

2017 Reciprocal Meat Conference – Meat and Poultry Quality

Meat and Muscle Biology™



Evaluating the Relationship of Animal Well-Being and Temperament to Carcass Characteristics

F. L. Yang*, F. W. Pohlman, K. S. Anschutz, J. J. Ball, P. Hornsby, and J. L. Reynolds

Department of Animal Science, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, USA

Keywords: carcass performance, docility, temperament
Meat and Muscle Biology 1(3):75

doi:10.221751/rmc2017.069

Objectives

While much effort has been put forth dealing with extrinsic factors influencing animal well-being, less is known and therefore less effort has been conducted in dealing with intrinsic factors affecting animal comfort and well-being. Animals are unique and each cope with stress in their own unique way. Therefore, it is not uncommon to have a group of cattle, each in the same truck, pen, handling facility and environment, but have quite different responses to stress. In a given group some cattle may remain calm with regard to their surrounding and handling while others may become excited. The differing response of these cattle can lead to individuals that respond well and thrive in the environment to those who do not cope at all. The lack of the ability to remain calm and adapt to their environment can lead to poor performance, illness and even death. Docility can impact feedlot profitability and carcass characteristics. The purpose of this study was to compare carcass characteristics between steers with different docile chute scores.

Materials and Methods

Incoming calves were weighed, processed, and scored for docility/temperament in the chute (1-docile,

2-restless, 3-nervous, 4-flighty, 5-aggressive, 6-very aggressive) by 1 person. Docility scores 5 and 6 were not observed and group 3 and 4 were combined. There was a total of 49 steers, 19 in the docile group, 18 in the restless group, and 12 in the nervous-flighty group. Steers were housed with access to pastures for 2 mo then transferred to research feedlots where they remained until harvest. Finished steers were processed when they reached a minimum 1.27 cm back-fat thickness and carcass data collected.

Results

The incoming weight and the final body weight were similar ($P > 0.05$) among temperament groups. The nervous-flighty group had a lower ($P < 0.05$) hot carcass weight than the docile and restless groups. All 3 groups were similar ($P > 0.05$) in back-fat thickness, ribeye area, yield grade, marbling score, dressing percent, and percent kidney, pelvic, and heart fat.

Conclusion

There were very little differences in carcass characteristics of steers with different temperament.