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Message from the Board

by Larry Croissant, District 3 Director

Multi-Breed EPDs

One of the core policies of the Red Angus Association is to use the best available science. The Red Angus Association has had the development of Multi Breed EPD's as a project for several years. It has been committee driven and fully supported by the board. It has been on the Breed Improvement Committee's agenda for several years, the Young Breeders made it a priority project in their meetings, and it was incorporated into the Strategic Plan when it was updated in 2003. The Joint Venture intended to apply this science by aligning multiple breeds. A Multi Breed EPD loses its value without breed partners and their accompanying data base. The Joint Venture, however, was unable to keep the major breeds aligned. During the past year the universities involved in the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium have taken the lead to get the data bases of the breeds into a Data Base Warehouse and produce the first Multi Breed EPD's with all of the larger breeds included except American Angus and Hereford. Each breed retains total ownership and access to their data, and their data can only be accessed and used with their permis-

The Multi Breed EPD model which was developed provides an evaluation of the genetic merit of animals of different breeds and combinations of breeds and puts the EPD's on the same base. It accounts for breed effects and the components due to heterosis of a hybrid animal's phenotypic performance and provides their true genetic merit. A comparison of animals across breed makeup only occurs within a herd and within contemporary groups within a herd. Comparisons are never made between herds. Comparisons are made between different breeds and hybrids only when they are in the same herd and the same contemporary groups within the herd. A breeder using a single breed will get the same

in herd performance ratios and P+ EPD's as he has in the past.

Other breeds have been using older multi-breed analysis techniques with limited multi-breed data bases. Currently, there are several branded hybrids for cattlemen to choose from. We need to get our Red Angus cattle evaluated on an even playing field with other breeds and hybrids. This allows the commercial cattleman, our only true customer, to select the best cattle for his operation. This is important to Red Angus breeders and the cattle industry. If we believe our cattle perform and add value from birth to "beef on the plate" the surest way to keep them a sought after solution is to get them fairly evaluated against other breeds and hybrids. Without the best science making the comparisons, we take the chance of commercial cattlemen making decisions based on promotion campaigns, rumor and hearsay. This resulted in the "Bull of the Year" selection process of the 70's & 80's.

Applying this science has currently led to an underlying controversy within our breed. Pros and cons have been circulating in the "rumor mill". Facts get misrepresented and distorted. This is an important direction for our breed. It has always been our breed's philosophy to adopt new science to more accurately describe our cattle. This has helped position our breed as a leader in the beef industry and has greatly contributed to the success we are currently experiencing. I would encourage you to seek out the facts. Read the articles in the last few issues of the magazine, read the board minutes, visit with your board representative, come to convention and attend one of our board meetings. Board meetings are open to all members and you are always welcome! Get active, be informed, and vote!

Thanks for your time. I hope to visit with you anytime and see you at convention.