

# FEED TRIAL INFO

## FOR CSPA MEMBERS

### WHY ARE FEED TRIALS VALUABLE TO THE PRODUCER?

Test stations and RFI (Residual Feed Intake) trials are valuable tools in the field of animal husbandry and agriculture for several reasons:

- 1. Genetic Selection:** These trials help in identifying superior genetics for breeding purposes. By monitoring the performance of cattle in test stations or animals in RFI trials, breeders can assess traits such as growth rate, feed efficiency, temperament and overall health, which are important for genetic selection programs aimed at improving livestock quality.
- 2. Efficiency Improvement:** RFI trials specifically focus on feed efficiency, which is a crucial factor in livestock production. By identifying animals with lower feed intake relative to their production performance, producers can select for traits that improve feed efficiency. This contributes to cost reduction and sustainability in livestock farming by minimizing feed wastage and environmental impact associated with excessive feed consumption.
- 3. Economic Benefit:** Improved genetics and feed efficiency lead to economic benefits for producers. Animals selected through these trials are likely to have lower production costs and higher profitability due to better growth rates and reduced feed expenses.
- 4. Research and Development:** Test stations and RFI trials serve as platforms for research and development in animal genetics, nutrition, and management practices. The data collected from these trials can be analyzed to gain insights into the physiological mechanisms underlying feed efficiency and other important traits. This knowledge can then be applied to further enhance breeding programs and agricultural practices.

Test stations and RFI trials play a crucial role in advancing the efficiency, profitability, and sustainability of livestock production systems. They provide valuable information for breeders, producers, and researchers, ultimately contributing to the continued improvement of agricultural practices and the quality of livestock products.

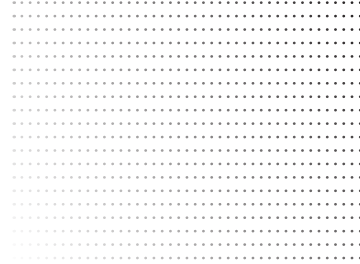
Test stations and RFI trials serve as important tools for breed associations to uphold and improve breed standards, improve individual breeding programs, support members, promote the breed, and contribute to the overall advancement of the livestock industry.

### WHY ARE FEED TRIALS VALUABLE TO THE BREED AS A WHOLE?

Test stations and RFI trials are valuable to a breed association for several reasons:

- 1. Quality Assurance:** By conducting these types of trials, breed associations can ensure that animals registered or certified under their breed standards meet certain performance criteria. This helps maintain the integrity and reputation of the breed by ensuring that only high-quality animals are promoted and sold to breeders and producers.
- 2. Data Collection:** These trials generate valuable data on various performance traits such as growth rate, feed efficiency, and carcass characteristics. Breed associations can use this data to update breed standards and provide useful information to members regarding the genetic potential of different bloodlines within the breed.
- 3. Breeding Program Improvement:** Test stations and RFI trials provide breed associations with insights into the genetic merit of different animals within the breed. This information can be used to identify elite sires and dams for breeding purposes, thus accelerating genetic progress, and improving the overall quality of the breed over time.
- 4. Member Education and Support:** Breed associations can use the results from these trials to educate their members about the importance of performance testing and selection criteria in breeding decisions. They can also provide support and guidance to members on how to interpret performance data and make informed breeding choices to achieve their production goals.
- 5. Promotion and Marketing:** The resulting data collected from test stations and RFI trials can be used by breed associations for promotional and marketing purposes. Highlighting the superior performance of animals within the breed can attract potential buyers and enhance the marketability of the breed, thereby benefiting breeders and increasing demand for the breed.
- 6. Industry Recognition:** Breed associations that actively participate in performance testing and evaluation programs gain recognition and credibility within the livestock industry. This can lead to increased collaboration opportunities with other industry stakeholders, such as researchers, producers, and government agencies, to further promote and advance the breed.

## CURRENT FEED TRIALS AVAILABLE TO CSPA BREEDERS:



### OLDS COLLEGE OLDS, ALBERTA

Both heifer and bull tests available for producers to participate in between March and June. A standard test period is 71 days (21-day adaptation period plus 50-day test). Measurements and data returned to the producers include daily feed intake, average daily gain, and residual feed intake (efficiency). They also arrange for ultrasound measurements for those who are interested. Information can be shared with the breed association as applicable.

Their rations are barley silage/wheat silage based with barley grain and supplement. Targeted gains are 2.25 lbs/day for heifers and 3.0 lbs/day for bulls. Pricing will vary based on ingredient prices at the time of the trial as there is a research fee + daily feed and yardage charged for each animal.

Annually efficiency tests are started November 1st. Three to four test periods are run over the winter/spring and typically finish up in June. Three test pens run at the same time, so in essence that's 9 to 12 test groups per year. If you want to participate in one of these trials, the sooner you are able to get in touch with the college ahead of their test start dates (Nov, Jan, March), the better, but often they are able to accommodate smaller groups just a few weeks prior to delivery.

Additionally, they have capacity to run a few pens of steers (upwards of 150) for anyone looking for "feed-em", "weigh-em" type of data. If needed/wanted, this can be co-organized with larger processing facilities such as Cargill or Harmony to be able to gather carcass data.

Olds College also offers temperament assessments for animals, usually on campus but sometimes on-farm for the producers, should that be of interest.

Reach out to Sean Thompson for more information [sthompson@oldscollege.ca](mailto:sthompson@oldscollege.ca).

### CATTLELAND FEED YARDS STRATHMORE, ALBERTA

Testing is available for bulls, heifers and steers. Cattleland provides average daily gain data (they do not have RFI bunks). This data can be used to rate individual animal performance within the group on feed. During this trial, animals are put on a 30 ration. 30 ration is a feed formulation where the ratio of grain to protein is approximately 30 parts grain to 1 part protein. Weight is taken of each animal upon arrival and then they are weighed every 28 days until day 112. These frequent weigh ins result in a nice growth curve and provide a way to index the animals based on performance within that group.

New producers are welcome at any time throughout the year. Timing largely depends on what exactly the producer is looking to do. For example, a producer may want to start feeding a group in September to get the calves ready for early spring bull sales. Alternatively, if the goal is to feed bulls throughout the winter to get them ready for breeding season, they may start feeding later in the year.

Prices vary throughout the year and the price also changes based on the number of animals you choose to bring in. Mock estimates can be provided upon request.

Contact Kristine Burgess for more information [kristine@cattleland.ca](mailto:kristine@cattleland.ca)

### MANITOBA BULL TEST CARBERRY, MANITOBA

Test groups available for both bulls and heifers – bull & heifer self fed test as well as a limit fed heifer test.

Cut off date for entry into program is in September. Cattle move into the yards early October and regimented feeding/testing begins end of October.

Cattle are weighed every 28 days for 112 days.

They also offer the convenient option to sell bulls and/or heifers in the Manitoba Bull Test Sale that takes place in March (cattle are pictured, videoed and prepped for the sale on site).

Bulls and heifer are fed a 12% protein ration for a warmup period and grass hay. After the initial warm up the bulls are switched to a 13% protein ration and unlimited grass hay. Targeted gains for bulls is 3 lbs per day. The heifers remain on the 12% throughout the test period. There is also a second heifer group that is on a limited feed program. These heifers are fed a 12% barley pellet with the goal of having them gain 2lbs/day. They are topped out at 8lbs of grain/day and grass hay.

All bulls are ultrasounded (for ribeye, lean meat yield, marbling and back fat) and semen tested. Consignors can choose to additionally have their

heifers ultrasounded. Prospective buyers are provided with current EPD's, CUP Carcass Data, and Performance Data (both ADG and WDA). Scrotal circumference will be adjusted to 13 months (395 days) of age.

*Additional programs of interest at the Manitoba Bull Test:*

#### YOUNGER BULL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Develop bulls born in April, May, and June. These bulls need to be delivered in mid-November and are put on a 112-day test starting in January. They then return to the Station the following November and are conditioned for sale.

#### YEARLING BULL CUSTOM FEEDING PROGRAM

Custom feeding of yearling bulls. A convenient option for those who find it a challenge to find a place to hold these older bulls for the winter. The goal for these yearling bulls is to have the bulls in prime condition for the next breeding season.

#### ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION PROGRAM

Lastly, ask about their A.I. Program. Heifer consignors and buyers have the option of entering their females in this program. Other females can be delivered after the Bull Sale.

Contact Cam Wood for more information at [204-856-6568](tel:204-856-6568) or via email at [bulltest@mynetset.ca](mailto:bulltest@mynetset.ca)