

NEWS RELEASE

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Gardiner Angus Ranch Southern Carcass Improvement Project Update

Gestation Length, Birth Weight and Weaning Weight Comparisons made between 2010-born Angus X Southern versus Southern X Southern Calves

ASHLAND, KANSAS, December 17, 2010—The first group of calves from the Southern Carcass Improvement Project (SCIP) was weaned in early November at Gardiner Angus Ranch. Fifty-nine head of embryo transfer April- and May-born calves are now being backgrounded at GAR and will be grazed on wheat pasture, as moisture conditions allow, before being placed on feed as yearlings next spring at Triangle H Cattle Feeders in Garden City, KS.

The group includes 35 Angus-sired calves, 8 Red Brangus-sired calves, 7 Simbrah, 3 Braford, 3 Brahman, 2 Senepol, and 1 Santa Gertrudis. Ten Southern-breed embryo donor dams are represented, 6 of these having both Angus- and Southern-sired calves in this year's research group.

Initial analysis of gestation length, birth weight, and weaning weight data associated with the two sire groups has been completed, with the following results:

- (1) Angus-sired calves had shorter gestation lengths (-8.3 days) versus Southern-sired calves. This difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$).
- (2) Angus-sired calves had lighter birth weights (-9.6 pounds) versus Southern-sired calves. This difference was also statistically significant ($P < 0.05$).
- (3) Angus-sired calves had heavier weaning weights (+6 pounds) versus Southern-sired calves. However, this difference was not statistically significant ($P > 0.20$).

Both sexes are included in these comparisons. Appropriate statistical adjustments were made between steer and heifer calves across both sire groups in the analysis. One very light birth weight/light weaning weight Southern x Southern heifer calf was excluded from the comparison as an outlier. This calf has remained healthy from birth, but weighed only 51 pounds when born and 352 pounds at weaning.

“We are making good progress on the SCIP research so far,” says Mark Gardiner. “This project is primarily designed to be a carcass merit comparison, but we did expect to see growth-curve differences as well. The Southern-sired calves were quite a bit heavier at birth, but they did not outweigh the Angus-sired calves at weaning.”

Gardiner Angus Ranch has also confirmed that 60 of its recipient cows are pregnant with another group of SCIP embryo transfer calves to be born in the spring of 2011.

Gardiner Angus Ranch, in collaboration with Kansas State University and Virginia Tech, launched SCIP in 2009 to determine just how much carcass improvement can be made in one generation, using high carcass value Angus bulls on typical cows found in the southern U.S. SCIP addresses the beef industry’s long-standing need for higher quality grades and better overall carcass traits in Southern U.S. packing plants. Gardiner Angus Ranch is a family-owned Angus ranching operation located near Ashland, Kansas. Gardiner Angus is dedicated to the production of quality beef from gate to plate. The Gardiners use their experience in beef cattle breeding, with state-of-the-art technology and data management, to produce Angus cattle that make documented contributions to the beef industry. The Gardiner operation registers more than 2,000 head of Angus cattle each year through the American Angus Association and encompasses more than 40,000 acres in southwest Kansas. The ranch is a founding member of U.S. Premium Beef, LLC.