

**Cattle Business in Mississippi – May 2019**  
**“Stocker Cents” article**

## **Taking advantage of a free lunch**

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For the vast majority of stocker and cow/calf producers, more weight to sell equals more dollars in your pocket. Producers should always take into consideration though how much that added weight cost to produce, and knowing your cost of gain is vital. This can be a big difference between profit or loss. However, there is one way that cattle producers can get a free lunch when it comes to added weight, hybrid vigor.

Hybrid Vigor is the advantage in performance in crossbred offspring over their straightbred parents. This results from the crossing of two breeds that are genetically different. An example taken from Publication 2755 Crossbreeding systems for Beef Cattle: For example, Breed A averages 610 pounds at weaning, and Breed B averages 590 pounds at weaning. When crossed, the A × B calves average 625 pounds at weaning. The hybrid vigor from this mating can be calculated with the following equation:

$$\text{Hybrid Vigor} = \frac{(\text{Crossbred performance average} - \text{straightbred performance average})}{\text{Straightbred performance average}}$$

If we plug in the numbers from the example:  $\frac{(625-600)}{600} = 4\%$

For more information about beef cattle production, contact an office of the Mississippi State University Extension Service.