

# Beef Breeders Carefully Consider EPDs, Calving Ease In Dams

First in a series

Editor's note: Several commercial beef cow/calf operations are recognizing the benefits of using bulls in their breeding programs. In the first of a three-part series, several commercial beef farms share their views of what it takes to run a successful sire herd and how to manage the

operation for increased profitability.

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
DAYTON (Armstrong Co.) — There are rules of thumb for nearly any farm. But the two rules of thumb for selecting herd sires for your commercial cow/calf beef operation are simple:

• Rule One: carefully consider expected progeny differences (EPDs) in bull selection along with visual assessment.

• Rule Two: The mother's milking ability is crucial at calving time.

And while few commercial operations use artificial insemination (AI) in the brood cows, the benefits of using bulls outweigh many of the difficulties in trying to manage an AI program.

Those are the conclusions reached in the experiences of three Pennsylvania herds, one here in Armstrong County and the others in Franklin and Westmoreland counties. And those who purchase bulls may want to take those factors into consideration in light of the upcoming Performance-Tested Bull Sale at the Penn State Ag Arena, University Park, at noon on Friday, March 27 during the Beef Expo.

### Angus herd

Jim and Marcia Larson of Singing Meadow Farms in Dayton, Armstrong County (with full-time help from manager Joe Saxfield) maintain a 300-head cow purebred Angus herd on about 1,400 acres and raise about 300 calves a year. In addition, they manage 100 head of sheep and six head of quarter-horses to work the cattle.

For the Larsons, it is simply much easier and less expensive for the bulls to do all the work (bulls provide better than 70 percent coverage over AI breeding). In the spring, the cows are divided up into lots and are serviced by about 10 bulls. Altogether, the farm raises about 50 replacement calves per year.

For the Wingert Farm in St. Thomas, Franklin County, using bulls was also a matter of how much of a work force was available to ensure insemination. The

farm opted for using bulls simply because during breed season there was "no time to devote to cows," said Eugene Wingert.

The Wingert farm (which also raises about 2,000 hogs out of a 200-sow farrow-to-finish system) raises a total of about 160 cows and

uses a pasture rotation system. The system uses about 40 cows in one area, rotated on a regular schedule. Many of the acres on the farm (800 acres, mostly tillable) are used to raise corn and other feed for the beef and hog operation.

(Turn to Page A32)



Jim and Marcia Larson on their Singing Meadow Farms in Dayton, Armstrong County.



Dr. John Comerford, Penn State beef specialist, right, speaks to Naomi and Mike Costello about the Costello herd.



A dam and her calf at the Larson Farm.



Jere Wingert, peeking over bull, and Eugene Wingert check the condition of one of their four proven herd sires.

## Power Equipment & Hydraulic Systems

### Engines:

Honda G100, 2.2 HP .....	\$215.00
Honda GX110, 3.5 HP .....	\$229.00
Honda GX140, 5.5 HP .....	\$240.00
Honda GX240, 8.0 HP .....	\$395.00
Honda GX340, 11 HP .....	\$465.00
Honda GX340, Electric .....	\$525.00
Honda GX390, 13.0 HP .....	\$525.00
Vanguard 16 HP 2 Cyl.....	\$695.00
Vanguard 9 HP (Extra Special).....	\$360.00
Kohler K5825 23 HP .....	\$1,325.00
Cummins 45 HP .....	\$1,950.00
Lincoln Welder, 200 Amp Belt Drive (Rebuilt).....	\$350.00

UPS Prepaid - PA Customers 6% Sales Tax Unless Exempt

Dealer Prices On Request

We Manufacture A Full Line Of Pressure Washers

Portable and Stationary Hydraulic Systems

100 Motors and Pumps In Stock

5000 Feet of Hydraulic Hose In Stock

Also Carrying A Full Line Of Browning Pulleys, Belts And Bearings In Stock

1 Mile East of Georgetown on Christiana Pike

## Georgetown Hydraulics

343 Christiana Pike, Christiana, PA 17509

Closed Thursday & Sunday

# Supra

POA SUPINA

**Permanent Ground Cover  
for Orchards, Vineyards  
and Christmas Tree Farms.**

**NO Mowing.**  
**NO Moisture Competition.**  
**NO Mud.**

Another  
Quality  
Seed from



Buffalo, NY • (716) 891-8955