

ABSTRACTS
*** Author Presenting Paper**

122 Behavioral characteristics affecting performance of grazing cattle. W.E. Pinchak*¹, ¹*Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.*

The intent of this discussion is to provide a contemporary synopsis of the relationships between behavioral patterns and cattle performance from grazed ecosystems, within the context of a changing beef industry. Nowhere are the forces of change in our industry more prevalent than at the cow-calf producer and stocker operator level. Selection for desirable behavioral attributes may be as profitable as selection for a single gene trait. Foraging behavior is the animal's response to a complex of individual sensory and nutrient inputs, as modified by experience and cohort behavior in the herd. Animal performance, within genetic constraints, then is the result of an individual or herds behavioral ability to adapt to a grazing environment and management. Increased emphasis in the industry is placed on individual animal performance and value as the means to improve product consistency. These changes necessitate we evaluate the behavior of cattle populations to identify those individuals that exhibit behaviors that improve product consistency and farm gate profitability. These potential outcomes will be discussed in terms of scaling behavior performance relationships from the individual to herd levels and back again. Specifically, behavioral relationships to thermal environment, grazing management, supplementation, herd management practices and landscape attributes will be explored in relation to efficiency of production and product value.

Key Words: Behavioral Scaling, Supplementation, Efficiency of Production