



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 202 spring calf crop.
- ✓ Commitment notification due
October 1, 2024 (Calves DO NOT need to be weaned by then)
- ✓ \$50.00 Entry Fee Per Ranch Due by October 1, 2024
- ✓ Ranch will feed steers to 850 lbs by March 2025
- ✓ 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 for the first 60 days on feed.
- ✓ Cattle will be transported to Western Beef Marketing feedlot in Clayton, NM to be finished on a higher grain/lower cost ration.
- ✓ Cattle will be harvested at 1250-1350 lbs at a USDA facility.
- ✓ Carcasses will be evaluated for yield and quality grades. Sold on the grid.
- ✓ Prizes will be provided for best performing cattle by ranch for gain, feed efficiency, total cost of gain, carcass categories, and overall top performance.

ENTRY

1. All entry applications must be hand delivered or postmarked on or before **October 1, 2024**. 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 after October 31st.
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 2024) will be selected by the producer at weaning.
 - a. **More than three steers can be brought through the program, with top 3 performers data going toward the contest.**
2. Cattle should be fully weaned by November 15th, 2024.
3. Cattle will be retained and managed by the producer through March 2024.
 - a. If weight management becomes an issue, individual consultation is available to help producers have their calves reach the target weight.
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 2024. Cattle weighing 800 lbs< or >900 lbs will not be eligible for the feeding phase of the contest.
 - a. Cattle outside this weight range can still have data collected on them, however, they are not eligible for the contest.

Feeding phase

The 60 day feed intake data collection portions of the program will take place at the Tucumcari Feed Efficiency test station in Tucumcari, NM. After the data collection period is over, cattle will then be shipped to the Western Beef Marketing feedlot located in Clayton, NM until finished.

***If there are fewer than 20 head in the program, cattle will remain in Tucumcari to be finished.*

Health Management

1. Cattle will be delivered to the Tucumcari Bull Test Station, Tucumcari, NM tentatively on March 22, 2025
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 fed at the Tucumcari location 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.

The ration at the Clayton feed yard, will be a finishing ration, having a higher % of grain and lower % of roughage. This ration should also be lower in cost.

Costs

The Bull Test Station does not finance feed/health/labor expenses. Therefore, payment of \$200.00 per steer per ranch is due at receiving to cover the first 30 days of cost. Each month after, a flat fee of \$200.00 per steer 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.***

Feed payment will continue through the Tucumcari station. Western Beef Marketing will send one bill, and invoices will then be distributed to each participant.

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

Contest steers will be shipped to a USDA inspected facility, as contracted through Western Beef Marketing. Cattle will be shipped to either National Beef or a Tyson facility and will be sold based on the grid. Carcass data on these individuals will be provided.

If a producer would like to sell their meat independently, it will be the responsibility of the producer to make processing arrangements. To keep the carcass portion of the contest fair, only cattle sent to a facility through Western Beef Marketing will be eligible for the overall contest.

Producers are not limited to 3 head of cattle. Therefore, if a producer would like to keep a certain number of cattle for themselves, that is an option. These cattle can remain at the station to be fed out. The program director will assist in getting carcass information gathered on these animals as well.

Carcass data from the larger packers 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.