

# The Beef Business ‘Bull’etin

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## System Changes for Big Results

*The goal of the Beef Business ‘Bull’etin is to provide information on how to improve the profitability of your beef herd. Herd improving bulls that I have for sale are featured. Please call with questions.*

**W. Mark Hilton, DVM**

With 28 years of veterinary experience and 13 years before that on our home farm (no, I’m not 41, we bought our first cows when I was 11), I have had ample opportunity to see success, mediocrity and failure. As I reflect on the most successful operations they have many things in common. One of these is that they have made significant and sustainable changes over the history of their business. These are not minor changes like calving a week earlier or later in the year. They are changes that make a huge change in the overall operation.

Some examples include (all figures based on a 50 cow herd):

### **A major change in winter feeding.**

The first option here is to replace hay feeding with something cheaper, much cheaper. Stalk grazing is always the first option because nothing comes close to grazing stalks for 60-90 days in saving money. With hay at \$60/ton you save **\$4140** for grazing stalks for 2 months. The best stalk grazing is as soon as possible in the fall. Stalk residue

deteriorates every day it lays on the ground and generally by January, the quality is quite poor. The goal is to have the cows coming in the south gate the instant the combine is leaving the north gate of the just-harvested corn field.

Since winter feed cost is the biggest cost of owning the cow for the year, the next major change where herd owners have saved significant dollars is switching from full feed of hay to the use of co-product feeds. If you can use corn gluten or distiller’s grains with solubles (wet is almost always cheaper and priced at \$50/ton for this example) as the major portion of your winter cow ration you could save over **\$3500** vs. full feed of hay for 5 months. There is a cost of storage and delivery to the cows, but labor can be saved by feeding only three times/week.

Limit feeding hay will save significant dollars. Research at Purdue shows a 20-35% savings in hay if cows are only allowed 4-6 hours/day access. Think about how we



**45X—The Complete Package**

fed cows 40 years ago. We fed cows once daily with square bales and they ate their feed in just a few hours. Our labor-saving round bales have greatly increased hay wastage by allowing the cow to decide how much she eats and how much she pulls out of the bale and stomps into the mud. If you feed hay for 5 months, the 25% savings would net **\$2800**. This would easily pay for a few steel posts and some hot-wire to go around the hay rings.

Other options of significant system changes include: **Changing calving season** from winter (Feb-early March) to mid-late spring (end April-early June) for herds that constantly fight bad weather and calf scours. It is hard to put a dollar figure on this one, but if you

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## System Changes con't

lose 2 calves/year and spend \$1000 with your local veterinary clinic, you could potentially save **\$2000** just in health costs (not to mention your \$\$ on feed savings by calving later).

### Changing genetics to add hybrid vigor.

Advantages of crossbred cows are:  
 2-6% ↑ in calf survivability  
 4% ↑ in feedlot growth  
 16-38% ↑ in longevity of cows  
 6% ↑ in weaning rate  
 9-23% ↑ in # calf weaned/cow exposed  
 6-9% ↑ in weaning weight of calves

25% ↑ in lifetime productivity of cows

Add these advantages up and you can improve income in that 50 cow herd by \$60/cow/year so in a 50 cow herd that is **\$3000**.

### Feed them out

Feed your calves to slaughter to add **\$4000** to your bottom line (\$100/head profit with 40 calves sold and 8 heifers retained for breeding). Our clients that sell freezer beef make an additional \$300/head profit on the \$100/head listed above. Sure there is some extra cost involved, but sell 20 head this way and add about **\$5500** to the bottom line. With so much emphasis on buying

locally and consumers wanting to know where their food comes from we feel this is a marketing option for more of our beef producers. Put a huge sign near your farm to attract new customers.



**10X—Calving-ease Angus Composite**

## Bulls for Sale

Please check out our website – [www.mwbeefcattle.com](http://www.mwbeefcattle.com) to see pictures and the most up-to-date information about our bulls for sale. Bulls are moderate framed, thick muscled with excellent dispositions. Their EPD's are balanced with emphasis on low birthweight, excellent growth and tremendous carcass. Their steers will weigh off heavy and sell for top dollar. The heifers will be the keeping kind that

your neighbors will envy. Nine bulls are classified as calving ease bulls that can be used on heifers.

Please check out our website - [www.mwbeefcattle.com](http://www.mwbeefcattle.com) to see more pictures and the most up-to-date information about our bulls for sale.

## Calving-ease Angus Composite Bulls

We have two Angus composite 'heifer bulls' (10X and 12X) that have pedigrees stacked for low birthweight. These bulls are 90% Angus and 10% Gelbvieh. They will both work very well on yearling heifers as their birthweight EPD's rank in the top 10% of all Angus bulls for low birthweight. They are not 'just' calving ease bulls as they are also very complete sires with excellent growth and carcass in a very moderate frame.

## SimAngus Bulls

We have sold a number of really solid SimAngus bulls the past couple of years as a compliment to our Balancers. I think anyone that has seen our bulls in the past will be totally impressed with these thick-muscled, moderate framed SimAngus bulls. These bulls are 'puppy dog' tame and that was expected. Four of these bulls are out of "In Focus" and it just doesn't get much

better than that. Check the website and then come and see why we are so high



**81X—SimAngus—Soggy black baldy**

on these bulls. 86X, 81X, 87X and 85X are nearly 'peas in a pod' with one being a black baldy. Only many generations of AI produce bulls like this. The 59X bull is from the Brooks farm and he is out of their IBEP sire 'Carlos' that has done a super job for the past 6 years.

All the SimAngus bulls are DNA tested for 12 traits (see website – click on "beef articles" for details) and as an added bonus all are homozygous black!

## Balancer Bulls

We have built our reputation on selling Balancer bulls that are cow makers. If you want a set of cows that are calm, fertile, calve unassisted and take care of their calves, these bulls will fit the bill. These foundational traits will never be compromised and since we sold over 50% of our bulls to repeat customers last year we think you will appreciate these traits. Over the past few years we have been putting more emphasis on moderate frame,



**218X—Balancer with ADG ratio of 119!**

fleshing ability and carcass traits. The average cow in America is too big and costs too much to feed.

For details on the bulls, look on [www.mwbeefcattle.com](http://www.mwbeefcattle.com). You will find a grandson of my famous '218' cow that has looked like a herd sire since day one. 45X may be the most complete bull I've ever sold – calving ease enough for heifers with growth, thickness and very moderate frame. If you find a bull that is longer sided than 5X3, let me know. He is a stud. 14X is a 'no holes' bull with a pedigree deep in Angus and Gelbvieh genetics that

have stood the test of time. Cows too big? Look at 21X to moderate frame and improve fleshing ability. 33X and 24X are half brothers that will improve growth and carcass and put some super calm cows in your herd for many years..

All Balancer bulls are DNA tested for 12 traits just like the SimAngus bulls. We are very pleased that the bulls rate very well for traits like tenderness, residual feed intake (feed efficiency), % choice, marbling, ADG, and docility.

All the heavy lifting has been done for you. Come and reap the benefits for your herd.

## Bull Guarantees

Bulls will have a breeding soundness exam completed and are guaranteed to be breeders.

Bulls are guaranteed for disposition for life.

Calf vigor at birth is an absolute.

All are free of known genetic defects.

Calves will have exceptional growth rate.

Daughters will be low input, fertile, front pasture cows that will have long productive careers.

Structural correctness is an absolute. All bulls are Johnes and BVD PI free. Calving ease on cows is guaranteed and some bulls are certified for use on heifers.

*For complete DNA profile of all  
Balancer and SimAngus bulls  
see [www.mwbeefcattle.com](http://www.mwbeefcattle.com)*

*"Beef Articles"*

## DNA Test Results

All of the Balancer and SimAngus bulls have been DNA tested for 12 traits. See website for details. Highlights include:

- 4 bulls with RFI (feed efficiency) score of 5 out of 10 (low # better)
- 2 bulls with a tenderness score of 9
- every bull above average for marbling and % choice
- all bulls in optimum range for fat and yield grade
- 7 bulls scoring 7 for docility
- 6 bulls homozygous black

## Bull Buying Incentives

Bull buying incentives include:

- \$100 off the price of each bull if you pick the bull up at Brooks Farm by May 1, 2011. Bulls stay at no charge to you up until May 1.
- Payment of \$10/head up to \$100 total if you put calves from one of our bulls into

IBEEF or similar retained ownership program AND provide us with gain and carcass data. Bull buyers see the superior growth and carcass genetics from MBCC bulls and we get to use the data to educate potential buyers about the value of top genetics.

- If you sell calves after wean-

ing, we have a feedlot that wants MBCC genetics. You get top dollar for your calves and the feedlot owner gets healthy cattle that grow, grade and make a profit. A herd owner recently received a \$58/head 'premium' from our feedlot owner compared to his other 'best' price. It does not take long to pay for a superior bull when you pocket an extra \$58/calf!

**MIDWEST BEEF CATTLE CONSULTANTS**

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**Midwest Beef Cattle  
Consultants**

*[www.mwbeefcattle.com](http://www.mwbeefcattle.com)*

## **Bull Sale Details – Saturday, February 19**

You are welcome to stop by Brooks Farm at 8689 W, 500 N, Wolcott any-time to see the bulls on test. Go straight north out of Wolcott on 900W and proceed 4 miles to 500 N. Turn east and drive ¼ mile to the farm on the north. Call Tom ahead of time if possible – 765-479-1750 or 219-279-2229 – to schedule a time to walk through the bulls. After you’ve studied the figures and examined the bulls, come back to the farm on **Saturday, February 19** and make your final selections. We want each of you to have an equal chance



**5X3—Rock solid Balancer bull**

to buy the bulls that best fit your goals. If you have interest in a bull, put your buyer number next to that bull’s number. If you are the only bidder, the bull is yours at the offering price. If two or more have chosen the bull, you will have the opportunity to bid on the bull by \$100 increments until only one bidder remains. What we don’t want to happen is for you to miss out on any bull that will fit your program. So, put your number on multiple bulls to be sure you don’t get shut out. If you get your top choices and then don’t need a bull you marked, you are under no obligation to bid on any more bulls. Our ultimate goal is for you to get the best bulls for your herd goals.

The schedule for Saturday, **February 19** will be:  
**9:30 – noon** sign in and view the bulls  
**11:30 – noon** enjoy lunch – hamburger provided by bull 28W from last year who decided to cop an attitude on BSE day  
**noon – 12:55** Mark and Tom to discuss the bulls and their ‘numbers’  
**12:59** Last chance to select your bulls  
**1:00** Bull sale starts with bulls in top price category with the most buyer numbers. Sale progresses through each price level in same manner as top category.

If you cannot attend on Saturday, call Mark (765-714-1092) or Tom (765-479-1750) and we will bid on your bull. We guarantee to buy him at the lowest price possible. We can also call you when your bull comes up and you can bid over the phone. Again, the goal is for you to get the bull you need.