

ABSTRACT

EVALUATION OF INTACT MALES AND STEERS FOR GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND MEAT QUALITY

The objective of this study was to examine the effects of using bulls for beef production as compared to steers. Feed efficiency, carcass characteristics, and sensory evaluations were conducted on 11 bulls and 8 steers processed at approximately 14 months of age. *Longissimus* muscle samples were obtained for Warner-Bratzler shear force, cooking loss, percentage intramuscular fat, and sensory evaluations (tenderness, juiciness, flavor, and overall acceptability) at 12 days postmortem. Bulls produced a leaner ($P > .05$) carcass, but a lower ($P > .05$) quality carcass than that of steers. Bulls had a lower ($P < .05$) percentage of intramuscular fat when compared to steers. Shear force values were similar between bulls and steers, therefore providing no objective difference in tenderness. Sensory evaluations were similar in samples from bulls and steers, indicating that bulls and steers produced meat of similar textural and sensory characteristics.

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