

August 6th, 2014

Dear Field Day Participant,

Thank you for participating in this year's field day. To accompany the discussion, we have worked to put together a report detailing work with beef cattle and their forages including performance and economic data. I would like to thank all of my wonderful colleagues that help make Lake City Research Center a leader in grazing, ecology and local food systems. Doug Carmichael, Evan Elder, Ty Houghston, Jerry Lindquist, Kable Thurlow, Kevin Gould, Paul Gross, Matt Raven and Kim Cassida, among others, have helped to catalyze the research and outreach seen here. I too am very thankful for Dr. John Baker, Dr. Janice Swanson and Chuck Reid for all of their guidance.

CENTER GOALS

In 2010, staff associated with Lake City Research Center met with a holistic manager to outline a new direction for the station. Three important goals were outlined. First we would like for the Center to be a national leader in pasture based, lower-cost beef production systems. Secondly, we wish to maintain a high quality of life for all the Center effects: our visitors, employees and other coworkers. Essentially, we envision the Lake City being an education center for others to gain information and concurrently maintain, positive beneficial relationships with all stake holders. Finally, with the pressures being placed on research institutions as faculty, management and staff, we wish to have security in the opportunity to research alternative approaches and not be pushed back into more status quo work that has been often replicated the last 30 years.

CENTER RESOURCES

This year the center is managing 180 Red Angus breeding age females, 65 of which are registered. We currently graze the cowherd on 600 acres of land including 64 acres of low pressure irrigation. We have 80 acres of alfalfa that is used to hay the calf crop through the winter. We maintained 80 heifers and 70 steers through the winter.

We are very fortunate to have the Rood Trust Endowment tied into the research center. In the past, the funds had been primarily administered into small research grants that were run at the farm. However, because of the budgetary challenges of the university, we have become more reliant on external funds and the Rood Trust has been used to help address infrastructure needs capital improvements of the facility. Faculty do still have the opportunity to apply for granting opportunities through the Rood Trust but generally in a matching situation with federal funding.

NEW FEDERAL FUNDING!!!!!!!

I am pleased to announce we have new federal funding to further conduct our research and outreach with respect to grass finishing. The new \$470,000 grant will allow us to investigate the influence of cover-crops on grass finishing along with forage type influence on beef sensory characteristics. We too will investigate the sensory performance of fresh and frozen products. The overall outcome we hope to achieve is to identify grass finishing practices that are profitable and ultimately increases the amount of grass finished beef into the landscape.

GRASSFED EXCHANGE 2015

Michigan is proud to host the Grassfed Exchange National Meeting September 16-18, 2015. The meeting strives to forward the grass finishing livestock industry with exciting pasture walks, world renown speakers and also recognizes industry leaders through a multitude of awards. Accompanied with industry trade booths, the three day conference also attracts producers, distributors and retailers from across the nation. Stay tuned for more information.

LAKE CITY GOES TO LONDON

Just recently, I presented our grass finishing and carbon emission data to the International Savory Conference in London, England. There was a collection of ranchers and farmers, business investors interested in carbon, NGO's, authors and medical doctors from over 20 countries in attendance. I was amazed at those interested in grazing and carbon. I spoke with investors from Goldman Sachs and Virgin Investments (the Richard Branson company) Based on my interactions there, the future is in our soil and this will drive food and health. I believe that further developing food production methods that are profitable, ecologically regenerative and are neighborly and socially just is the future of food in MI. There are those who are ready to invest in this.

NEW ADMINISTRATORS

If you have a chance, please welcome our new administrators to MSUE and AgBioResearch: Dr. George Smith has taken over the role from Dr. John Baker as Associate Director of AgBioResearch. George grew up on a sheep farm in Idaho and has a great combination of applied background and research acumen. Also we have a new trio of MSUE administrators: Margaret Bethel, Ray Hammerschmidt and Patrick Cudney. If you get a chance, please introduce yourself to our new leadership.

In summary, I am thankful for the progress we continue to make at Lake City. We always want to focus on you the stakeholder, the environment in which we all live and will do our best to be responsive to the research and outreach needs of the area.

Sincerely,



Jason Rowntree

Assistant Professor and Lake City Research Center Coordinator