

Dalebanks Digest

Fall 2013

Above Average in Everything

Congratulations to the *Kansas Stockman*, who recently won two prestigious awards in this year's Livestock Publications Council Advertising Contest, 1st place for best headline and 2nd place for best 4-color, full page advertisement. Both awards were given for the 2012 Dalebanks Angus bull sale ad, "*It's Hard to Be Above Average in Everything*," which the *Stockman* helped us design.

We certainly aren't in business to win advertising contests, but we are very proud of the philosophy behind this headline and advertisement. The notion of meeting or beating the average in each EPD was not something that we just came up with for the sake of an award-winning ad. For 109 years, the Dalebanks program has not wavered from E.L. "Bert" Barrier's vision: *To produce balanced-trait bulls that profit their owners through their production.*

The 115 bulls in this year's sale represent the **top half** of more than 200 bull calves born in the Dalebanks program in 2012. In a time when extremes have permeated everything from weather--to politics--to cattle breeding, we believe that this balance is a refreshing—and logical—concept.

We look forward to your evaluation of these sound, rugged hard-working bulls on November 23rd!

Sunflower Supreme Program

By Jaymelynn Farney, Southeast Beef Systems Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

The Sunflower Supreme program is a cooperative effort between K-State Research and Extension and the Kansas Department of Agriculture. The intent is to provide knowledge, guidance, and tools to assist beef producers in improved health and reproductive performance of replacement heifers and in turn increase cow longevity within a herd. Focus will primarily be on decreasing dystocia issues, a whole herd health program, and breeding techniques for success.

This will be a great educational tool for producers and all the guidelines can be adopted in any operation raising replacement females. With expanded collaboration between producers, Extension, and local veterinarians, this program will add value and revenue to southeast KS cowherds and provide quality replacement heifers to increase the demand for Kansas cattle.

Producers who wish to participate with 2013 spring born heifers need to enroll by October 1. Heifers which are raised following the protocol will be eligible for a **special sale** in the **early winter of 2014**.

Producers interested in participating in the program should contact their Extension Agent or visit sunflowersupreme.org for additional information.

Ranch-Raised and Ready

We are always pleased when customers comment that Dalebanks bulls maintain their condition well while servicing females during their initial breeding season. While no young bull can survive on bare ground and rocks, we strive to breed and develop cattle that are highly adaptable to all environments and management programs.

For decades, the Dalebanks bull development ration has been formulated to achieve **optimum** (NOT maximum) gain during an approximately 100-day feeding period. Our goal is to provide enough nutrition to see differences in individual bulls' gain without compromising rumen function that can lead to feet issues or infertility.

In 2005, we altered the way we maintained our coming two-year old bulls through the late spring and summer. These bulls moved from the development pens to a half-section of native Flint Hills grass from late April through September. While this hardened the condition of the bulls for our fall sale, customers have been satisfied with the soundness of these rugged, ranch-raised bulls.

The past two years, we have decreased the amount of time our fall bulls are developed on a delivered ration. For the first 11 months of our fall bulls' lives, they were on pasture grazing standing forage and gaining very well. We have recently begun delivering a mixed ration to these bulls, but forages such as wheat straw, native grass hay and silage continue to dominate their diet.

While it may be overly optimistic, our ultimate goal is to develop bulls solely on standing forage and supplemental protein as needed. Yes, it will likely result in an animal that looks slightly different on sale day. But if that bull can cover the same number of females and last longer for our customers, we believe that it is a very worthwhile trade. After all, until we ultimately "salvage" our bulls at the end of their useful lives, very few of us get paid on what our BULL weighs...it's how his PROGENY weigh.

As with any change in management, this one will require significant adaptability and patience. We welcome any input or questions about this topic. We are confident that our customers will be pleased with the long-term results of this new development protocol. But it might require a bit different perspective of the bulls' phenotype on sale day.

Annual Bull Sale

Saturday, November 23, 2013

Selling 110 yearling and coming 2-yr-olds

Sale books will be mailed and available at

www.dalebanks.com in late October.



Consumers No Longer Hungry

I once had a friend who enjoyed inviting people over for an occasional Sunday barbeque. He could grill well, but the true secret to his success was the actual timing of the meal. He would invite people to come over for “dinner” shortly after noon, but food would rarely be served until five or six o’clock. No appetizers were served ...just a few adult beverages, a game or race on TV and several hours of conversation. By the time dinner was finally served, we were so hungry that ANYTHING he grilled would have tasted like it was straight out of Bobby Flay’s *Food Network* kitchen.

Today’s consumer has countless choices when it comes to the food they eat. The notion of “three squares a day” is far removed from today’s vocabulary. Instead of sustenance, food consumption has become a cultural experience, adventure or political statement.

Meals have been replaced by snacks. “What’s for dinner?” has been augmented to “Mexican, Thai or Indian tonight?” Spice racks have been upgraded to fresh herb boxes. Grocery store produce aisles have given up market share to “organic” farmers’ markets and community-supported-agriculture programs.

This is not a new trend. In fact, the food revolution in the United States began fifty years ago. According to the Smithsonian Institution, *“During the 1960s and 1970s, as waves of cultural and political change swept through American Society, food became a tool of resistance, consciousness-raising and self-expression. Embracing the motto ‘You are what you eat,’ hippies, feminists, religious seekers, ethnic nationalists, and antiwar and civil rights activists rejected mass-marketed, mass-produced food as symbols of the establishment they rallied against. They left home to create food co-ops, vegetarian and ‘natural food’ restaurants, coffee bars, organic farms and communes.*

“By engaging in a public debate about the politics of food, these grassroots movements brought to the table concerns about diet, hunger, health and the environment. They raised questions about food safety and justice and how the food Americans ate was produced, prepared and consumed, advocating new models of food production and new diets.” -Observed at a Museum of American History Exhibit, August 2013

Even Julia Child, James Beard, and other pioneering culinary figures surely could not have envisioned the evolution of their early televised cooking shows. Today’s channels such as Food Network, Cooking TV and a whole host of others have turned simple food preparation into entertainment and art.

While this phenomenon may not have hit all of our kitchens at home on the range (yet), it certainly influences many of our beef consumers. And this movement can have significant effects on their purchasing habits. When Rachel Ray chooses a thick KC Strip for her featured recipe, the industry celebrates. But when Giada de Laurentis dedicates one show per week to “Meatless Mondays,” we shun her. Regardless, these stars’ choices influence the purchasing decisions of millions of viewers and Internet followers.

Consumers today look at food preparation and consumption as more than sustenance—they expect an *experience*. I believe that the concepts of organic, locally grown/raised, sustainable and free-range represent

more of a “feeling” than an actual production practice. Many consumers state that they switched to these “specialty” ingredients because they are somehow safer, more wholesome or healthier, but I disagree. In my opinion, these discriminating choices give them a perceived connection to the production of their food. They might be several generations removed from the farm, but they crave a tie to the agrarian lifestyle. And whether or not the person standing in that organic farmers market actually *raised* the eggplant that they’re charging you twice market value for (chances are; they did not), their hands are dirty and they appear to be a “real family farmer.” As that eggplant is served the next evening, you can be sure that at some point during dinner, it will be billed as “fresh from the farmer’s market,” so everyone at the table knows it represents a special experience.

Today’s beef consumers want more than just zinc, iron and protein from that steak—they want a STORY that makes them feel good. Grass-fed, corn-fed, naturally-raised, humanely-handled, and organic are words with meaning to someone. But in my opinion they all represent a similar notion to our consumer...they tell a story about how the beef was produced. Farmers and ranchers are excellent story-tellers. We may not realize it, but our simple existence symbolizes the legend and romance of the “old west.” Why do you think the “Marlboro Man” was a cowboy? We can use this allure to our advantage as we market our products across the globe.

Unlike my old friend mentioned previously, we cannot hold our consumers “off feed” for a few hours to make our meals taste better. Thanks to improved genetics, selection and production practices, we have greatly improved the quality and consistency of our beef products—and we must continue to do so. But today’s consumers are hungry for much more than simple nutrients and taste—they’re hungry for a positive EXPERIENCE. From production to marketing to preparation, beef has as much potential to be “story food” as any ingredient I can think of.

Let’s use the story-telling skills we have honed at the cafes, sale barns, Co-Ops and fairgrounds across cattle country. Let’s put the typecast of the honest, hard-working farmer/rancher to work in our favor. But instead of just sharing these stories and legacies with each other, let’s tell them to the folks *starving* for them...our urban and suburban beef consumers. Whether it is school children at our local “Day on the Farm” or a hesitant customer at a meat counter in a large supermarket, there are countless opportunities for us to share the beef industry story with our consumers. And although many of us are wary of social media, they have become the source of current information for a large percentage of potential beef eaters.

So the next time your family sits down to a nutritious beef dinner, I suggest you do the following (better yet...ask your child or grandchild to do it):

- 1) Snap a photo of the juicy steak or burger on the center of the plate,
- 2) Upload it to Facebook or other social media site, and
- 3) Share a quick story that reminds friends how each pound of beef provides much more than just Zinc, Iron and Protein. It provides a direct connection to the land, legacy and hard-working values that are found in our farm and ranch families across our nation.

Developmental Duplication

On August 12, 2013, the American Angus Association announced the finding of a new genetic condition called Developmental Duplication (DD). Similar to other genetic conditions recently discovered (AM, NH and CA), this condition is inherited as a simple recessive trait. The condition is NOT lethal, and the expression ranges from normal phenotype to an additional limb protruding from the shoulder or neck.

The most thorough and updated information about DD may be found at www.angus.org. To present the information in the simplest format possible, we have listed some frequently asked questions that many of you have recently expressed to us.

Refresh my memory...how does a "simple recessive" inheritance pattern work?

If two carrier animals (bull and female) are mated, approximately 25% of the calves will be homozygous dominant (no recessive allele), 50% of the calves will be heterozygous (carriers of the recessive) and 25% of the calves will be homozygous recessive (affected with the condition).

If a carrier parent is mated to a non-carrier (homozygous dominant), half of the progeny will be homozygous dominant (non-carriers) and half will be heterozygous (carriers). NONE will be affected by the condition and all will look normal.

What lines of cattle are carriers?

The primary carrier sires that our family has used in the past decade are B/R New Design 036, Bon View New Design 1407, GAR Predestined and B/R New Day 454. Roughly half of the direct progeny (direct sons or daughters) of these sires are likely carriers. A complete list of carriers may be found at www.angus.org.

Why are we finding so many "defects" today?

Geneticists in the bovine academic community have increasingly observed that all breeds (all mammals, in fact) have hundreds of mutations in their genome. This has been—and likely always will be—the case, as mutations can be a GOOD or bad thing. The reason we are documenting more genetic conditions today than we did in previous times is largely due to two things: management and technology. Decades ago, many cattlemen left bulls out year 'round, gathered calves of a certain weight a few times per year, and had no individual identification of cows. The cattle were not likely checked on a regular basis, so issues with calving difficulty and abnormal calves usually went unnoticed or were simply blamed on predators or weather issues. PLUS the developments in genomics and gene sequencing have made the discovery, location and testing for these conditions much easier than even a decade ago. In the past, veterinarians and producers may have just passed an odd-shaped calf off to a weed toxicity, incomplete twin separation, or a simple "congenital birth defect," but many of these conditions are now reported to a university and/or breed association, so we can begin searching for potential genetic causes.

So there are likely no more "defects" in a breed today than there were several decades ago. We are simply better at observing, documenting, reporting and discovering their true cause.

Do I need to test my bulls and/or cows?

Dalebanks Angus will likely test potential carrier animals in our herd so we can have all the information necessary to make selection and breeding decisions. Most commercial herds should be able to use sound judgment in their bull selection (without going to the expense of DNA testing large numbers of animals) to minimize the risk of having an affected calf. However, if a herd has used a large number of potential DD carriers in the past, it might be worth testing potential carrier herd bulls to mitigate risk. **If you wish to review your past bull purchases, feel free to contact us anytime.**

If I still have questions, who do I call?

You are always welcome to contact us via phone or email. The American Angus Association does an excellent job conveying updated information on genetic conditions, and it may be found online at www.angus.org, or by contacting Angus Genetics, Inc at 816-383-5100. As another resource, Dr. Dan Moser, and Dr. Bob Weaber, Kansas State University, are also valuable resources, and may be contacted at dmoser@k-state.edu / (785) 532-2459 or bweaber@k-state.edu / 785-532-1460.

The beef industry will continue to find genetic conditions in cattle in the future. Thanks to genomic technology, entire lines of cattle no longer need to be sacrificed simply because of one recessive allele. With prudent use of this technology and sensible selection and culling, we can "breed our way out" of these situations with as little economic hardship as possible.

The Bright Side of Drought

Dry conditions can have devastating effects on a ranching operation, but a positive side-effect should be an improvement in the quality and consistency of the cattle which make it through culling during a drought period.

This year's bull offering was positively affected by this culling in multiple ways. Like many of you, we reduced cow numbers, keeping only the best. And we again castrated a significant number of calves at weaning, as we knew feed and water resources would be short going into winter and we did not need the extra animal units.

Then last spring, we again projected a shortage of quality water, grass and feed, so we sold more yearling bulls via private treaty (PT) than we have ever marketed. And since we keep what we consider the absolute best bulls in terms of their EPD balance, soundness and phenotype for our fall sale, we had to cut deeper into the top-notch "sale group" for our spring PT offering.

As a result, these 45 coming two-year-old bulls and 65 fall yearling bulls are as even and consistent – in both genetics AND phenotype—as any we have offered. Sure, this line has been overused and abused in thousands of sale catalogs for decades, but this year's bulls definitely back it up.

We are very pleased with this group. Our bull demand continues to grow, so it would be easy to rapidly increase the number of bulls we sell. But due to our stringent culling regime—and a little extra prodding by Mother Nature over the past couple of years—we have prioritized **quality over quantity** in this 2013 bull sale offering.

We look forward to your evaluation of the bulls, and we greatly appreciate your continued interest in our family's program. See you on November 23!

Annual Bull Sale

Sat., November 23, 2013 * 12:30 pm

At the ranch, 3 ½ mi NW of Eureka

Selling 110 bulls

45 coming 2's, 65 fall yearlings

Ultrasounded, fertility tested and ready to work

Sired by: 454, Complete, Mainline, Mentor, Forward, Final Answer, Frontman, Aberdeen, Program and others

This year's bull offering illustrates our family's 109 year commitment to balanced-trait, profitable bulls produced for the commercial cattle producer.

- Their EPD show that they excel in a **complete** range of AHIR-recorded traits.
- Their phenotypes indicate that they are sound-structured, moderate-framed bulls that should perform well in a variety of environments.
- Bulls were developed on a forage-based ration and have spent the majority of their lives grazing native grass in the Flint Hills.

Put these bulls to work in your herd and let the Dalebanks difference help boost your profitability.



Customers' Cattle Excel

Congratulations to these Dalebanks customers who have received high honors for their cattle recently:
Ken Grecian, Palco, KS – *Champion Heifer Carcass, Beef Empire Days, Sired by Dalebanks genetics*
John Wendling – *Champion pen, KS Angus Association/ CAB Carcass Data Project, 89% CAB and Prime.*

Several other customers have recently shared stories about how Dalebanks genetics have benefitted the profitability of their operations, as well. Here are a few of the highlights:

TLA Ranch – *“Matt, the last couple of years have been rough with the drought but we’re hanging in there. We still have most of the cows we purchased from you (in 2008) and they’re still producing well. I keep thinking I should cull #7057 being 16 yrs. old now, but she stays in good health, easy keeper, and produces a decent calf on time every year. Just need for her to have a female now to hold back.”*

Ted Schepmann – *“Had the best sale of my career this weekend, Matt. Offered a group of bred heifers for sale and beat the market like a drum. I could have sold them 3 times yesterday! All the heifers descend from the original cows I purchased from you. Best investment I ever made! Thank you.”*

TA Ranch – 2012-born steers: 80% CAB and Prime, Avg Daily Gain: 4.0# and a 6.2 F/G conversion – *“Matt, I was probably a fool to retain ownership in this volatile market, but thanks to the premiums that these cattle earned, they still made money.”*

Outlaw Cattle Co – *“Had a buyer look at the calf crop from Dalebanks bulls recently and he was impressed with the bone and length of the yearlings. I recommend if a person is looking for top quality Angus Bulls give them a shot for your business.”*

Contact us anytime...

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Dalebanks Angus

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