



Points to Ponder:

- There are economic advantages to spaying market heifers
- It is important to implant spayed heifers
- Implanting keeps your neighbors bulls where they belong
- As with any surgery there are risks.



Spaying Heifers

Spaying is a management tool long used by ranchers to grow yearlings on grass. It has proven to have many advantages that outweigh the few disadvantages. During most cattle markets in the spring most heifers can be purchased \$10-15/CWT lower than a steer. These same spayed heifers coming off grass in the late summer to early fall will often times be within \$1-2/CWT of a comparable steer.

It is important to implant spayed heifers. Spayed heifers can be grazed, fed, and implanted similar to steers. Spayed heifers keep neighbors happy as it helps keep bulls in the pastures where they belong. Research trials indicate that spayed heifers have a 2-5% gain advantage vs. implanted, intact

heifers.

The implanted spayed heifer will reach optimum grade earlier, usually within 90-110



days on feed and yield a quality carcass. It's clear that implanted, spayed heifers marketed at the proper time will outperform intact heifers. Feedlot operators recognize these advantages and know all to well the risks involved with feeding intact heifers (unwanted pregnancies) as opposed to spayed heifers.

Mick Harding, DVM

Spaying eliminates the visual exposure of heifers calving when they are on the "show list". This will eliminate the public perception issue that can potentially harm the feedlot and cattle industry.

One must realize that the surgery is irreversible making spayed heifers for feeding only. The cost usually ranges anywhere from \$5-7/hd. depending on the number of head being done. As with any surgical procedure there is a death loss risk associated with the spaying procedure, much depending on expertise and luck.

Horse Vaccination and Worming

One can never over emphasize the importance of a sound vaccination and worming program for horses. When determining what vaccines to use and what type of worming program to implement it is necessary to take your horses environment and sources of exposure into consideration.

The environment in which your horse is feed and kept will dic-

tate the frequency and type of worming program necessary to adequately control your horses internal parasite load. The horse that is kept in a dry lot will have different worming needs when compared to a horse grazing on 20 acres of pasture.

Sioux Nation Ag Center has a wide variety of equine vaccines and wormers available to suit

the individual needs of you and your horse. To determine the program best suited to your operation please feel free to consult with your Sioux Nation Field Marketer or contact your local Sioux Nation Ag Center location.

Determining Lean Gain (Part 2)

By Robert Fischer, PhD
Swine Nutritionist

To determine the lean growth rates of pigs on your operation you will need to know the carcass weight at slaughter, the estimated lean content in the carcass, an estimated lean content of the pigs at the initiation of the finishing period, and the days to slaughter. There are several equations that can be used to estimate fat-free lean; however packing plants have their own equations to calculate percent lean and will report this information along with carcass weight on carcass printouts provided by the packing plant. The percent lean is calculated from measurements of back fat, loin eye area or depth, and yield.

Lean gain (lbs/day) can be calculated as follows:

[lb of lean in carcass-lb of lean in feeder pig] / days on test

Calculation to determine lean in feeder pig:

$(0.418 \times \text{live weight, lb}) - 3.650$

Example of lean gain calculations:

Initial weight: 55 lbs
Slaughter weight: 267 lbs
Days on feed: 110 days
Yield: 75%
Percent lean 55%
Carcass weight: 200.25 lbs

Pounds of lean at slaughter:
 $200.25 \times 0.55 = 110.14$ lb of carcass lean

Pounds of lean in feeder pig:
 $(0.418 \times 55) - 3.65 = 19.34$ lb of lean initial

Lean Gain (lbs/day):
 $(110.14 - 19.34) / 110 = 0.825$ lbs per day

In general terms, pigs with more than 0.80 lbs of lean gain per day can be classified as high lean gain pigs and pigs gaining between 0.65 and 0.80 lbs of lean gain per day can be classified as medium lean gain pigs. This information is very useful when determining the nutrient requirement of a group of pigs under the same environmental conditions.

Therefore, when lean growth rates are known, estimates can be made on how much lean and how much fat pigs will produce during a given amount of time or during a certain weight range. Thus, from this information we can estimate daily amounts of amino acids and energy that are required by the pig to attain these weight gains to maximize performance.



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