

BULL BUSINESS NEWS

April 2008

Efficiency's Effectiveness

-MP

The past year has brought on a tremendous amount of new promotion, advertising and proclamations about "efficient" lines of genetics in the Angus breed. Depending on what is being promoted, efficiency is defined and characterized in numerous ways. Webster's defines "efficiency" as: "The ratio of the effective or useful output to the total input in any system."

For years, the Beef Improvement Federation has debated—even argued—about what should be measured or quantified to adequately compare feed efficiency. The DNA markers available today are tools, but it is our opinion that these are nowhere near comprehensive enough to give us an accurate reading of feed efficiency...at least not yet. In time, accumulated data will yield more accuracy in these measurements, and the markers will likely become useful tools.

In the absence of accurate, science-based measurements of feed efficiency, it appears that some folks are using assumptions such as rib depth, height and even low weaning and yearling EPDs as indicators of feed efficiency. Yes, smaller, lower performing cattle eat less feed than bigger, very high growth cattle. Yes, feed costs represent a ranch's highest input cost. And yes, Angus cattle are significantly larger in mature size today than they were decades ago.

Sure, we can easily return to genetics that yield 1000 pound mature cow weights, 850 pound yearling weights and 500 pound weaning weights. Admittedly, those genetics were plentiful within the Angus breed a mere 25 years ago. Semen from several of these sires is again being sold at very high price levels, as breeders attempt to inject this "efficiency" back into the cowherd.

However, before we all flock to this extreme (we all know the seedstock sector is guilty of chasing these extremes, and they use tremendous amounts of passion and energy when they do it), it would behoove us to take a quick "history lesson." As stated above, we can get back to those small, "efficient" cattle in a generation or two. At the same time, we will likely yield lighter, lower performing calves if we do not simultaneously select for our growth "outputs."

Those of you who marketed commercial Angus calves 25 to 30 years ago vividly recall how difficult it was to sell them to feedyards. Yes, the Certified Angus Beef Program has made marketing Angus-sired calves much more enjoyable. However, we are convinced that the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program played an even larger role in establishing value for Angus-influenced cattle in the feedyard sector. See, AHIR was the tool that helped develop accurate Expected Progeny Differences, and these EPDs enabled us to find lines of genetics that could boost weaning and yearling growth in our breed. When feeders began to see these "little black carcass cattle" finally gain at levels similar to (and eventually greater than) their continental breed counterparts, we saw a huge increase in the values paid for commercial Angus calves. Trust us, most feedyards do NOT want to go back to the low performing "short blacks."

We have created a very productive beef animal, but it has taken us decades of selection to accomplish it. Why make assumptions about efficiency and throw years of genetic progress away simply because we don't think we can "have our cake and eat it, too?"

Rest assured, we at Dalebanks Angus will find tools that accurately measure feed efficiency--and eventually range cow efficiency. We will use proven indicator traits first, then likely move to reliable DNA genomics that accurately measure efficiency. And we believe that we will be able to select for these traits while maintaining (or optimizing) our levels of weaning and yearling growth, marbling, muscle and other economically important traits. Revisit the definition of efficiency above...useful output divided by total input.

Currently, we are recording and analyzing mature hip heights and weights on our cowherd. We use this data, along with mature size EPDs, to moderate our cow size while maintaining or increasing the weaning and yearling growth of their calves. We have been doing this for several years, and we believe that it is our best tool currently to select for cattle that grow quickly to a year of age, then halt their growth curve soon after.

We welcome your input and questions on this important issue. We recognize the importance of improving both the cost AND return sides of our industry's business. Improving our bulls' abilities to add profit to your operation is our primary objective, and we look forward to continuing to improve their genetic potential for our customers.

YEARLING BULLS AVAILABLE NOW

Here are a few examples of the 30 yearling bulls we have for sale this spring. Please contact us soon if you need bulls this season.

<u>Tag</u>	<u>Sire</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Wn</u>	<u>Milk</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>\$W</u>	<u>\$B</u>
716	1023	0.6	49	18	86	\$33.05	\$43.58
739	Prime Star	2.1	40	22	84	\$22.65	\$45.16
7524	Freightliner	2.0	43	17	86	\$23.53	\$38.37
7547	Nebraska	-0.7	49	18	91	\$28.85	\$33.18

Charitable Donations to Animal Rights Groups Increase

- From Angus Journal Listmaster/adapted American Meat Institute release

Charitable donations to animal-rights groups rose 5% in 2006, according to a new analysis by the Animal Agriculture Alliance. Donations to the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) increased by 17%. The findings come from the 2007 Animal People Watchdog Report on 150 Animal Charities.

AMI reports that the Animal Agriculture Alliance analysis also showed that the largest animal-rights activist group in the United States, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), increased donations by 9%. This increase builds on a 62% increase in donations the organization garnered in 2005. **Total donations to animal-rights groups in 2006 equaled approximately \$295.8 million.**

*As beef producers, we **must** continue to use proper animal handling and welfare procedures. But we must also combat the growing amount of misinformation that is being spread throughout our schools, media and entertainment venues. Because most of us do not have the time, money or personal contacts with urban media and thought leaders, we must support methods such as the Beef Checkoff and other industry-led organizations, who can effectively combat this growing issue. As shown above, these groups are very well-funded, and we must channel efforts and money toward battling their agenda, which is to ultimately drive animal agriculture out of business.* -MP

Wanted: Your email address

In an effort to improve our communication and contact with our customers, we will provide the OPTION of receiving future newsletters and other bits of timely information via email. Please email your e-address to Matt (mattperrier@dalebanks.com), and we'll put you on the list. If you also wish to receive the "hard copy" of newsletters in the mail, just let us know.

Rest assured, these addresses will NOT be shared with any other entities than Dalebanks Angus. If, at any time, you wish to be removed from the email list, simply drop us a note and we'll remove your information. Thanks!



For Sale – registered and commercial females

- 20 registered Angus open heifers - Dalebanks
 - 60 commercial Angus and baldie open heifers - Dalebanks customer-hfrs near Wellington, KS
 - 30 registered Angus spring yearling bulls - Dalebanks
 - 25 registered fall-calving cows – calving in October & November (delivery July 1, 2008) - Dalebanks
- Please contact us any time you have groups of cattle to sell—steers or females. We'll be happy to help get the word out.*

Contact us anytime...

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FORWARD & ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED