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20

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Effect of Mud on the Market Value of Slaughter Cattle

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How much shrink to allow for mud clinging to the hair-coat is a perennial problem to buyers and sellers of slaughter cattle. The problem is greatest during winter and spring when precipitation is heaviest. During wet periods, cattle can become quite muddy, especially during alternate freezing and thawing weather. Mud accumulates during periods of thaw and freezes during cold snaps. Then mud balls accumulate, especially on the animal's sides, underline, and tail. Such accumulations can be extensive.

Cattle marketed carrying quantities of mud create controversies between buyers and sellers regarding additional shrink or price adjustments.

We collected data related to the question from 167 animals at the Theis Packing Company and Heizer By-Products Company, both of Great Bend, Kansas, during the spring and fall of 1973. All animals were individually weighed, identified by number, and photographed. Their hides were recovered after slaughter, individually weighed, cleaned thoroughly, dried, and

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weighed again to determine weight of mud removed. Each animal was visually appraised for muddiness and given one of four scores:

Muddiness ratings	Score
Clean	1
Slightly muddy	2
Muddy	3
Very muddy	4

Figures 1 through 4 are photographs of animals typical of each group. Table 1 gives mean weight of mud found on animals in each group, its percentage of the animal's live weight, and value of the mud at \$45 per cwt.

Table 1.—Weight of mud, its percentage of animal's live weight, and its value of muddiness groups

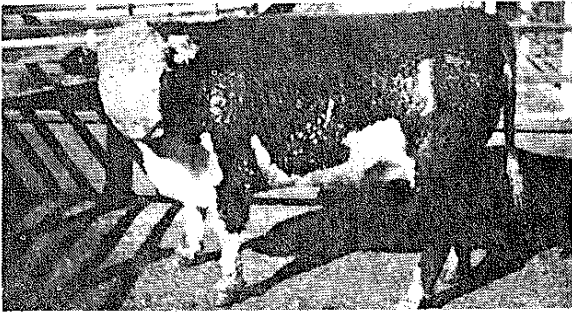
Muddiness score	Weight of mud lb.	(kg)	% shrink of live weight	Cost at \$45/cwt
1	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$ 0.00
2	5.68	2.58	0.56	2.56
3	12.82	5.83	1.27	5.77
4	23.21	10.55	2.31	10.44

The information should provide a guide for arriving at a fair additional shrinkage value for excess mud. When necessary to use it, the value would be added to the customary shrinkage for the marketing area.

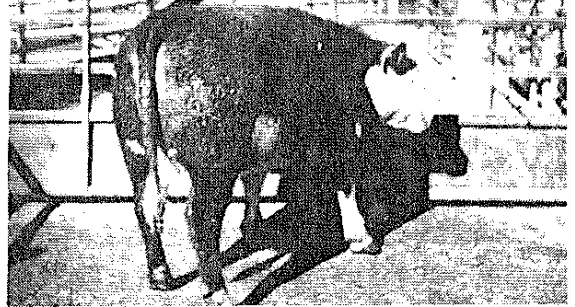
Mud on slaughter cattle is a factor only during prolonged wet periods. When it is a problem, buyers and sellers may want to refer to this publication to arrive at fair shrinkage agreements.

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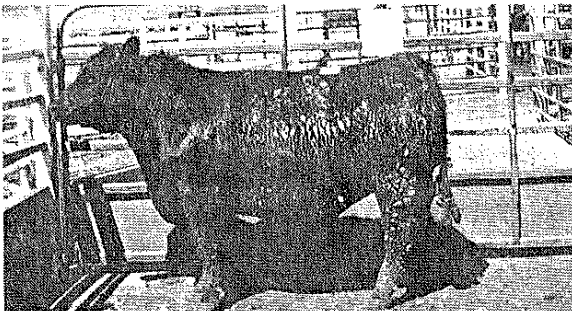
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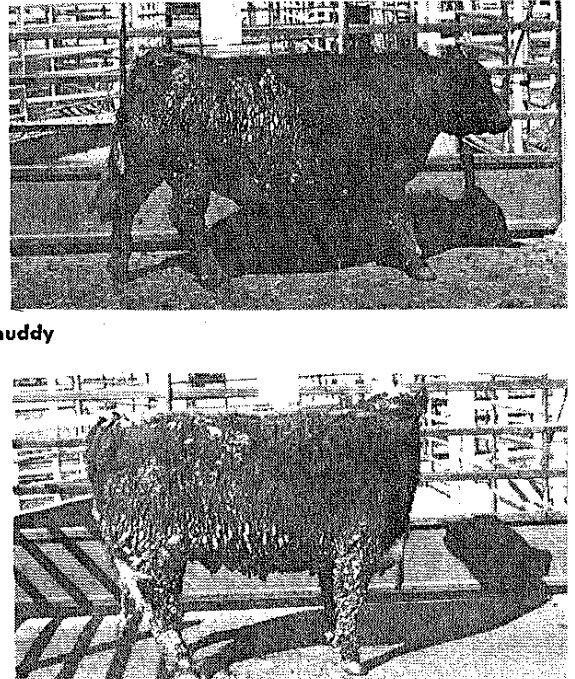
**Figure 1.—Clean
0.0 lb. Mud**



**Figure 2.—Slightly muddy
5.7 lb. Mud**



**Figure 3.—Muddy
12.8 lb. Mud**



**Figure 4.—Very muddy
23.2 lb. Mud**

