

BEEF BUSINESS 'BULL'ETIN

Midwest Beef Cattle Consultants - W. Mark Hilton, DVM

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Utilizing EPDs in Your Herd

We had a great learning session at our educational meeting this past December at Chris Muegge's farm. The questions showed that producers are interested in selecting bulls that will really move their herds forward. We learned that there is not ONE BULL that is best for all producers. Bulls need to enhance the goals of the herd and because all herds are different, different bulls will come to the top of the list for different herds.

Your first question needs to be, "Is the bull going to be used on heifers or cows?" If the bull is to be used on all heifers, you need a 5 star calving ease bull. If you will use the bull on mostly cows and a few heifers, a 4 star calving ease bull should work well. If you are buying a bull for cows, a 3 star calving ease bull is perfect. You want adult cows having 80-90# calves unassisted at birth and not 65# calves that will have weaning weights below your target.

The next question is, "will you keep back replacement females?" If the answer is "Yes", then you need to look at the genetics of your herd. If your average cow is 75% or more Angus, do NOT buy one of our Angus bulls. You need a Balancer or SimAngus. A large study in Montana showed a profit of \$70 MORE per cow per year for herds with crossbred cows vs purebred, and anything more than 75% is essentially a purebred. So, if you have 50 cows, your "extra" profit is \$3500 each and every year for having a crossbred herd. That's like getting a \$3500 bull free every year!

Herds also differ in how hard they "push" their cattle or how they make them "tough it out". One method is not better than the other. Herds with tremendous forage that expect high weaning weights, have excellent reproductive rates (con't page 2)

We have been buying bulls from MW Beef for over 10 years. The quality and guarantee on their bulls are unmatched. The friendship and relationship that has developed during this time is a bonus to the positive results we see in our genetics that translate to increased profitability for our operation.

Danny Orr, Paoli, IN



Balancer, Angus and SimAngus bulls that will move your herd forward

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and feed their calves out for slaughter have to select bulls with EPDs that are high in many areas. If you have a more “low-maintenance” herd with average forage, good reproductive rates and decent weaning weight you need a bull with good EPDs, not elite EPDs. If pasture and nutrition is average, good genetics that optimize hybrid vigor through crossbreeding will add dollars to your bottom line. I have analyzed financial records on beef herds as a part of my veterinary career for over 25 years and profitable herds may need ‘elite’ bulls while others will do great with ‘very good’ bulls.

Balancer Bulls

You will notice that our Balancer bulls are well above breed average in calving ease and well below breed average in birth weight while weaning and yearling EPD is generally above average. Balancer cattle have improved calving ease and decreased birth weight over the past 20 years and my herd has exceeded that breed average, Five of our Balancers are 5 star calving ease bulls for use on heifers. Growth is excellent in this breed and bulls at breed average will be excellent for most herds. I will NOT chase higher growth EPDs just to “shout” in my newsletters that my cattle are in the top 1 or 2% of the breed. If they happen to be at that level, you can guarantee that they are also great disposition, moderate frame, easy fleshing and structurally correct. That’s because those traits are non-negotiable.

Balancers have plenty of milk and our bulls tend to hover around breed average. Some are a bit higher and these bulls come from cows with excellent udders, so a bit extra milk will not be a negative. Our Balancers are much higher than average on marbling because many of you sell freezer beef or sell to slaughter on a grid. Marbling is highly heritable and stacking two or more generations of high marbling bulls assures you will get to reap the benefits of cattle that consistently grade choice and higher.

SimAngus Bulls

Our SimAngus bulls are fabulous in calving ease and low birthweight. The Simmental breed has worked hard to lower birthweight and improve calving ease and we only use bulls that will sire cattle with excellent calving ease on cows. The growth on our SimAngus bulls is right around average. The Simmental and SimAngus breeds have plenty of growth and there is little to no need to chase more growth in these breeds. The same can be said of milk where I rarely have a client that says they need significantly more milk in their herd. Like the Balancers we select Simmental and SimAngus bulls that are high in marbling so our buyers can capture the choice and higher quality grade premiums.

Angus Bulls

The Angus bulls we have for sale are all 5 star calving ease bulls and they need to be used on heifers. I am not concerned about hybrid vigor when breeding heifers; I want calving ease (con’t page 3)



MBCC 5M– Balancer cow that has 6 descendants in the sale. Great chance to add elite genetics to your herd

Bull Guarantees

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

Disposition of bulls is guaranteed for life. Yep, FOR LIFE!

Calf vigor at birth is an absolute.

Calves will have exceptional growth rate.

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

Structural correctness is guaranteed forever.

All bulls are Johnes and BVD PI free.

Calving ease on cows is guaranteed and some bulls are certified for use on heifers.

All bulls are free of all known genetic defects.

first and foremost. These bulls are elite in regard to calving ease and also have plenty of growth, milk and marbling. You will not be “giving up” traits like you will with many calving ease bulls.

Sight Unseen Purchasing

I emphasize every year to please call me before the sale so I can help you select the best bulls for your herd. In fact, you don't even need to come to the sale as I guarantee I will buy you the bulls that best fit your needs and will do so at the lowest price possible. We have one buyer that has never yet been to the sale and has purchased 3 bulls over the past 4 years. I know all about these cattle and I will ALWAYS help you select the best bulls for your herd based on **your goals**. If you call me and are “in love” with one of the bulls, but I think this is the wrong bull for you, I will tell you the truth. If you get the wrong bull for your herd, then both of us are unhappy. My greatest joy in selling bulls is when I receive positive feedback after calves from my bulls are born easily, jump up and nurse quickly and then wean off heavy. It gets even better a few years later when the accolades come in for the daughters of our bulls as that is one of our top goals; producing bulls that sire the best females you've ever had.

One of our repeat bull customers, David Sutherlin has put hundreds of cattle into the retained ownership feeding program (IBEEF) and the premiums he has received have more than paid for most of the bulls he has purchased from us. If you place calves in a feed test you will receive a credit of \$100 for the first 10 cattle you put into a retained ownership program when you send me the data. I think David currently has \$300 credit on his next purchase due to sharing data that showed his last 3 bull purchases have produced feedlot calves that had significantly above average growth, disposition, health and carcass quality when compared to the other cattle in IBEEF. This all added up profits well above the average of the IBEEF cattle.



SimAngus Bull 16D— Powerful son of ABS bull Hooks Yellowstone. Above breed average in the following EPDs: calving ease, weaning weight, yearling weight, milk, marbling and ribeye. The perfect option for a set of Angus or Balancer cows.

Herd Health

As a veterinarian, I see health problems too often. We all know that if calves get off to a great start, they have a much better chance to stay healthy later in life. Easy things to do that give a great return include:

- ◆ Winter and calve heifers separately from cows – heifers and cows have different levels of immunity to disease and have vastly different nutritional requirements. They should be in separate groups from the start of winter feeding until grass turnout in the spring
- ◆ Vaccinate cows and heifers for scours if you have trouble with this disease – check with your herd health veterinarian and get their recommendation on when and what to use.
- ◆ Vaccinate calves in early June (best date for most of Indiana) for bovine respiratory disease (BRD) so that calves can get the second dose at weaning. We have way too many calves that get sick after weaning and getting 2 doses of modified live virus (MLV) vaccine into calves before weaning is a key to assuring health. Again, ask your DVM which vaccine to use. I am also glad to visit with your veterinarian if they would like to discuss vaccine choices.

20 Balancers, 9 SimAngus and 4 Angus Bulls For Sale— Saturday, March 18. 10 am—open house; 1 pm—sale

Please plan to attend our 14th annual open house and bull sale on **Saturday, March 18**. Arrive at 10 am so you will have plenty of time to view the bulls and ask any questions. Grab lunch at noon and put your buyer number on each of the bulls that fit your herd goals. This gives you the opportunity to buy any bull on your list without obligating you to buy him. We will then make the sale order based on buyer rank. If you are the only buyer on a bull, you can select him at the base price. If more than one person wants a particular bull then those that have him on their list will be the only ones that can bid on the bull. Buyers love this system as it allows you the best opportunity to get one of your top choice bulls. Last year every bull buyer got one of their top 4 choice bulls with most getting their first or second choice.

We have a new sale location this year. It is at the Muegge Family Farm, SW of Greenfield, IN. Address is **3824 S Binford Road, Carthage, IN, 46115**.

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 (north). It is just past the stop sign.

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Bull Sale Details

All bull data and EPDs will be posted on the website www.mwbeefcattle.com. If you want the information emailed to you, please send me an email today asking for the information. You will always get information well ahead of when it is mailed out. Also, if you have interest in purchasing females, you will have this information before those that only get it via US mail. PLEASE email me today at mark@mwbeefcattle.com to get information emailed to you. You will still receive newsletters via US mail unless you only want them via email.

Sale catalogs will be mailed to all repeat buyers about March 5. If you are NOT a previous buyer, please email or call so that we can send a catalog to you. It will also be on the website. The sale catalog will include what we consider the most important EPDs for each bull. If you want even more, e.g. things like docility, RADG, etc, just let me know and I will get that to you. For the registered Balancers, you can see their complete data at the Gelbvieh website.



Balancer bull 67D—Son of Lazy TV Watchman and out of a Mytty In Focus cow. We've sold 3/4 brothers to this bull for the past 3 years. 67D is above breed average for all 7 of the EPDs we target: Calving ease, weaning weight, yearling weight, milk, marbling, ribeye and feedlot profit index. He is looking for some SimAngus or Balancer cows!

Contact Us

I would love to hear more about your beef business! Please contact me at:

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