

Measuring Carcase Characteristics on the Hoof

Can we use technology to assist in the identification of finishing cattle that have reached their optimal level of finish?

The Challenge

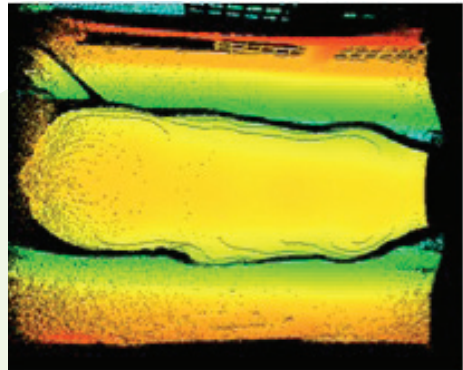
In 2014 only 52% of UK beef carcasses met the target fat and confirmation classes. Both over and under specification results in a loss of value to the supply chain (at producer and processor levels).

The Research

Working with industry, a patented automatic weighing and monitoring system has been developed.

The automatic weighing system has been positioned at a water or feed/mineral point in the pen of finishing cattle for voluntary and regular weight recording. The weighing platform structure incorporates 3D camera based imaging technology.

This prototype is being trialled at the SRUC Beef Research Centre. Trials are also running at commercial finishing units and two large abattoirs.



Example image taken by a 3D camera

The Results

The relationship between live animal measurements and carcass classification are currently being assessed for confirmation, fat class and saleable meat yield etc.

The Impact

The BeefMonitor project has the potential to identify when finishing cattle have reached their optimal condition for sale.

The technology will result in potential production cost savings of over £35 per animal over an average finishing period.

It also captures data which can help inform decision making on diet and health. It may help identify ill-health before identifiable by the stockman's eye.

Project Detail

Project start date: 07/2014, finish date: 06/2017.

Email: Shane.Troy@sruc.ac.uk

SRUC Beef and Sheep Centre, Research Division: Dave Ross, Shane Troy, Carol-Anne Duthie, Jimmy Hyslop.

Collaborating with: Innovent Technology, Harbro, Ritchie Implements, Scotbeef and Morrisons. This project has been co-funded by the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK.

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Further Information

For more information on farm business management, beef systems, nutrition and breeding contact your SAC Consulting local office or beef and sheep specialist at **beefandsheep@sac.co.uk**