American Blue – A Greener Meat

How are our cattle greener, you ask?

Over a six year span the American Blue cattle were studied along with other traditional beef breeds. The breeds were segregated in penned control groups. The American Blues had the highest feed efficiency and costs were down over $70 on average for the other pens on test.

Genetically American Blue cattle produce a limited amount of fat which produces twice the calories of protein. It will take more energy by other breeds to put on that extra fat.

So, if putting weight on a calf, it takes more than three (3) times the energy (calories) to put a gram of fat on a calf than muscle (protein).

American Blues have higher feed efficiency and use fewer natural resources. This breed is also noted for its' hyper-muscular growth. This allows more meat on the rail with less waste. In a recent USDA study comparing Angus and Blues, the Angus had 66lbs more waste per half, whereas the blues had 100lbs. more retail meat on their half. On average other breeds will yield 55-65% on the rail and blues will yield 68-75%.

If you are putting weight on a calf, it takes more than three times the energy (9 calories/gram) to put a gram of fat on a calf than muscle (4 calories/gram for protein).

High feed efficiency, high yield, and high processing percentage with less waste. That equals green, or rather, Blue beef!.

CONSUMER NUTRITIONAL NOTE:
Approximately 9 calories to 1 gram of fat

Approximately 4 calories to 1 gram of muscle protein

(Based on a 4 oz raw serving	Certified American Blue Ground Beef	USDA Regular Ground Beef	USDA Average Chicken Breast (w/skin)****
Fat (g)	7.0	30.0	10.5
Moisture (g)	71.7G/per 100 g	63.34	79.18
Protein (g)	25	18.78	23.7
Cholesterol (mg)	64	96	72.1

American Blue Cattle...

The Ultimate Terminal Crossbreeding Choice

Beef producers have been benefitting when using a fullblood American Blue bull as a terminal crossing sire. Blue cross-bred calves result in increased carcass yields as compared to their dams

The American Blue bull will put more weight and muscle on calves. When using a fullblood American Blue bull he will pass on one myostatin gene and farmers/ranchers can experience on average a 7% yield increase, making the crossbreeding program more profitable.

Overall Benefits of Crossbreeding

- **High growth rates**
- **Early turnoff**
- **Outstanding feed conversion**
- **Dress out percentages 60%+**
- **High yield**
- **10% more lean retail product**
- **Easy calving**
- **Early maturity**
- **Tenderness from fine muscle fibers**
- **Higher protein content**
- **Excellent flavor & juiciness**
- **Very docile temperament**

American Blue Cattle Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 165
Haworth, Oklahoma 74740

www.americanbluecattle.org

American Blue Cattle Pureblood/Fullblood

History

The American Blue Cattle began as the Belgian Blue, which originated in central and upper Belgium when the local red-pied and black-pied cattle were crossed with Durham Shorthorns in the late 1800's. Some Charolais influence during the 19th century is also suggested.

Originally a dual-purpose breed, beef production become the focus following World War II, when Europe's economy demanded increased beef quality and quantity. During the 1950's the Belgian cattle underwent a selective genetic breeding and development program conducted by Professor Hanset at the AI Center in the Province of Liege. This program created their unusually heavy muscling.

The first Belgian Blues were imported to the United States in 1978. Today, American Blue Cattle are their own fullblood registered breed, independent from their Belgian relatives after years of breeding for easier calving, lower birth weights and improved structural soundness.

Characteristics

American Blue Cattle are large framed with exceptional muscling due to an inactive myostatin gene, and therefore high-yielding carcass. They are known for their quiet and docile temperament, early maturity, short gestation, hardy calves, adaptability, excellent feed conversion and tender lean meat.

Mature fullblood bulls can average up to 2000 lbs. Mature fullblood cows average 1500 lbs. Average fullblood birth weight is 85-95 lbs. and 75 lbs. for crossbred.

There are a few color combinations for fullbloods: White, Blue Roan, Black, Black/white and we are seeing some Red Roan popping up now.

Why American Blues?

- Extraordinary muscle development
- Great tenderness of meat due to the thinness of muscle fiber
- Higher % of quality cuts
- Docile temperament
- Short gestation length
- High yielding carcass at 68-75%
- Compliments crossbreeding programs.
- Great terminal sire breed

Feeding the Blues

Blues and Blue Crosses are typically like any other breed, except for muscle growth. Blues do not need a lot of particular care and feeding over other breeds. Although higher muscled cattle do need a good mineral supplement and selenium may be an important mineral. If you are looking for the higher muscle development, adequate protein is also important.

Efficiency of Feeding Blues

American Blue animals are extremely lean, characterized by a deviant muscle fiber type compared to non- American Blue Cattle. This fiber type can result in lower maintenance energy requirements. Maintenance requirements of the American Blue Cattle were investigated based on a zero-body weight gain. This showed that maintenance energy requirements of the American Blue Beef cows were close to the mean requirements of other beef genotypes.

Among the 18 breeds of cattle tested for this study, the blues were shown to be the most profitable. They used twenty-two factors to test performance including feed efficiency, feed cost, purchase price and average daily gain. A higher efficiency means the reduction of feed costs for livestock production which will therefore result in higher profitability and is what the ultimate cattleman is looking for.

Nutritional Comparisons

Meat Type	Calories	Total Fat	Cholesterol	Protein
American Blue *1/2 BB x 1/2 Hereford*	96.76%	22MG	21.80%	
Fish	1659.00%	50MG	18.80%	
Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast	1304.10%	41MG	22.90%	
Traditional American Beef	188	25-35%	76MG	24 GM
Lite American Beef	133 (45% fat)	15.25%	76MG	25 GM