1985

Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center: Overview

ROMAN L. HRUSKA U.S. MEAT ANIMAL RESEARCH CENTER[1]

1. **Overview of Center:** The U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) was authorized by Congress on June 16, 1964, thereby creating a single facility that provides an unusual opportunity for making major contributions to the solution of problems facing the U.S. livestock industry. Development of the 35,000-acre facility started in the spring of 1966 and is continuing at the present time. Phase I construction, consisting of an office-laboratory building for intensive investigations, was completed in January 1971. These facilities provide a physical plant for 42 scientists and about 200 support personnel. Phase II construction, consisting of the Meats Research Laboratory and Agricultural Engineering Building, was completed in October 1977 and provides a physical plant for 25 scientists and about 60 support personnel. Phase III construction will provide facilities for a comprehensive research program of producing, harvesting, handling, storing, and using forages in livestock production systems. Approximately 35 additional scientists and 65 support personnel will be required for this phase. Currently, one-third of the scientific staffing is completed.

Approximately 50 percent of the research program is devoted to beef cattle, 30 percent to swine, and 20 percent to sheep. Current research program objectives require breeding-age female populations of approximately 7,000 cattle (17 breeds), 4,000 sheep (8 breeds), and 600 swine litters (8 breeds) per year.

The research program at the Center is organized on a multidisciplinary basis and is directed toward providing new technology for the U.S. livestock industry by extending investigations into new areas not now being adequately studied. The research program complements research conducted elsewhere by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is cooperative with the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station and other land grant university agricultural experiment stations throughout the country.

On October 10, 1978, the President signed into law a bill renaming the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center. The purpose of the bill was to honor former Nebraska Senator Roman L. Hruska for "his efforts in the establishment of a centralized Federal facility for the research, development, and study of meat animal production in the United States."

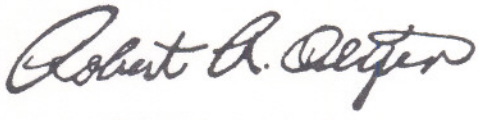
[1]Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the University of Nebraska, and other cooperating land grant universities.

2. Overview on the Beef Cattle Research Program: MARC's beef cattle research program places the highest priority on developing technology capable of having an immediate and major impact on the beef cattle industry. Although the program is largely oriented towards fundamental research, emphasis is placed on the generation of technology that can be practically implemented by small farmers and commercial beef cattle producers alike within a relatively short time frame. Because of the uniqueness of the Center's resources, research is being conducted on a "conception to consumption" basis with beef cattle.

Currently, we have 20 scientist "equivalents" conducting research in the beef cattle program at MARC. They are working in 11 primary research thrust areas. In addition, they are coworkers on five major projects away from MARC. Also, MARC has an active postdoctoral and visiting scientist program, which supports the beef cattle research program.

This report represents a cross section of our beef cattle research program at the present time. Since some of the projects from which results are reported are still in progress, the preliminary nature of some of the results must be recognized. However, it is our opinion that information useful to the industry should be provided at the earliest possible time. Progress reports of this nature will be released periodically to make current results available to the industry. For the reader's convenience, the table of contents of this report is organized by disciplinary unit which is taking the lead in each specific problem area. The articles within the body of the report are arranged as they most closely relate in subject matter.

3. Appreciation: I want to express my appreciation to Margie McAlhany, MARC Information Officer, and Gordon Hays, Cattle Operations Manager, for serving as coeditors of this report, I also want to thank Linda Kelly for proofreading the report and Linda Doele for preparation of the final copy. These individuals have contributed many hours to the completion of this report.



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