

Change.....

Welcome it, or get beat by it

By Larry Keenan, RAAA Research/Special Projects Coordinator

The days of not being able to include Heifer Pregnancy (HPG) Expected Progeny Difference (EPD) in non-parent bull buying decisions are over! With the recent changes to the HPG EPD calculation (see p. 16 & 18 in the July/August ARA issue), the majority of non-parent animals now have an HPG EPD. This will give our commercial producers the ability to select bulls that will sire females that will get bred and stay bred.

If you are of the opinion that commercial producers will not select for high HPG EPDs, you need to remind yourself that reproduction is the most economically important trait in the beef industry. This is extremely important to the number one Red Angus bull purchasing customer base: commercial producers. Additionally, we have all heard the news that the nation's cowherd is growing and will continue to grow. This growth is coming from cattle producers retaining ownership in heifers to put back into their operation. This trend will likely continue next year. Keeping this in mind, you can expect commercial producers to emphasize HPG EPDs in their bull buying decisions. If your bull does not have an HPG EPD, commercial producers will be apt to look elsewhere for a bull with known HPG genetics.

You are probably saying, "How do I prevent this from happening?" There is only one way: complete and submit heifer exposure forms on the heifers that you have retained and exposed to bulls. In the majority of cases, this information will enable us to calculate HPG EPDs on the bulls. Heifer exposure forms for Spring herds were due on August 15th; however, these forms are still being accepted. If you have misplaced your heifer exposure forms, contact the RAAA registration department for assistance. Additionally, you can submit heifer exposure information via the internet at <http://rrts.redangus.org/Login.asp> For Fall herds, heifer exposure forms will be sent out in October and will be due February 15th.

We are likely to see a change in the selection criteria placed on bulls by commercial producers in the upcoming sales. They know the importance of reproduction, and will select bulls with known HPG genetics. Do your part in providing vital information to your commercial bull buyers; complete and submit your heifer exposure forms.