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Association Commentary

by Bob Hough, RAAA Executive Secretary

The release of the new EPDs is always a time of excitement. It is fun to see how young bulls have tracked as they gain accuracy, as well as being able to search for bulls meeting specific criteria via the web. The Sire Summary, which is free upon request, will be mailed soon, as well as herd EPD reports to all purebred breeders. Commercial customers can also request a complimentary EPD Report. Through a link on the web site, breeders can access decision support software to help them make breeding decisions. Also available are dam summaries, data extracts for sale catalogues and performance pedigrees, all for reasonable fees.

It is no surprise to any Red Angus breeder or long time customer, that the release of new EPDs is exciting around Red Angus circles. After all, objective selection is the basis upon which the breed was founded. As the breed continues to grow rapidly and attract new members and bull customers, I think it is good to review the Core Policies that have helped shape this great Red Angus breed. In this column, I would like to highlight six of the nine Core Policies that speak specifically to the objective selection of cattle:

Core Policy 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 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.

Core Policy 3. 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 technical committee and not the board of directors.

Core Policy 5. 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.

Core Policy 7. The ARA Magazine is sent to all bull customers, so in general, the editorial content of the magazine has a commercial and technical focus, i.e. typical breed journal articles such as member profiles are avoided.

Core Policy 8. 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.

Core Policy 9. The RAAA actively seeks out and implements new technologies that are based on sound, scientific principles.

At Red Angus we just don't talk a good story, we live it. These Core Policies are living, breathing principles that have helped make Red Angus the industry's preeminent performance breed. If you want to take out as much of the guess work as possible when purchasing your next herd sires Red Angus is definitely the breed to be with. If you have any questions about this year's EPDs, please feel free to call Larry Keenan or myself, and we will look forward to working with you. ■