

More Bulls, More Coming-2's, More Quality

You asked, we responded! Saturday, November 18, will mark the largest bull sale offering in our 119 year history. We kept the top 150 bulls from nearly 250 bull calves born in the Dalebanks program in 2022. What's more, nearly half of these bulls will be the big, stout coming two-year-olds from our spring herd!

As in past years, these older bulls were developed last winter on a moderate energy diet and spent the summer and early fall grazing native Flint Hills pasture just north of the sale facility. The fall bulls were weaned in the late spring, also grazed pasture through the summer, and have been on a moderate energy ration since August. Just like always, all of them represent the top end—both phenotypically and genotypically--of both calf crops. They will be freeze-branded, fertility-tested, vaccinated and ready to turn out on cows or heifers any time after the sale.

As we see the seedstock business become even more segmented, our family is steadfast in our belief that cattle should SIMULTANEOUSLY offer soundness, performance and longevity...not just one or two of these important qualities. We realize that there are numerous choices in Angus bulls today. You may find bulls that have higher EPDs for a given trait or two. Other programs might have higher actual weaning weights. Some bulls might display a fancier "look." And yes, there are certainly cheaper bulls out there, as well. But customers who have tried "Brand X" bulls and then return to buy "Open D" bulls indicate that finding bulls like ours that combine structural soundness, optimum EPDs, early growth, calving ease, and docility is increasingly difficult today.

We look forward to visiting with you about the breeding philosophy and disciplined culling that have helped us produce Practical. Profitable. Genetics. for 119 years. Call, text, email or stop by anytime!



What is a Bull Worth? *Portions reprinted with permission, CattleFax Trends, August 2023*

This question is never ending and is going to be different for everyone, depending on their goals and objectives. The adage that many have used is that a bull is worth the value of five calves from the previous calf crop, and long term CattleFax data largely supports that notion.

The CattleFax Cow-Calf Survey data results indicate that producers who pay more for bulls sell calves for higher values, and more of them retain ownership to a phase past weaning to take advantage of the value of those genetics. Survey participant calf values the past three years indicate that for every additional \$2,500 spent for a bull, the average calf price increased \$75 per head. Over a three-year period, if that sire produces 75 head of calves, that alone is worth \$5,625, a 125% return on the money.

Using the historical correlation that average bull prices are largely in line with the value of five calves, based on the projection that U.S. average prices for 550-pound steers this fall will average near \$275 and 500-pound heifer calves average 8 percent less on a dollars per hundredweight basis, average bull values this fall and next spring could average near \$7,250+/-, a 41 percent increase over last year.

CattleFax expects calf and all cattle prices to continue to increase the next several years. When cow herd expansion begins and there are more heifers and cows available to breed, bull demand and prices will continue to advance as well. Preparing your budget and bull selection criteria and objectives for your bull battery needs becomes more important in the coming years as the capital requirements increase. Bulls are a significant cost to an operation, but with the right selection for your objectives they also have the potential for high returns.

Traits that Pay v. Traits that Cost

Last July, the folks at High Plains Journal invited me to offer the keynote address at Cattle U in Manhattan, KS. It was a great program, and I really enjoyed getting to answer questions and discuss a few of our industry's challenges. My talk was titled "Addressing Antagonisms in Ag ... Without Always Being an Antagonist" (a self-titled title, as evidenced by its length). In this talk, I covered the many antagonisms that producers must navigate as they make decisions for their farms and ranches. As a genetics guy, the obvious examples surrounded antagonistic traits such as marbling/meat yield, weaning weight/calving ease and yearling weight/moderate mature size. While generations of disciplined selection and data-generated selection tools have helped us reduce some of the effects of antagonisms, the correlations and antagonisms are still ever-present.

If we think about management decisions, there are numerous other antagonisms that we must deal with each day. For instance, implementation of No-Till farming should improve soil health, but it may come with increased use of herbicides. Contracting feed purchases or future calf sales manages our risk, but it might also reduce chances for huge rewards.

As I thought more about this topic, it became clear that this is what drives our family's breeding philosophy—optimizing the intersection between traits that pay and traits that cost. When making genetic selections such as herd bulls, AI sires or replacement heifers, we generally place most of our emphasis on the traits that pay: weaning weight, yearling weight, marbling, ribeye area and so forth. Through years of selection, these production traits have increased output, growth and consumer satisfaction, and thus have added revenue to all producers' bottom lines.

But many cow-calf producers are recognizing that there are often costs associated with many of these outputs. Those additional outputs require additional inputs such as feed and forage. If females are unable to access more nutrients, they don't produce adequate milk for the calf and may have poorer conception rates. What's more, some lines of cattle that are extreme outliers for many of these production traits coincidentally have less than desirable structural integrity, causing increased foot and leg issues.

Now please don't misinterpret our comments. We still believe that Expected Progeny Differences and the associated selection indices from the American Angus Association are the best tools we have for beef cattle selection. But they're exactly that...a tool that can be used in concert with (not instead of) practical methods like culling and visual appraisal for sound, easy fleshing cattle that keep producers in business by adding *profit* to their business, not increased costs.

And regardless of the tools used, most cow-calf producers operate with practical limitations for forage resources and delivered feed. So instead of the continuous quest for maximum weaning weight, carcass weight or other production traits, the time will come (maybe HAS come) when optimum levels of growth and output will result in higher overall profitability.

Like it or not, cattlemen have always taken pride in outputs. Few coffee shop conversations have been won with "most profit per acre or cow." Instead, the most pounds, bushels or bales usually dominate the day. The seedstock world is no different...it's hard to differentiate genetics that are slightly better than average in nearly all traits—INCLUDING traits such as foot EPDs, udder quality, heifer pregnancy and mature size.

But for over a century, that's exactly what we have demanded of Dalebanks genetics. That the range cows and herd bulls thrive in this region's environment--often with limited feed resources--while producing progeny that can then express enough growth and marbling to be high-value carcasses that meet consumer demand. Seems simple enough, until we recognize the antagonisms and associated demands that all of these factors exhibit.

Day after day, season after season, it's what we consider our most important job at Dalebanks Angus. Listening to our customers, evaluating challenges and opportunity in the cattle business, sourcing genetics that can help meet these needs and then working with Mother Nature to find the genetics that excel, while culling those that don't.



OPTIMIZE THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN

TRAITS THAT PAY and TRAITS THAT COST

Saturday November 18, 2023
NW OF EUREKA, KANSAS

Selling 150 Bulls
Yearling & Coming Two-Year-Olds

D DALEBANKS
ANGUS
presented by
genetic
genetics

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Pounds, efficiency, gain, marbling, yield... the industry always wants MORE. But those extra few pounds or percent often come with increases in labor, problems, feed or other inputs.

For decades, we have focused on optimal animal performance AND labor-saving foundation traits like foot soundness, fertility, longevity, sound udders and docility.

While this "systems approach" to genetic selection may not produce THE bull with THE most of a given trait or EPD, it results in hundreds that find that sweet spot between sensible inputs and optimal outputs.

CONTACT US FOR A SALEBOOK!

Would You Rather?

I'll be honest, I was unsure how soon—or if ever—I would see cattle prices eclipse levels seen in 2014. The tremendous run we have seen in all classes of cattle in 2023 have certainly made a believer out of a lot of us. Most experts point to both supply and demand fundamentals that have gotten us to this tremendous market. We can attribute demand growth to many factors, the primary being a multi-decade focus on the consumer through value-based marketing and rewards for quality and consistency.

But the supply side of the price curve is a double-edged sword, and it continues to cut pretty deep in our neck of the woods. To state the obvious, drought that started in the west and northern plains two years ago has shifted east and now has enveloped much of the Plains and Midwest.

So as the childhood game goes, “Would you rather have a record-high cattle market and a drought, or full ponds and cheap calf prices?” While many folks have had to make tough choices regarding stock water, forage supplies, calf marketing and heifer retention, at least we have a solid market if we need to sell earlier or deeper into the cowherd.

And—unlike the drought of 2012, this one has covered an even larger swath of the country, signaling that heifer retention has still not begun in earnest, so most analysts believe that elevated price levels should last a bit longer than they did in 2014/2015.

I love the quote, “Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. And weak men create hard times.” While the past year’s weather has not been fun for any of us, I believe that it helps make all of us stronger. In fact, it is likely making a younger, stronger, heartier cowherd that will be even better prepared to efficiently produce calves for upcoming years.

These times of reduced cow numbers signal an opportune time to increase the QUALITY of genetics. As we rebuild the cowherds, cattle with optimum levels of performance and excellent function traits will be those that are of tremendous value—both to you AND to your buyers.

Emission Research Project

For nearly a year, Dalebanks Angus has been working with Kansas State University to collect gas emissions data on our spring and fall-calving heifers. Using GreenFeed equipment, heifers are individually measured for Methane and Carbon Dioxide production, as well as oxygen consumption, during normal respiration. It is our hope that by quantifying this data, we can better share the real story about a range cow’s carbon footprint. Plus, these phenotypes can be used to calculate a proxy for metabolic rate, so we hope to eventually be able to better select for the most forage efficient lines of cattle we can find.

To measure these females, a small amount of alfalfa pellets is dropped in the feeder as a buzzer sounds. Once accustomed to the machine, cattle step into the feeder to eat for a brief time. While in the feeder, air that blows past their faces is collected and analyzed to determine the concentration of each of these gases and matches this reading with their RFID.

This data will be analyzed by Dr. Megan Rolf and colleagues at KSU over the coming months, so stay tuned for updates.



Thanks to Collinge Cattle Co for loaning us a truck and water tanks this fall. Few things are better than good neighbors!



Contact us anytime to discuss what you need to add more Practicality and Profitability to your herd!

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Practical. Profitable. Genetics.

Annual Bull Sale November 18, 2023

12:30 pm at the Dalebanks Angus Sale Facility, 1030 River RD, Eureka, KS

Selling 150 yearling and coming 2-year-old bulls sired by:

Tehama Patriarch	HF Safe & Sound
DVF Growth Fund	Yon Top Cut
Connealy Cool	Tehama Tahoe
PLC Charisma	Sitz Resilient

*Bulls with optimal balance of
MATERNAL, CALVING-EASE,
GROWTH and CARCASS TRAITS.*

Contact Matt to receive your catalog!
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Dalebanks Patriarch 2503 (AAA 20462102)

Pictured just after breeding cows this summer. HE SELLS 11/18/2023
CED: 10 WW: 90 YW: 168 HP: 17.4 Claw/PA: .48/.49 \$M: 81 \$C: 298

*We will not be selling any heifers through the sale this fall.
We will have groups of fall open heifers, spring bred heifers and spring bred cows
available at private treaty.
Contact us for details.*

Dalebanks Angus
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