

# Angus Symposium Panelists Discuss 'Ideal Beef Animal'

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — What makes an ideal animal, in the show ring or in the pasture? That depends upon what they are being bred for, said members of a special "Judges" panel at the kickoff of the Texas and Southwest Angus Symposium June 27, after the South Central Regional Junior Angus Preview Show at the state fairgrounds in Dallas.

Panel members were Dr. Bob Kropp, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater; John Maurer, Granada Inc., Wheelock, Texas; and Bill Wilson, Premier Inc., Cloverdale, Indiana. Moderator was Dick Beck, Angus Hall of Fame, Smithville, Missouri.

**Importance of Frame Score**  
Size, or more specifically frame score, came in for a good deal of discussion. Kropp pointed out that big animals are needed in order to increase the average frame score size in a herd. Frame score is 40

percent to 50 percent heritable, Kropp explained, and if you breed a frame score 7 or 8 bull to frame 4 or 5 cows, you can expect to increase the average frame score size of the offspring by .2 inch. That means it takes 10 years to increase the average size of your cows by one inch, he said.

A steer can't be over 53 or 54 inches at the hip and still finish at 1,200 pounds and grade high Good or Choice, Kropp said. The important thing about any beef cattle is that they grow fast and efficiently to 12 months of age and produce a lean, USDA Choice grade carcass.

Kropp recommended that breeders also focus on where their product is going. The commercial industry needs to produce cattle that will yield 600 to 800 pound carcasses, he said, so this means that the steers must finish at between 1,000 and 1,250 pounds and

grade at least low Choice. There is also a market for higher quality beef as expressed in the growth of the CAB (Certified Angus Beef) program, Kropp said, plus a demand for a much leaner product.

Once a breeder has exceeded frame score 7 in the cattle he produces, it is time to concentrate on other traits such as growth and structural soundness, Kropp said.

**Structural Soundness**

John Maurer emphasized the need for structural soundness, and said that it is receiving much more attention today. Starting from the ground up Maurer said that cattle need large symmetrical feet that are free of cracks and corns.

The pasterns should have a 40 percent to 50 percent slope and the center of the cannon bone should come out of the center of the knee. Some people want perfectly straight feet, Maurer said, but he

feels that a slight splay presents no problem. The shoulder, he said, should be long and sloping and well tied in to the body. As cattle get big we see more open fronted cattle with rough shoulders, he observed.

In the rear, cattle need adequate angulation of the hock. They should be straight from the hooks to the pins and with adequate width at the pins. Finally Maurer used cattle from the junior show to demonstrate how correct structure contributes to walking soundness.

**Femininity**

Wilson emphasized his desire for femininity and breed character in

Angus cattle. As cattle get bigger the females tend to be less feminine and more course, he said. A bull should look like a football player and a female should look like a pretty girl, Wilson emphasized. He said that feminine cows in his herd seem to produce cattle more like themselves.

"We are going to moderate size," Wilson said. "We will keep the size we have but have to improve on other traits." Wilson said that in the Premier operation they are using AHIR records to identify cows with outstanding maternal traits and calving ease.





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