



Introduction

Producers often find it challenging to get information back on how their cattle perform in the feedlot and in carcass quality. It typically requires a sizeable number of calves be committed through the feeding process in order to get the data back. This program was designed to give producers valuable information about how their cattle perform in the feedlot and in carcass quality, without having to commit a large number of calves. Ranch's will be competing against each other, with the best performing set of calves earning top billing!

Contest Rule Overview

- ✓ Retain 3 steer calves from the 2023 spring calf crop.
- ✓ Commitment notification due
September 15, 2023 (Calves DO NOT need to be weaned by then)
- ✓ \$50.00 Entry Fee Per Ranch Due by September 30th.
- ✓ Ranch will feed steers to 850 lbs by March 2024
- ✓ Deliver calves to the Tucumcari Bull Test Station
- ✓ Feed and processing expenses will be covered by the rancher.
- ✓ Gain and feed efficiency data will be provided monthly.
- ✓ Cattle will be harvested at 1250-1350 lbs at a USDA facility.
- ✓ Carcasses will be evaluated for yield and quality grades.
- ✓ Prizes will be provided for best performing cattle by ranch for gain, feed efficiency, total cost of gain, carcass categories, and overall top performance.
- ✓ Ranches can market beef themselves or with help from NMSU.

ENTRY

1. All entry applications must be hand delivered or postmarked on or before September 15, 2023. A \$50 entry fee must be included with entry application.
2. Checks can be made payable to NMSU College of ACES
3. The entire amount is non-refundable if a participant drops out.
4. Entry forms and payment can be completed online at <https://nmbeef.nmsu.edu/> , or email maward@nmsu.edu for hard copies of the application.
5. Hard copies of applications and payment can be delivered or mailed to:
Dept. Extension Animal Sciences and Natural Resources
c/o Marcy Ward
MSC 3AE PO Box 30003
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Contest Expectations

Cattle Information

At the ranch

1. Three steers (born spring of 2023) will be selected by the producer at weaning.
2. Cattle should be fully weaned by November 15th, 2023.
3. Cattle will be retained and managed by the producer through March 2024.
4. Cattle must be fully vaccinated upon arrival to the test station.
 - a. 7 way (8 way recommended with Somnus spur)
 - b. Modified live 5 way viral
5. **All cattle coming to the station must be tested for BVD.** Owners can have their cattle tested ahead of time (at weaning recommended), otherwise they will be tested upon arrival to the station. Any animals testing positive may not remain at the station and should be culled.
 - a. If having cattle tested prior to arrival, you must provide documentation at delivery.
 - b. For more information about BVD testing see attached information or contact Marcy Ward (575-644-3379)
6. Cattle must weigh **850 lbs** by March 2023. Cattle weighing 800 lbs< or >900 lbs will not be eligible for the feeding phase of the contest.

Feeding phase at Tucumcari Test Station

Health Management

1. Cattle will be delivered to the Tucumcari Bull Test Station, Tucumcari, NM in March 2024 (Date TBD)
2. All cattle will be fitted with an electronic ID tag upon arrival
3. All cattle will be vaccinated with Bovi-Gold One Shot and wormed.
4. Cattle will be weighed two consecutive days at the beginning and end of the data collection period

5. Cattle will be checked daily for sickness and treated appropriately.
6. Severe sickness, injury, or disposition issues may require that owners pick up their animals.

Feeding Management

The diet is a total mixed ration that averages 14% protein and 73% TDN (energy). Low starch grains serve as a predominant energy source. The ration also averages about 40% roughage to 60% grain.

1. Cattle will be allowed a 10 day step up period prior to being on the full growing ration.
2. Cattle will be fed twice daily (3X in GrowSafe® pen if needed)
3. Cattle will be on feed 5 to 6 months, depending on group performance.

Costs

The Bull Test Station does not finance feed/health/labor expenses. Therefore, payment of \$600.00 per ranch is due at receiving to cover the first 30 days of cost. Each month after, a flat fee of \$600.00 per ranch will be due at the first of each month. For the station to be able to cashflow expenses, payments must be paid on time (within 30 days of billing). **Any past due balances will incur a 1% interest fee.** If total costs exceeds flat rate, the producer will be billed accordingly at the conclusion of the 165 day test. Conversely, if actual costs are less than what has been paid, you will receive payment for the balance.

Approximate Cost Breakdown per Head

Feed average	\$700-800 (dependent on intake)
Labor	\$90.00 (dependent on pen count)
Yardage Fee	\$40.00
Health charged at cost	\$15 (maintenance) + any treatments
TOTAL	\$900.00 - \$1000.00/head on average

Animals may not be shipped until their bill is paid in full.

Data Service

The GrowSafe© technology available at the station allows for individual animal data collection. Data will include, ADG, Feed Conversion, Residual Feed Intake, Dry Matter Intake and Cost of Gain (COG). Monthly reports will be provided to all producers. All data will be provided and summarized within 10 days of the conclusion of the test.

Liability

The test station personnel will make every effort to safeguard the health of the animals and will obtain competent veterinarian service when necessary, but will not be responsible for loss by fire, theft, injury, sickness, death, or in any other way. Insurance can be obtained by owner of animal. Inspections are encouraged and welcomed by appointment.

The test station will not be held liable for any personal injury or accidents of any kind, while you are at the facilities.

The test station facility is owned by TFET cooperators and the land is owned by New Mexico State University. Therefore, participants who come to the facility to help work with the cattle and are not employed by NMSU are required to also sign a volunteer agreement with the University.

If an animal dies or is dropped from the contest due to health concerns, the ranch is no longer eligible for contest awards, but is welcome to continue to feed the remaining cattle or pick them up once bills are settled.

Beef Processing

Steers will be shipped to a USDA inspected facility on a pre-determined date, scheduled at the discretion of the program manager. The facility chosen to assist with the contest will be dependent on total number of cattle entered, the plant's capacity, and cost of processing. Once a facility has been selected, the program manager will notify the producer of processing costs and provide cutting instruction sheets, if needed.

Producers can market the beef themselves or can seek assistance from NMSU. If the producer sells their steers or beef products on their own, they are responsible for all processing expenses. It should be understood that processors don't typically have storage capacity to house a large number of animals, therefore the producer will be expected to pick up (or arrange the pick-up) of all their beef within the timeframe asked by the processor. All carcass data will still be used for the contest and passed on to the producer.

Carcass data will include final carcass weight, dressing %, yield grade, and quality grade. If there is a technical tie between carcasses, an advantage will be given to the carcass with the largest gross current grid market value.

AWARDS

The New Mexico Ranch to Rail's primary goal is to deliver important information to producers about their cattle. Ranches, will however, be recognized for their cattle excelling in gain, feed efficiency, cost of gain, overall carcass quality, and gross carcass value. Individual performance will be included in the ranch averages across categories. Top individual animals will also be recognized.

POINT SYSTEM

Ranch Overall Feeding Performance

Average Daily Gain.....0-50

Feed Conversion.....0-50

Cost of Gain.....0-50

Ranch Overall Carcass Evaluation

Dressing %.....0-50

Quality Grade.....0-50

Gross Carcass Value.....0-50

300 TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE

Ranch Partnership Program

An optional addition to the program is the partnership with youth through the New Mexico Youth Feeder Beef Contest. The NMYFC is managed much the same way as the ranch to rail, but it focuses on youth participation and education about commercial beef production. In being a ranch partner, you would be paired with youth who may not have access or facilities to house cattle. This is a great opportunity to mentor a young person that is interested in the beef industry. If you would like to participate in the Ranch Partnership program, please indicate your interest in this option on the application.

An organizational meeting will be held in early November 2023 to answer questions and discuss the contest in detail.