

TCFA

Junior Fed Beef
Challenge



2025
Official
Rule Book

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Objective: *The primary purpose of this program is to encourage young people to gain practical experience in feeding commercial beef cattle. This program will stress the importance of proper animal husbandry and financial management.*

RULE 1: Young people who are regularly enrolled in public or private elementary or secondary schools or who are being home schooled in Texas, Oklahoma or New Mexico, including high school seniors, are eligible to compete in this contest. Also eligible are young people who are directly involved in ranching or feeding cattle in Texas, Oklahoma or New Mexico. Contestants must be certified by a County Extension Agent (CEA), Agriculture Science Teacher (AST) or non-relation feedyard manager.

RULE 2: Contestants will be split into two divisions: **Senior and Junior**. All ninth graders and above at time steers are validated will be in the Senior Division and all eighth graders and below will be in the Junior Division. Contestants must be nine (9) years of age or enrolled in the 3rd grade by September 1, 2024. Second year contestants in eighth grade and below may elect to enroll in the Senior Division. However, if they choose to be in the Senior Division, they cannot move back to the Junior Division for the remainder of their eligibility.

RULE 3: Only steers are eligible to be entered in this competition. Contestants must own and validate their steers no later than March 21. **Contest steers must be fed and cared for as a separate pen from the date of validation. A contest pen of steers cannot be comingled with other non-contest cattle.**

- **As of 2022, multiple contest cattle pens can be fed together.**

RULE 4: Contestants or the adult leader must contact TCFA to order contest ear tags. **Allow a minimum of one week lead time before validation deadline.**

RULE 5: Contestants can only enter one pen of steers or a partnership pen in this competition. A partnership pen will be a maximum of three young people partnering on a pen of three steers. Four steers may be validated with only three to be used for the carcass contest, in this case the steer with the lowest TCFA carcass points will be considered the alternate, and not used for contest purposes.

RULE 6: Replacement steers will not be accepted after validation. Any violation of this rule will result in disqualification. If a steer dies, please contact the TCFA office within 72 hours. Records will be required on each steer validated. Steers may be validated any time between February 28 and March 21. The last acceptable validation date is March 21. Official entries must be submitted with validation data and a \$35.00 per person entry fee by April 7.

RULE 7: Validation consists of all steers being identified by placing an EID in LEFT ear and hanging ear tag in the RIGHT ear and photographed (head and tag showing and readable). All steers must be weighed at time of validation and a signed scale ticket must be provided. If steers are initially weighed individually, then closeout weights must be individual. If steers are initially weighed as a group, then closeout weights must be as a group. The official on feed weight will be the scale ticket weight less a 3% "pencil shrink". All validation information must be signed by the CEA, AST or non-relation feedyard manager. Do not apply a "pencil shrink" to any commission or shipping charges if they are incurred.

RULE 8: Entry weights and date must be on certified livestock scales. The scale ticket must be signed by the weighmaster. Cattle must either be weighed individually or as a group, but not both ways. **Initial weigh in and closeout weights must be the same ie. individual or as group.** Individual scale tickets must be supplied if you enter individual weights in the record book.

RULE 9: Steers must be weighed individually or as a group for the closeout weight between Tuesday, July 8 and Friday, July 11. Steers weighed at harvest should have a hot carcass weight of 551 lbs. to 999 lbs. to satisfy grid requirements and avoid discounts. Heavy steers may still be used as contest steers and will be given steer points based on carcass merit. Regional plants do not typically accept cattle for processing for the following restrictions:

- a. Cattle that exceed 58 inches in height
- b. Non-ambulatory cattle
- c. Cattle that exceed 1,500 lbs. (Note: It is at the processor's discretion to process cattle in excess of 1,500 lbs.)
- d. Cattle with abscesses, scars, ruptures, uncastrated males, freshly castrated males, or cattle with fresh cuts or unhealed wounds
- e. Cattle with Cysticercosis (measled beef)
- f. Any other defect in the cattle that would result in a downgrade of the carcass

RULE 10: Steers must be polled, dehorned or horn tipped, per standard feedyard practices.

RULE 11: Contestants must have a completed drug certificate ensuring their steers are fed and managed in accordance with Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations regarding animal health products. The drug certificate must be presented when unloading steers at delivery.

RULE 12: Contestants must complete the BQA Beef Processing Plan and submit this sheet with their digital record book.

RULE 13: Contestants will be required to complete an online BQA Certification. Use this website <https://www.bqa.org/certification/online-certification>. Please complete the feedyard certification portion and submit the completed certificate with digital record book.

RULE 14: Notify TCFA immediately if any validated steer loses a contest ear tag. All steers unloaded at Lonestar Stockyards must have the official ear tag in place.

RULE 15: Maximum number of pen entries will be determined by TCFA officials.

RULE 16: Contestants must complete all phases of the contest to receive scholarships, prizes and premium monies.

RULE 17: Steers will be sold to the packer on the prevailing market grid. Cattle payments will be made using the packer provided information. Independent party data collection on carcass information will have differences from the plant data.

RULE 18: Contest steer points will be calculated using the plant provided hot carcass weights. Quality and yield grade will be provided by an independent third-party information source. TCFA carcass points will be calculated based on independent third-party information; payment will be made in accordance with plant data.

Significant change in Cattle Quality Contest:

- Base price derived from average dressed steer price reported by USDA (5 Area Weekly Accumulated Weighted Average Cattle Price: LM_CT100)
- Grid values assessed using maximum values (+ for premiums; - for discounts) reported by USDA (National Weekly Direct Slaughter Cattle – Premiums and Discounts; LM_CT155)
 - Total dollars returned per animal (50% of points)
 - \$/cwt returned per animal (50% of points)
 - **Exception to LM_CT155 Heavy weights discounts will start at 1050 lbs.**

RULE 19: Decisions made by the TCFA Junior Fed Beef Challenge Rules Committee will be final.

Important Dates

FEBRUARY 28: Earliest date steers can be validated.

MARCH 21: Last date steers can be purchased and validated.

APRIL 7: Entry form, validation information and entry fee must be received by TCFA.

JULY 8-11: Final steer closeout weights.

JULY 11: Steers delivery location:
Lonestar Stockyards, Adkisson Rd., Wildorado, TX
check in from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

JULY 16: Digital record book due and close out emailed to membership@tcfa.org by 5:00 p.m.

JULY 25: Contest Day at West Texas A&M University.

*Junior/Senior participants check in from 7:30 to 7:50 a.m.
Contest begins at 8:00 a.m.*

Winners will be announced that afternoon following the contest.

Entry Forms

Entry forms can be obtained from TCFA by calling (806) 358-3681 or by emailing membership@tcfa.org

Entry forms are also available for printing on the TCFA web site at <https://www.tcfa.org/educational-programs.html>

Event Explanations

Oral Interviews

All **Senior** division contestants will be judged in an oral interview. Three industry leaders will make up a panel of judges that will conduct the interviews. Questions may cover any aspect of the cattle feeding and beef industry. If necessary, the top five contestants may be called back for a second interview.

Presentations

All **Junior** division contestants will be required to give a 3–5 minute oral presentation to a panel of three judges. The topic of the presentations may cover any aspect of the cattle feeding and beef industry. Junior division participants will have visual points as part of the presentation.

Written Exam

All contestants will take a written exam. The Junior and Senior divisions will have a different exam. Material covered on the written test may include any information that you have been sent, including information from the *Cattle Feeders Resource Guide*, Evaluation of Slaughter Cattle, TAMU Marketing Articles and the weekly TCFA *Newsletter*.

There will be calculations on the exam. **Junior** participants will be asked to do very basic calculations including Shrink, Average Daily Gain, Dressing Percentage and Basic Break Evens. **Senior** participants will be asked to do more advanced calculations concerning Dressing Percentage, Live Weight Price vs. In The Meat Price, Live Weight Pricing vs. Grid Pricing, Cost of Gain, Average Daily Gain, and Break Evens.

All information for the exams will be taken from materials that participants have received through the feeding process or information covered within the record book.

Feed Sampling and 100% Dry Matter Feed Conversion

1. The exhibitor will receive six (6) sample bags. Six (6) invoices are included in the record book for the purpose of sampling fees. If students only use three (3) samples, they will only record three (3) of the invoices. This should be enough to take three monthly samples of the ration during the feeding period. Use one bag for the grain part of the ration and one bag for the hay part of the sample (if feeding hay separately, not mixed in the ration). Label each bag as to the contents, i.e., alfalfa hay, wheat straw, whole corn with protein supplement, along with participant name etc. If hay is used during the feeding period, then a sample of the hay must be sent every month that it is fed separately. If you feed total mixed rations with the roughage included, you only need to send one sample per month.
2. Each sample will be mailed, preferably via UPS, to Servi-Tech Laboratories in Amarillo, Texas for evaluation of the sample. Use the mailing labels sent to you to address the UPS package. The cost of the analysis will be deducted from the cattle check at the end of the contest for each exhibitor's steers. The cost of sampling will be \$10.00 per sample per month and will be withheld from the cattle checks. All participants in a partnership pen must account for feed samples. Samples are to be collected and received at Servi-Tech by April 25, May 23 and June 27. The results will be mailed to the exhibitor each month as soon as they are received in the TCFA office. Samples are to be taken each month for **April, May and June.** Each exhibitor is to include the cost of mailing and the sampling in their record of expenses.

Feed Sampling Technique:

1. Take the sampling bag that is provided and sample three places in the ration. First from the top of the ration, second from the middle of the ration and third from the bottom of the ration. Do this in three places within the bunk, doing it each time from the top, middle and bottom. This should give a good sample of the ration. Do the sampling the same way each month. When sampling hay, take three samples from the hay, dividing the samples from three different places within the hay.

Your name or partnership name must be written on the sample bag.

2. Sample must be received at Servi-Tech by April 25, May 23 and June 27.

**Servi-Tech Laboratories
6921 S. Bell
Amarillo, TX 79109**

How to read sampling data:

When the sampling sheet is received, the exhibitor will determine the dry matter of the sample by taking the moisture results from the sample sheet and subtracting that from 100. The answer is the dry matter of that sample. Do this for both samples if feeding extra hay on a monthly basis.

For Example: 100 - 19.16% moisture = 80.84% dry matter, 1800 lbs. of ration fed in May as fed, times 80.84% equals 1455 lbs. ($1800 \times 0.8084 = 1455$ lbs.) on a 100% dry matter basis for May.

Do the same calculation for the hay sample. When pounds of dry feed are determined for both feed ingredients for that month, add them together and divide that number by the total pounds of each feed ingredient, on an as fed basis. The resulting answer is the dry matter of that total ration for that month.

For Example:

1800 lbs. grain and protein x 80.84% =	1455 lbs. dry matter
<u>+450</u> lbs. wheat hay x 0.9000% =	<u>+405</u> lbs. dry matter
2250 lbs. total as fed	1860 lbs. total 100% dry

$1860 \text{ lbs. dry} / 2250 \text{ lbs. as fed} = 0.8267 \times 100 = 82.67\%$ dry matter of ration for that month.

At the end of the feeding project, total the three dry matter percentages from the months of April, May and June. Divide that number by three to determine the Average Dry Matter of your rations for the Summary of Expenses.

For Example:

April	82.67%
May	81.50%
June	80.25%
	<u>244.39</u>

$244.39 / 3 = 81.47\%$ Average Dry Matter of the Ration.

Record Book Explanations:

- A. Digital online record book – Username and password will be provided upon completion of application submittal to TCFA. All supporting documents will be uploaded into the digital record book.
- B. The starting weight will be the validated “on-feed” weight and must be supported by a serially numbered scale ticket for each steer properly completed and initialed by the weighmaster which evidences the weigh date, owner’s name, the steer’s certified weight, steer’s description and steer’s ear tag number. There will be a 3% “pencil shrink” on the incoming weight and 4% “pencil shrink” on the out weight. Do not apply a shrink to freight or commission if freight or commission is incurred at purchase.
- C. The “Finished Weighed Date” and the “Gross Finished Weight of Steers” must be supported by a serially numbered scale ticket for each steer or group of steers properly completed and initialed by the weighmaster which evidences the weigh date, owner’s name, steer’s certified weight, steer’s description and steer’s TCFA ear tag number.

Overall

ALL supporting documents should be uploaded into the online digital record book.

Participants should print the close out section of online record book and bring on day of contest. ALL DIGITAL RECORD BOOKS WILL BE GRADED FOR COMPLETENESS AND ACCURACY BY THE TCFA ALLIED INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE.

- Record Keeping points
 - Digital Record Book 20 pts.
 - Steer Photos 10 pts.
 - Feed Samples 30 pts. (10 pts. each x 3)
 - Weight Tickets 20 pts. (10 pts. start wgt./ 10 pts. end wgt.)
 - Online BQA Certification 10 pts.
 - Drug Certificate 10 pts.

** Rounding – Rounding calculations will apply for the **written exam**. If the answer asked for is shown in four places, carry the calculations out to five places and round back to four. If the decimal is 5 or greater, then round up. If the decimal is 4 or below, round down. This is shown in the examples below.

Mathematical Expression	Calculated Amount	Properly Shown On Summary of Expenses
Cost / lb	\$.00495 \$.00494	\$.0050 / lb \$.0049 / lb
Cost / cwt	\$84.495 \$84.494	\$84.50 / cwt \$84.49 / cwt
3 or 4% Shrinkage	97.5 97.4	98 lbs 97 lbs
Average gain per head	375.5 375.4	376 lbs 375 lbs
Average daily gain per head	1.945 1.944	1.95 lbs/hd/day 1.94 lbs/hd/day

Feed Conversion	9.065 9.64	9.07/1 or 9.07:1 9.06/1 or 9.06:1
Average cost per head per day	\$1.385 \$1.384	\$1.39/hd/day \$1.38/hd/day

INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL for written exam on contest day. Participants will be expected to complete the close out summary. Participants should be familiar with this mathematical process. See example below:

CLOSE OUT

ON FEED DATE:	03/25/2018
FINISHED WEIGH DATE:	07/10/2018
DAYS ON FEED: (FINISHED WEIGH DATE - FIRST DAY OF FEED)	107
TOTAL HEAD DAYS:	428
1. FINISHED WEIGHT OF STEERS	
A. GROSS FINISHED WEIGHT OF STEERS	5239 LBS
B. LESS 4% SHRINKAGE	210 LBS
C. NET FINISHED WEIGHT OF STEERS	5029 LBS
2. TOTAL STARTING WEIGHT OF STEERS (NET WEIGHT)	3165 LBS
3. TOTAL GAIN (1C - 2)	1864 LBS
4. AVERAGE GAIN PER HEAD (3 DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF HEAD SOLD)	466 LBS/HD
5. AVERAGE DAILY GAIN PER HEAD (4 DIVIDED BY TOTAL DAYS ON FEED)	4.36 LBS/HD/DAY
6. TOTAL COST OF FINISHED STEERS (TOTAL OF INITIAL COST, EXPENSES, FEED, PROCESSING, AND INTEREST)	\$ 5665.89
7. TOTAL INITIAL COST OF STEERS	\$ 4212.615
8. TOTAL COST OF FEEDING STEERS (TOTAL PROCESSING, EXPENSES, FEED AND INTEREST)	\$ 1453.27
9. COST PER POUND OF GAIN (8 DIVIDED BY 3)	\$ 0.78
10. COST PER POUND OF FINISHED STEER (6 DIVIDED BY 1C)	\$ 1.13
11. FEED CONVERSION	
A. TOTAL LBS OF RATION FED (AS-FED BASIS)	11430 LBS
B. WEIGHTED DRY MATTER PERCENT	80.83%
C. TOTAL LBS OF RATION ON A DRY MATTER BASIS	9238.869 LBS
D. FEED CONVERSION ON AN AS-FED BASIS (11A DIVIDED BY 3)	6.13
E. FEED CONVERSION ON A DRY MATTER BASIS (11C DIVIDED BY 3)	4.96
12. AVERAGE COST PER HEAD PER DAY (8 DIVIDED BY NUMBER OF HEAD DAYS)	\$ 3.4

The TCFA Junior Fed Beef Challenge is conducted by the TCFA Allied Industries Committee. All contest decisions made by the committee are final.