



# NALF REPORT

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Summer and early fall of 2011 have been busy with change and innovation for not only the Limousin breed but the staff at NALF. Challenges are nothing new to cattle people and their way of life, but the drought of 2011 has been one people won't soon forget. The Limousin breed will prevail through these testing times, because of the outstanding character and perseverance of the people involved.

In spite of the current challenges, many good things are occurring that will not only be positive for the Limousin breed, but the cattle business in general. Cattle prices have continued to trade at record high levels. Total cowherd numbers have declined almost nine million head to nearly 30 million head. In spite of the reduction in numbers, it is amazing that beef production has not declined significantly. This is due in part to the increase in efficiencies of the American cattlemen and improved genetics.

Increases in tonnage have largely come from better performance of cattle reflected by increased carcass weights and a faster turnover of cattle through feedyards. Non-fed slaughter continues to remain high given drought conditions, but this will not last forever. Eventually, heifer retention will occur which will decrease daily F.I. slaughter rates and set up a bullish supply situation for the cattle business over the next several years.

Production traits that Limousin cattle excel in where total pounds equate to dollars is an advantage our breed offers the industry during a time when numbers are declining and feed efficiency is key given high-priced feed.

While the supply side of the cattle business is positive for the cattle business, the demand side will most likely provide uncertainty for most. The economy continues to struggle with high unemployment and an out of control national debt. The stock market has continued to soften with fears of another recession. In spite of these concerns, inflation has occurred for most commodities, from corn to cattle. It is an advantage to be involved in production agriculture over the next several years. In spite of economic fears for many businesses, people still have to eat!

The August board meeting for NALF was a good one. Staff will continue to implement actions that will carry out the Strategic Plan initiated by the Foundation to accelerate programs that will help grow the breed.

Links to PVP (Process Verified Programs) will be on the website with Tri-Merit and IMI Global. This is for members who want to get their cattle or their customer's cattle qualified for age and source, natural programs or NHTC options. Please call staff if you have any questions.

The board also approved a plan to revamp NALF's tag program for cattle by structuring a split-level tag program to take advantage of cattle destined for different markets. We will still offer the LimMark tag for cattle heading for primarily Select quality grade, high-muscled markets such as Laura's Lean, and will also offer producers the option of a LimChoice tag for cattle

that are geared to a Choice quality grade marketing option and headed into mainstream terminal markets such as Tyson, JBS, Excel, National Beef and Meyers Beef.

This will help retain the breed's identity as cattle move into commercial cattle feeding operations and should also be a good source of advertising for our breed—maintaining breed identity will be important as we continue to push for more commercial acceptance in both conventional mainstream and natural cattle feeding programs. Both tag programs offer an EID Tag in addition to a panel tag with the corresponding EID number. Individual identification of cattle will become even more valuable to the cattle industry as export markets continue to expand. Most export markets require individual source and age status to be eligible for export.

NALF will be working with *Limousin World* on an updated commercially-focused *Bottom Line* publication that will be out in December with expanded and targeted readership. This publication will focus on increased penetration of the commercial cow-calf sector and feedlot operations making the industry aware of how the Limousin breed can add to profitability.

Members should utilize the talents of your commercial marketing director, Joe Epperley, to assist with marketing their feeder cattle. As always, Joe will devote a large share of his time to our seedstock producers and assist with the marketing and promotion of their cattle through the upcoming sale season.

The current board of directors has taken an aggressive approach to marketing and growing the breed. They are intent on making multiple options available for our diverse set of cattle, whether they be Fullblood, Purebred or Lim-Flex. Drought conditions will present challenges to everybody in the cattle business over the next 12-18 months, but the demand for quality genetics will not go away!

The fall show season is upon us. NALF will have staff at both Kansas City and Louisville and looks forward to seeing many of you there. The junior show at Amarillo was a success and we look forward to the National Junior Show in Des Moines, Iowa, next year. We will continue to push for strong junior involvement within the Limousin breed to lay the foundation for the next generation of breeders.

NALF recently hosted its Emerging Leaders Academy (ELA) in August with a motivated group of young, aggressive breeders from across the nation. The two-day meeting was filled with speakers from NCBA, Cattle-Fax, U.S. Meat Export Federation, and JBS feeding and packing divisions near Greeley, Colorado. NALF can look forward to strong leadership over the next several years given the quality people and the level of commitment ELA members have for the Limousin breed.

The staff at NALF is committed to capitalizing on the opportunities the cattle industry is offering to grow and expand the Limousin breed. Please feel free to contact us with any suggestions or questions you may have.