

Dalebanks Digest

Spring 2013

Largest Number of Bulls Ever Sold: Spring 2013 Private Treaty Offering

Dry conditions have forced us to reduce our cattle inventory going into the 2013 grazing season. As a seedstock herd, it is difficult to simply liquidate large numbers of females, as this genetic "factory" cannot be rebuilt with the same time-tested genetics that have been developed over the decades. And while earlier weaning dates will again likely be used in 2013, we still must keep most of the calves through the yearling phase for proper contemporary grouping purposes, so that still requires rangeland and/or delivered feed.

Consequently, **we have decided to increase our numbers of yearling bulls for sale private treaty this spring.** This will mean that **more quantity AND quality** will be offered in this group than ever before. Demand continues to grow for these private treaty bulls, so we look forward to adding this selection for our customers this March and April.

Low-Energy Development

These bulls grazed grass and cover crop pastures until late fall, and we have kept them on a very low energy growing ration since mid-November. Their feed ration consists largely of ground wheat straw and droughty corn silage. By design, the bulls will be slightly lighter weight this year, but we are confident that the long-term payout of increased longevity will be beneficial for our customers.

As we have discussed with many of you over the past few years, we are always pleased with feedback that we receive regarding Dalebanks bulls' ability to outlast the "average" Angus bull in terms of length of breeding life. But we are never satisfied with "good enough," so by moving our bull development to a lower-energy forage scenario, we believe that we can achieve even longer-lasting bulls for Dalebanks customers.

Our long-term goal is to keep bulls entirely off of a delivered feed ration during the majority of their development, but Mother Nature has made this a difficult proposition the last two years. So we have tried to mimic a pasture scenario by limiting the number of days in a pen, utilizing larger pens (more exercise) and feeding extremely high roughage rations (mimicking a dormant native grass and protein scenario).

Will the bulls appear slightly different than in past years? Yes, they will. But significant genetic variation is still able to be seen, thus allowing for accurate EPD calculations and selection decisions. *And remember... an extra 1" of backfat on a bull might make him appear "bigger, stouter, deeper, higher performing" or any of the other terms that sound good over a microphone, but it does not actually make him—OR HIS CALVES-- any better than his genetics allow.*

Bull Availability and Information

We will offer roughly 70 yearling bulls private treaty. Most will be sons of the following bulls: Woodhill Mainline, Summitcrest Complete, Connealy Contrast, GDAR Game Day, HA Program, Kesslers Frontman, ALC Big Eye, and other balanced-trait sires.

The bulls were weighed, measured and ultrasounded on February 27, so we plan to have them freeze branded, sorted and **ready to select by March 15.** The bulls will be evaluated for breeding soundness, vaccinated, poured and ready to breed approximately 15 head of cows or heifers later this spring or summer.

Please contact Matt (mattperrier@dalebanks.com or 620-583-5033) to add your name to the list for updated information on these bulls as soon as it is available. We look forward to visiting with you soon!



Dalebanks Promptitude 9506

AAA 16465812

Dalebanks Donor tops KAA Auction

A flush out of one of the most exciting young donors we have produced was the high-selling lot in the Kansas Angus Association Online Auction in January. This flush out of Dalebanks Promptitude 9506 (AAA 16465812) sold for **\$6000 to Daltons on the Sycamore, Gretna, VA.**

This Final Answer x 1023 x Alliance female embodies the breeding goals of the Dalebanks program. She offers an exceptional combination of all traits of economic importance.

9506 is the only cow in the breed to achieve her levels of \$W (\$57) and \$B (\$83). Plus she posts exceptional calving ease (+15), yearling growth (+107) femininity, reproductive efficiency and frame moderation (-16 MW, -0.3 MH). A beautiful udder and sound, easy-fleshing phenotype add to her tremendous resume.

She was flushed in early March to Rito 9M25, so look for these high-caliber progeny in the Dalton program in the coming years.

Thank you to all Dalebanks customers who bid on this lot. We were thrilled to have so many individuals competing for this exciting flush.

\$W: The Cowman's Index

Portions used with permission

by Matt Perrier
Dr. Sally Northcutt, AAA

When multi-trait selection indexes were introduced by the American Angus Association (AAA) in 2004, they were seemingly released in reverse chronological order. First the feedlot/carcass index, \$Beef (\$B); later the cowherd production index, \$Weaning (\$W), and—in time—we'll hopefully have some sort of multi-trait index evaluating the reproductive efficiency of Angus cattle, \$Repro. The reverse order was simply due to the inherent heritability estimates of EPDs characterizing beef cattle. Carcass traits are generally considered highly heritable, growth traits are moderately heritable and fertility or repro traits are lowly heritable. So the _____ "low hanging fruit" was picked first.

As is often the case with a new piece of technology, significant amounts of energy surrounded the release of the first multi-trait index. From an educational standpoint, we Angus breeders asked a lot of questions and read massive amounts of information to better familiarize ourselves with this new style of genetic prediction. After we became more comfortable on ways to help our customers use \$B, I believe that we seemingly forgot to re-educate ourselves when the next multi-trait index, \$Weaning, was released in 2005.

However, for the majority of Dalebanks customers across the country, \$Weaning is likely the multi-trait index that best fits our commercial operations' management and marketing protocols. Dr. Sally Northcutt, Genetic Director for the AAA, defines \$W as: *an index value expressed in dollars per head; the expected difference in future progeny performance for pre-weaning merit. \$W includes both revenue and cost adjustments associated with differences in calving ease, weaning growth transmitted to the calf, maternal milk, and mature cow size.*

Simply stated, \$W uses multiple traits to estimate a bulls' ability (and that of his daughters) to produce pounds of calf at weaning, therefore increasing ranch profitability. It simultaneously uses traits such as:

- Calving Ease (Direct and Maternal) to estimate the numbers of calves born unassisted, thereby decreasing labor costs,
- Weaning Weight to estimate the pounds of weaned calves sold at market price,
- Milk EPD to estimate the cow's ability to efficiently produce heavy-weight calves at weaning. Extremely high milk levels also *negatively* affect \$W, as they result in higher production energy requirements (costs) of the bulls' daughters in the herd, and
- Mature Weight and Mature Height to estimate maintenance energy requirements for the daughters, which both should reduce feed and forage costs.

Economic factors for weaned calf price and cow input costs (feed, pasture usage, etc) are then teamed with these genetic trait levels to establish the bio economic index, \$Weaning.

So for Dalebanks customers who sell calves at (or shortly after) weaning and keep replacement females that are expected to produce optimal-sized calves with the least amount of feed possible, the \$Weaning index can be a primary determinant in finding bulls that fit your cowherd's needs.

This takes nothing away from the \$Beef Value index, as it should also be incorporated into the selection index for producers selling progeny that will eventually be fed and processed into high-quality beef. If a ranch retains ownership on all of their progeny, \$B should likely be the primary focus. Even when selling at weaning, \$B should be given some attention, as the feedlots purchasing those steer calves will likely keep a close eye on how they gain and grade. And rest assured, many feedyards make pricing and purchasing decisions for subsequent years' cattle based off this valuable information.

But as we have stated before, today's volatility in weather, markets and other factors in beef production make balanced-trait genetics one of the best risk-management tools a cow-calf producer can employ. Do bulls exhibiting above-average figures in all traits cost more? Sure they do. But they should also enable Dalebanks customers to capitalize on price premiums AND cow cost savings, helping the bottom line.

Perrier Family Continues to Expand

Mark and Kelly Perrier, Westminster, CO, announced the birth of their first child, Lauren Kate Perrier, born October 8, 2012, in Louisville, CO. She weighed 9 lbs, 4 oz, and measured 21 inches in length.

Paternal grandparents are Tom and Carolyn Perrier of Eureka. Maternal grandparents are Gary and Virginia Merkel of Robinson, KS.

We are also excited to welcome Mark, Kelly and Lauren back to Kansas, as both parents have accepted job transfers that will bring them back to Wichita this spring.

Add Lauren pic

Chuckles

Fellow Angus breeder, Joe Elliott, sent these (and MANY other) headlines via email. With all of the pressures associated with daily life, a bit of humor never hurts. Hopefully these can provide just a bit of levity in your day.

**Federal Agents Raid Gun Shop, Find Weapons
Marijuana Issue Sent to a Joint Committee
Man Accused of Killing Lawyer Receives New Attorney
Rally Against Apathy Draws Small Crowd
Study Shows Teen Pregnancy Drops Significantly After Age 25
Mississippi's Literacy Program Shows Improvement**

Making Great Mothers

Reprinted with permission

by Katie Allen, AAA

If you're in the cattle business, you've heard it time and again—the number one profitability driver in the cow herd is reproduction.

While expected progeny differences (EPDs) have been developed, through research data, to aid producers in selecting for growth, carcass quality and some maternal characteristics, the American Angus Association® continues looking at ways to make more selection tools available, particularly heifer pregnancy EPDs and other tools for cow longevity and reproductive efficiency.

To enhance current maternal EPDs and develop more selection tools would require more reproductive trait data collected on Angus females. This data would include heifer breeding records, calf records for each female to monitor her lifetime production and disposal codes that designate the reason a female was removed from the herd. The MaternalPlus program became the method to feed this database and gives breeders the opportunity to collectively help advance reproductive selection in the Angus breed.

MaternalPlus is a voluntary inventory-based reporting system that is designed to capture reproductive trait data to expand reproductive and lifetime productivity selection tools. The program provides Angus breeders and their customers the information they need to make effective selection decisions.

"The MaternalPlus program is the ideal way to report heifer breeding records," says Sally Northcutt, Association director of genetic research. "Another convenient benefit of MaternalPlus is the availability of calf EPDs for calving ease direct, birth weight and weaning weight, once the weaning data are processed through the Association. These selection tools are easily viewed through a participant's AAA Login account for use in preweaning selection and culling decisions even before calves are registered."

Dalebanks Angus Ranch, Eureka, Kan., is one of more than 160 Angus breeders currently enrolled in MaternalPlus.

"It's a huge opportunity for us as Angus breeders to simultaneously select for growth traits, end-product traits, calving ease, all of the things we've done for years, Matt Perrier says. "But (we can) also focus on the number one profitability driver, which is reproductive efficiency."

The Perriers are no strangers to the Angus breed. Matt served on the American Angus Association staff first as a regional manager and then as director of commercial relations from 1997 to 2004 before returning to the operation. He and his father Tom, a former Association Board director, strive to be progressive seedstock producers to meet the needs of their customers, who are mostly in the commercial business seeking Angus bulls.

Matt says that MaternalPlus will improve the marketability of Angus for seedstock and commercial producers alike due to understanding more about Angus cows' stayability and fertility. Even though reproductive efficiency is a lowly heritable trait, he says it is still important to examine it by collecting as much data as possible. Improving reproductive efficiency over time will pay off.

"If we can't achieve maximum profitability, our customers can't achieve maximum profitability on our bulls," Matt says. "It's a long-term proposition. Reproductive EPDs and the heritability estimates on these reproductive traits are fairly low. But so was calving ease, and look what we've done with calving ease in the Angus breed."

With time and effort and more producers enrolling in the program to add to the database, MaternalPlus can help the Angus breed show its maternal focus and have the data to support it.

"To provide selection tools, you have to have data," Tom Perrier says. "We need people to enroll in the MaternalPlus program. It's voluntary, but we need people to enroll so we can track cows, why we dispose of them, which ones are getting bred and which ones aren't. Also in that is mature weights, frame size and condition scores."

The Perriers say MaternalPlus requires producers to take a little more time to collect data on females and enter it into the online system, but time put into the program will show other Angus breeders and commercial customers that the Angus breed is continuing to make progress and drive profitability for all.

*Note from the Perriers: As one of only **three** herds in Kansas currently enrolled in Maternal Plus, Dalebanks Angus' focus on reproductive efficiency is obvious. We still believe that we can continue to improve the growth and end-product merit of Angus cattle. But we also recognize that extreme levels of performance are of little value if the cows aren't bred.*

We'll continue our fundamental philosophy of breeding highly fertile, low birth, rapid growing cattle that mature at a useful size and offer optimal levels of end product merit. Having these repro EPDs to better quantify cattle that meet these targets should benefit ALL of us.



Annual Dalebanks Bull Sale:

November 23, 2013

Predictions

by Matt Perrier

As I write this newsletter, we're in the midst of Winter Storm Q, Round 2. Like many in the region, we received 8-10" of beautiful, powdery snow in the storm's initial round late last week. But until a day prior, our weather forecasters (Wichita, KS) were forecasting a "Trace to 2 inches" for our area.

As of last night, the same forecasters were forecasting Howard, KS (20 miles south of Dalebanks Headquarters) to be the epicenter of this second round, with 28" of snowfall predicted. That put us in the 16-26" range.

26 inches! Really?? My point is this; predictions are exactly that: *an educated guess of a future outcome*. We deal with predictions every day...weather, markets; even genetic predictions (EPDs).

It seems to be human nature to halt everything else when a prediction is offered. Our kids know that when the "Dong, DING, Dahhhng" sounds on the TV announcing the 7 Day Weather Planner, dinner conversation stalls for a few seconds while I check to see how I should alter my work schedule to best capitalize on what Mother Nature has in store. And anyone who has attended a beef industry convention knows that the one session that is sure to be "standing room only" is the Market Outlook by given by a market analyst. Even breed association EPD releases are wrought with anxiety and excitement each time they are updated or released.

None of these predictions are ever perfect. But they are certainly better than the alternatives of ignorance or chance. In my opinion, the most intriguing part of a prediction is to see how differently people use these "educated guesses" to positively affect their business. Although the majority of folks who watch the evening weather might not use the information much past the occasional complaint at the coffee shop about these forecasters' inaccuracy, I have still witnessed many good managers who take long-term weather forecasts and use them to better operate their farm or ranch.

Same with Angus EPDs. Can they tell us to the exact pound what each calf will weigh? Certainly not. But they are extremely effective in making directional change for certain traits on a whole-herd basis.

I enjoy seeing Dalebanks customers grow in their understanding EPDs and the best use in their operations. Instead of treating EPD levels as a "race to the top," they have identified their own herd's strengths and weaknesses, found appropriate levels of certain EPDs necessary to improve their profitability, and purchased genetics accordingly.

So before I criticize the weatherman, market analyst or breed association, I must remember that the most important part of a prediction might not be the exact level that was foretold. It is likely the way that I analyze the information and put it to use for my situation.

70 Private-Treaty Bulls Available This Spring

Sires include Mainline, Complete, Contrast, Game Day, Program, Frontman, Big Eye, and other balanced-trait sires. Plenty of calving-ease bulls for heifers, plus high-performance genetics for cows.

Bulls available for selection after March 15 on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Matt today to receive information on this high-quality set of bulls as soon as it is available. They will be freeze branded, vaccinated and fertility tested in mid-March. *Call or email to receive more information and make your selections*

Dalebanks Females for Sale Private Treaty

Select groups of open spring heifers and bred fall females will be available throughout the spring. Call Matt for info.

Annual Bull Sale: Saturday, November 23, 2013

Selling approximately 115 yearling and coming 2-year-old bulls

Tom & Carolyn perrier@dalebanks.com
620-583-6956

The Perriers
www.dalebanks.com

Matt & Amy mattperrier@dalebanks.com
620-583-5033



Dalebanks Angus Ranch
1021 River RD, Eureka, KS 67045

FORWARD & ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED