

# Angus Breeders Begin Sire Evaluation Tests

A new program of genetic evaluation chart has been started by the American Angus Association. Under the program, Angus bulls will be evaluated and ranked nationwide on the performance of their offspring. According to Lloyd D. Miller, the association's executive secretary, the new and somewhat controversial program is called the National Angus Sire Evaluation.

To date, some 45 bulls have been tested and ranked nationally on the performance of their calves from weaning through the feedlot and on the rail. More important, another 200 Angus bulls are in various stages of the program. "Some will do exceptionally well, and some will do very badly," Miller said, "but all the results will be published. Their owners are willing to take the risk of having one of their bulls do badly and have it published nationwide, in order to find out more about the cattle they are breeding."

"The purpose of National Angus Sire Evaluation is not to find a super bull," says Miller. "It is to identify a large number of bulls with the genetic power to improve their offspring in specific traits. This will give Angus breeders a choice of sires they can use in well-planned breeding programs. It should take some of the guesswork out of their selections," Miller emphasized.

The listing of 39 bulls, which includes some 25 bulls that have just completed the program, is now available from the American Angus Association. The results show only one bull in the top 10 of all four traits measured - weaning weight, yearling weight, carcass cutability and carcass quality. Several other bulls ranked high on two or three of the four traits tested for. On the bottom of the scale, a few bulls, which breeders considered to be excellent herd bull prospects, fell down in all of the traits tested for and others ranked extremely low in one, two or three traits. Regardless of how a bull does he must be included in the national ranking after completing the test. A breeder has the option, however, of taking the bull out of the national listing after the first time.

The closest thing to a "super bull" on the new listing is an animal that ranked first on weaning weight, second on yearling weight, third on carcass cutability and ninth on carcass grade. But he may not be the best bull for every herd, Association representatives pointed out. For example, if the breeder has good milking cows and a reasonable amount of growth rate in his calves, but needs to improve the cutability and carcass grade of his calves, then he might skip over this outstanding bull in favor of another in the

test that ranked right at the top for carcass cutability and carcass quality.

Records show that the sire which ranked first and second in the two carcass traits should improve the yield grade in his offspring by .76 percent over the average of all bulls tested compared to .46 percent improvement for the more "superior" bull. The second bull's records show that he should increase the quality grade of his offspring by just under one-half of a 1-3 of a USDA quality grade, compared to less than .2 of a 1-3-grade unit for the high ranking bull.

On the other two traits the top "carcass" sire ranked 11th on yearling weight with the capability of adding an average of 7 pounds to the yearling weight of the calves he sires. His only real problem is a 19th position ranking on 205-day weight. In this area he could be expected to cut 1.2 pounds off the average weaning weight of his progeny. So if a breeder is willing to take a smaller increase in yearling weight and a slight reduction in weaning weight, he should be able to improve the carcass yield and quality of his herd. It should be pointed out, however, that there was far less difference between the bulls on carcass traits than on weight gains.

Assuming on the other hand that you are a cattle breeder who needs as much growth rate in your calves as

possible, and are not worried about improving your carcass grade and cutability, then maybe you would be interested in yet another sire from the test. This third bull has an expected progeny difference (EPD) in yearling weight of 31.2 pounds. This means that he should add more than 31 pounds to the average yearling weight of your calves. This was good enough to rank him number one on yearling weight. At today's fat cattle prices, this amounts to a considerable increase in income.

This same bull ranked second in weaning weight with a 12.2 expected progeny difference. This 12.2 EPD means that he should be able to increase weaning weights of his calves by an average of over 12 pounds.

On the minus side, the bull ranked 16th in carcass cutability with the anticipated ability to add only .1 percent increase in yield grade over the average of all bulls tested. The bull's worst showing was in carcass quality. The results from his progeny ranked him 30th over all and his expected progeny difference shows that he can be expected to reduce USDA carcass grade of his offspring by .1 of a 1-3 grade unit.

For a herd that has good bred-in carcass cutability and quality these last two figures would be relatively insignificant, particularly when compared with the major improvement the bull could generate in weight gains.

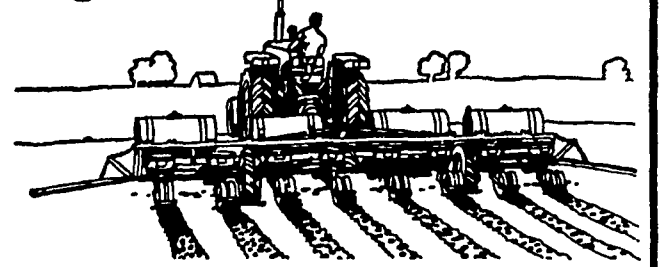
By the same token the National Angus Sire Evaluation program has singled out bulls that are near the bottom in all traits.

In weaning weight, yearling weight, cutability and quality, for example, one bull ranked 30th, 25th, 30th

and 38th, respectively. Another sire ranked 35th, 37th, 25th, and 28th. This was (Continued on Page 63)

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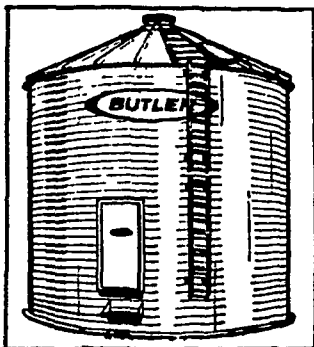
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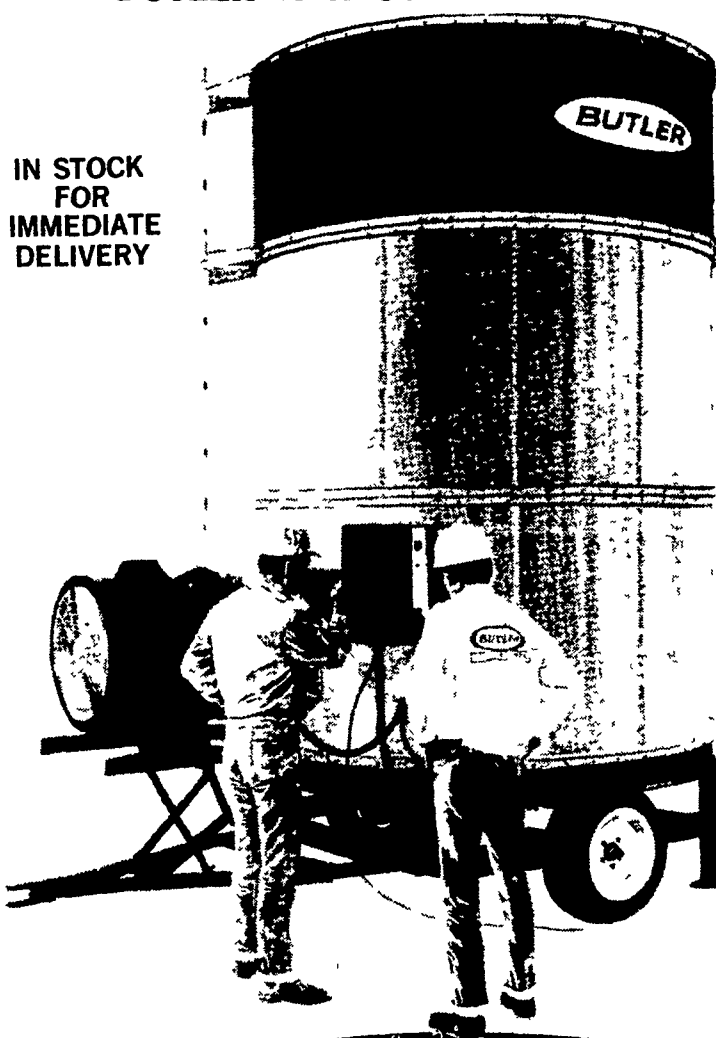
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