

Beef Business “Bull”etin

MIDWEST BEEF CATTLE CONSULTANTS, LLC

PRODUCING CATTLE THAT WORK FOR YOU



Are we putting too much emphasis on growth?

In a biological system like beef production shooting for maximums are almost never the best plan. Reaching for extremes nearly always produces unintended and negative consequences.

MBCC bull customer Brad Rosenberger knows we love to hear how our cattle are doing for our buyers. Three years ago, Brad and his father purchased a super calving ease Balancer bull – top 1% for calving ease direct – whose primary goal was to give them “sleep all night” calving ease. A secondary goal was to keep back replacement females from this 64% Gelbvieh bull. Brad and his father feed out all their calves to slaughter so having very good growth was also a goal.

The bull they selected hit their target for calving ease

as they have never pulled a calf out of him. The daughters they have kept back have been DNA tested. They are among the best I analyze every year, and I analyze a ton. Goals 1 and 2 are slam dunks.

Brad sent me the performance data on his Balancer sired calves this past summer. His calves averaged 720# at weaning (220 days) and gained 3.49#/day from weaning to slaughter. The calves weighed an average of 1367# at slaughter at 13.3 months of age.

Would you be pleased with that kind of performance? What if I told you the sire of these calves is below average in the Balancer breed for both weaning and yearling weight? Sure, the Rosenberger’s are excellent cattle feeders, but you cannot get 720# weaning weights, 3.49#/day gain from wean to

“Eight and a half years ago we purchased our first Balancer bull from MBCC. This is by far the best decision we’ve made for our herds. The hybrid vigor, growth, and overall quality is unsurpassed in the replacement heifers and feedlot calves.

As we were looking to improve our herd, starting with a genetically superior bull was extremely important. The team at MBCC has been excellent to work with and they want to make sure we get the bull that fits our needs! We are lifetime customers!”

**Larry Thomas Paoli, IN
and daughter
Jaclyn Love, Orleans, IN**

slaughter and cattle weighing 1367# at 13.3 months without very good growth genetics.

If you are buying a terminal bull where you will be keeping no heifers back and sending all cattle to the feedlot, purchase a bull with very high growth and marbling. But, if you are keeping back females, an extremely high growth bull will most likely leave you with a set of cows that are too big. Big cows eat a lot and that is not how to have a profitable or fun beef business.

Please call us before you invest in your next herd sire. We want to hear all about your beef business so we can help you make a “short list” of bulls that fit all your goals.

How much bull power?

I frequently get the question about how many bulls are needed for a herd. My rule is “a bull can breed the number of females in a 65-day season equal to his months in age up to 50 females.” So, a 15-month-old bull can service 15 females and the following year when he is 27 months of age, that rises to 27.

We know that crossbred cows possess hybrid vigor and that is what makes them ~20% more fertile than a straightbred cow. The research shows the same for bulls. A hybrid bull like a Balancer or SimAngus can breed ~20% more cows than a straightbred, so that 15-month-old bull can service 18 females and a year later he can cover 32.

If you are running multiple bulls with a group of females, the bulls need to be of similar age. If a 15- and 27-month-old bull are together breeding cows, the young bull will get none bred due to the dominance of the older bull.

Bull longevity

My boss and then partner in our veterinary business in Iowa taught me, “Animal first, owner second and our clinic third” should always be our priority rank. “Take care of the animals and the client and we will be successful” was the mantra.

This is still my mindset 41 years later. We have customers that are done using a bull at 3-4 years of age due to heifer retention. Why should a 3-4-year-old bull go to slaughter when he still has many years of life left in him? We will help you market these mature bulls after you are done with them. We have many producers that still have an MBCC bull working at 8 or 9 years of age.

At our recent fall sale, we had 4 mature bulls in the sale, and they all sold. The sellers of these bulls had kept back heifers and will need a different bull this coming spring, thus the need to let these bulls go. Want to know how they sold? Each one sold for more than their purchase price as a yearling. The buyer used the bull for 2-3 breeding seasons and sold them for a profit. I think they were all quite pleased.

We will continue to help our producers market their mature bulls. We cannot guarantee that if you buy a yearling that he will sell for a higher price than you paid 2-4 years later, but the odds are good. Maybe you should purchase 2 yearlings instead of a mature bull the next time you need “a little more bull power” than a yearling will provide. You just might get a few calf crops and sell the bull for a profit.

First bulls out of “52K” to sell

We were rewarded with an outstanding set of calves out of MSCM Tahoe E118 “52K” this past spring. This is the bull that Chris and Jordan Muegge sold in the spring 2023 sale for \$10,800 to VF Farms at Seymour. The calves are exactly what his EPDs said he was going to be – calving ease, plenty of growth, moderate frame, docile and high marbling. Our lot 1 bull is always one of the best Black Balancer bulls in our sales and we’ll be leading off the spring sale with a “52K” son.

Want RED bulls? We've got them.

We have producers each year that want Red Balancer or Gelbvieh bulls to maintain a red cowherd. We've produced a few in the past, but we are not going to offer a bull just because he is red. The red bulls need to match our black bulls in quality.

I purchased what I think is one of the best Red Gelbvieh cows in the breed 2 years ago with the goal of breeding her to the best Red Angus AI sire (Bieber CL Stockmarket E119) to make some outstanding Red Balancer bulls. After she calved, I had one of my former students flush her and we got 4 bull calves and 4 heifer calves out of the flush. I've flushed about 10 cows over the past 15-20 years, and I've made about \$5 total for my efforts, so ET is no get rich quick scheme. This was the best I'd ever done.

These 4 full ET brothers are on test and will be in the March 15, 2025 sale. They are peas in a pod and are among the best bulls we've ever offered. Their moderate-framed dam with a perfect udder is pictured below.



We also have 3 sons of one of the best Red Balancer bulls in the breed – Just N Time - in the sale. These bulls are stout and have an impressive set of EPDs.

We also have a red high percentage Gelbvieh (93%) and a red purebred in the sale. One is 5 stars for calving ease and each would be a nice complement to use on a set of high percentage Red or Black Angus cows to give tremendous hybrid vigor.

In addition to these 9 red bulls, we have 35 black bulls that are as good as we've ever produced. If you want your next bulls to check the box for calving ease, vigor at birth, tremendous docility, superior growth, moderate frame, and excellent carcass while leaving you with the best set of calm, fertile females with exceptional longevity you have ever raised,

Has the seedstock producer lost focus on what really matters to the commercial cow-calf producer?

I am sure you all receive bull sale catalogs as I do. I enjoy reading them because it allows me to see what other producers have as a focus. When I get catalogs that shout "50% of the bulls in the sale are in the top 2% of the breed for weaning and yearling weight", I know that they are not producing bulls that will work for many commercial producers. In the footnotes under these high growth bulls many will tout the dam as being one of their best. What they neglect to mention is that she weighs 1800# and eats a lot of feed! Now, if this bull has excellent marbling and is being purchased solely to produce feedlot calves, he may be a perfect fit for that role. But that is not what is happening in many cases. Their daughters are unfortunately being kept for replacements.

I frequently talk to producers that complain about poor fertility and an increasing feed bill. Calves don't jump up quickly to nurse and they have less cows on their pastures than they did 20 years earlier. Having cows that are too big can cause all these problems.

We have bulls that are very high growth and marbling, and we will advise you not to keep their daughters because they will likely be too big. We need to produce some of these terminal bulls as our producers with larger herds need to have maternal and terminal bulls. Most of our bulls are not terminal bulls. They are maternal bulls that will produce the best females you have ever raised; tame, moderate and fertile. Their steer mates will have very good growth (see article on Rosenberger's) and excellent carcass quality.

Producer Focus - Tempel Farms, St. Croix, Indiana

Pat Tempel and his family have had cows since 1977, but the purchase of a farm in 2010 with rolling ground that was unable to be farmed necessitated the expansion of the beef business. They expanded to 80 cows with equal numbers in two separate 60-day calving seasons. They started out buying bulls from a nearby seedstock producer but keeping enough pregnant females in the herd became a challenge. "The producer was putting too much emphasis on growth and the cows were getting too big. We always had poorer than expected reproductive rates" says son Chris. "We decided to quit raising heifers and we started buying all our replacements. That has worked well for us."

"Traditionally we finished out all our calves to slaughter, but when corn got expensive and so did calves, we opted to sell our preconditioned calves to a local feeder. We follow a vaccination program from Drs. Hoagland and Hoagland-Edwards at Dubois County Animal Hospital and the buyer says our calves are the healthiest he buys."

"We purchase very high growth and marbling bulls from MBCC, and the buyer said our calves averaged 1600# at 14 months of age the last few years. They grow and grade."

Most of the cows on the Tempel farm are Red Angus x Simmental crossbreds and they use Black Balancer bulls to add hybrid vigor and get mostly black calves. "Years ago, if we got a red calf, he got dingied as a feeder or a fat. Our buyer said that the few red calves he gets from us now bring the exact same price as the black ones. I guess quality pays."

Pat, Chris and Jon farm 2800 acres of row crops, have 260 acres of hay, are a gilt developer (wean to breed) with 1800 head on feed at a time and now have a 100-120 head cow herd. "We cannot have cattle that take a lot of extra care. We expect calves to be born on their own and jump up to nurse. We see a real advantage in these 'convenience traits' with the MBCC sired calves. They are nearly problem free."



The Tempel's recently purchased a TMR wagon and are working with Chis Muegge to develop their winter rations. "We used to only feed hay and they wasted a lot. With our limit fed ration of corn silage, wet corn gluten and wheat straw we are saving a ton on feed cost while performance is up. We are also selling some of our high-quality hay. Chris has made us aware to always look at different nutritional avenues."

"I really enjoy working with the cattle", Chris says. "Seeing those cows and calves out on pasture grazing is great. They are also a very profitable enterprise for us. Cattle will always be a part of our agricultural business because we have ground we cannot farm. We have discussed building a better feeding facility and going back to feeding the calves to market, so our marketing plan may change in the future."

Saturday, March 15 Schedule

10am - View Sale Cattle and discuss purchase options with MBCC Team

12pm – Lunch with fresh, homemade pies by Grandma Muegge

1pm - Sale Bulls sell first, then females

All times are Eastern time

Sale Location:

M5 Family Farms,

3824 S Binford Rd, Carthage, IN 46115

The Feedbunk by Chris Muegge, Ruminant Nutritionist: Winter Bull Management

Through the winter months our focus tends to shift towards the cow herd and setting them up for a successful calving and breeding season. Feed, quality mineral, and good management help to make sure they are in the proper condition for turnout. Unfortunately, all too often the same attention is not paid to their male counterparts. The next few paragraphs are a few things to keep in mind to make sure your bulls are ready to go this breeding season.

Nutrition: First and foremost, know your starting point. A bull won't reach his mature weight until 3-4 years of age. That means a 15-month-old bull purchased in the spring of 2024 is still growing. A yearling bull may lose 100-200 lbs. during the breeding season (we don't often see this in our MBCC bulls!) or 1-2 Body Condition Scores (BCS). Over the next 300 days he must make this weight up plus the weight he needs to gain to reach a healthy, mature weight. Proper development is key, as an under conditioned/over conditioned bull will have suboptimal fertility.

Young Growing Bulls

- Under 3 years old to gain 1.25 - 2.0 lbs/day
- Consume 24-30 lbs. of dry matter/day
- Need 8.5% Protein, 60% TDN
- Grass hay and high fiber energy source (Soybean hulls, DDGs, Gluten)
- Goal is to have these bulls at BCS 6.0 at breeding

Mature Bulls

- Bulls over 3 years old
- Consume 35-40 lbs. of dry matter/day
- Need 7.0% Protein, 50% TDN
- Can be turned out with mature cow herd after pregnancy checks
- Separate prior to calving
- Do not get bulls too heavy and monitor hoof and leg soundness

Be sure to keep a quality mineral in front of bulls all winter long. Zinc, Copper, Manganese, and Selenium are all critical to sperm maturation, which is a 60-day process. Utilize a mixture of inorganic and organic minerals to improve absorption to optimize sperm quality, along with hoof health. Winter forage tends to be low in Vitamin A. I recommend a winter mineral with 400,000 IU/lb or more Vitamin A.

Environment: Bulls are athletes; we need them to cover ground during the breeding season. Give bulls space to move and exercise. Place feeders and water away from each other to encourage travel. Offer at least 30 inches of bunk space to each bull. Again, separate mature bulls from younger growing bulls so they can be fed appropriately. Scrape mud and manure. Mud can reduce intake, decrease feed efficiency and lead to foot rot problems. If your bull provider is utilizing a foot rot vaccine like Fusoguard®, be sure to booster this at your scheduled bull breeding soundness exam (BSE).

Frost bite is no fun, especially on your prized bull's testicles. Frost bite hampers the bull's ability to thermoregulate his testicles which is critical for normal sperm development. Even moderate frost bite can decrease BSE passing rates by 25%. Prevent this by keeping dry areas to bed down. Offer extra bedding during extremely cold/wet weather. Create windbreaks to reduce wind chill.

SCHEDULE YOUR BSE: No matter your management or bull quality, bulls will inevitably fail a BSE at some point in their life. Waiting until the last minute to find this out only puts you at a bigger disadvantage. I highly recommend scheduling a BSE 60-75 days prior to breeding. Problems like cold stress or minor frost bite can heal in a 45-60-day period. Performing a BSE early gives you the chance to retest these bulls. I prefer to know the status of my bull's semen before sale season is in full swing. If you want to be extra cautious, have a BSE done prior to March 15th. That way if you need a bull, you can purchase one through our annual spring sale. Hope to see you March 15th!

Midwest Beef Cattle

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Saturday, March 15, 2025 1pm Sale Sneak Preview

Our **"52K"** bulls are the real deal. We will continue to use him hard in our herds. We also have a half-brother to **"52K"** and we are retaining 50% semen interest in him. Maria and Marvin Mauer, VF Farms, Jeff Ryan and Scheurich brothers have all purchased bulls where we have kept a semen interest, and I believe all have been pleased with the revenue sharing.

We will again have **"Stock Options"** sons as they have been some of the favorites at our last 3 sales. Our **"Triple K Husker"** bulls were in great demand a year ago and we have two in this sale. We have 13 bulls that rate 5 stars for calving ease. There are 6 bulls that are over 75% Gelbvieh for those with higher % Angus females. We have easily the best set of red bulls we've ever produced.

Want added hybrid vigor? Take a look at our Simmental-Angus-Gelbvieh and SimAngus bulls.

We are also offering 10 open, Balancer heifers that will be ready to breed in the spring. All have been DNA tested and are "keeper quality." Looking for a tremendous Balancer pair to add to your herd? Come and take a look at the young female and her calf we are offering.

Did we mention that we would love to hear about your herd goals BEFORE you come to the sale? We think selecting a new herdsire is a BIG DEAL and we want to help you select the best bull for your beef business.