



## AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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DOCUMENTS

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Minnesota Central  
Bull Testing Program

### ANIMAL SCIENCE FACT SHEET

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#### Purpose

Central bull testing stations provide comparative growth information and estimate genetic differences among herds and individual bulls in ability to gain. Individual performances of prospective herd sires are measured under relatively standard conditions so that reasonably valid comparisons can be made between bulls. Central test stations supplement, rather than replace, on-the-farm records of performance. By using all available records, breeders can select herd sires that should improve performance of their beef cattle. If full value is to be obtained from the test station, an adequate number of bulls should be tested every year.

The Minnesota Central Bull Test Station testing procedures, rules, and regulations were agreed upon by the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association and the test station manager. The University of Minnesota authenticates the records and supervises the program. Objectives of the tests are:

- To compare the ability of individual bulls to gain.
- To encourage herd improvement through the use of performance-tested bulls and other performance records.
- To make producers more aware of relationships among the production traits, how they are inherited, and how they may be used in an improvement program.

#### Eligibility for Test

The breeder must be a member of the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association (MBCIA). The annual fee is \$10.00. This membership fee can be paid together with the bull test application fee. The membership fee is used for the performance testing promotion program. The association gives beef awards to youth beef exhibitors who show superior growing cattle at county and state shows. Other activities include sponsorship of the annual beef cattle evaluation conference, area beef performance workshops, state and area beef breeders' seminars, outstanding commercial beef performance man-of-the-year award, and outstanding purebred and young beef performance man-of-the-year award.

An official test group consists of individual or groups of bulls of one or more sires. To evaluate a sire progeny a minimum of three bulls per sire is recommended.

All bulls entering the test must weight *at least 2 pounds per day of age on arrival at the test station*. Four percent of the arrival weight will be added to compensate for hauling shrinkage.

The fall (November) test will evaluate bulls born between February 1 and May 31 of that year.

Calves born outside this age bracket will be evaluated if adequate numbers of bulls are nominated for testing.

#### Procedure

All bull calves should be delivered to the test station—located 3½ miles west of the junction of Highways 15 and 8, near Truman, Minnesota—the first Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday in November. Each calf must be accompanied by a health certificate. The official test will begin after a 21-day



The Minnesota Central Bull Test Station evaluates bulls for individual ability to gain under relatively standard conditions.

adjustment period. On-test weights and off-test weights will be determined by the average of two weighings taken on two consecutive days. The test will run 140 days, and the bulls will be weighed at 28-day intervals. Traits evaluated will be average daily gain on test, weight per day of age, adjusted yearling weight, and reproductive soundness.

The 205-day weights to be used in test station reports will be calculated from the initial weight when the bulls are placed on the official 140-day test. The 205-day weight will be adjusted for age of dam as recommended by the on-the-farm performance test regulations.

**Pen Assignment.** Breed groups will be assigned to pens at random by drawing numbers. Bulls will be fed in groups of 25 head or less and penned by breed groups if possible.

Growth data will be evaluated on individual bulls. Because different sires and breeds may be represented within a pen, feed efficiency will not be reported.

**Feeding.** Feeding will be done by a bunk feeder. The feed will be clean and fresh. The basic ration will be at least 65 percent total digestible nutrients (TDN). The formulation of this ration is approved by the University of Minnesota and specified by the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association. The ration is composed of:

- Corn silage—full feed
- Legume hay—3 lb/bull
- Ground ear corn—2½ lb/100 lb bull live weight, or shelled corn—2 lb/100 lb bull live weight
- 40 percent protein supplement—1 lb; supplement will include mineral-vitamin mix

## Care of Animals

Strict health regulations are followed in the operation of the bull testing station. Each entry must be accompanied by a health certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian. This must certify that all bulls are healthy and fulfill the following requirements:

- Vaccinated for blackleg, malignant edema, and leptospirosis within 90 days of delivery;
- Vaccinated with a vaccine against red nose (I.B.R.), bovine viral diarrhea (B.V.D.), and para-influenza virus (P.I.3);
- Have no infections, cutaneous papillomas (warts), ringworms, lice, or else have a veterinarian certificate stating bulls have been treated not less than 15 days before delivery;
- No test for tuberculosis and brucellosis is required prior to delivery for Minnesota producers. All bull calves more than 8 months old owned by out-of-state producers must have a brucellosis test within 30 days before delivery. A tuberculosis test is required within 60 days for all bull calves more than 8 months old that are owned by producers who reside outside Minnesota and its adjoining states. A test for brucellosis is required within 30 days of the bull sale.
- To reduce stress, all calves should be weaned at least 3 weeks before delivery.

Upon delivery, all bulls will be inspected by a veterinarian and treated for parasite or health needs.

## Costs of Testing

All costs pertaining to the care, feeding, testing, and recordkeeping of animals will be paid by the breeders. Each breeder will pay:

- \$25.00* per animal *with his application* to the *Minnesota Central Bull Test Program*.
- Upon delivery of the bulls to the test station, an additional *\$225.00* per head must be paid to the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association.
- At the conclusion of the test, the breeder will be charged for the remaining feed and health costs that may accrue in excess of the initial payments.

The cost of testing is dependent on the number of bulls tested:

Yardage Cost	
No. of bulls	Cost per day per bull
2 or less	\$0.60
3 or more	\$0.50

Feed Cost	
Corn price	Cost per pound of gain
under \$2.10	\$0.38
\$2.10-\$2.25	\$0.40
\$2.25-\$2.50	\$0.42

(For each \$0.25 above \$2.50, add \$0.02 per pound of gain.)

Local elevator corn price on March 1 will be used to set feed cost. Veterinary treatment cost will be billed to each consignor.

All costs will be charged from day of arrival through the day individuals leave the station.

If the breeder does not deliver his bulls to the test station after his application has been accepted or if he makes a default of contract, the breeder will forfeit the \$25.00 pen reservation fee per bull. The test station will retain \$15.00, and the MBCIA will retain \$10.00.

## Performance Test Bull Sale

At the conclusion of the 140-day test, a tested bull sale will be conducted. This sale usually is held the Saturday after

the bulls go off the official test, about the fourth week in April, or at the time recommended by the state beef breed associations. Bulls must make acceptable growth performance and be structurally and reproductively sound. The MBCIA central bull testing sale committee reserves the right to reject any bull from the sale that would discredit the program due to soundness or overfat condition. A veterinarian will examine each bull for health and reproductive soundness. A complete physical examination of the male reproductive tract will be given each bull by a veterinarian.

All bulls will be given an index for the tested bull sale. The following index will be used within each breed or test group:

$$\text{Bull Index} = + \frac{30 (\text{Individual test average daily gain})}{\text{Test group average daily gain}} + \frac{70 (\text{Individual pounds per day of age})}{\text{Test group average pounds per day of age}}$$

Each bull consignor has the option to consign or withdraw his bull from the sale. The consignor must, however, notify the sale manager of his intentions 30 days before the scheduled sale.

## Entry Application

Breeders are encouraged to make early application to the test station. The pens are reserved on a first come, first serve basis. The entry application should be sent to the Minnesota Central Bull Test Program, Red Wing, Minnesota 55066. The pen reservation fee of \$25.00 per bull should be made payable to the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association.

For further information, write to the office of the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Program, 101 Peters Hall, 1404 Gortner Avenue, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108.

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## APPLICATION TO ENTER BULLS MINNESOTA CENTRAL BULL TESTING STATION

Please complete the following form and send to:

James Bryan  
Secretary-Treasurer  
MBCIA Central Bull Test Program  
Route 2  
Red Wing, Minnesota 55066

I wish to enter \_\_\_\_\_ bull(s) in the Central Bull Test Station. Enclosed find \$25.00 per bull for pen reservations payable to the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association.

I understand that the Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, test station manager, or the University of Minnesota will not be held liable for sickness or death loss of any bull tested if the veterinarian attests such illness was not due to negligence. I will be responsible for insurance coverage for value of the bull(s).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_