Round 3 in April, and some pen space may still be available. NALF staff members will attempt to coordinate transportation so the cattle arrive at CSU between November 1 and 15. Program guidelines and the enrollment form are available in the "Programs" section of the NALF Web site ([www.nalf.org](http://www.nalf.org)). For enrollment information, contact Bo Sexson, NALF director of commercial programs, at [bo@nalf.org](mailto:bo@nalf.org) or 303/220-1693.