

BEEF BUSINESS 'BULL'ETIN

Midwest Beef Cattle Consultants - W. Mark Hilton, DVM

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No Bull****

Bull buyer Chris Wiese came up to me after one of our bull sales and said, "No Bull****. That is why we buy bulls from you and your team. It's the most honest sale I have ever attended". Thank you, Chris!

We are getting ready to have our 16th annual sale and our focus has not changed in those 16 years. As a practicing veterinarian I saw "problem cattle" on an almost daily basis. I did not want to see any problems in my pastures. Our focus for 16 years (and way before that as our family had beef cattle) is on cattle that work for you, not the other way around. Our list of absolutes include: great disposition; easy calving, excellent vigor at birth; superior growth; moderate frame and milk; perfect feet, legs and udders; super fertility and outstanding carcass. There are plenty of things in life that cause us grief; our beef cattle should NOT be one of those things. Raising cattle should be profitable and FUN!

I thought of Chris Wiese's statement when I opened up a bull sale catalog that I received recently. One of the bull's footnotes said "Great heifer bull prospect that won't make you give up any muscle or performance." So, according to the footnote, this bull is excellent for calving ease, growth and ribeye, right? I looked at his EPDs (numbers that are 9x more accurate in predicting what his progeny will do vs any performance data like birth, weaning weight or 'muscle shape') and found a different story. His Calving Ease Direct EPD (best predictor of his calving ease when used on heifers) was 9.6 which put him in the 85th percentile (bottom 15% of entire Balancer genetics), his weaning weight and yearling weight EPDs (best predictor of growth of his calves) was in the 90th percentile and his ribeye EPD (best predictor of muscle of his calves) was also in the 90th percentile. In other words, his calves will need considerable assistance when used on heifers, they will grow poorly and will lack muscle. What would the footnote say in our No Bull**** catalog? There would be no footnote because he would have been castrated at birth! He is exactly the opposite of what we are trying to produce.

I purchased my first bull from MBCC in 2009. I have bought a bull every year and am very pleased with the quality, performance, and the dispositions of the bulls. They met all my specifications. I will continue to buy bulls from Midwest Beef Cattle Consultants.

*Wess Booker
Scenic View Farm,
IN*



Herd improving Balancer, Angus, Red Angus and SimAngus bulls

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Think that bull was an aberration? In the same sale catalog another bull's footnote read, "Calving ease bull with a 62# BW, a 106 WW ratio and a 102 YW ratio. Good kind to use on heifers . . ." What did his EPDs reveal? He was in the 90th percentile for Calving Ease Direct (CED) at 8.6 and 60th percentile for growth. Another bull that would have left his testicles on the ground in my herd. I can accept a bull that is a bit below average for growth if he is super for calving ease, but a bull that is hard calving and poor growth? Nope. Three factors caused this bull to have a 62# birthweight. He was born in the fall (lower birthweight than spring calves) in the SE USA (lower BW than a northern calf) and out of a first calf heifer (lower BW than mature cow). All three of these are non-genetic factors and zero of these factors will impact his offspring.

Maybe I am on my soapbox a bit, but after 35 years of veterinary practice I have seen it all with regard to cattle with more hype than proof. Our bulls have the proof and you can take that to the bank.

Do You Need a Bull for Heifers?

What is a reasonable CED EPD for use on heifers? The University of Missouri has organized their Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program for 22 years and it publishes the CED requirements for service sires for all bred heifers in their sales. This is the premier heifer development program in the US. Their minimum CED for Balancer bulls used in the program is 13 or the 40th percentile of the breed. So, they say that a Balancer bull at or above 13 can be used on heifers with minimal risk of calving difficulties. We have even more stringent requirements to designate one of our bulls as a 5 star calving ease bull (certified to use on heifers) with a minimum CED of 15 or the 25th percentile. Maybe I am too conservative, but my DVM training shouts "I want no calving problems!" I would much rather a bull we rate as 3 star (cows only) or 4 star (cows and a few heifers) turns out to be a 5 star than the other way around. I have told many people that I treat every buyer as if I was selling the bull to my parents and you never want to disappoint your parents.

The Best Way to Buy a Bull

Our goal is for you to get the best bull for your herd goals. Even though our cattle have similar qualities, there are differences. If you sell freezer beef or retain ownership of your calves, you need to have a bull that is elite in growth and carcass. If your cows are too big and you keep back heifers, you need a bull with a more moderate frame. If you call us before the sale and tell us your goals, the first thing we will do is tell you bulls we think you should cross off of your list. If you have purchased bulls previously from us we will make sure the pedigree of your potential bull candidates are genetically different from your current bulls so you minimize inbreeding. After more questions we will get you down to a list of 5– 10 bulls.

The way we sell our bulls you will not overpay for your bull. If you are interested in a bull, you put your buyer number next to that bull. If you are the only person on that bull, you get him at the base price. About 40% of our bulls over the past 3 years have sold for the base price. If multiple people have their number on a specific bull we start at the base price and bid by \$100 increments until the bull is sold. The advantage for the buyer is that you can always see the "bull buyer board". Let's say you have bull 1F as your top

Best way to buy a bull (con't)

choice with 2F next and 4F third. Say all three bulls have a base price of \$4200. There are 6 buyer numbers on bull 1F and only 2 numbers on both 2F and 4F. Bull 1F is now at \$6000 and you think, "I am likely to get 2F or 4F at considerably less than \$6000 if I quit bidding on 1F?" So you pass on 1F. He brings \$6000 and you get 2F at \$4400.

It may be worth it to get your top choice for the difference of \$1600, but in some cases it may not be the best option. At a regular auction, you have no clue how many people are interested in each lot.

The other thing we do is ask each buyer to list their top 3 bulls. This allows us to make the sale order so that you are very likely to get one of your top 3 choices. In fact, over the past 15 years over 90% of our buyers have gotten one of their top 3 selections. It's the No Bull**** way to buy your next herdsire.

How Much to Pay for a Bull?

An average bull will sire 100 calves in his lifetime. We expect our hybrid bulls to last even longer, but we'll use that figure. Can you afford a superior \$5000 bull vs a bargain at \$2500? The superior bull has an increased cost per calf of \$25/calf. If your calves weigh 500# at weaning, the difference is \$5/cwt greater investment in the superior calves. Can you get \$5/cwt more for your calves due to quality?

We have many past bull buyers that tell us their calves are heavier at weaning (more total \$\$) AND they are topping the market.

What if you feed the calves out and receive a \$33/head premium? What if you keep back females and reap the advantages of tremendous fertility, exceptional disposition and heavy weaning weights?

Answer: your superior bull just became a very wise investment!

Preview of Our Upcoming Sale

- 18 bulls ranked 5 stars for calving ease
- 5 coming 2 year-old bulls ready for heavy service. Need to breed 25-30 cows? Buy one of these big guys.
- 100% of the bulls rate 4 or 5 stars for disposition
- Take \$200 off your purchase price if you take your bull home on March 16 sale day
- Take \$100 off your purchase price if you haul your own bull. We will keep him until May 1 at no charge.
- Bring a friend to the sale and when they buy a bull, you receive a \$100 credit on your next bull purchase.
- Guarantees on all bulls – calves will have outstanding vigor at birth, excellent growth, calm disposition, heifers will make great cows and feedlot calves will have superior carcass. Bulls are guaranteed **for life** for disposition and feet and leg issues.
- First time ever - females for sale. Open heifers, bred heifers and bred cows. Bring your trailer!

Bull Details on the Web

Go to **www.mwbeefcattle.com** for all the information on our bulls. You will find the complete EPD information (and PLEASE call me if you have questions on interpreting EPDs. I am happy to help explain them) along with genetic information, performance data and ratings for each category. If you want me to email you anytime we have an update on the bulls, please send me a note at **mark@mwbeefcattle.com** and you will be the first to have the information. You can also see information on Facebook pages for **Midwest Beef Cattle Consultants** and **M5 Ag Services, LLC**. We just posted some videos there.

If you want to come to see the bulls between now and sale day, please call Mark or Chris to let us know when you are coming. We are glad to meet with you and answer your questions. Have I mentioned that we REALLY want you to get the very best bulls and females for your herd goals? Our sales have had ~70% repeat customers over the past 5 years so we feel we must be doing something right. Our new buyers come primarily from two sources; fellow producers that are referred by a current customer or the referrals by the herd health veterinarian. Those referrals let us know that we have a product that is valued.

Let the Cow Save You \$ and the Bull Make You \$

This was the title of an article I recently read and I thought this was brilliant. The author was Dr Kris Ringwall from North Dakota State. His summary includes: don't fight nature and calve in the winter; giant cows eat too much feed— keep cows moderate in size; buy bulls that fit your goals and use EPDs to select the bulls; slaughter cattle need to have a high % that grade choice or better with few yield grade 4 and no yield grade 5s (see previous newsletter where 94.5% of 145 head of Balancer sired cattle—all calves sired by MBCC and Brooks bulls—graded choice or prime and only 9% were YG 4 with 0 YG5. Carcass premiums = over \$4800!)

We have the bulls you need to make those moderate-sized cows and we have the bulls that produce those money making feedlot animals that grow and grade.

Who Should Attend the MBCC Sale

Our bulls are an investment and the definition of an investment is something you purchase that makes you a profit. If you answer “Yes” to one or more of the following questions, please come and take a look. There is no obligation to buy; we just think you might like what you see.

Attend our sale if you:

- retain heifers to improve your herd
- want low-maintenance cattle that calve easily; calves jump up quickly to nurse, have tremendous vigor at birth
- only check your cows once or twice daily during calving
- sell freezer beef or sell slaughter cattle on the grid
- sell feeder calves and want a premium price for your high-quality calves (we have buyers!)
- think your cattle could do more for your bottom line
- need to add some hybrid vigor
- Want some “front pasture” females to add to your herd



Balancer bull Ditka C85—sire of 5 bulls in our upcoming sale on Saturday, March 16, 2019. Calving ease, growth, females, carcass; his sons are herd improvers.

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Give us a call for more
information about our
cattle program

Midwest Beef Cattle Consultants — Superior Genetics for Profit-minded Beef Producers

Saturday, March 16, 10:00am 16th Open House; 1:00pm—Bull and Female Sale

We would love to see you at the Muegge Farm, 3824 S Binford Rd, Carthage, IN on **Saturday, March 16** for our **16th Annual Open House and Bull and Female Sale**. We will have about 35 bulls for sale—Balancers, Angus, Red Angus and SimAngus. We have heard your comments over the years about our sale and we have listened. For the first time ever, we will also have a select group of bred and open females for sale. These are registered and commercial females that are of the same genetics that produce our bulls each year. Come and add some select females to your herd.



The bulls will be penned by sire group and all bulls in a pen will be on a single page in the catalog for ease of viewing the bulls. If you have questions about the best cattle to purchase (and you should!!), please arrive at 10am. We get very busy around 11:30 and our goal is to get your questions answered so you can get the right cattle for your specific herd goals. This is vitally important to us. We know the cattle, the pedigrees and the cow families. There are differences and we will be 100% transparent. Lunch will be served from 11:30-12:45, so please come and enjoy a free lunch before the sale. Grandma Muegge will have her famous pies for you to sample. I know the two that I had at our educational event in December were fabulous!

Sale location: 3824 S Binford Rd, Carthage, IN 46115. ***Look for “MBCC Bull Sale” signs*******

Directions from intersection of SR 9 and Hwy 40, Greenfield: Go south on SR 9 for 3 miles to 300 S. Turn left and go 5.1 miles to Binford Rd (angles SE). (At 600E you jog south for about 10 feet. Immediately jog back east to stay on 300S. GPS may mess you up here!) Angle right on Binford and go 1.3 miles to farm on left. It is just past the stop sign.