

RAAA National Office

4201 N. Interstate 35 • Denton, TX 76207
(940) 387-3502 • Fax (940) 383-4036
Email: info@redangus.org
www.redangus.org

RAAA National Staff

Executive Secretary

Dr. R.L. "Bob" Hough
bob@redangus.org

Association Administrative Director

Betty Grimshaw
betty@redangus.org

Office Administrative Director

Judy Edwards
judy@redangus.org

Accounting Director

Jeanene McCuiston
jeanene@redangus.org

Commercial Marketing Director

Ron Bolze
ron@redangus.org

Marketing Programs Coordinator

Greg Comstock
greg@redangus.org

FCCP Quality Assurance Manager

Ann Holsinger
ann@redangus.org

Advertising/Art Director

Kevin LeMaster
(515) 225-0051
kevin@redangus.org

Information Technology Director

Kip Lewis
kip@redangus.org

Research/Special Projects Coordinator

Larry Keenan
larry@redangus.org

Junior Red Angus Advisor

Dawn Bernhard
(515) 679-4006
brnhrd@ncn.net

Programmer / Database Manager

Brad Dinwiddie

Registration Department Manager

Kenda Ponder
kenda@redangus.org

Registration Department Staff

Lucila "Lucy" Meyer
lucy@redangus.org

Kay Hurley
kay@redangus.org

Angelia Brooks
angelia@redangus.org



Association Commentary

by Bob Hough, RAAA Executive Secretary

Crossbreeding

This annual issue of ARA Magazine focuses on crossbreeding. Crossbreeding and the advantages of heterosis have been well documented particularly impacting traits of relatively low heritability such as calf livability, fertility and longevity. Overall, the pounds weaned per cow exposed can be improved up to 25 percent under ideal circumstances. This begs the question, why isn't crossbreeding being utilized more extensively in our industry?

I think one of the main reasons is breed complementarity. Many breeds simply have too much horse power for certain environments, and breeds that have more acceptable levels of performance for tough environments have fallen out of favor in our industry. In more favorable environments, a large number of breeds become available for commercial producers to choose from. We are also effectively losing breeds from a commercially viable standpoint as certain breeds have turned their focus away from commercial production and towards the club calf industry. Of course good breeders still exist within these breeds, but as they move more towards a club calf economy, the cattle don't shed and they tend to be unsound being too straight legged. The narrowing of the gene pool for crossbreeding is of genuine concern to me, because if breeders can not find the proper breed to complement what they have, straight breeding becomes a viable option.

Does that mean I have given up on crossbreeding; the answer is no. One solution to utilizing the higher horse power cattle in tough environments is to utilize F-1 hybrid bulls. This tones down the amount of performance in the cattle and drops the amount of milk and Continental influence in the calf crop. The major draw back to this system is that the calves are not eligible for the Feeder Calf Certification Program because they are not sired by a registered Red Angus bull. One thing we must do is set aside industry prejudices and use cer-

tain commercially viable breeds especially on the British side. The red baldy was a good cross 50 years ago and is still a good cross today for tough environments.

The other major tools that commercial producers now have at their disposal are excellent heat synchronization systems for use with timed A.I. This makes A.I. viable for most producers, and allows them to implement a crossbreeding program while still using only Red Angus bulls for natural service. This takes out much of the hassle of managing bulls of different breeds and having multiple breeding pastures.

Heterosis is a tremendous tool when utilized properly, which is why the Red Angus supported crossbreeding practically since its inception. However, a word of caution, when crossbreeding is done haphazardly and production levels (milk, etc.) become ill fitted to the environment, crossbreeding can lead a producer down the wrong road. The take home message is that if you are going to crossbreed you should do your home work and do it right when it comes to implementation. If you are not willing to make that commitment or don't have the quality seedstock to implement a crossbreeding system properly, it is best to stay with straight breeding.

Board Approves GPS

The RAAA Board approved a contract with International Brangus Breeders Association to start a jointly owned company, Genetic Performance Solutions. GPS has now been incorporated, capitalized and is up and running. This company will produce EPDs based on software leased from University of Georgia and is where Red Angus will be getting its EPDs in the future. The company also owns on-line registry software, which along with the EPD calculations will be offered to the industry through service agreements. RAAA will not at this time be utilizing the registry software, so this will have no impact on our registry system. ■