

## **THE EFFECT OF SLAUGHTER VALUE OF YOUNG CROSSBRED BEEF BULLS**

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In many countries, beef production is based on dairy cattle herds. Meat from dairy cattle is less valuable and cheaper than meat from beef cattle, and it is mostly used as raw material for further processing, which is why beef producers relying on dairy herds cannot compete successfully in international market (Seredyn 2006). In order to increase beef production and improve meat quality, dairy cows and heifers of lower reproductive potential are crossbred with beef bulls. The produced offspring are characterized by higher fattening performance and higher slaughter quality (Nogalski, Kijak 2001; Wolfova et al. 2007). Carcass composition depends on many factors: intensity of the fattening, age and weight at slaughter. Effect of age on carcass slaughter value studied Kuchida et al. (1995), Opatpatanakit et al. (2007).

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between age of slaughter and slaughter value of animals' thus determine an optimum date of slaughter.

The experimental material comprised 168 young bulls divided into groups: I- < 18; II- 18,1 – 21,0; III- 21,1 – 24,0; IV- 24,1 – 27,0; V- > 27 months of age. Crossbred beef bulls (Holstein-Friesian cows crossed with bulls of the following breeds: Limousine, Hereford or Simmental) were sent to the slaughterhouse between 4 January 2011 and 30 March 2011 and were slaughtered in accordance with industrial standards. After slaughter, carcasses' conformation and fatness were graded according to the EUROP system. Carcass dressing percentage and percentage content of primal cuts were also determined.

Age at which the bulls were slaughtered differed significantly with respect to muscling and fatness. Most bulls slaughtered at an average age of 15 months had class U carcasses, compared with other age groups. The carcasses of these bulls in the majority were classified to fat class 1. Significant ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) differences were found in respect to carcass dressing percentage between bulls slaughtered up to 18 months of age and bulls slaughtered after 27 months of age.

Carcasses of bulls slaughtered at an average age of 15 months had the best conformation class and carcass fatness, highest carcass dressing percentage, best rates of slaughter value.