



2020 Alabama Pasture to Rail Program

Rules and Recommendations

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Alabama Pasture to Rail is a retained ownership program allowing beef producers to collect post-weaning performance data, health data, and carcass data on cattle from their breeding program. This allows producers to determine whether changes need to be made to the breeding program for post-weaning traits.

Southeastern cattle represent 25% of calves being fed in U.S. feedlots annually. For most producers, calves are sold at weaning, and because of U.S. Beef Industry fragmentation, little to no feedback is provided back to the cow/calf level. However, in the end, a high quality carcass is the most valuable item a cow/calf operation produces, but it is the last thing producers are paid for.

As the U.S. Beef Industry moves forward, the prosperity of the entire industry rests on its customers. In 2015, beef prices were 57% higher than pork and 207% higher than chicken. The demand for beef has remained strong because customers still want taste. Much of beef's taste or flavor is enhanced by the amount of marbling in the beef. In early 2015, sales of prime and branded choice beef surpassed sales of select beef for the first time backing up the claim that our customers want taste.

Understanding how calves fit into the entire beef chain is critical for optimal marketing. Obtaining post-weaning and carcass information on calves will allow you to tweak your breeding program and strengthen your position in marketing your calves each year.

Objectives

The Alabama Pasture to Rail Program is an educational program for cattle producers. The purpose is to give cattle producers the following opportunities without the investment required to finish an entire pen of cattle.

1. To obtain individual animal data for post-weaning performance, health performance, and carcass merit that can be used to assist producers with selection decisions pertaining to existing breeding, nutrition, and health programs.
2. To educate cattle producers on recommended health practices and custom feeding programs.

General Information

1. A consignor may enter no less than three (3) steers and/or heifers, provided that each calf weighs a minimum of 600 pounds on the day of delivery. Calves under 600 pounds may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, with the producer understanding the higher risk of these small calves.
2. Consignments are **due** three weeks prior to shipment of cattle. A consignment fee of \$30 per head is required at nomination for ear tags, health certificates, and for administration of the program. The consignment fee is refundable until 10 days prior to shipment.
3. Calves must be weaned for **60** days prior to shipment. They must also be castrated and dehorned and properly vaccinated.

4. Calves will be gathered at central locations around Alabama for shipping. Locations will be determined once nominations are received. At the shipping point, calves will be tagged, weighed and graded.
5. Cattle will be shipped to Hy-Plains Feedyard in Montezuma, KS as soon as possible after processing. This will be a 15-25 hour ride depending on where calves are comingled in Alabama.
6. For calves to be shipped on a given date, there **must** be at least 47,000 pounds of cattle to ship. Transportation cost will be split per animal based on the weight of the animal, cost of transportation, and the weight of the entire load. If the load is shipped with less than 47,000 pounds, producers will not be responsible for the added costs of shipping a light load.
7. Cattle will be fed to market weight as determined by the feedlot management team.
8. There will be a maximum of three (3) slaughter dates per shipment to try and slaughter cattle at their optimum size.
9. Cattle will remain the property of the consignor, and thus consignors assume responsibility for loss by death or injury. A named peril insurance in which all cattle will be covered is automatically provided at the feedlot. Bloat and respiratory items are not covered by the peril insurance. Items covered include lightning strikes, smothering by snowstorms, tornadoes or electrocution. Other livestock insurance can be purchased by each individual consignor which could cover losses due to bloat, broken limbs, respiratory, water belly, enterotoxemia and the like. Consignors would be responsible for purchasing additional insurance prior to shipment.
10. Price Protection, in the form of hedging or forward contracting, will be used to protect cattle prices when available. The cost of the price protection would be added to the bill. This will be determined through consultation with feedyard management and Extension personnel.

About the Feedyard, Including Costs

Hy-Plains Feedyard is located in Montezuma, KS, which is approximately 30 miles west of Dodge City. It has a 50,000 head capacity.

Hy-Plains will sell the cattle on a carcass grid, when possible. If not possible, cattle will be sold cash and data will be purchased back. Cattle can be sold to one of three plants: Cargill, Tyson or National Beef. At National Beef, cattle would be sold on the U.S. Premium Beef grid when possible. At the other two plants, they would be sold on the plant carcass grid. Thus, cattle will be sold based on their merit to grow, grade and yield. The following table will outline the costs of retaining ownership:

Item	2016-19 Average Cost/head
Consignment Fee	\$30.00
Shipping to feedyard	\$50-75.00
Yardage (cost/hd/day at feedyard)	\$0.05/day \$8.39/hd
Feed cost	\$0.75/lb of gain \$426.12/hd
Processing Fee	\$13.70/hd
Mass Treatment Cost	\$21.51/hs
Treatment Cost for sick calves	~\$30.00/treatment
Interest rate on carrying costs	\$5.84/hd
Carcass Data Collection	\$4.73/hd
National Beef Checkoff	\$1.00/hd
Alabama Beef Checkoff	\$1.00/hd
Shipping to harvest	\$3.56/hd

Health program and management prior to shipping for Pasture to Rail Calves

Health is a key component of successful retained programs. Sick calves will not accurately represent their genetic potential, skewing performance and carcass data. Additionally, data from 2016-19 shows that there is a \$158.16/hd reduction in profitability in cattle that are treated for disease only once.

Producers are strongly urged work with their veterinarian and to carefully follow the pre- delivery health guidelines. Complete the health record enclosed. The following must be done at least 4 weeks prior to delivery:

1. Castrated, dehorned and healed.
2. Dewormed
3. Vaccinated for:
 - a. IBR, BVD, PI₃ and BSRV
 - b. 7-way Blackleg
 - c. *Mannheimia hemolytica* and *Pasteurella multocida*
4. Booster Vaccinations for:
 - a. IBR, BVD, PI₃ and BSRV
 - i. Booster must be a Modified Live Vaccine
 - b. 7-way Blackleg
5. Booster Vaccinations should not be given with 14 days of shipment, but within 60 days of shipping.
6. Weaned and started on feed for 60 days by shipping date (minimum 5 lbs./hd/day).
7. All animal health products should be administered following Beef Quality Assurance Guidelines and Manufacturer instructions.

A vaccination record, stating the calf has been vaccinated for the organisms described above should be filled out and brought to the load out location if not mailed in to AL P2R Coordinator before.

We recommend at least using a modified live vaccine to booster calves for IBR, PI₃, BRSV, and BVD. Following label directions when utilizing modified live vaccine is extremely important.

Any implants given on the farm should be given long enough before shipment to “play out” before arrival at the feedyard. This will allow you to receive the full benefit of any implants you use and give the feed yard the ability to fully implement their implant strategy.

Recommendations above required program:

If you feel you have an immune response problem on your farm, giving each calf an A-D-E vitamin shot can also help jumpstart their immune system.

Histophilus Somni (Haemophilus somnus) is an organism that we have experienced death-loss to in research cattle. This might be an organism that you are interested in vaccinating against, but it is not required.

It also might be a very good idea to test for persistently infected BVD calves. To do this, you send an ear notch sample to Alabama Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Auburn. The sample submission form can be found at: <http://www.agi.alabama.gov/divisions/avdl/submission-forms>

The cost is \$5/hd. You will need tubes to put the ear notch in. You may be able to obtain these from your veterinarian, or you can order: <http://www.agi.alabama.gov/divisions/avdl/fee-schedule>

Questions?

For more information regarding the Alabama Pasture to Rail Program, please contact:

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2020 Alabama Pasture to Rail Consignment Form

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Premise ID: _____

Email Address: _____

Farm Tag	Consignment Tag ^a	Birth Date ^b	Estimated Wt. at Shipment	Sire Registration No.	Sire Breed	Dam ID	Dam Breed

^a Assigned at shipping location

^b At least month and year

Preferred Shipping Date: _____

Return completed Consignment form and \$30/hd consignment fee at least **21 days prior to shipment to:**
 Alex Tigue; Animal Science & Forages Regional Agent; 140 Duncan Hall Auburn University, AL 36849; email: dat0002@aces.edu

2020 Alabama Pasture to Rail Health Form

Option 1

3 mo. of age	Product	Company	Route	Date
Clostridial 7-way			SQ only	

Around Weaning	Product	Company	Route	Date
Clostridial 7-way			SQ only	
IBR/BVD/PI ₃ /BSRV				
Deworm				
External Parasites (if necessary)				

3 to 6 Weeks Later	Product	Company	Route	Date
IBR/BVD/PI ₃ /BSRV				
Pasturella*				

Date Weaned: _____ Date Castrated: _____ Date Dehorned: _____

Implanted? If yes; date & product _____

- Depending on manufacturer, the pasturella vaccine may be a one time vaccine. Some products require a booster. Read label directions on all products and follow specific product directions.

2020 Alabama Pasture to Rail Health Form

Option 2

At Weaning	Product	Company	Route	Date
Clostridial 7-way			SQ only	
IBR/BVD/PI ₃ /BSRV				
Deworm				
External Parasites (if necessary)				

3 to 6 weeks later*	Product	Company	Route	Date
IBR/BVD/PI ₃ /BSRV				
Clostridial 7-way			SQ only	
Pasteurella				

*Booster vaccinations should be administered in a time frame listed on the label of the vaccine.

Date Weaned: _____ Date Castrated/dehorned: _____

Implanted? If yes; date & product _____

- Depending on manufacturer, the pasturella vaccine may be a one time vaccine. Some products require a booster. Read label directions on all products and follow specific product directions.