

Increase the Value of Calves

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To receive the most dollars for his calves, a producer must produce what the market demands. Go to the market where calves are to be sold and observe to determine which calves sell for the most money.

Market reports indicate that quality calves of the desire weight that are castrated and dehorned are the most valuable. Performing the practices of castration and dehorning at an early age should be a standard management practice. If the desired weight is not achieved, then the breeding program, breeding time and nutrition program need to be adjusted to produce the desire calf.

Records indicate that calves left as bulls sell for \$5.00 to \$7.00 per hundred less than comparable steers. Remember that bulls that have been castrated must be completely healed at marketing time. Naturally polled or dehorned calves sell for \$1.50 to \$2.00 per hundred more than horned calves. Calves should be completely healed at marketing time.

Additional weight can add extra value to a calf. Research and demonstrations have shown that implanting suckling calves can add an additional 20 pounds in 100 days.

In summary, quality calves that are castrated, dehorned and implanted sell for more dollars.

Sometimes producers think strictly about the calves when they miss the targeted weight and quality. It may be necessary to cull low quality cows and put extra effort into bull selection. For more information, contact your local Extension agent.