



Red Angus Multi Breed Prototype

by Larry Keenan and Dr. Bob Hough

As you have read in previous ARA Magazine editions, RAAA is actively pursuing Multi-Breed EPDs through collaboration with the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium (NBCEC). The reason for this pursuit is two-fold: 1) the Multi-Breed models are the most technically advanced and sustainable available to RAAA; 2) to carry on the RAAA founders' focus on serving commercial customers and supporting crossbreeding, we must make mating decisions easier for commercial producers.

The biggest obstacle facing commercial producers who wish to utilize crossbreeding lies in the fact that all breeds use different base adjustments to standardize their EPDs. This results in all breeds having a different 'look' to their EPDs. To better serve our commercial producers, this simply must change. In order for this to change all breeds must use the same base adjustment. Through the NBCEC's Multi-Breed evaluation, all participating breeds will be adjusted with the same base! Thus, commercial producers will only have to learn the 'look' of one suite of EPDs. The NBCEC believes that commercial producers are most familiar with American Angus Association (AAA) EPDs. Therefore, NBCEC has decided to adjust the Multi-Breed EPDs to an AAA base. Another benefit to this decision is even though AAA is not participating in the Multi-Breed evaluation; you will now be able to compare RAAA EPDs with AAA EPDs.

Due to the NBCEC decision on using an AAA base, the 'look' of RAAA EPDs will change through the implementation of Multi-Breed EPDs. Table 1 details the preliminary new 'look', as it compares Fall 2006 RAAA EPDs calculated at Colorado State University to RAAA EPDs calculated in the latest NBCEC Multi-Breed prototype. **Although detailed analysis of these Multi-Breed EPDs has provided us with a high comfort level with their precision and accuracy, keep in mind that these Multi-Breed EPDs are still considered preliminary, and therefore are subject to possible change.**

To compare our RAAA Multi-Breed calculated EPDs to AAA EPDs, Table 1 lists the average AAA calculated EPDs for their 'Current Sires'. Due to the fact that Red Angus and Black Angus cattle have the same origin, one would expect the genetics to be similar. This expectation is proven by comparing RAAA Multi-Breed EPDs (set to an AAA base) and AAA EPDs. Additionally, this comparison indicates the method NBCEC has used to set the Multi-Breed EPDs to an AAA base is very accurate.

In the pre-Multi-Breed era, the only avenue commercial producers could use to compare EPDs across breeds was the Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) Across Breed Adjustment Factors (Table 2). These factors are used to adjust each breed's EPDs to an AAA base for the pur-

pose of comparing the genetic potential of animals. To use these adjustment factors, commercial producers must add the adjustment factor to the perspective breed's EPD. Table 2 shows that the MARC adjustment factors have been underestimating the genetic potential of Red Angus cattle. With these adjustment factors being the only means a commercial producer has to compare genetics across breeds, many may steer away from Red Angus bulls. The Multi-Breed EPDs will correct that wrong turn!

With the majority of breeds participating in the NBCEC Multi-Breed evaluation being Continental breeds, it has been a concern that Red Angus cattle would appear to be lower growth as compared to the other breeds. Table 1 details the overall average EPD for animals included in the NBCEC Multi-Breed prototype evaluation. Obviously, Red Angus has continued its superiority of low birth; however, Red Angus compares very favorably to other breeds for growth.

The Multi-Breed evaluation will provide Red Angus members with new doors to open. Red Angus producers should start to prepare themselves to reap the fruits gained from the breeds continued emphasis on accurate genetic predictions. Preparation starts at learning the 'look' of these new Multi-Breed EPDs. **It is absolutely imperative to remember that although our EPDs will 'look' different, you are still looking at the same animal, the progeny from that animal will still perform just as they have in the past, and they will still rank the same as they do now within the Red Angus population.** The only difference is now you have a more powerful tool to convince that potential bull buyer to buy Red Angus bulls. ■

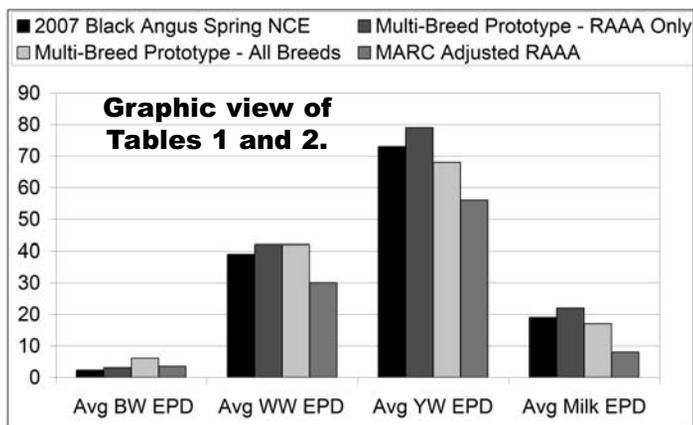


Table 1. Comparison of average EPDs across various National Cattle Evaluations.

Trait	2006 RAAA Fall NCE	Multi-Breed Prototype RAAA Only	Multi-Breed Prototype All Breeds	2007 AAA Spring NCE Black Angus
	Avg	Avg	Avg	Avg
BW	0.5	3.1	6.1	2.3
WW	32	42	42	39
YW	56	79	68	73
Milk	16	22	17	19
TM	32	44	38	NA

Table 2. MARC Adjustment Factors

Trait	MARC Red Angus Adjustment Factor	MARC Adjusted RAAA EPDs Avg	Multi-Breed Prototype RAAA Only Avg
	BW	3	3.5
WW	-1.6	30	42
YW	-0.08	56	79
Milk	-8.1	8	22