

2016-2017 NCTA Heifer Link Donated Heifer Selection Criteria

The overall purpose of the Heifer Link program is to help NCTA students enrolled in livestock management, the 100 Beef Cow Ownership Advantage Program or diversified agriculture to have ownership of one bred heifer upon graduation. The students will be selected through an application/interview process.

A donor/producer of an animal will have a pen of 3 to 5 heifers from which the Heifer Link Committee can evaluate and select one breeding heifer. The committee may ask to tour facilities, look at the cow herd, heifer and steer calves, as well as bulls.

The following factors will be considered when selecting live heifers for the Heifer Link program:

- Early growth (weaning and yearling weight)
 - Weaning weight – minimum of 450 lbs – this weight correlates to a 1200 lb. cow
- Early puberty
- Fertility
 - Herd goal – 65 to 75% first service conception with 90 to 95% pregnant after 60 days of breeding
- Calving ease
- Milking ability
- Physical soundness
 - Skeletal structure
 - Eye pigmentation- Most pigmentation not a concern
 - Mammary system- No physical deformities- Hard to tell udder until bagging up and dropping milk
- Capacity
 - Enough rib and middle to carry offspring
- Disposition
 - Flighty not acceptable
 - Exit velocity of 1 to 2
- Fleshing ability
 - What feed ration have the heifers been on?
 - Avoid heifers that are too lean or hard doing
 - Avoid heifers that are overly fat
 - Minimum condition score should be a 5-7 (on a 1-9 scale)
 - See attached sheet for specifications on condition scores
- Muscling
 - Avoid heifers that are narrow, flat and light muscled
 - Avoid extremely thick, coarse and highly defined heifers

- Frame size
 - Select heifers that are in the 4 to 7 frame score range
- Vaccination protocol
 - Need to have Brucellosis(BANGS)
 - At minimum one round of 7- or 8-way

NCTA biosecurity and health procedures for incoming heifers:

- Isolation for 30 to 60 days
- Test for BVD, PI with a BVD ELISA test, Johne's Disease and Lepto
- New heifers, at arrival, should be vaccinated for IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV (MLV), 5-way Lepto, Vibrio and 7-way Blackleg
- Deworm on arrival

Selection Committee:

Doug Smith, PhD

Brian Veldheizen, D.V.M.

Producer- Bill Rishel-John Scharf or other Heifer Link advisor/producer

To obtain more information or an application form, contact one of the numbers below:

- Dr. Doug Smith, NCTA animal science division chair, 308-367-5286, or e-mail doug.smith@unl.edu
- NCTA Animal Science/Agricultural Education Division, 308-367-5293