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# Message from the Board

by Steve Andras,  
1st Vice President/ District 9 Director - Midwest

## 100 Years Celebrated

What a show! The grandeur of the 100th anniversary of the National Western Stock Show was awe-inspiring, to say the least.

When I contemplate the history of the National Western, I can't help but recall the profound impact it has had on my own heritage. My dad, Billy Andras, told a story that I never grew weary of hearing. His words painted the scene to where I could almost hear the sounds, smell the smells, and put myself in his very shoes. He would set the story by telling how the railroad company would drop off a rail car in Manchester, to be picked up once loaded. He would tell how he, his brothers, and my granddad would then haul tack, feed, hay, bedding, and finally, cattle, about a mile across our town to load this railcar to the gills. Before closing the door, they climbed into the car and set in for a long train ride across the plains to Denver.

Though, often freezing outside, the railcar would remain comfortable from the body heat from a dozen or more Hereford cattle. Some of the main discomforts described to me were the drip of the sweating ceiling--condensation caused by the warm, humid air in the car, and of course, the natural smells of cattle in a confined area. I don't recall how many hours they spent in this railcar on the way to Denver, but I know

they didn't get to drive 75 mph or stop for a Quarter Pounder when they were hungry, like today. The truly endearing facet of this trip was not just their commitment to improving beef breeds, but a dad spending quality time with his four sons, completely uninterrupted. Indeed, I count myself fortunate to have close ties to many of the 100 years of the National Western. Personal stories aside, I feel it is appropriate to unfold some of the rich history of the National Western.

In 1906, Theodore Roosevelt was president, there were 45 states in the Union, and the population of Denver was a budding 200,000. Stockmen from the West were desperately trying to establish a strong market center, because transportation to the two major packing plants (Kansas City and Chicago) was cutting into the already tight profits of the cattle industry. In the 1890s, efforts were made to establish a livestock convention in Denver, but the true need was a stock show that met annually.

In 1905, three visionaries, Elias Ammons, Fred Johnson, and G.W. Ballantine met to discuss plans for an annual stock show. They decided January was the logical time for cattlemen to gather after harvest and before calving. With the "Western Livestock Show" ready to formally open in January, 1906, the Rocky

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## Message from the Board

Mountain News stated that, "No convention to be held here this year will exceed in importance the gathering of this week...The city will not be satisfied until it is the live-stock center of the West and all the related industries are firmly established here." The same paper later declared what was referred to as "Denver Day" at the stock show, where Denverites were urged to attend the stock show. To facilitate this, the city declared "Denver Day" a holiday and banks, schools, and other businesses closed their doors. People attended in droves to admire the best cattle the West had to offer displayed under the big-top tent. The first stock show exhibited four cattle breeds: Aberdeen-Angus, Shorthorns, Herefords, and Galloways; and two horse breeds: draft horses and ponies. Total entries for the first National Western were 336 animals.

The first stock show was an enormous success and plans for expansion were soon to follow. In 1907 the name was changed to the "Western National Stock Show," then in 1909, it was finally changed to the "National Western Stock Show." In 1910, the National Western opened its doors to cattle from across the nation, authenticating it as a national show. Prior to this, it was restricted to Western cattle (West of the 99th Meridian).

Though the history of the National Western is far richer than I have space to write, I know the impact of the National Western Stock Show is undeniable. I am truly grateful to be able to convene on Denver once a year to walk in the footsteps of my family and those that paved our way in the cattle industry. I want to close with a glimpse into the 1906 "Western Livestock Show," taken from The First 25 Years, by Keith and Cheryl Chamberlain:

*Entering the tent, visitors found green tanbark spread on the floor, lending a grassy outdoor atmosphere that was complemented by the aroma of hay, bedding and livestock feed. Brightly colored flags and buntings draped the stands, and the sounds of cattle and horses filled the tent as darkness fell and stars began to glimmer the big-top glowed with golden arc lights. The deep voiced announcer boomed judging results through a megaphone and a brass band struck up the tune "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight."...the crowd rose to its feet in a roar of approval."*

After having attended the 100th Annual National Western Stock Show, with the number of cattle exhibited, breed association meetings, the Red Angus Brain-Trust, Hill and Pen Shows, and the relaxed atmosphere of like-minded cattlemen, I can assure you, there was a "Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." ■

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# Association Commentary

by Dr. Bob Hough, Executive Secretary

## **National Cattle Evaluation**

This is one of my favorite times of the year. New EPDs are available, and we are awaiting the thick of the bull sales and the breeding season when they will be relied upon heavily. And they should be relied on heavily, since EPDs are the best genetic describers of a bulls' potential progeny performance and Red Angus has the best EPDs in the industry.

The fact that Red Angus has the best EPDs in the business is no accident. Red Angus has an unequaled 52 year performance heritage, and an unprecedented quest to apply the best science available to make its genetic predictions. This is shown clearly in five of the nine Core Policies that guide the RAAA:

1. The policy of the Red Angus Association is to discourage the more artificial practices in purebred cattle production and to place its faith instead in objective tests, consisting for the most part of comparisons within herds of factors of known economic importance and known heritability. By making this an integral part of the registration system, Red Angus breeders feel that even faster progress can be made toward the ultimate goal of more efficient beef production.

2. The standing policy of the RAAA is that when the science exists to make a genetic prediction more precise and reliable, the science is implemented. This is overseen by the technical committee and not the board of directors.

3. The Association's general role in assisting marketing of the membership's cattle is to have the best objectively described cattle in the industry and to provide the best service to our members' customers (commercial producers). Although RAAA promotes overall demand for the breed through activities such as national advertising, the Association does not take a role in the marketing of an individual member's cattle.

4. The role of the Association is to objectively describe reproduction, growth, maintenance and carcass traits

utilizing the fewest EPDs possible to achieve this purpose. The concept of Economically Relevant Traits guides this process.

5. The RAAA actively seeks out and implements new technologies that are based on sound, scientific principles.

Obviously, based on these long standing core policies, performance is at the root of the Red Angus breed, and commercial producers investing in their next herd sire(s) can buy with confidence utilizing RAAA genetic predictions.

## **Joint Venture for Genetic Performance Solutions**

The Genetic Performance Solutions (GPS) has continued to evolve. One partner, the Gelbvieh Association, has dropped out, while others have explored joining. Although Gelbvieh leaving does somewhat drop mass, it became quite apparent that their goals and the strategies outlined in the GPS Strategic Plan had drifted apart; so, in my opinion, their parting became inevitable.

Still, the GPS continues to move forward aggressively. The top priorities are a multi-breed evaluation and building a database warehouse. At the end of the month the group will be meeting to re-establish time-tables and other goals.

Like any start-up company, GPS has experienced some bumps in the road, but it has not wavered from its ultimate goal of increasing commercial bull market share for the participating breeds by providing better tools to the industry. The ultimate goal is to make systematic crossbreeding easier and more objective for commercial producers in an effort to improve their profitability. Obviously, to achieve this goal we will need far more sophisticated and user friendly tools than we as an industry currently possess.

I will conclude this column with another of Red Angus' Core Policies, "The Association has a long standing policy supporting planned crossbreeding and the use of heterosis." ■



# Marketing Update



by Blake Angell, Commercial Marketing Director and Greg Comstock, RAAA Marketing Programs Coordinator



## Certified Calves Ring In the New Year

The demand for Certified Red Angus calves continues to be extremely strong as we begin the New Year. Certainly, the 2005 marketing season is not one that will soon be forgotten by cow calf producers, and the 2006 calf market has begun equally hot. The first two weeks of January saw many weaned and backgrounded calves make their way through sale barns, all with similar outcomes - Certified Red Angus were topping the sales.

Ogallala Livestock Auction saw Certified Red Angus calves top several weight divisions on their January 5th sale. On the steer side, Joann Brennan & Sons of Ellsworth, Neb., topped all 6-weight steer calves when their 625 pounders rang in at \$140.25.

Following at a close second, was the consignment by Bill, Justin and Rhett Schewsbury, also of Ellsworth. Their 605 lb steers received \$140.00. Both of these sets of calves were \$2.00 cwt over the other steers in that weight class.

But it was the heifer sale that really caused all the excitement. The Ogallala sale report indicated that lower six-weight heifers mostly traded in a range of \$117.00 to \$124.00. That's why it is so impressive that the Brennan heifers weighing 608 lb tallied up \$154.00. This was yet another example of how strong the demand for Red Angus females continues to be.

Early 2006 finds another 3,000 Certified Red Angus calves scheduled to sell through barns in: Massena, Iowa, Canton, S.D., Mobridge, S.D., Salina,

Kan., Pratt, Kan., and Sioux Center, Iowa. With the strong demand that exists for Red Angus calves both as feeder cattle and replacement females, we expect more of the same from these sales - Certified Red Angus setting a strong pace for all other calves to follow.

And remember, if you still have calves to sell, contact one of the Red Angus Marketing Staff members and provide them a description of the calves that can be sent out of the Feeder Fax FREE OF CHARGE to a list of potential buyers - buyers who are specifically looking for Red Angus calves. By letting these interested buyers know about your calves, you could be the next one to set the top of the market at your local auction market.

### Building Better Beef...

**Helping add value to your customers' cattle through buyer education.**

In September, 2005, Red Angus Marketing Programs launched Building Better Beef, an electronic newsletter directed towards the livestock marketing and Feedlot industries. Building Better Beef helps busy marketing professionals understand the production advantages and marketing opportunities that come as standard equipment with superior Red Angus genetics.

Certified Red Angus, the Angus America Grid, and ProCow have become industry standards of customer

service. In many cases, these programs not only add value for producers and/or feeders, but can also benefit those who make their living in the livestock marketing industry. Feedlot managers and fat cattle buyers need

access to the premium structure of Angus America Grid. Sale Barns and Video reps routinely list Red Angus influenced females on ProCow. And all of them study the Feeder FAX for the availability of source verified Red Angus sired calves.

If you or any of your bull customers would like the feeders or livestock

marketing professionals you work with to receive *Building Better Beef*, simply contact Red Angus Marketing Programs at (940) 387-3502 or e-mail [feederfax@redangus.org](mailto:feederfax@redangus.org), and we will add their e-mail to the recipient list.



# Registration Bulletin

by Kenda Ponder  
Registration Department Manager

## Spring 2006 Herd Inventories

Spring 2006 Herd Inventories were mailed from the National Office the first week in January. They need to be returned post-marked no later than February 10, 2006 with all changes, additions, and corrections. If the Herd Inventory is correct, please mark it correct and send back to the National Office.

The Association will bill the Spring 2006 annual THR assessments based on your Herd Inventory that is returned to the National Office. We do encourage you to keep a copy of your Herd Inventory for your records, which you can then check when you receive your Spring 2006 annual assessment billing on the July statement.

The Herd Inventory has been updated to include all the EPDs for a given animal, therefore you will notice that the information carries over under the boxes for marking disposal information. Many breeders ask about obtaining the MPPA for a given female and think that the only way to obtain that information is by ordering a Dam Summary (\$30), and do not realize that a female's MPPA is listed on the Herd Inventory.

## Age of Animals on Barn Sheets / Ultrasound data collection

Members who have animals on inventory eligible for the collection of ultrasound information will need to request 'barn sheets'. The barn sheets are provided for the technician to record data to be sent to the lab. DO NOT send the barn sheets

to the National Office with information.

- Bulls: Between 320 - 440 days of age (yearling).
- Heifers: Between 320 - 460 days of age (yearling).
- Animals outside of this range will not appear on the barn sheet and must be requested.

After ultrasound data is processed, we send it back to the owner of the animal(s). Please be sure that any special instructions be sent to the lab where the data will be processed, if summary data is to be sent to parties other than an owner of the animal(s): example, e-mail or fax to a bull test manager, sales manager, etc. The lab will then include those instructions in an e-mail when the data is received in the National Office. We will be glad to e-mail results, so please leave instructions with the lab and they will forward them to us with the data.

## Fall 2005 Heifer Exposure Inventory

The inventory for Fall heifer exposure information was mailed out the middle of November, 2005 and is due back in the National Office postmarked no later than February 15, 2006.

## Website- RRTS

RRTS - SHOULD NOT be used to try and make corrections to information that has either already been submitted to or processed by the National Office. RRTS should be used to submit NEW information, like registrations and weaning/yearling updates. If you need to submit

## Reminders

- If you are submitting a calf record where a parent is registered in another breed association, you must provide us with a copy of the registration certificate or a pedigree from the respective breed association's web site in order for us to complete the work.

- When submitting an embryo transplant calf for registration, you must provide us with the flush date. If you submit the embryo recovery sheet, please make sure the flush date is noted clearly and highlighted to expedite your work being processed. If you submit ET registration via RRTS include the flush date and the corresponding calf's tattoo in the comments box. If you submit ET registrations by paper please use the embryo transplant registration form and fill in the flush date. If an ET calf is raised by a Red Angus registered recipient, please provide her registration number at the time the calf is registered.

a correction, please e-mail a member of the registration department staff directly or fax the information to the National Office. The information will be handled in a timely manner.

## Fall 2005 calf crop, March 1st - Pre-listed weaning worksheets

These worksheets will be mailed out around the 1st week in March for members to submit their Fall 2005 calf records (include calves which died before weaning), as well as reason and disposal codes for females that do not have a calf record.

**On-line "Update Spring 2006 Herd Inventories"**  
**www.redangus.org -- under registration information**

# 2006 Red Angus National Cattle Evaluation

By Larry Keenan, RAAA Research/Special Projects Coordinator

**We have recently celebrated a New Year, and are happy to announce that we have new EPDs to accompany the New Year. The RAAA National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) has been completed and the new EPDs have been released. I'm sure most of you have committed to a few 'New Year's Resolutions', and I hope if you have not used EPDs in your bull selection decisions in the past, you have made a resolution to use them this year in those very important decisions.**

**Table 1. Proven and Opportunity Sires Percentiles**

	100%	99%	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%	0%
100%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
99%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
95%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
90%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
85%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
80%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
75%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
70%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
65%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
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45%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
40%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
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30%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
25%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
20%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
15%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
10%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
5%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
0%	100	99	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0

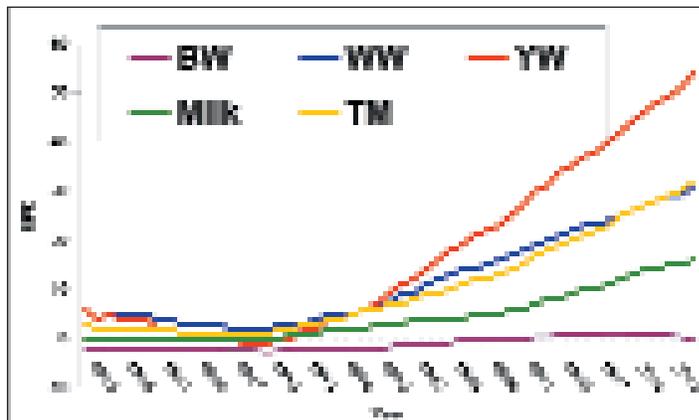
## Statistics

Through the NCE we are able to provide statistics that allow you to compare animals you own, or may purchase, to other animals of the same grouping (Proven and Opportunity Sires, Active Cows, and Non-Parents). Table 1 details the percentile table for the Proven and Opportunity sires. From this you can determine how animals you are using, or considering using, rank for any particular trait. Another interesting statistic that results from the NCE are the genetic trends for each trait. These trends are highlighted in Figures 1, 2, and 3. It is apparent that through the use of EPDs we have been able to make progress in the traits evaluated.

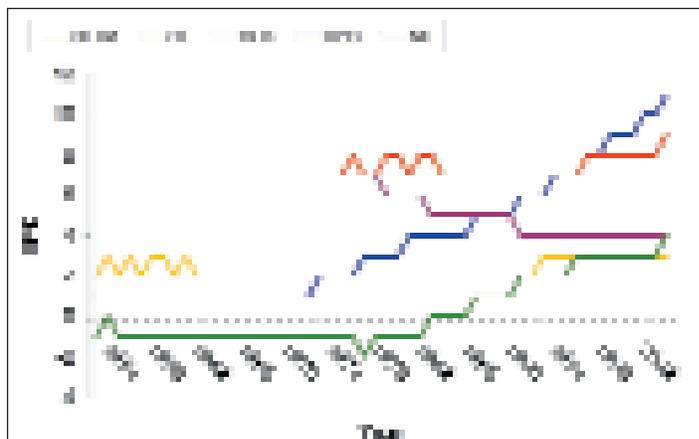
## Sire Summary Listing Criteria

In order for a sire to be listed in the 2006 Spring Sire Summary, they must meet two criteria. First, they must have a weaning weight accuracy of .50 or higher. Second, they must be an active sire, which is defined as sires with reported progeny in one of the last two years; 1,666 sires currently meet these criteria. You will notice that we have two groups of sires in the Sire Summary, Proven Sires and Genetic Opportunity Sires. Active sires with a weaning weight accuracy between .50 and .59 are classified as Genetic Opportunity Sires (656 sires listed). Active sires with a weaning weight accuracy greater than .60 are classified as Proven Sires (1,010 sires listed).

**Figure 1. Genetic Trends for Growth Traits**

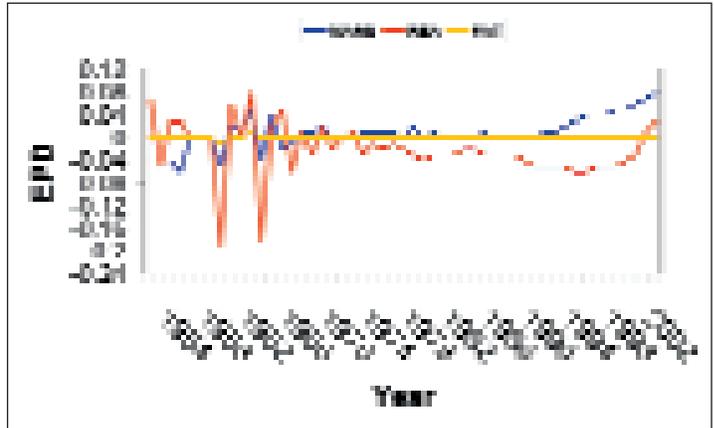


**Figure 2. Genetic Trends for Reproduction Traits**



## 2006 Red Angus NCE

**Figure 3. Genetic Trends for GCarcass Traits**



### Improved Accuracies

Noticeable changes to the Spring 2006 NCE include improved accuracy calculations for Stayability and Maintenance Energy. It is important to understand that the enhanced accuracy calculations have the potential to affect sires' accuracy; however, it will not affect their EPDs for those traits. The improvements to the Stayability accuracy mostly affected young sires, with many young sires having a noticeable drop in accuracy. On the other hand, the improvements made to the Maintenance Energy accuracy affected all animals breed-wide, with all animals having a noticeable drop in accuracy. We are constantly looking for ways to make our EPDs and accuracies better, and these improvements are a result of that effort.

### Accessing the new EPDs

There are several ways to view the information derived from the NCE: printed Sire Summary, the internet, and whole-herd EPD reports. If you would like to receive a printed Sire Summary, contact Judy Edwards, [judy@redangus.org](mailto:judy@redangus.org), at the RAAA national headquarters. The Sire Summary only lists sires that meet the criteria mentioned above. It also contains editorial content that explains EPDs and Accuracies, as well as EPD statistics such as averages and percentiles for each EPD. Another, and in my opinion the best, way to access the new EPDs is via the internet through our website: [www.redangus.org](http://www.redangus.org). Not only does the website contain the electronic version of the Sire Summary, but it also features an EPD Lookup tool that allows you to search for the EPDs on any animal registered in the RAAA database, not just the 1666 sires listed in the Sire Summary. It is important to remember that every animal in the RAAA database receives updated EPDs and accuracies during every NCE. Another useful tool located on the website is the Sire Search. This tool

## 2006 Red Angus NCE

allows you to enter EPD ranges, for several or all EPDs, that best meet your breeding strategy. The Sire Search allows you to input maximum and minimum EPD requirements, then searches all sires in the RAAA database, and returns a list of sires that meet your requirements. This tool greatly reduces the time needed to find bull(s) that will fit your breeding program. Lastly, RAAA members can view the new EPDs on the Whole Herd EPD Report that was mailed to every RAAA member in January. Additionally, commercial producers can request a Bull Buyer EPD Report that lists the new EPDs on purchased bulls. To request a Bull Buyer EPD Report contact Kenda Ponder, [kenda@redangus.org](mailto:kenda@redangus.org)

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### Understanding EPDs

For those of you that are new to EPDs, or just need a refresher, I would recommend that you take a look at the editorial content found in the front of the printed Sire Summary. There you will find several articles that discuss EPDs and Accuracies. You can also read the 'Ranchers Guide to EPDs'

that is located on our website. If you have further questions that are not addressed in these pieces of information, feel free to contact the RAAA National Office.

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### Web Links

#### Electronic Sire Summary

-Excel

[http://www.redangus.org/genpred/sire\\_summary.xls](http://www.redangus.org/genpred/sire_summary.xls)

-CSV

[http://www.redangus.org/genpred/sire\\_summary.csv](http://www.redangus.org/genpred/sire_summary.csv)

#### EPD Lookup

<http://www.redangus.org/epdlook.html>

#### Sire Search

<http://www.redangus.org/siresrch.html>

#### Ranchers Guide to EPDs

<http://www.redangus.org/newredsite/ranchersguidetoEPDs.pdf>

# Genetic Selection... Your Key to Unlock Profitability

By Larry Keenan, RAAA Research/Special Projects Coordinator

**Throughout the year, cattle producers make numerous decisions that impact the economic well being of their operation. Managerial decisions are made on a daily basis and while some require little research, the impact of others warrants thorough study. One decision that rises to the top of this list is selecting bulls to breed to your cows.**

Cattle producers have multiple expenses during the year, often too many to count; however, most producers only have one income: their calf crop. Regardless of whether you sell your cattle at weaning, retain ownership through a feedlot, or supply replacements, the calves that you produce eventually define your income. Many factors have an influence on the calf crop: management, forage, weather conditions, to name just a few. One major contributor that is in a class of its own is the genetics of the calf crop. With inferior genetics, it is almost impossible to create a high quality calf crop. However, with good genetics it is relatively easy to create a high quality calf crop. With the sire accounting for 50 percent of the calf crop genetics, it is obvious that selecting a good bull is the best and quickest way to increase the quality of your calf crop, which in turn will mean more money in your back pocket.

What traits do I select for? This common question is often answered by starting at the producer's point of sale. For example, a producer who sells his calves at weaning should place emphasis on weaning weight genetics; because that is what he sells

**Table 1. Percentiles for Proven and Opportunity Sires**

100%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
90%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%
80%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%
70%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%
60%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
50%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
40%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
30%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**Table 2. Percentiles for Non-parents**

100%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
90%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%
80%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%
70%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%
60%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
50%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
40%	40%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
30%	30%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20%	20%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10%	10%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

## Genetic Selection

- weight. Another producer who retains ownership and sells his cattle on a grid, should place emphasis on carcass genetics, such as ribeye area, marbling, and backfat. Given these statements, it is very important to avoid single trait selection. You should place the majority of your emphasis on the traits that you sell (weaning weight, carcass traits, etc.), but you should also look at other traits that could affect the calf crop. A prime example, a bull that you are considering purchasing has excellent genetics for the traits you are emphasizing, but he has an extremely high calving ease score. Unless you want to become an expert on pulling calves and risk losing calves, and possibly cows, your best bet is to find a different bull. Calves with excellent genetics are worthless if they never take a breath of air and are eaten by buzzards. Another word of caution: too many times producers travel to a sale with the intention of buying a bull(s) that excels in the trait(s) they market, but when they arrive a different bull catches their eye. They end up buying that bull without looking at his genetics. This is a huge mistake. It is nice for your calf crop to be 'easy on the eye', but don't let eye appeal override the traits that you need. Remember, you are selling a combination of traits that make a heavier calf crop grade better. You are selling far more than just eye appeal.

I want to select for good genetics, but there is so much data to look at: actual weights, adjusted weights, ratios, and EPDs. What should I base my genetic selections on? To begin with, actual and adjusted weights are important pieces of information. Without weights we have no idea about the performance of individuals. However, using weights to evaluate the genetics of an animal is a mistake. Since those weights are influenced by the environment and management, you cannot use them to compare possible sires. Ratios take into account environment and management, so they are better predictors of genetics when compared to weights. However, ratios do not account for mating bias or the performance of related individuals in other contemporary groups or herds. Ratios can only be used to compare bulls within the same contemporary group, and I have yet to see a sale catalog that identifies what contemporary groups the sires were in. Given this information, it is obvious that ratios should not be used in your sire selections. Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) are the only genetic predictors that account for environment, management, mating bias, and performance of related individuals in differing contemporary groups and herds.

## Genetic Selection

These features make EPDs far superior to weights and ratios in predicting the genetics of sires. Even in the case of low accuracy yearling bulls, EPDs are far superior to ratios because weights, ratios, and performance of related individuals are all accounted for in those EPDs.

Given all of the above information, it is apparent that if you make the financially correct decision to select a sire based on genetics, you should place your selection emphasis on his EPDs, not weights or ratios.

When selecting a bull for the genetics that he will pass on to your calf crop, you should have a plan of action. Request a catalog from the sale you are planning on attending or a print-out of EPDs if you will be purchasing a bull by private treaty. If the bull seller cannot provide EPDs to assist in your selection decision, look elsewhere for a bull. Study the EPDs. Identify multiple bulls that excel in the traits you are selecting for. It is always a great idea to look at the percentile tables provided by RAAA. These data are provided in Table 1 and 2, and will give you an indication of where the bull(s) rank as compared to the rest of the breed. If the bulls that you have identified from a particular sale or private treaty, rank below average for the traits you are placing emphasis on, don't waste your time attending the sale. After you have identified a short list of bulls to look at, attend the sale and visually inspect the bulls. Only look at the bulls that made your list based on their genetic merit, don't waste your time looking at other bulls that fall short of your genetic standards. After you have determined that the bulls are structurally correct, which will enable them to travel in the pasture and get the job done, get your buyer number and be ready to make an important purchase for you operation's profitability.

Selecting a bull that will result in the genetic improvement of your calf crop, and may in turn increase your profitability, is not an easy decision. However, when one adds the value of next year's calf crop with the returned genetic improvement in retained replacement heifers, sire selection is easily one of the most important financial decisions you have to make. Remember, studying the EPDs of the bulls is the most critical step of this process. So don't get excited during an auction and leave this step out. ■

# Understanding EPD Accuracies and Possible Change

by Dr. Bob Hough, RAAA Executive Secretary

**EPDs are one of the most powerful tools the beef industry has ever had. They have literally revolutionized the way we as an industry design breeding programs and select seedstock. With EPDs, breeding beef cattle has moved from an art form to a science. Our industry desperately needs these reliable objective genetic predictions calculated from unbiased data to compete with other protein sources.**

Our competition — the pork and poultry industries — certainly do not design their product genetically utilizing romanticized selection procedures or by following ever changing fads. They utilize scientific principles to design animals that optimize production and produce a consistent product. We must do likewise, and EPDs are by far the best tool we have to help us in this effort.

To utilize EPDs correctly, a person must understand what these genetic estimates represent and what they do not. EPDs work, and the average of the EPDs for all the Red Angus sires used in a given year should remain constant. Although the average EPDs of the group should not change, certain sires' EPDs will turn out better than expected while others will be a disappointment. Because of this, a herd that has the luxury of sampling a large number of sires, exposes themselves to little risk from possible EPD change due to low accuracy predictions. Conversely, a producer utilizing only one sire in their herd must weigh the possible risk inherent in utilizing a low accuracy sire. This dictates the need for a clear understanding of EPD accuracies and possible change by both seedstock and commercial cattle producers.

## Accuracies

Accompanying the EPDs released by the Red Angus Association of America are accuracy values (Table 1). An accuracy is a relative measure of the strength of the rela-

tionship between genetic prediction and true genetic value. Accuracies are reported as a decimal number from zero to one. When unbiased data (e.g. complete reporting from THR) are utilized to calculate EPD genetic predictions and as the accuracy value approaches 1.0, the EPD is "accurately" or closely estimating the true genetic merit of an animal for a given trait. By the same token, accuracies closer to zero indicate that the EPD prediction has far less reliability.

A guide for interpreting accuracies is presented in Table 2. One important point must be made here. Although the genetic prediction for low accuracy animals can be considered unreliable relative to higher accuracy EPDs, they are still the best objective measure of an animal's genetic merit. EPDs are far better than ratios, adjusted weights, raw weights and visual appraisal. It has been said that even a low accuracy EPD is many-fold more reliable than all of these other measures. The reason for this is the fact that all of these pertinent objective measures (adjusted weights, etc.), plus many more factors, are all taken into account when an EPD is calculated.

## Possible Change

Possible change is another method of visualizing how accuracies function. Since EPDs are predictions, not true values, we can expect that they will change from one year to the next as more information is collected (e.g., progeny data) and includ-

Table 1. Example EPDs and accuracies for three fictitious sires.

ANIMAL NAME	BIRTH DATE	GRPS PROG.	DTRS PROG/DTR	BIRTH EPD ACC	WEANING EPD ACC	YEARLING EPD ACC	MILK EPD ACC
RAA RELIABLE	01/01/90	125 500	210 2.3	1.0 .90	35 .90	50 .90	15 .90
RAA NEXT STEP	01/01/94	10 25	5 1	0.5 .60	36 .50	55 .50	18 .40
RAA NEW WAVE	01/01/98	0	0 0	0.0 .20	40 .20	60 .20	15 .20

Table 3. Possible change of Red Angus EPDs.

ACC	GRPS	WWT	YR	MILK	MP	EPD	EPD	EPD	WT	MILK	MP	WT
0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Table 2. Interpreting accuracies.

Acc.	Degree of Risk	Comments
<.40	Low	Unreliable, but still the best guess
.40 to .60	Low/medium	Worth looking at, but still risky
.60 to .80	High/medium	Quite trustworthy, make comparisons with some confidence
>.80	High	Good accuracy, compare with confidence

## Understanding EPD Accuracies and Possible Change

ed in the biannual RAAA National Cattle Evaluation. Because of this inclusion of new data in each evaluation, the EPDs calculated for a sire represent the best estimate of the animal's true genetic merit. This means that change in EPDs over time for a sire should be viewed positively since the EPD is more "accurately" describing the animal. The amount of change that can occur in an EPD estimate is referred to as "possible change."

A possible change value is a measure of the possible change (in trait units) that can occur for a trait. The possible change chart (see Table 3) represents one standard error of prediction (standard deviation) for the range of accuracies for each trait. The true genetic value of each genetic prediction would be expected to fall within plus or minus one standard deviation 68 percent of the time. This means that as accuracy increases, the EPD prediction is known to be closer to the true genetic value, so the possible change value decreases. An example of this would be a forty pound weaning weight EPD. At .30 accuracy, we would expect the true genetic value to fall somewhere between 32 to 48 pounds 68 percent of the time ( $40 \pm 8$ ), while at .80 acc., the true genetic value would be expected to fall somewhere between 38 and 42 pounds 68 percent of the time ( $40 \pm 2$ ). This is what is referred to as the confidence range. The higher the accuracy the narrower the confidence range. Table 4 again shows our three example sires, viewing their accuracies in the light of possible change and confidence range.

One common misconception is that confidence range is an indicator of expected variation in a calf crop. Confidence range does not in any way predict progeny variation. It instead shows the expected range on which the true EPD genetic value, if known, would be expected to be located given the accuracy of the estimated EPD. This means that a low accuracy sire should not be expected to have any more or less variation in his progeny than a high accuracy sire.

## Why Do Some Sires Change More Than the Possible Change Values Indicate?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions. The possible change chart gives the impression that sires will not change more than the value in the table for a given trait at a given accuracy. Without understanding the possible change chart, the fact that the possible change or standard error of prediction only reflects a 68 percent confidence range can easily be missed. The true genetic value can vary more than the

Table 4. Example EPDs, accuracies, possible change, and confidence range for three fictitious sires.

ANIMAL NAME	BIRTH DATE	GRPS PROG	DTRS PROG/DTR	BIRTH EPD ACC	WEANING EPD ACC	YEARLING EPD ACC	MILK EPD ACC
RAA RELIABLE	01/01/90	125 500	210 2.3	1.0 .90 $\pm 0.3$ 0.7 to 1.3	35 .90 $\pm 1$ 34 to 36	50 .90 $\pm 2$ 48 to 52	15 .90 $\pm 1$ 14 to 16
RAA NEXT STEP	01/01/94	10 25	5 1	.5 .60 $\pm 1.2$ -0.7 to 1.7	36 .50 $\pm 6$ 30 to 42	55 .50 $\pm 8$ 47 to 63	18 .40 $\pm 5$ 13 to 23
RAA NEW WAVE	01/01/98	0 0	0 0	0 .20 $\pm 2.4$ -2.4 to 2.4	40 .20 $\pm 9$ 31 to 49	60 .20 $\pm 12$ 48 to 72	15 .20 $\pm 7$ 8 to 22

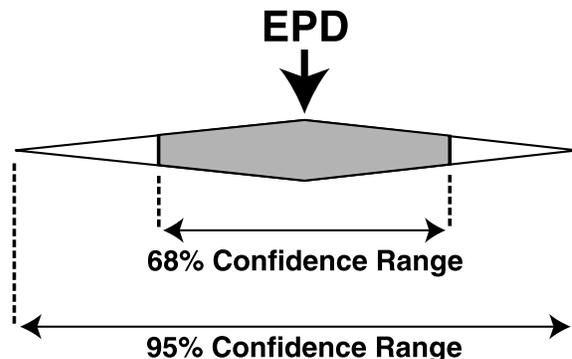


Figure 1. Graphical presentation of EPDs (Bourdon, 1996)

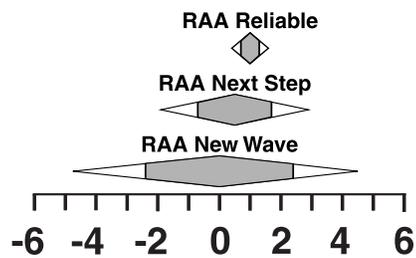


Figure 2. Graphical presentation of birth weight EPDs for three fictitious sires.

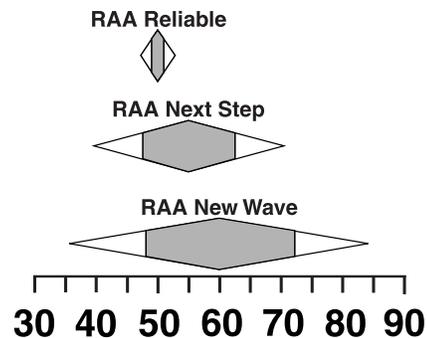


Figure 3. Graphical presentation of yearling weight EPDs for three fictitious sires.

## Understanding EPD Accuracies and Possible Change

plus or minus one standard deviation represented in the possible change chart. If we expand to a 95 percent confidence range, the true genetic value will be plus or minus two standard deviations/possible change units. Beyond the 95 percent confidence range, an additional five percent of the sires can be expected to move more than two standard deviations. Let's go back and review the example of the forty pound weaning weight EPD at either .30 or .80 accuracy. The 68 percent confidence range was 32 to 48 pounds for .30 accuracy and 38 to 42 pounds for .80 accuracy. If we now expand to a 95 percent confidence range, we would expect the true genetic value to be between 24 and 56 pounds  $[40 \pm (2 \times 8)]$  for .30 accuracy, and between 36 and 44 pounds  $[40 \pm (2 \times 2)]$  for .80 accuracy.

Dr. Rick Bourdon proposed displaying EPDs and their confidence ranges graphically at our 1996 RAAA Brain Trust Meeting in Denver. Although not implemented due to space limitations in the Sire Summary, Dr. Bourdon's concept does an excellent job putting possible change/confidence range in perspective (Figure 1). Utilizing his model, we can graphically demonstrate the EPDs and confidence ranges for our three example animals' birth weight and yearling weight EPDs (Figures 2 & 3). This underscores the value of utilizing high accuracy sires, and it also sheds light on just how dangerous it is to make selection decisions without EPDs, since low accuracy EPDs are still more reliable than weights and ratios. It is also important to understand that for many sires, the low accuracy estimates will change little as they increase in accuracy.

## Conclusion

Today's cattle industry has certainly become very sophisticated. As the industry has changed, so have the demands on modern cattle producers. Cattle breeders must now be able to make important business decisions utilizing a wide variety of objective information. EPDs are one of the cornerstones of this new age. Understanding accuracy, possible change and risk is an important component of fully analyzing these genetic predictions. Although possible change must be considered when evaluating a sire, we must not be overwhelmed by this information. It is also hoped that in the future, as we move to more and more electronic delivery of information, that concepts such as Dr. Bourdon's recommendation for graphic presentation of EPDs and confidence ranges will become a reality. Yes, cattle breeding is changing, but the information available to producers will allow our industry to improve at a pace no one could have imagined just twenty years earlier. Utilized correctly, we do not currently have a more powerful tool than Red Angus EPD predictions.

# Breeding Soundness Exam Used to Evaluate Fertility in Bulls

Producers searching for a cost efficient method to promote a successful breeding program may find breeding soundness examinations (BSEs) for bulls beneficial. The importance of the bull in a cattle breeding program often is underestimated. A cow is responsible for half the genetic material in only one calf each year, while the bull is responsible for half the genetic material in 20 to 50 calves. The bull's ability to locate cows in estrus and breed them is clearly vital to a successful breeding program.

For the breeding soundness evaluation to be successful, bulls should be evaluated 30 to 60 days before the start of breeding. It is important to allow sufficient time to replace questionable bulls. Bulls should also be evaluated at the end of breeding to determine if their fertility decreased. A BSE is administered by a veterinarian and includes a physical examination (feet, legs, eyes, teeth, flesh cover, scrotal size and shape), an internal and external examination of the reproductive tract and semen evaluation for sperm cell motility and normality.

The physical examination studies overall appearance. Flesh cover is one factor to evaluate. Body condition can be affected by length of the breeding season, grazing and supplemental feeding conditions, number of cows the bull is expected to service and distance required to travel during breeding. Ideally, bulls should have enough fat cover at the start of breeding so their ribs appear smooth across their sides. A body condition score 6 (where 1 = emaciated and 9 = very obese) is the target body condition prior to the breeding season.

Sound feet and legs are very important because if they are unsound, this can result in the inability to travel and mount for mating. The general health of the bull is critical since sick, aged and injured bulls are less likely to mate and usually have lower semen quality. The external examination of the reproductive tract includes evaluation of the testes, spermatic cords and epididymis. Scrotal circumference is an important measure since it is directly related to the total mass of sperm producing tissue, sperm cell normality and the onset of puberty in the bull and his female offspring.

Examination of the external underline before and during semen collection will detect any inflammation, foreskin adhesions, warts, abscesses and penile deviations. The internal examination is conducted to detect any abnormalities in the internal reproductive organs.

**Bulls with large (scrotal) circumference will produce more sperm with higher normality and also reach sexual maturity sooner.**



*A cow is responsible for half the genetic material in only one calf each year, while the bull is responsible for half the genetic material in 20 to 50 calves.*

The semen evaluation is done by examining a sample of the semen under a microscope. The veterinarian will estimate the percentage of sperm cells that are moving in a forward direction. This estimate is called "motility". In addition, the sperm cells will be individually examined for proper shape or "morphology". Less than 30 percent of the cells should be found to have an abnormal shape.

Any bull meeting all minimum standards for the physical exam, scrotal size and semen quality will be classed as a "satisfactory" potential breeder. Bulls that fail any minimum standard will be given a rating of "classification deferred."

This rating indicates that the bull will need another test to confirm status. Mature bulls should be retested after six weeks. Mature bulls will be classified as unsatisfactory potential breeders if they fail subsequent tests. Young bulls that are just reaching puberty may be rated as "classification deferred", and then later meet all of the minimum standards. Therefore caution should be exercised when making culling decisions based on just one breeding soundness exam.

Many producers work hard to manage their cows for high fertility. They may assume that the bulls will do their expected duties. However, it's important to pay close attention to bulls to establish successful breeding.

*Source: Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Repro. Specialist*

## Severity Of Winter And Impact On Calf Birth Weights

Does the severity (coldness or mildness) of the winter have an impact on spring-born calf birth weights?

Ranchers have asked that question during many springs and veterinarians have speculated for years. The debate rages on! This is obviously a difficult subject to research because you cannot have a "control" group of cows to compare to a "treatment" group that is exposed to a cold winter while still running on the same pasture. Therefore research data on this subject is limited. University of Nebraska researchers (Colburn and co-workers) have done the next best thing. They have monitored the birth weights of genetically similar calves across three different winters and have related average winter temperatures to birth weights. A 3-year study was conducted to evaluate effects of high and low air temperatures and wind chills during winter months on subsequent calf birth weights and calving difficulty of spring-born calves. Records on approximately 400 2-year-old heifers and their calves were used. Heifer and calf genetics were the same each year. Heifers were fed similar quality hay free-choice each year before calving. High temperatures during the 1994-95 winter were 9 degrees higher than during the 1992-93 winter. The low temperatures were five degrees higher for 1994-95 compared to 1992-93. The greatest differences in monthly temperatures between years were found during December, January and February. Average temperatures for these three months increased 11 degrees F over the three years. Average calf birth weights decreased 11 pounds (81 to 70) from 1993 to 1995. A 1:1 ratio was observed. Although calving difficulty was high due to the research design, it also decreased from 57% to 35% from 1993 to 1995. Results indicate that cold temperatures influenced calf birth weight. Weather cannot be controlled; however, with below average winter temperatures, larger birth weight calves and more calving difficulty may be expected in the spring.

Other data that may shed some light on this subject, comes from OSU in 1990. Birth weights of 172 fall born calves and 242 spring born calves were compared. These calves were the result of AI matings using the same bulls and bred to similar crossbred cows. The fall born calves averaged 4.5 pounds lighter at birth than their spring born counter parts (77.7 vs 82.2). One possible explanation for this phenomenon, the changing of blood flow patterns of cows gestating in hot weather versus cold weather. During hot weather blood is shunted away from internal organs toward outer extremities to dissipate heat, while the opposite is the case in very cold weather with blood flow directed toward internal organs in an effort to conserve heat and maintain body temperature. This change in maternal blood flow may impact fetal growth in a small way, but result in a measurable difference.

*Source: Glenn Selk, OSU Extension Cattle Reproduction Specialist*

# SALE REPORTS

## The 'Front Pasture Classic'

Andras Stock Farm  
and Coley Cattle Company  
Macomb, Illinois  
November 5, 2005

Lots	Average
<b>Andras</b>	
Herdsire prospect	\$4,100
Open Heifers	\$3,150
Bred Heifers	\$2,252
Mature Cows	\$1,740
Embryo pkg	\$2,850

<b>Coley</b>	
Donor Cow	\$22,500
Herdsire Prospect	\$13,000
Open Heifers	\$4,950
Embryo pkg	\$1,800

Andras Tops:  
Lot 16, Andras Grandiose 5016, (herdsire prospect) sold to Two Oaks Red Angus, Iowa, for \$4,100 (3/4 interest).

Lot 18, Andras Pure Style 5053, (open heifer) sold to Katie Bettis, Ill., for \$3,700.

Lots 33 and 36 (bred heifers) each sold for \$3,100. Lot 33, Andras Missy 4095 to Mathes Ranch, Mo., and Lot 36, Andras Amy 4031, to John and Jed Moore, Ind.

Lot 70 topped the cow/calf pairs, selling to Greg Hoeing, Ind., for \$4,100.

Lot 17, Embryos (3) [Andras Energizer 2222 x BUF CRK Amy 4046] sold to Little Creek Farm, Miss., for \$2,850.

Coley Tops:  
Lot 1, Perks Miss Rambo 8105 (donor and dam of Perks Advance 121R) sold to David Schramm, Iowa and Cody Griffin, Iowa for \$22,500 (1/2 interest).

Lot 2, an ET full brother to Perks Advance 121R and herdsire prospect sold to Gill Red Angus, S.D.; OHR Red Angus, N.D.; Sand Hills Red Angus, N.D.; and Hanson Ranch, Texas, for \$13,000 (2/3 interest and full possession).

Lot 15, Coley's 121R Daorv 5105, (open heifer), sold to Walnut Springs

Farm, Miss.; Badlands Red Angus, N.D.; Fehrman Red Angus, Minn., for \$8,500 (1/2 interest).  
Lot 4, Embryos(3) [Perks Advance 121R x Perks Miss Rambo 8092], sold to Little Creek Farm, Miss., for \$1,800.

The volume buyer was Peter McDaid, Ill., buying seven head. Cattle sold into 15 states.

## Gill Red Angus

Timber Lake, South Dakota  
December 7, 2005

Sale Management: Big Red Genetics  
Auctioneer: Roger Jacobs

Lots	Average
ET Fall Bulls	\$4,125
18 month old bulls	\$3,002
Bred Heifers	\$1,391
Open heifers	\$812

What a great day it turned out to be at the first ever Gill Red Angus "You buy, We bid" Fall Bull Sale. The wind chill was around -5 all day but that didn't stop a huge crowd from rolling in.

There was a tie for the high selling lot of the day. Lot 18 was an ET son out of Gill Horizon 5379 and LMG Susett 724. Lot 25 was another ET son out of LCC Vaquero 1412J and Ms Rambo 7542. Both of these bulls left the ring at \$5,750 and sold to Dan Materi of Strasburg, N.D. The next high selling bull was Lot 3, a son of Rattler 908 and LMG Sara 817. John Rust, Mercer, N.D., chose this guy at \$5,250. Lot 30, a Heavens Door son, went to Glen Fogalman, Opal, S.D., for \$5,000. Four bulls then left the ring at \$4,750 each. Leroy Dubray bought Lot 4 and another ET bull, Lot 19. Ed and Karen Miller from Faith, S.D., took Lot 10, a Heavens Door son out of a Rattler dam. Bruce Flittie from Hosmer, S.D., took the other \$4,750 bull home. He was lot 42, a son of Red Moon and going back to Buster.

The Kaiser Ranch from Linton,

N.D., grabbed the first 20 head of bred heifers and took them home for \$1,400. Chris Keller, Trail City, S.D., took the last 32 head for \$1,385.

The open heifers were a consignment by Prince and Sons from Hays, S.D. They were an outstanding group of cow makers and sold to John Rust from Mercer, N.D., for \$812.

Volume buyers on the bulls were John Owens from Red Bluff, Calif., buying 9 bulls. The Bruce Ranch from Hayes, S.D., grabbed 5 bulls, and Leroy Dubrais from Mobridge, S.D., took 4 bulls home.

## North Dakota Red Select Sale

Sponsored by the  
ND Red Angus Association  
Farmers Livestock,  
Bismarck, North Dakota  
December 10, 2005

Managed by: Big Red Genetics  
Auctioneer: Kyle Gilchrist

Lots	Average
Bred Heifers	\$2,917
Open Heifers	\$2,540
Bred Cows	\$3,100
Flush	\$3,000
Embryos	\$690

The cattle sold at an all-time high with one of the biggest crowds ever at this sale.

Lot 21 was the high selling bred heifer and the overall high selling lot of the day. This lot was consigned by Heart River Ranch, N.D., and was a daughter of Shoco Data. She was extremely long bodied with a lot of style. Namken Red Angus, S.D., purchased her for \$4,750. The second high selling bred heifer was Lot 23 consigned by Spear J Red Angus, Mont. She was a very deep made heifer with loads of capacity, full of muscle, and a daughter of Fritz Chief. Prairie Pride Angus, N.D., grabbed her for \$3,200. The next high selling bred heifer was Lot 44, which

## SALE REPORTS

was consigned by Broken Cowboy Red Angus, N.D. Lot 44 was a daughter of the Genex stud, Brown Vacation. Frenzel Red Angus, Minn., grabbed her for \$3,100. Another top bred heifer sold for \$3,100 to Fenzel Red Angus, Minn. This girl was a daughter of Glacier Legend and was consigned by Jacobson Red Angus, Minn. In the open heifer department, Broken Heart Ranch, S.D., consigned the high selling lot. She was an outstanding LCC New Chapter daughter and sold for \$3,500 to Dave Schramm, Iowa. The von Forell Ranch, Wyo., consigned Lot 41, a daughter of Advancer 9088, going for

\$3,400 to Heart River Ranch, N.D.

The embryos were in high demand and topping this market was Lot 40, consigned by von Forell Ranch, Wyo. This great package was sired by Grand Canyon and was out of Supervision's dam. Lost River Red Angus, Minn., snatched these up for \$1,100 a piece for a total of \$3,300. OHR Red Angus had a top embryo lot, sired by Grand Canyon and out of a top King Rob daughter. This excellent package sold to Mikell Davis, Miss., for \$1,000 apiece for a total of \$3,000. Lot 17 was the only future flush sold that day, going to Circle M Farms, N.C., for \$3000.

Volume buyers of the day were Frenzel Red Angus, Minn., with six lots, Jacobson Red Angus, Minn., with four lots, and Brenner Angus, N.D., and Mikell Davis, Miss., each with three lots apiece. ■

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# Decision Support - Improving on Selection Indexes

by Dr. Mark Enns, Colorado State University

"There is just too much information on these animals. How am I supposed to use all of this?" is a comment often expressed by many commercial and seedstock producers in reference to the overabundance of information available when making a bull purchase/selection decision. This information comes in a variety of forms including EPD, weights, ultrasound measurements, and other pieces of performance data. Many producers are simply overwhelmed by the amount of data and can not determine how to use all of it to make a good selection or purchase decision. Most beef cattle producers want to improve their profitability and when they attend bull sales they want to purchase bulls that will do just that—make them more profitable. In that process, they want to use the best information possible, but the sheer amount of information is frustrating and they revert to selecting animals based on "what looks the best to them" or some intuitive "feel" for what traits are most important in their production system. Studies have repeatedly shown that EPD work, but what can be done to simplify the selection decision and to help the customer purchase the bull that will make them more profitable?

## Background

Breed associations, their constituency, and scientists have realized that information overload is an ongoing problem. To overcome the problem and to help these producers, many associations have begun to deliver dollar values that result from the application of selection indexes. In a nutshell, selection indexes combine EPD with the costs and revenues from beef production, to predict the difference in profitability between animals' progeny. Some rationalization for the development of the selection index and the next step is needed.

Looking at the big picture, the goal of most producers is to remain in busi-

ness. To do this they need to be profitable. Most know the importance of careful selection and that the resulting genetic improvement can indeed improve their bottom line. Seedstock breeders want to improve not only their own profitability but also the profitability of their customers. A seedstock breeder knows that if the customers are more profitable their seedstock will command higher prices. To better use genetic improvement to improve profitability, there must be some way to combine selection with the costs and incomes of production.

Traditionally, producers took an intuitive approach to combining genetic improvement and the economics of production. For instance, they realized that increasing weaning weight increases income from the sale of weaned calves but if female replacements were kept, larger weaning weights likely resulted in larger cows. Larger cows, in turn, had higher maintenance requirements and potentially higher feed costs. So they used their intuition to balance the importance of selecting bulls that produced heavier calves with the desire to keep cow size in control.

As background to this discussion, there are two classes of traits: 1) traits that are directly related to either a cost of production or revenue from the sale of animals—these are the economically relevant traits, and 2) traits that are important because they are related to the economically relevant traits. This latter class of traits is known as indicator traits. The easiest way to distinguish between the two is to ask if the trait were to change one unit, would profitability change? A good example of the latter is birth weight, if birth weight is reduced by one pound, there is likely not much change in whether that calf is born unassisted or not. Birth weight is an indicator of the economically relevant trait calving ease. If the producer needs to assist that heifer

in calving, labor costs increase, the heifer has delayed rebreeding, and calf survivability is reduced. A difficult birth directly influences profitability. The Red Angus Association of America has realized this distinction and now delivers EPD for most economically relevant traits.

Over the last few decades, however, the expanding list of EPD for both indicator and economically relevant traits has resulted in overlap where several EPD may represent the same economically relevant trait. This, in turn, adds even more complexity to the selection decision. Such is the case when both birth weight and calving ease EPD are available. In this situation, the use of intuition to combine genetic improvement and the economics of production is more difficult and the question becomes "How should birth weight and calving ease be ranked for economic importance or should one be ignored?" Another illustration might involve a producer whose main source of income comes from the sale of weaned calves. When selecting a bull should that producer put emphasis on WW or YW EPD? And how should these be ranked relative to calving ease? The breeder is continually challenged to make a selection or purchase decision that makes their operation more profitable.

There are now new selection tools available that move selection decisions from the realm of intuition to a process that assesses how a bull's progeny will impact profitability. These new tools objectively combine EPD with the economics of beef production, allowing us to determine which animals will make an operation more successful.

## The New Approaches

To begin to overcome the challenge of putting all of these EPD together to rank bulls on future profitability, scientists and breed associations began to develop and release to their breeders

## Decision Support - Improving on Selection Indexes

selection indexes. The theory behind this was originally developed by Hazel in 1943, but for various reasons has been slow to be adopted by the industry until recently.

Typical selection indexes as released today use the EPD released by the breed associations and weight those EPD by their relative economic value—the amount they will change either income or expense. For example, if only calving ease (CE) and weaning weight (WW) were important to an operation, the calving ease EPD and the weaning weight EPD would each be weighted by their economic value. In the simple example shown below, assume that the value of calving ease were \$10 per 1 unit of calving ease EPD and weaning weight was worth \$1 per pound and two bulls have the following EPD:

	<b>CE EPD</b>	<b>WW EPD</b>
Bull A	-5	+25
Bull B	+3	+20

The index value for bull A would be  $-\$25 [(-5 * \$10) + (25 * \$1)]$  and bull B would have an index value of  $+\$50$ , meaning there would be a difference of  $\$75 (-\$25 - \$50)$  in profitability of offspring of bull B versus offspring of bull A. Clearly this is an oversimplified example as most producers would use more economically relevant traits than just calving ease and weaning weight. These other traits would need to be included in the index as well. The ideal indexes include weightings for all economically relevant traits or all traits that influence income or expenses of a specific production system.

The weakness with most current indexes is that the economic weights used in these indexes are typically calculated from breed or national averages of production costs and prices received. In reality, production costs vary from ranch to ranch as do performance levels in those varying environments. So what is the problem with using average performance, cost, and income values? Hopefully this example will make it clear. Take two producers and let's assume that both retain ownership of their calves and sell those on a grid. One of the producer's calves average 90% choice and the other producer's calves average 40% choice. In this scenario, the producer whose calves graded 90% choice would not put as much emphasis on marbling score EPD whereas the producer whose calves graded 40% choice should put much more emphasis on marbling score EPD if they wish to continue marketing those animals on a quality grid. Most current selection indexes would emphasize marbling score EPD equally for both. For another example consider a cow/calf operation that has 90% conception in yearling heifers. That operation would put considerably less selection pressure on heifer pregnancy EPD than an operation whose heifer pregnancy rates were 60%. For either of these scenarios the economic weight used in a selection index would most certainly be different. Most currently delivered selection indexes include these generalizations, but some have taken the first step in overcoming this by delivering indexes that were

## Decision Support - Improving on Selection Indexes

designed for specific marketing programs. While this is a start in the right direction, these selection indexes do not address ranch to ranch variation in performance and costs of production.

There are at least 2 options for overcoming the limitation associated with the generalizations in current indexes. The first is to identify personnel to help develop specialized selection indexes for your operation. Typically this is some sort of consultant or professional offering these services. This approach has often been taken by breeders overseas. Another option is the use of a decision support system that allows producers to develop economic rankings of animals themselves which can be tailored specifically to their production system.

Colorado State University as part of the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium (NBCEC) has been developing just such a system. The NBCEC is a federally funded project designed to help the universities involved in beef cattle genetic evaluation enhance research programs. Primary goals of the consortium are to improve the beef cattle genetic evaluation system in the U.S. and to reduce the time for delivery of results of research to the industry. The web-based system CSU is developing uses information input by the producer on their production system, management, economics, and genetic parameters of the herd to calculate a "dollar value" for each bull. This dollar value can then be used just as dollar values from selection indexes are used. The advantage of a customizable program like this is the ability to design each ranking for a specific production and marketing system, thereby solving the problems inherent with generalized indexes. This system overcomes the issue of different levels of production in each herd and the emphasis those should carry.

### Decision Support and the Future

Currently the system is designed to access the present list of EPD and assumes that calves are marketed at weaning. We at CSU are currently enhancing the system and anticipate release in the near future of a system that allows producers to choose when animals are marketed from weaning or through the feedlot or on to a carcass basis. Additionally, with the multibreed genetic evaluation prototype being developed through the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium, the system will also account for crossbreeding systems, and the heterosis and improved performance gained from those mating systems. The system will also allow comparison of animals from different breeds and evaluate their potential influence on profitability.

The strength of this system is the ability of seedstock producers to help their customers choose bulls that are the best for their unique production systems and also to allow the commercial breeders to rank bulls based on the how those bulls will influence the profitability of their ranch. ■

*Editor's Note: Parts of this article originally appeared in the [Bragus Journal](#)*

# Ultrasound Update

Ultrasounding yearling breeding stock in valid contemporary groups allows for the early detection, although still at a low accuracy, of those animals that have outstanding potential for carcass traits. Perhaps more important, it identifies those animals that are extremely poor representatives of the breed. Either way, it is objective information that can be used to calculate Carcass EPDs, which can then be used by commercial customers when evaluating potential Red Angus seedstock.

Please find the 2006 Ultrasound Technician list from the Ultrasound Guidelines Council (UGC). These technicians are certified for the year 2005 by the UGC as field technicians. They meet or exceed the requirements of the Ultrasound Guidelines Council to collect ultrasound scan images on beef cattle for fat thickness, ribeye

area, rump fat and intramuscular fat. The Red Angus Association of America requires that a certified technician be used to enable the Association to accept the data.

Please also find listed the four centralized laboratories for processing ultrasound images. These labs utilize only technicians that meet or exceed the requirements of the UGC to interpret beef cattle ultrasound images for fat thickness, ribeye area, rump fat and intramuscular fat. In addition, these labs use interpretation software that has been UGC approved and/or validated.

The Ultrasound Guidelines Council was started several years ago by the Beef Breed Council as a method of assuring minimum standards for ultrasound data quality. The Red Angus Association of America was very active in the formation of the UGC, and strongly supports its ongoing goals and actions.

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## 2006 APTC Field Technician List

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Fabiano Araujo - Argentina

Jeremy Arthur - Columbus, MT - (406) 322-5386

Shari Beamish - Hamiota, MB - (204) 759-2727

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# Ultrasound Processing Labs

## National Cup Lab and Technology Center

PO Box 627  
413 Kellogg Avenue  
Ames, IA 50010-0627  
Phone: 515-232-9442  
Fax: 515-232-9578  
cuplab@cuplab.com  
www.cuplab.com

National Cup Lab and Technology Center accepts images from the Aloka 500-V, the "new" Alkoa, and the Classic 200.

Mark Henry is the lab manager.  
Processing fees are \$4 per head.

## Ultrainsights Processing Lab

1767 210th Avenue  
Diagonal, IA 50845  
Phone: 641-234-0183  
Fax: 641-464-2193  
ultrainsights@iowatelecom.net

Becky Hays is the owner and lab manager.

Processing fees are \$4 per head.

## International Livestock Image Analysis (ILIA)

4594 Union Rd  
Harrison, AR 72601  
Toll Free: 877-900-2333  
Fax: 720-533-8909  
sherry@ilialab.com

Ilia accepts images from the Aloka 500-V, the "new" Alkoa, and

Blackbox. Ilia has its own field image collection software called BIA.

Sherry Parks is the current lab manager. Processing fees are \$3 per head using BIA software and

\$4 per head using non-BIA software.

# Notable News



## **Burt Receives Travel Fellowship**

(Fort Worth, TX) - Alaina Burt, of Jacobson, Minnesota, a graduate student in the Journalism and Mass Communications program at South Dakota State University recently received the highly coveted International Stockmen's Educational Foundation

Travel Fellowship to the 2006 International Livestock Congress in Houston, Texas, March 1-2.

The travel fellowship was awarded to 25 students from seven countries and 23 universities including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Ecuador and the United States.

Supported by the Vivian L. Smith Foundation, students are selected by a multi-national selection committee, with half of the 25 recipients representing international students. Fellowships include airfare, ground transportation, hotel and scheduled meals during the International Livestock Congress. Scholastic achievement, leadership experiences and letters of recommendation are all part of the stringent qualifying requirements. This setting provides the students with the opportunity to interact with world industry leaders and contribute to the solutions that will shape the advancement of the livestock industry into the next millennium.

Following their experiences, students are required to write a professional paper of not more than 12 pages to be submitted to the International Stockmen's Educational Foundation board and to their respective schools department heads. Papers are also published in the event proceedings and on the International Livestock Congress web site at [www.livestockcongress.com](http://www.livestockcongress.com). The author of the student paper evaluated as outstanding will also receive registration, airfare and accommodations from the ISEF to Beef Australia, May 1-7 in Rockhampton, Queensland.

## **U.S. May Lift Its Ban on Older Canadian Cattle**

USDA plans to propose a new rule on the ban in the next six to eight months, according to Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Administrator Dr. Ron

DeHaven. BSE-related restrictions on the import of Canadian cattle, in place since 2003 were lifted earlier this year for younger animals, but cattle 30 months of age and older and the beef derived from them are still barred. The rule will analyze the situation extensively and will likely require a minimum 60 day comment period, followed by adequate time to review comments and develop the final rule. If the rule is published in the spring of 2006 as anticipated, it would not be implemented before summer. - *National Cattlemen's Beef Association*

## **Higher Quality Beef Supplies Remain Tight**

Choice boxed beef prices are well above year-earlier levels as supplies of high-quality beef remain tight. In September and October the proportion of steers and heifers grading Choice and higher was near 54 percent, well below the near 55 to 56 percentage range of a year earlier. Numerous reasons have been discussed recently as to the culprit in the grading proportion shortfall in cattle grading Choice and higher. Heavier placement weight's for much of this year may create a grading problem because of their inherent tendency to grow rather than finish. But while the weights are heavier, the impact is likely to be more as a marginal contributor rather than the main problem. The last couple of quarterly *Cattle on Feed* reports indicate heifers continue to comprise a smaller proportion of the cattle on feed inventory. The July 1 *Cattle on Feed* report indicated the number of heifers on feed was 4.6 percent below a year earlier; the October 1 report indicated a drop of 10.6 percent. Consequently, heifers are making up a smaller share of total slaughter than in 2004 or 2003. The reduced share of heifers in the steer/heifer slaughter mix is likely a contributing factor in lower-grading wholesale beef because of heifers' slightly higher propensity to grade. Another concern that has come up over the years is the protein levels in rations. Excessive protein rations tend to result in growth, while higher carbohydrate rations favor higher fat placement and finishing. There is also the consideration that fed cattle are being marketed ahead of schedule and before reaching their full market finish potential, which seems

counterintuitive given the low grain prices, negative profits and lack of sufficient numbers of Choice cattle. An apparent single issue has not materialized, and may not. - *Economic Research Service*

### **Hong Kong Ends U.S. Beef Ban**

Hong Kong has reopened its market to boneless beef from U.S. cattle less than 30 months of age. Hong Kong authorities said that the government would begin processing import requests immediately, but that each consignment of beef must have prior written permission from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. There were hints that the 30-month restriction was an initial phase and the possibility remained to reinstate imports of all U.S. beef products. Hong Kong was the fifth-largest export market for the U.S. and imported about \$90 million worth of U.S. beef in 2003. - *Drovers Alert*

### **EU Bans Four More Antibiotics**

A European Union-wide ban on using antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed went into effect Jan. 1. This is the final step in the EU's strategy to phase out antibiotics used for non-medicinal purposes. It's part of the European Commission's overall effort to tackle antibiotic resistance. Antibiotics can now only be added to animal feed for veterinary purposes.

- The following four substances will be removed:
- Salinomycin sodium used for piglets and finishing pigs.
  - Avilamycin used for young pigs, finishing pigs, chickens and turkeys.
  - Flavophospholipol used for rabbits, laying hens, market chickens, turkeys, pigs, calves and cattle.
  - Monensin sodium used for market cattle. - *Drovers Alert*

### **Drought In Cattle Country**

Various cattle-abundant regions across the United States continue to suffer from severe drought conditions this week, causing grass fires and threatening homes and ranches. According to Texas Governor Rick Perry's office, since December more than 130 fires had consumed over 80,000 acres of land and destroyed hundreds of homes. Three Texans have lost their lives. The U.S. Drought Monitor, <http://hill.beef.org/drought.asp> has gauged Severe to Exceptional drought in states including Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Illinois, Nebraska, Missouri, Kentucky, Iowa, northern Louisiana, and more.

NCBA Chief Economist Gregg Doud indicates that "as of now, many states outside of Texas are also being affected. If we look at the numbers, some of the largest cattle production regions of the United States are struggling through this drought."

According to Cattle-Fax, as January 1, 2005 the total

beef cow inventory in four of these top affected states is estimated to be: (1) 5,432,000 million beef cows in Texas; (2) 2,161,000 million in Missouri; (3) 2,055,000 in Oklahoma; and (4) 1,909,000 in Nebraska. That's 9,648,000 of the 33,055,000 estimated beef cows in the U.S. - which means that around 29 percent of total U.S. cattle population can be found in these four drought-affected states alone. NCBA will continue to urge Federal Disaster Assistance for these areas on Capitol Hill. *The Cattlemen's Capitol Concerns (CCC)*

### **Cattle Update: A Cow's Wish For 2006**

Here's a wish list I developed a few years ago (with revisions), but it's a good idea to review it. Here's wishing you a successful 2006.

In 2006 please give me:

1. Good working facilities - so I don't get hurt
2. Improved pasture management for better grazing
3. A premise ID and records to enhance my calf's and my own marketability
4. A good free choice loose mineral with high copper and selenium
5. Regular body condition checks to decide when to supplement

6. A bull that meets VQA requirements, maybe even an AI bull
  7. Attention during calving - sometimes I need help or my calf is weak
  8. A 60 to 90 day breeding season, I don't like that bull that much
  9. A complete vaccination program that includes leptospirosis
  10. Process my calf at birth so he gets a good start and is identified
  11. Dewormer for my calves, but none for me. I'm resistant to worms!
  12. Control of those darn flies
  13. A vaccination and weaning program for my calf so he won't get sick
  14. Veterinarians that know what they're doing and can give you an estimated calving date.
  15. A marketing program for my calf so he sells well and you can afford to keep me another year.
  16. Finally, if this is the year I don't measure up - market me quickly and effectively. Not as a cripple or thin cow.
- Source: John B. Hall, Extension Animal Scientist, Beef, Virginia Tech*  
*Taken from Cattle Network*

## RAAA New Members

Crescent Mesa Ranch  
Monte and Sandra Mackey  
19927 Encino Ridge St  
San Antonio, TX 78259-1908

Greg Hale  
PO Box 117  
Perryton, TX 79070

Larry Kirby  
2106 Cherokee Looop  
Graham, TX 76450

Nebeker Cattle Co  
Wayne Nebeker  
1055 3400 E  
Battle Mountain, NV 89820

Miller Cattle Co  
Chuck and Christi Miller  
220 S Purdy Ln  
Columbia, MO 65201

Corey Nixon  
2039 Beautiful Home Road  
Tompkinsville, KY 42167

4N Cattle Company  
Matt Nelson  
1630 Union Ave  
Belmond, IA 50421

TX Enterprises  
Charlie and Amy Thomas  
4728 Gum Tree Rd  
Winston Salem, NC 27107

Lazy Moon Farm  
Roy Moon  
RR 3 Box 98  
Fort Gay, WV 25514

Matejeck Red Angus  
David Matejeck  
Box 364  
Lakota, ND 58344

Forster Land and Cattle  
Jeff Foster  
2135 Hwy 545  
Dubach, LA 71235

Brookins Red Angus  
Rodney Brookins  
61306 308th Ave  
Millville, MN 55957

D & L Farms  
Doug and Linda Walker  
2377 Hwy 448  
Greensburg, LA 70441

Navillus Red Angus  
John Sullivan  
PO Box 315  
Brookfield, MO 64628

Mirror Image Farm  
Dave and Nina McCain  
4008 N County Road 300E  
Frankfort, IN 46041

Willow's Rest Farm  
Harold Cannon  
14316 Virtue Road  
Lenoir City, TN 37772

Cripple Creek Farms  
William King  
1745 Welch Rd  
Noth Java, NY 14113

Byrne Ranch  
Jim Byrne  
1321 Cutler-Lautenschlager Rd  
Endicott, WA 99125

James Glen Smith III  
1411 Pine Grove Rd  
Stanley, VA 22951

Jumping Cow Ranch  
Grant Thayer  
24063 County Rd 122  
Ramah, CO 80832

Spike J Cattle  
Julian Garcia  
50 Casey Lane  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

William and Charlotte Gilbert  
Box 393  
Eastend, SK S0N 0T0  
Canada

Wayward Wind Ranch  
Richard Phillips  
3974 Franklin St Rd  
Auburn, NY 13021

High Valley Ranch Land &  
Cattle Co  
JC Willhite & Bill Dejernes  
11650 High Valley Rd  
Clearlake Oak, CA 95432

Early Bird Ranch  
Douglas and Sally Marshall  
61 Manner Frank Rd  
Milan, TN 38358

## **JUNIORS**

Ryan Halko  
573 E Hunter Rd  
Sand Coulee, MT 59472

Kaleb West  
2190 Lenin Rd  
Madisville, KY 42431

Shane Coulter  
26568 Sievers Bend  
Rushford, MN 55971

Travis Ruddle  
4248 Hwy 28W  
Adair, OK 74330

Michael Matejcek  
PO Box 364  
Lakota, ND 58344

Jara Settles  
84663 Hwy 35  
Hoskins, NE 68740

Hannah Melchior  
5275 46th St  
Almont, ND 58520

# Calendar of Events

## February

- 4 Loonan 31st Annual Production Sale, Corning, IA
- 12 Early Bird Ad Deadline for April ARA Magazine
- 14 Iowa Beef Expo Red Angus Classic, Des Moines, Iowa
- 15 Members return Heifer Exposure Fall 2005 Inventory
- 15 RAAA mails out reminder for Spring 2006 Herd Inventory
- 16 Red Power Performance Tested Bull Sale, Valley City, ND
- 18 Nordlund Stock Farm Annual Bull Sale, Clearbrook, MN
- 20 Final Ad Deadline for April ARA Magazine
- 22 Messmer Red Angus Sale, Stockmen's Livestock, Dickinson, ND
- 22 Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic, Kearney, NE
- 22-23 Lorenzen Annual Bull Sale, Pendleton, OR
- 24 Badlands/Fehrman/Severance/Presser Bulls, Mandan, ND
- 25 JD Red Angus/6L Ranch Bulls, Aberdeen, SD
- 25 Heart River Ranch Annual Sale, Belfield, ND
- 27 Panhandle Cattle Co., Annual Sale, Lakeside, NE
- 28 Cowman's Classic All Breed Bull Sale, Spokane, WA

## March

- 1 RAAA mails Fall 2005 pre-listed weaning worksheets for Fall 2005 calf crop
- 1 Broken Heart Ranch 28th Annual Production Sale, Firesteel, SD
- 1 Feddes/C-T Red Angus Bulls, Manhattan, MT
- 2 Bieber Red Angus Annual Production Sale, Leola, SD
- 2 Fritz Red Angus Sale, Brady, MT
- 4 Illinois Power of the Reds Auction, Congerville, IL
- 7 Hall Red Angus Annual Production Sale, Burwell, NE
- 7 Wedel Red Angus, Leoti, KS
- 8 Larson and Strawberry Ridge Joint Production Sale, Livingston, MT
- 10 Leland Annual Production Sale, Sidney, MT
- 11 Hueftle Cattle Co Red Angus Bull Sale, Cozad, NE
- 11 Red Alliance Auction, Stillwater, OK
- 11 Janssen Farms Red Angus Private Treaty, Geneseo, KS
- 11 Lazy D Ranch 5th Annual Production Sale, Hobbs, NM
- 12 Early Bird Ad Deadline for May ARA Magazine
- 13 Walz Plateau Bull Sale, Ogallala, NE
- 14 5L Red Angus Production Sale, Sheridan, MT
- 15 Basin Reds, Hobson, MT
- 16 Loosli Red Angus Bulls, Ashton, ID
- 18 Altenburg Super Baldy, Wellington, CO
- 18 Milk Creek Reds, Plevna, MT
- 18 Red Hill Farms 1st Annual Bull & Female Sale, Lafayette, TN
- 18 Circle A Angus Ranch, Iberia, MO
- 20 Early Bird Ad Deadline for May/June ARA Magazine
- 20 vonForell Bull Sale, Wheatland, WY
- 21 Pieper Red Angus 17th Annual Production Sale, Hay Springs, NE
- 21 Green Mountain Red Angus Annual Bull Sale, Three Forks, MT
- 22 Pelton Simmental/Red Angus 13th Annual Sale, Burdett, KS
- 22 Washington Cattleman Assn. All Breed Bull Test Sale, Prosser, WA
- 23 Mushrush-Beckton Joint Production Sale, Elmdale, KS
- 23 Schuler Red Angus 24th Annual Production Sale, Bridgeport, NE
- 25 Croissant Red Angus Spring Production Sale, Briggsdale, CO
- 25 Best Of The West Sale, Cottonwood, CA
- 25 Texas Red Angus Sale 2006, Glen Rose, TX
- 25 Fischers 13th Annual Spring Fling Sale, Harlowton, MT
- 28-29 Leachman of Colorado Bulls and Females, Wellington, CO
- 29 Westphal Red Angus Sale, Grass Range, MT
- 30 UBar Production Sale, Glasgow, MT
- 31 PA Performance Tested Bull Sale, Pennsylvania Furnace, PA
- 31 Redland Red Angus 2006 Annual Bull Sale, Hysham, MT

## April

- 1 SERAA Grasstime Auction, Cullman, AL
- 1 Mid-America Red Angus Bull Sale, Maryville, MO
- 3 Final Ad Deadline for May/June ARA Magazine
- 6 Midland Bull Test, Columbus, MT
- 6 Miller's Rose Ranch 2nd Annual Bull Sale, Snowville, UT
- 8 Parker Ranch Renewed Commitment Sale, Fort Smith, AR
- 8 Beckton Red Angus, Sheridan, WY
- 9 Coley Cattle/Graystone Cattle Bulls, Birmingham, IA
- 9-11 Leachman Cattle Barons 33rd 'Homecoming' Sale, Billings, MT
- 10 Spear J Red Angus & Bowles J5 Reds Joint Production Sale, Glasgow, MT
- 14 Red Western Red Angus Bull Sale, Crawford, NE
- 14 Gregg Ranch Red Angus, Carter, South Dakota
- 15 Sonstegard Bull Sale, Montevideo, MN
- 22 Missouri Show-Me-Red Auction, Springfield, MO