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2007
AMGA



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812-345-6108

Tom Helfter - MWMGA Rep.

507-665-2934

Ginger Natolis- EMGA Rep.

740-374-2910

Our Cover

The cycle begins again

A new born Murray Grey calf watches from its bed in new grass and wildflowers, reminding us that no matter what else is happening, the cycle of life begins anew each year. Good luck with calving!

Thanks to Mike & Gaylene Lowry of Fernley, NV for the photo

We are always looking for good photos of Murray Grey cattle. We invite all members to send pictures!

How to reach us -

American Murray Grey Association

P.O. Box 60748

Reno, NV 89506

Phone: 775 - 972 - 7526

Email: AMGAOffice@murraygreybeefcattle.com

<http://www.murraygreybeefcattle.com>

Notes from the National Office -

2007 Dues are overdue. We will be updating the state pages on the website by the end of March. Don't let your contact information disappear; buyers will return once the weather finally breaks. Speaking of your AMGA web site - more than 23,000 people have visited our cyber home since December of 2003. Remember, AMGA will do web pages for members.

Spring herd Female Inventories are due. Group BreedPlan members who want to submit data on spring calving cows need to make sure your Inventories are in. Fall calving inventories can be submitted anytime before those cows begin to calve. Fees on fall calving cows are not due until you submit your fall herd inventory.

2007 National Murray Grey Show will be held at the Clark County Fair in Ridgefield, WA, August 3 - 7. George Germaine and Michael Jimenez will be keeping us posted as show, meeting and lodging information becomes available. Watch the "Breaking News" page on the web site for National Show updates.

AMGA Director George Virtue will have his first knee replacement surgery on March 5. Please keep George and Sharon in your thoughts and prayers. If any one wants to drop George a note, he can be reached at 29449 Berlin Road, Sweet Home, OR 97386. We wish George a speedy and complete recovery.

January 2007 Sire Summary has been published and mailed to AMGA Group BreedPlan members. The Sire Summary is also on-line at the AMGA website. Mouse over "Programs" click on "AMGA Sire Summary" or type this into the address bar on your web browser: <http://www.murraygreybeefcattle.com/sires.htm> Remember, only AMGA members who participate in AMGA Group BreedPlan have authentic AMGA EPDs. See the on-line Sire Summary for a complete list of participating Group BreedPlan herds.

John & Gennie Gerow will be traveling East for the Murray Grey show at the Ohio Beef Expo. The AMGA Office will be closed Thursday, March 15 - Sunday March 18.

Summer 2007 Murray Grey Tanbark Trail

Exposition	Dates	Contact
Ohio Beef Expo Columbus, OH	March 15-17, 2007	Ginger Natolis 740-342-2190
Linn County Fair Albany, OR	July 20 - 23	Sharon Virtue 541-367-5164
2007 National MG Show Clark County Fair Ridgefield, WA	August 3 - 7	Michael Jimenez 360 - 687 - 4247
Lane County Fair Eugene, OR	August 15 - 20	Sharon Virtue 541-367-5164
Eastern Idaho State Fair Blackfoot, ID	September 5 - 8	Justin Holloway 208 - 522 - 5489
Spokane County Interstate Fair Spokane, WA	September 12 - 16	Sharon Virtue 541-367-5164
Your Show Here!	Let us know Dates & Locations!	AMGA Call: 775-972-7526

This is a partial list of shows and fairs in which AMGA members will be showing cattle this summer. If you are planning on showing or exhibiting breeding stock and we do not have **your** shows listed, please let us know.

This list is also on the web page. Mouse over "ABOUT MGs" and then click on "Murray Grey Shows" in the pop-up menu. We want as many shows listed as possible - but we need to hear from **YOU!**

If anyone questions whether or not the Murray Grey breed has a future in the US - just show them this picture!

This is Young Guns Wyatt Earp, semen recently imported from Australia by the Wyatt Earp Coop.

There should be no doubt that
The Grey Tide is Rising!



Directors Hold Winter Meeting

Reno, NV –

The directors of the American Murray Grey Association held their annual winter meeting at the Association's headquarters in Reno, Nevada on Saturday, February 10. All of the directors were present except for Justin Holloway, Kent Knight and Andy Zinnel. Vice-President Pat Flavel chaired the meeting due to Kent's absence.

In an informal session after a "finger food buffet" Friday evening, Registrar Gennie Gerow led an effort to organize this year's standing committees. Although there was a great deal of good-natured banter and teasing, the standing committees are up and running for 2007. (See article on next page). Following formation of committees, directors enjoyed fellowship while discussing issues of interest to the Association and the breed.

Pat Flavel called the director's meeting to order shortly before 9:30 Saturday morning. Most of the morning session was spent analyzing member activity and income and expenses for the year just ended. Executive Director John Gerow presented 2006 Profit & Loss Statement and the AMGA has ended its fourth consecutive year with positive earnings. The directors approved Gerow's 2007 proposed budget with minor adjustments. The budget does project a positive cash flow for this year.

Executive Director John Gerow reported that he is ready to launch an on-line semen directory in which AMGA members can list semen for sale. Gerow explained that there is a "catalog" function built in to AMGA's web search site and that this function will allow members to list the bulls from which they have semen for sale, post photographs of the bulls and provide brief text commentary on the sires. The cost to members will be \$10 for the first bull listed and \$2 for each additional bull. Listings will remain on the web semen catalog until the seller asks that they be removed.

In other business, the directors asked that the national office procure DNA testing kits from Igenity and Bovigen for members' use. Midwest regional rep Tom Helfter led a discussion on the feasibility of having regional public sales of Murray Grey cattle. After a wide ranging discussion, the matter was tabled for future consideration. One outcome of the conversation was the suggestion that AMGA publish "average" selling prices that members are receiving for their Murray Grey cattle. Publication of such a list would give both buyers and sellers a better idea of the value of Murray Grey cattle available for sale.

The next meeting of the Board will be in Ridgefield, WA in conjunction with the National Show, Clark County Fair, August 3 - 7, 2007. A list of 2007 Directors and phone numbers is on Page 1 of this issue.

Check those tattoos!

By: John Gerow

When one is volunteered to help at a cattle show, one should procure a complete list of his expected duties. This not only allows one to mentally and physically prepare for those duties, but also allows one the ability to make correct wardrobe choices. To wit; when one is expected to check tattoos on cattle that have been hauled cross-country in torrential rains of biblical proportions, one should not wear one's favorite cream-colored sweater to the show barn. Needless to say, I no longer own my favorite cream-colored sweater, and I have learned that I will ask what my duties entail next time. I also learned that some of us need a refresher course on tattooing registered cattle.

The tattoo is extremely important in the realm of registered cattle. Some breed associations are moving to use a unique tattoo in place of a numeric registration number. For most breeds, the tattoo is the only permanent identifier that is acknowledged in courts of law. This can be crucial in settling estates and dividing marital property during divorce.

Several years ago, this office was called upon to help settle the estate of a long time member. Many of the Murray Grey cows owned by the deceased could not be matched to registration certificates because the tattoos were not legible. The estate lost several thousand dollars by having to sell these cows as commercial cows rather than being able to sell them for their purebred value. Perhaps worse, was the fact that the breed lost the genetic value of these cows because of poor tattoos. It is a very good practice to check every cow's tattoo every time you run them through the chutes, especially in today's market conditions when registered Murray Grey cattle are worth so much more than commercial beef cows. Don't let sloppy tattoos rob you of real money.

There is a good guide for tattooing included in your Breeders' Guide on Page 8 of Section A. Please take a few minutes to read over this. It is important. If you are not sure about tattooing, give your local cooperative extension agent a call, or talk to a neighbor who owns registered cattle. Remember, the tattoo is the only permanent identifier for your Murray Grey cattle.

Severity Of Winter & Calf Birth Weights

Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Animal Reproduction Specialist

Does the severity (coldness or mildness) of the winter have an impact on spring-born calf birth weights? Ranchers have asked that question during many springs and veterinarians have speculated for years. The debate rages on! This is obviously a difficult subject to research because you cannot have a “control” group of cows to compare to a “treatment” group that is exposed to a cold winter while still grazing on the same pasture. Therefore research data on this subject is limited. University of Nebraska researchers have done the next best thing. They have monitored the birth weights of genetically similar calves across three different winters and have related average winter temperatures to birth weights. This research is reported in detail in the 1996 University of Nebraska Animal Science Research Report (Coburn, et al.) A 3-year study was conducted to evaluate effects of high and low air temperatures and wind chills during winter months on subsequent calf birth weights and calving difficulty of spring-born calves. Records on approximately 400 2-year-old heifers and their calves were used. Heifer and calf genetics were the same each year. Heifers were fed similar quality hay free choice each year before calving. High temperatures during the 1994-95 winter were 9 degrees higher than during the 1992-93 winter. The low temperatures were five degrees higher for 1994-95 compared to 1992-93. The greatest differences in monthly temperatures between years were found during December, January and February. Average temperatures for these three months increased 11 degrees F. over the three years.

Average calf birth weights decreased 11 pounds (81 to 70) from 1993 to 1995. A 1:1 ratio was observed. Although calving difficulty was high due to the research design, it also decreased from 57% to 35% from 1993 to 1995. Results indicate that cold temperatures influenced calf birth weight. Weather cannot be controlled; however, with below average winter temperatures, larger birth weight calves and more calving difficulty may be expected in the spring. From: www.CattleNetwork.com

AMGA Standing Committees

At their annual winter meeting, the AMGA directors set up working committees for 2007. There are 7 committees that help steer the Association. They are: Finance, Rules, Performance, Nominations, Promotions, Exhibitions & Standards and Import & Export. The purpose of these committees is to research and study their specific areas and provide the directors with ideas and suggestions on how the Association can better serve the members in each of these areas.

If you are interested in any of these specific areas, you are cordially invited to contact the appropriate committee chair and volunteer your service on the committee - or share you concerns, ideas and suggestions. AMGA does have a “chat room” that is available for Internet meetings, in an effort to keep costs to members at a minimum.

For more information on these committees, feel free to contact the chair of any of the committees.

Committee	Chair	Phone	Email Address
Finance	Andy Zinnel	712-297-7293	azinnel@alta.k12.ia.us
Rules	Pat Flavel	208 - 880 - 3762	pattirex ranch@yahoo.com
Performance	Tom Helfter	507-665-2934	tlhelfter@aol.com
Nominations	Ginger Natolis	740-374-2910	monarchoak@murraygreybeefcattle.com
Promotions	Michael Jimenez	360 - 687 - 4247	michael@mljranch.com
ExhibitionsStandards	Steve Cummings	812-345-6108	Jetmech915@aol.com
Import & Export	Sharon Virtue	541-367-5164	hamurraygreys@proaxis.com



2010 MURRAY GREY WORLD CONGRESS

Canadian Murray Grey Association President Ed Gilmet sends word that early planning is well underway for the Murray Grey World Congress to return to Alberta in July of 2010.

The pre-Congress package will include the last 3 days of the Calgary Stampede, including Rodeo and Chuck Wagon race tickets.

The "formal" portion of the Congress will be in Red Deer in Central Alberta and will feature two days of informative presentations as well as displays of great Canadian Murray Greys.

The post-Congress tour will be a bus trip through the incredibly picturesque Canadian Rockies. The tour will include the cities of Edmonton, Jasper and Banff as well as views of glaciers, ice fields and the most spectacular mountain vistas in the world.

AMGA is excited about the 2010 World Congress and hopes that the United States will be well represented.

For more information, drop Ed an email at gilmoreranch@pathcom.ca.

Semen Sellers Wanted!!

AMGA will be launching an on-line semen directory through the Pedigree & EPD search site. You are invited to list the bulls from which you are selling semen.

The on-line directory will link from your bull's name to his "Animal Detail Page" which shows the bull's pedigree and EPDs.

But wait! There's more!

We will also be able to include photographs on the Animal Detail page. For an example, please go to the AMGA web search page - search for registration number 53138. Click on the bull's name - the camera icon tells you that there is a picture. This is what our on-line semen directory will look like.

There will be a small fee for the programming needed to do this. Call or email for more information.

P.S. You can also add photos of your cows to their individual Animal Detail Pages.



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IMPORTANT - Embryo Flush Procedures

It is most important to always bear in mind that the primary purpose of a breed registry is to preserve and protect the integrity of the pedigrees of animals registered in that registry. Rules, regulations, policies and procedures are designed to make that preservation and protection as solid as possible. These registration guidelines are constantly under pressure from rapidly evolving genetic technology. Breed registries must be nimble and adaptable and ready to meet new challenges as they appear.

With the demand for quality Murray Grey cattle outstripping our ability to meet that demand, and with an increasing interest in new genetics from Australia, there are more than a few AMGA members who are going to be doing embryo transfers in the future. It is vitally important that every member who does embryo transfers follow the AMGA procedures to the letter. Failure to provide proper documentation at any step of the way will result in calves that are ineligible to be registered.

Bearing in mind that the purpose of the breed registry is to preserve and protect the integrity of the pedigrees, let us take a walk through the procedures needed to register calves resulting from embryo transfer technology.

First, the AMGA member must have the donor cow identified by DNA profile and this profile must be on file with AMGA before calves can be registered. This DNA identification is used to ensure that every calf for which registration is applied is actually an offspring of the donor cow. If the sire being used is not in AI, then the breeder must also supply AMGA with a DNA identification profile of the sire. These DNA profiles are vital to the process of registering ET calves because they will allow the member to prove that the calf actually is the result of the ET mating. Every calf resulting from the ET will have to have DNA parent verification before that calf can be registered. This protects the value of the ET calves by preventing registration fraud.

When the member collects the embryos from the donor cows, the supervising vet or technician must fill out a Certificate of Recovery and the member must send a copy of this to AMGA, along with a \$5.00 recording fee. Submitting this certification allows AMGA to identify how many embryos were recovered.

The bottom half of this form is the Certificate of Transfer. A copy of this certificate must be submitted to AMGA for every embryo that is transferred into a recipient cow. In order to protect the value of the embryos, the Association must know the fate of every embryo that is harvested. You do not want to have some unethical breeder registering some scrub calf as being one of your valuable ETs. There is no fee to submit these Certificates of Transfer.

If you sell any of the frozen embryos, or sell any ET pregnancy in a recipient cow, you must fill out a Transfer of Embryo Ownership form and submit it with a \$7.00 transfer fee to the AMGA office. This allows the Association to recognize that a member who is not the breeder of the embryos has the right to register the resulting calf.

And remember, before you apply for registration, you must have DNA parent verification for *each* calf.

Breeder's Responsibilities in Embryo Transfers -

- 1 - Provide DNA for donor cow & sire if not approved AI sire
- 2 - Submit Certificate of Recovery & \$5.00 recording fee at the time of the flush
- 3 - Provide Certificate of Transfer for each embryo implanted in a recip cow at time of implant
- 4 - Submit Transfer of Embryo ownership for every embryo sold before calving - \$7.00 per fee
- 5 - Provide DNA parentage verification for every ET calf for which registration is applied

6 - Keep copies of every form submitted to AMGA

Following these simple steps will ensure that your ET calves are eligible for registration and that your investment in genetic technology is protected.



Strong but feminine - a Murray Grey ideal.
Photo courtesy of Bonnie Sicard, Madras, OR

Understanding the Ultrasound Info Craze

By Patrick Wall

Director of Communications

The National Centralized Ultrasound Processing Lab & Technology Center (CUP Lab)

Even though ultrasound technology and its application to the beef industry is still in its “calf” stage, the demand for carcass information is growing and maturing rapidly. With each breed association reporting ultrasound data and carcass EPDs independently, comparing the numbers becomes difficult and extremely confusing. In response to countless requests from breeders and buyers alike, a grass-roots explanation of ultrasound data as it is collected “chute-side” is long overdue. A step-by-step description of each image collected is a good method to help beef producers understand the traits measured and how to incorporate them into selection programs, regardless of breed or background, farm or feedlot.

Percent Intramuscular Fat (%IMF) or Marbling

With all of the grid premiums and incentives to raise Choice and Prime cattle, it’s easy to see why so much selection pressure has been placed on marbling. The section header implies that the two traits are one in the same. In reality, %IMF is simply an indicator trait for marbling, much like Birth Weight EPD is an indicator of calving ease. With high marbling EPDs and carcass quality genetics demanding top dollar in the sale ring, it is extremely important producers understand what they are buying.

The major difference between %IMF and marbling is that %IMF is a numerical objective measure, whereas marbling is subjective to the eye of the grader. The correlation is usually around +.70 between the two measures. In order to accurately predict USDA marbling score using ultrasound, the same grader would need to be used for every research trial.

Ultrasound machines show intramuscular fat by “hearing” a density change and portraying it on a screen as a grayscale color change. Lean tissue has a different density than fat, thus allowing us to estimate the amount of fat vs. lean on a percentage basis. As a result, the prediction models developed to estimate %IMF in seedstock do just that; they do not attempt to mirror any USDA grader. To classify and compare the actual IMF value is extremely difficult. A bull with a Birth Weight EPD of -1.5 is often termed a “Calving Ease Sire” with little to no argument. However, a bull with a high Marbling or %IMF EPD cannot necessarily be called a “Prime or High Choice Sire,” but merely a bull with good carcass quality genetics.

The most confusing element of understanding ultrasound data is deciphering which unit of measure is actually under your nose, especially in the case of marbling vs. %IMF. As one can see in the table (Courtesy of Iowa State University, Department of Animal Science), the number scale for Percent Intramuscular Fat and Numeric Carcass Marbling Score is close, but not one in the same. There is no written law or breed association rule that defines how %IMF or marbling is published in either sale catalogs or advertisements. When data is sent out from The CUP Lab to a breed association or breeder, it is in %IMF form, simply an average value taken from 4-5 images per animal. Complex computer models estimate the percent of intramuscular fat within a box placed by the interpreting technician in a consistent spot between the 12th and 13th ribs in the image, reported to the nearest hundredth. Some breeds express the EPD in %IMF fashion, but others convert the measure to Numeric Marbling Score units in order to prevent confusion.

% IMF	Quality Grade	Marbling Degree	Marbling Score
2.3-3.0	Select -	Slight 00-40	4.0-4.4
3.1-3.9	Select +	Slight 50-90	4.5-4.9
4.0-5.7	Choice -	Small 00-90	5.0-5.9
5.8-7.6	Choice o	Modest 00-90	6.0-6.9
7.7-9.7	Choice +	Moderate 00-90	7.0-7.9
9.8-12.1	Prime -	Slightly Ab 00-90	8.0-8.9
12.2+	Prime o	Mod Ab 00-90	9.0+

Ribeye Area (REA) and Rib Fat

The most difficult image to interpret at the CUP Lab is also the most troubling for technicians to collect on the animal. The margin for error when collecting the REA image is extremely small for both lab and field technician alike, especially when the breeder remembers by heart how big the full sib’s ribeye measured a year ago. Consequently, the lab takes more calls from breeders with dissatisfied results, even though the ratios and sire rankings may mirror a year ago. I’m still waiting for my first call complaining about ribeyes that traced too big. Understandably, the only live animal measure of muscle currently available is REA, especially important to breeders marketing terminal sires and retail product genetics. From a lab interpreter’s perspective, we only trace what we can see, and guesswork more often underestimates the animal’s genetic merit for muscle.

As a result, more missing data comes back to the breeder in the REA column than any other, but poor quality images create poor quality results.

At the CUP Lab, highly trained and certified technicians trace every animal's ribeye by hand. A computer mouse is used to trace the boundaries of the ribeye muscle; the computer measures the amount of area within the boundaries drawn, reported to the nearest tenth of a square inch. If the interpreter cannot see the boundaries needed, the image is rejected and no REA is reported, even though Rib Fat can still be measured. Ribeye Area is not only used for the obvious REA EPD, but also incorporated into corresponding Yield Grade and Percent Retail Product EPDs. Rib Fat has substantially more influence on either of the retail yield EPDs and is also measured on the same image as REA, though much easier to interpret at the lab. Rib Fat is measured in the same location for both ultrasound and carcass data collection, at the 3/4 position (3/4 the distance of the entire ribeye muscle starting from the spine or medial edge) perpendicular to the muscle. A computer mouse is used to measure the distance from the hide-fat interface to the fat-lean interface, reported to the nearest hundredth of an inch. The accuracy of ultrasound rib fat vs. fat measured on the actual carcass has been questioned. However, there is equal argument that ultrasound may actually be more accurate than the carcass measure. Hydraulic hide pullers found in most commercial packing plants often remove external fat with the hide, a source of variation eliminated when using ultrasound.

Breeders must toe a fine line when utilizing fat and retail product EPDs in their selection program, not only from a breeding perspective, but also matching the body composition of their cow herd to their particular management and environmental resources. On the average, Fat EPD in most all breeds has stayed near zero, though significant genetic variation within the population and/or breeds is quite evident. The reason is quite simple; select against fat and you run the risk of indirectly affecting the breeding/re-breeding rate (stayability) and milking ability of your cow herd. Select for increased fat, and you subject your calf crop to potential yield grade discounts and inefficient gains. The optimum combination of quality and yield for your customers may vary from what your cow herd can effectively produce. Mating a beef cow that adequately maintains herself on the feeds and forages you have available with a bull that provides the carcass ammunition desired by your customers is a key element to success.

Rump Fat

Many cattle producers question the usefulness of a rump fat measurement for the simple fact that grids neither pay nor discount for the trait. Besides, the image takes more time to collect and requires additional preparation (clipping/oiling) of the animal. However, the value of the trait is well documented, though not referred to nearly as often as the more traditional measures of carcass cutability.

On the surface, rump fat is extremely easy to collect and highly repeatable. The reference point needed to measure the trait uses the *gluteus medius* and the *biceps femoris*, two muscles easily identified in the ultrasound image taken over the rump. The hook bone is simple to palpate, a landmark used by field technicians to make rump image collection almost effortless. Rump fat depth is measured at the CUP Lab by physically dragging a computer mouse from the hide-fat interface to the reference point between the previously mentioned muscles, reported to the nearest hundredth of an inch.

Since scanning age windows are open only to cattle near a year of age, an early developing fat tissue helps breeders recognize cattle with more "fat potential." As one might expect, earlier maturing cattle lay down the breeding pad at a younger age. Thus, noticeable differences exist among breeds and biological types, particularly British vs. Continental breeds. Obviously, saying that Charolais cattle average less rump fat than Herefords is not reinventing the wheel, but using growth trends on rump fat vs. rib fat will help producers better understand how to effectively utilize the trait.

On a ration that meets or exceeds nutritional requirements, cattle will naturally have more rump fat than rib fat at yearling. However, on a high-energy diet, like in a feedlot situation, rump fat and rib fat measures come together, and in some cases, the measures actually cross (more rib fat than rump fat) as the animal nears harvest. Seedstock may do the same if being "pushed" to achieve maximum performance.

The evolution of ultrasound in the beef cattle industry is a rather short history lesson. Its acceleration into mainstream seedstock and commercial selection programs is a testament to the usefulness of ultrasound data for cattle operations of all sizes and scopes. The science and technology behind ultrasound is not perfect, but it has established itself as the most cost-effective and accurate tool to assess carcass composition in beef cattle without sacrificing the animals themselves. The growth EPDs developed and established in the 80's and 90's helped the beef producer compete in a performance driven market. Ultrasound data is again helping the beef business to compete, domestically and globally, in a value-based market driven by the taste buds of the consumer.

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