

*Note: Last year the “Cowboy Articles” were written to help you with your beef project. Remember when Cowboy did this?*

Title: Practice, Practice, Practice & Ultrasound!

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I took Cowboy to a practice day on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the Camas County Jamboree. Cowboy did well for his first major trailer ride and the process of being loaded, unloaded and tied in a stall all day with all the different noises. Cowboy had the show halter on for the first time. He did not like the chain under his chin. I should have practiced that at home. I led him with a rope halter instead. With more practice at home Cowboy and I should know what to expect at fair.



Cowboy had an ultrasound done while at the Jamboree. He has an 11.6 square inch ribeye, .28 inches back fat, and marbling score of 3.6 which is a select grade. There was 60 days until fair so I hope that the marbling score would increase to 4.0 which is a quality grade of choice. I could see Cowboy was starting to get fat; there are fat deposits around his tail head and his back is getting broader; maybe he is going to weigh closer to 1250 lbs at fair.



#### This year's steer - Dash

Dash now weighs 948 lbs (5/27); he is gaining 2.73 lbs per day. He is getting 19 lbs of grain ( $948 \text{ lbs} \times 2\% = 18.96 \text{ lbs}$  per day) and approximately 3 large flakes of alfalfa hay ( $948 \times 1\% = 9.48 \text{ lbs}$  hay/roughage) per day. The last few days he has not cleaned up his feed. It has been HOT; this is probably why. However, I did check the water tank just in case and the water was cool to the touch. Usually, Dash eats all of this grain and sometimes he does not clean up his hay. He is telling

me that I might be feeding too much hay or the hay quality is low (lots of coarse stems). Feeding quality hay is important for the rumen (stomach) to stay healthy and provide enough protein. Too much hay can cause my steer to gain slower. I want my steer to gain and get fat because that is an indication of high carcass quality. Last year I learned the slower my steer gained the more money I lost. Grain is an energy feed and helps my steer gain weight and fat faster and that is why I push the grain. I can tell Dash is getting fatter. I can see the change from when he was first weighed in. Fat is starting to deposit in his brisket, over his back/loin and on his tail head.

How is your project going? Here are some questions you can ask yourself.

- 🚩 What does your animal weigh?
- 🚩 How many pounds of grain and hay (or other roughage) are you feeding?
- 🚩 What is your animal telling you?
- 🚩 How are you practicing for show day?
- 🚩 Is your animal getting fatter? How can you tell?
- 🚩 What is a good carcass quality?

