National Beef Cattle Conference
Blueprint for the Right Kind
Results of the Opinion Survey

David Buchanan, Jarold Callahan and Neil McCarter
Animal Science Department
Oklahoma State University

All members of the audience were asked, at the beginning of the conference, to answer a series of questions pertaining to the evaluation of beef cattle and procedures for beef cattle shows. There were 402 respondents comprising several segments of the beef cattle industry (Table 1). The results of the survey, catagorized by type of respondent, are presented in the tables that follow. There were generally fewer responses than the total for any particular question because various respondents chose not to answer all the survey questions.

While there are aspects of the results that seemed inconsistent, we feel it is better for the reader to evaluate the results and come to his/her own conclusions. It is of some interest to compare the results of this survey to the similar survey conducted at the National Steer Symposium in 1982. Questions pertaining to the steer or steer shows were also asked at the Steer Symposium while those associated with breeding cattle were not.

There were more respondents in the current survey than in the previous one (402 vs 145). The current respondents included larger representation from purebred and commercial producers, but fewer show officials or club calf producers. In describing the optimum steer, the respondents at this conference indicated less fat thickness and smaller rib eyes but the descriptions of optimum weight, height and quality grade were generally similar. More of the current respondents felt that steer show classes should be split by breed and weight than was previously the case. Approximately the same proportion of the respondents thought that steer show judges should be provided with data, but the amount of information to be provided was much greater with the current group. Members of the audience at both symposia felt overwhelmingly that a Grand Champion should fit the beef cattle industry.

Different categories of respondents did not generally differ a large amount in how questions were answered. Of course, most groups were represented with small enough numbers that comparisons between groups were not very meaningful. However, college personnel, breed association representatives, purebred producers and commercial producers each comprised more than 10 % of the respondents. Those four groups did not have large differences in how responses to various questions were given except in the case of the sources of information which were appropriate for the judging of breeding cattle classes (Table 18). College personnel and breed association representatives generally felt that EPD values would more useful than simple performance information, while purebred and commercial producers requested EPD values and simple performance information in roughly equal frequencies.

Table 1. What is your commitment to the beef cattle industry that generated your interest in this conference?

Judge	5
Show official	10
College personnel	103
Breed association	45
Club calf producer	18
Purebred producer	162
Packer	1
Commercial producer	42
Feedlot operator	8

Table 2. What range includes the optimum weight (lb) for an industry steer?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
901 - 1000	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
1001 - 1100	1	0	13	4	0	19	0	9	1
1101 - 1200	3	7	72	27	4	92	1	25	7
1201 - 1300	3	7	16	14	12	49	0	8	0
1301 - 1400	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
more than 1400	0	0	1	0	1	0	0		

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 3. What is the optimum height (in) for an industry steer?

	J	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
52 or less	0	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	0
52.1 - 53	0	1	10	3	0	20	0	4	2
53.1 - 54	1	1	17	11	2	46	0	8	1
54.1 - 55	1	4	47	9	4	45	0	12	2
55.1 - 56	2	4	20	15	6	31	0	12	3
56.1 - 57	1	0	2	4	5	10	1	2	0
57.1 - 58	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0
more than 58	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 4. What is the optimum fat thickness (in) for an industry steer?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
.1 or less	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0
.11 - .2	1	2	4	8	0	29	0	8	0
.21 - .3	1	7	48	21	11	78	1	24	3
.31 - .4	3	1	45	12	3	45	0	6	4
.41 - .5	0	0	5	3	2	6	0	2	0
.51 - .6	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
more than .6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 5. What is the optimum rib eye area (sq in) for an industry steer?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
10 or less	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
10.1 - 11	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
11.1 - 12	0	1	4	5	0	7	0	2	0
12.1 - 13	1	4	26	7	0	31	1	8	3
13.1 - 14	2	3	39	15	4	54	0	14	3
14.1 - 15	2	2	24	14	9	43	0	14	1
15.1 - 16	0	0	6	2	3	17	0	2	1
16.1 - 17	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0
more than 17	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 6. What quality grade is optimum for an industry steer?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
Standard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Select minus	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Select plus	0	0	20	9	4	31	0	7	0
Choice minus	5	4	67	28	7	66	1	20	0
Choice average	0	5	11	7	4	58	0	10	3
Choice plus	0	1	1	0	1	5	0	3	0
Prime	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 7. What is the average frame size of the national cow herd?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
3	0	0	4	2	1	10	0	3	1
4	2	1	45	20	6	77	0	12	3
5	3	3	28	14	4	42	1	13	2
6	0	2	18	8	4	22	0	7	2
7	0	3	6	1	2	5	0	2	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 or higher	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 8. What frame size bull is necessary to mate with the national cow herd to produce optimum sized market steers and heifers?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
5	0	1	8	1	0	9	0	2	0
6	0	1	36	15	1	55	0	12	2
7	3	4	34	24	8	62	1	16	5
8	2	3	17	3	6	25	0	6	0
9	0	0	1	1	1	7	0	2	0
10 or higher	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 9. What is the minimum frame score that a purebred breeder should produce?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
3	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0
4	1	1	25	4	0	8	0	3	1
5	1	5	37	24	4	64	0	8	1
6	2	1	22	14	9	55	1	16	4
7	1	2	12	1	2	21	0	6	2
8	0	0	1	1	1	6	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
10 or higher	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 10. What is the maximum frame size that a purebred breeder should produce?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
6	1	0	5	2	1	8	0	2	1
7	0	3	28	12	1	46	0	13	2
8	2	6	38	22	7	55	1	12	3
9	1	0	21	7	3	32	0	5	0
10 or higher	1	0	5	1	5	13	0	4	2

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 11. If a judge has an individual that falls outside of your range for minimum frame score or maximum frame size, what then should be done with that animal when placing the class?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
disregard frame	0	0	2	3	0	4	0	2	0
place last or near bottom of the class	2	1	13	5	2	18	0	6	3
place some emphasis on frame, but greater emphasis on other attributes	3	8	81	34	15	127	1	28	3
none of the above	0	1	4	2	1	9	0	4	1

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 12. Should steer shows require a minimum daily gain (for a specified time period or weight range)?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
yes	4	7	86	34	11	131	1	36	7
no	1	3	17	10	7	29	0	4	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 13. If you feel steer shows should require a minimum daily gain, what should that daily gain be?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
1.01 - 1.5	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
1.51 - 2.0	0	1	6	1	2	8	0	1	0
2.01 - 2.5	2	6	31	10	6	36	0	8	1
2.51 - 3.0	2	0	27	13	2	51	1	18	5
3.01 - 3.5	0	0	15	8	1	31	0	6	1
3.51 - 4.0	0	0	3	1	0	5	0	3	0
more than 4.0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 14. How should steer show classes be divided?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
weight	1	3	23	6	2	14	1	5	1
height	0	0	11	5	3	7	0	1	0
breed & weight	3	5	39	24	9	111	0	24	6
breed & height	1	2	20	9	3	20	0	5	1
breed & weight & height	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
none of the above	0	0	9	2	1	10	0	3	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 15. Should a steer show judge be provided with performance data?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
yes	4	6	79	40	9	112	1	31	7
no	1	4	24	6	9	50	0	8	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 16. If you feel a steer show judge should be provided with performance data, what pieces of data are appropriate?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
weight	3	5	55	27	4	68	0	17	6
height	3	3	31	12	1	25	0	9	3
average daily gain	4	4	71	32	7	87	1	29	7
fat thickness	2	3	38	28	2	52	0	17	3
rib eye area	2	3	35	22	2	45	0	16	2
age	3	3	42	24	4	52	0	18	5

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 17. Should a judge of breeding cattle classes be provided with performance data?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
yes	4	7	94	40	15	132	1	34	8
no	1	3	9	6	3	30	0	6	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 18. If you feel a judge of breeding cattle classes should be provided with performance data, what pieces of data are appropriate?

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
birth weight	1	4	36	13	3	46	0	20	5
birth weight EPD	2	2	52	23	5	40	0	12	5
weaning weight	2	1	33	16	5	49	0	18	5
weaning weight EPD	1	3	55	21	7	47	0	13	4
yearling weight	1	1	36	15	6	51	0	18	5
yearling weight EPD	2	2	56	21	7	53	0	14	5
milk EPD	1	1	34	17	5	25	0	11	1
milk + growth (maternal) EPD	2	1	42	19	3	37	0	17	2
scrotal circumference	3	3	54	30	4	79	0	13	4
frame score	1	3	41	20	6	47	0	14	4
weight per day of age	2	6	54	31	11	91	1	25	4

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 19. Please rank the following traits for consideration when phenotypically evaluating breeding bulls.[b]

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
height	4.8	5.7	5.2	6.0	5.6	5.5	-	5.3	4.8
muscling	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.6	3.0	-	3.0	2.9
volume	3.8	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.6	-	3.9	4.1
structural correctness	1.2	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.9	-	2.4	2.1
breed character	6.6	4.8	6.1	5.0	5.6	5.0	-	5.2	5.4
length	5.6	4.8	5.2	5.1	5.2	4.5	-	5.1	5.6
growth rate	3.0	3.2	2.4	3.0	2.6	3.3	-	2.9	3.1

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

[b]These numbers are the average rank.

Table 20. When purchasing a commercial breeding bull, rank the following characteristics in order of importance for the selection process.[b]

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
performance information	2.6	2.7	2.1	2.6	2.1	2.2	3.0	2.0	2.0
conformation & appearance	2.4	2.2	3.0	2.7	1.9	2.7	2.0	2.6	3.1
breed	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.5	4.0	3.6	1.0	3.4	2.6
breeder	4.4	4.0	4.4	3.9	5.2	4.2	4.0	4.4	5.1
pedigree	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.5	4.9	5.0	6.0	5.1	5.0
EPD values	2.4	3.0	2.3	2.8	2.9	3.0	5.0	2.9	3.1

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

[b]These numbers are the average rank.

Table 21. The showring has an effect on the type of commercial cattle that are produced.

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
strongly agree	1	1	13	2	5	26	0	4	0
agree	2	5	47	30	9	89	0	23	6
disagree	2	4	36	12	4	42	1	10	1
strongly disagree	0	0	7	1	0	5	0	3	1

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 22. The Grand Champion steer should fit the industry.

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
strongly agree	3	3	50	26	10	85	0	23	7
agree	1	7	50	17	7	72	1	15	1
disagree	1	0	2	2	1	4	0	2	0
strongly disagree	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.

Table 23. The Grand Champion in a breeding cattle show should fit the industry.

	J[a]	SO	COL	BA	CCP	PP	P	CP	FO
strongly agree	3	5	44	24	8	85	0	21	6
agree	1	5	52	17	5	66	1	19	2
disagree	1	0	5	4	4	9	0	0	0
strongly disagree	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	0

[a]J=judge, SO=show official, COL=college personnel, BA=breed association, CCP=club calf producer, PP=purebred producer, P=packer, CP=commercial producer, FO=feedlot operator.