

## KEEPING BEEF RECORDS ON THE COMPUTER

Robert S. Sand  
Department of Animal Science  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, Florida

CowBase is a computer-based beef herd record system for recording production data and producing data summaries to assist in making management decisions. CowBase is designed to be easy to use by inexperienced computer operators and yet be a powerful management tool. Hardware requirements are IBM PC, AT or compatible with a minimum 384 K memory (preferably 640 K) and two floppy disc drives.

CowBase consists of two groups of programs, one dealing with cow/calf records and the other with herd inventory records. The programs are selected from a series of menus. Since information needs are different for each ranch, the program is designed so that information collected can be varied in relation to its anticipated use in an appropriate report. Thus, there is a core of basic data such as animal identification, birth date, dam identification and a weaning weight that is required with plenty of opportunity to record and utilize additional data. The Wean summary is a routine for combining production and

inventory data to produce a summary of the herds production for the year (Figure 1).

Data entry has been made as easy as possible through integration of programs so that data entries are made only one time. Where previous information is already recorded, the cursor can be set to appear only where new data need be entered. When there is data of a repetitive nature, such as wean date, there is an automatic entry feature that can be utilized. CowBase can be used in a laptop computer to quickly and easily record weights and other data as it is obtained while the cattle are being worked. As soon as the work is completed reports can be generated, evaluated and selections made before the cattle leave the pens.

A number of utility programs are included to facilitate adaptation of the system to fit any management information requirements. Some examples are custom sorting of various listings, choice of adjustment methods for age of dam and sex of calf, weaning weight adjusted to a standard age other than 205 days, reports sorted or summarized by user-specified codes.

Lifetime sire and dam reports which list and summarize lifetime progeny data are available by sending a disc with the years wean data to the FBCIA. The completed lifetime summaries will be returned both on disc and on paper.

**Figure 1. SAMPLE OUTPUT FROM THE COWBASE PROGRAM:**

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SAMPLE RANCH
Wean Summary
1986

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Number of Females in Herd:	176	Number of Calves Weaned:	208
Number of Cows Exposed		Average Weaning Age:	212 Days
To Breeding in 1985:	263	Average Weaning Weight:	525 lbs
Number of Cows Culled:	99	Average 205 Day Weight:	561 lbs
Number of Cows Died:	5	Average ADG:	2.13 lbs
Average Cow Age:	4.2 Years	% Calves weaned of	
Length of Calving Season:	123 Days	Females currently in herd:	118.2 %
		*Cows exposed in 1985:	79.1 %
Total Pounds Weaned:	109278 lbs		
*Pounds Calf Weaned Per			
Cow exposed in 1985:	415.5 lbs		

\*These are the most important figures used to determine herd productivity