

EPDs, Indexing Create Perfect Balance In Bull Selection

Second in a series

Editor's note: Commercial beef cow/calf operations rely heavily on good bull records to ensure the value of their herd. Last week, in the first of the bull buyers series, Lancaster Farming spoke to several farmers about the important traits in selecting herd sires and general herd management. This week, we take another look at expected progeny differences (EPDs) and records useful for those who will attend the 19th Performance-Tested Bull Sale at the Penn State Ag Arena during the Beef Expo on March 27.

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre

Bull Testing Program Under Way

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's official Bull Performance Testing program is well under way.

Fifty-two of the state's most progressive purebred breeders have consigned 73 of their best purebred bulls of various breeds to the testing program at the Meat Animal Evaluation Center.

This year there are 27 Angus, 19 Polled Herefords, 18 Simmentals, 5 Charolais, 2 Chiangus, 2 Limousin and 1 Salers.

Upon completion of the 112-day testing period, the bulls are subjected to evaluation including a comprehensive breeding soundness exam, measurement of fat thickness and loin-eye area, and a health exam which includes blood and TB testing, enabling the bulls to be sold anywhere in the country. The bulls must also meet minimum requirements for structural correctness and breed character. Individual feed efficiencies will be calculated for the bulls.

After all of the indexes are calculated and the evaluations analyzed, approximately the top 75 percent of the bulls are selected to be sold at Pennsylvania's 19th Annual Performance Tested Bull sale scheduled for noon, March 27, 1992, at Penn State's Ag Arena.

The bull sale again is one of the major components of the third Annual Pennsylvania Beef Expo, which is scheduled for March 26-29. The Pennsylvania Polled Hereford Association has their

Co.) — For beef cow/calf operators, it's time to take a long, hard look at your herd.

By inspecting the herd carefully for deficiencies across the board — including birthweights, weaning weights, yearling weights, milk production, and a host of other items — you may be able to come up with the traits that bulls from selected breeds can provide to improve your herd.

And information obtained before attending a bull sale, such as the Performance-Tested Bull Sale on March 27 at the Beef Expo, will help you make a decision on what kinds of bulls to buy.

But what goes into determining the "best" bull? And what records are required to help you in the decision-making process?

Tremendous impact
"Environment or management can have a tremendous impact on the performance of an animal," said Glenn Eberly, manager of the Meat Animal Evaluation Center at University Park.

Purebred beef operations in Pennsylvania can nominate selected bulls to be performance-tested and sold. They're put on a 112-day feeding test, where they're weighed every 28 days, and average daily gains are calculated on the bulls.

Feed efficiency for each bull is also calculated. At the end of the test, the bulls are evaluated for structural correctness, including an ultrasound to determine loin eye and fat thickness. The bulls undergo a comprehensive reproductive exam, and other physical exams including pelvic area, scrotal circumference, penis structure, and other factors.

(See the accompanying charts for details on specific factors.)

Breed group

The bulls are compared within a breed group and an index is calculated. "The specific index we use is 50 percent on an average daily gain ratio, 30 percent on adjusted 365-day weight ratio, and 20 percent on fat thickness," said Eberly.

(The 20 percent is based on a 10 percent deviation from the mean of the breed group, or the number of bulls of the breed on test at one time.)

The index eliminates most of the variations that can occur with different types of off-site manage-

ment. The bulls are sorted by the index — the higher the index, the better price at auction time.

Eberly said "the owner is

involved in the process of promoting his bulls and in promoting his operation, too. It gives him an

(Turn to Page A27)

Lot 1	Hereford	polled	WEA Intimidator 108	Index 117
Ear Tag 402	Birth Date 1-31-91		Reg. No. X2354088	
Tattoo 108	Birth Weight 108		EPD	No. Accuracy
CHG Intimidator 20X		Top MSU Knight Ryder		Birth Wt. +5.0
WEA Transformer 521		CHG Max Kay 5M		Weaning Wt.
		DPF Debonair 307K		Matern. Milk
		ROF Max Justa L478		Yearling Wt.
Pelvic 182.0	Scrotal Circ. 32.5	Feed Eff. 0.00		Matern. Comb.
Prewanning				
112 Day Test				
Lifetime				
Adj. 205 Day Wt. (lbs.)	Weight DOA (lbs.)	Final Weight (lbs.)	Ave. Daily Gain (lbs.)	Adj. Fat Thick. (in.)
823	3.63	1460	4.26	0.26
Performance			54.6	12.2
Perf. Ratio			122	104
Owner: Ralph E. Strouse, Wheel Estate Acres 401 Pierson Dr., State College PA 16803				

Lot 2	Hereford	polled	EPH Zeus 103	Index 106
Ear Tag 401	Birth Date 1-2-91		Reg. No. X23567343	
Tattoo E103	Birth Weight 92		EPD	No. Accuracy
RB Starnana 719U		Determinator 15G		Birth Wt. +8.0
EPH Investress 423		Victorious Vindy		Weaning Wt. +36.1
		Klondike Banner 469L		Matern. Milk -6.1
		EPH Investress 010		Yearling Wt. +54.7
Pelvic 177.7	Scrotal Circ. 38.5	Feed Eff. 0.00		Matern. Comb. +11.9
Prewanning				
112 Day Test				
Lifetime				
Adj. 205 Day Wt. (lbs.)	Weight DOA (lbs.)	Final Weight (lbs.)	Ave. Daily Gain (lbs.)	Adj. Fat Thick. (in.)
707	3.31	1425	3.85	0.37
Performance			54.8	12.0
Perf. Ratio			111	104
Owner: Mario M. Egleston, Egleston's Polled RD #1, Box 12, Elkland PA 16920				

Lot 3	Hereford	polled	KPF Delta Force	Index 105
Ear Tag 214	Birth Date 4-8-91		Reg. No. X23546248	
Tattoo 115	Birth Weight 80		EPD	No. Accuracy
FLF13U Determ		Determinator 15G		Birth Wt. +4.1
RRH Max Enforcer 3591		FLF Forcette 13U		Weaning Wt.
		FLF Enforcer 9016		Matern. Milk
		RRH Max Gainer 0359		Yearling Wt.
Pelvic 168.7	Scrotal Circ. 31.0	Feed Eff. 4.15		Matern. Comb.
Prewanning				
112 Day Test				
Lifetime				
Adj. 205 Day Wt. (lbs.)	Weight DOA (lbs.)	Final Weight (lbs.)	Ave. Daily Gain (lbs.)	Adj. Fat Thick. (in.)
770	3.18	1089	3.93	0.44
Performance			51.6	14.0
Perf. Ratio			113	98
Owner: John & Janet Humphrey, Kephshre Farms RD #2, Box 91 Patton, PA 16668				

Fifty-five bulls will be for sale at the 19th Performance-Tested Bull Sale at the Beef Expo. This is a sample from the sale catalog.

state female sale planned for immediately following the bull sale Friday afternoon.

The Pennsylvania Angus, Simmental, Salers and Charolais Associations will be conducting their respective state breed female sales on Saturday, March 28.

The Expo schedule for Thursday includes an educational program which will cover the topic "Improving Health in the Cattle Herd" and the trade show opening. The trade show will provide door prizes and activities as well as an opportunity to preview what is available in the animal health, nutrition, and equipment areas as well as many other associated products.

Other Expo events include animal exhibits featuring superior cows and bulls and a number of activities for the Junior Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association including a junior heifer show on Saturday evening and a junior steer show on Sunday, March 29.

For further information on the Performance Tested Bull Sale or the Pennsylvania Beef Expo or to request a bull sale or breed female catalogs, contact Glenn Eberly, director, Meat Animal Evaluation Center, 651 Fox Hollow Road, State College, PA 16803, (814) 238-2527 or (814) 865-5857.

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