

• SIMBRAH NEWS •

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INCREASING VALUE

By Caitlin Richards

Simbrah producers came together for the first annual Simbrah Summit in San Antonio, Texas in August. Speakers and attendees collaborated and discussed ways to improve the Simbrah breed throughout the one-day event.

Presenter Maurice Janda of Graham Land & Cattle Co. spoke to producers about a way to increase their cattle's value. While he specifically spoke about how it related to Simbrah cattle, producers of all breeds could take something away from his talk.

As the feedyard manager for Graham Land & Cattle Co., Janda shared with producers the impact retaining ownership of their cattle all the way to harvest can have not only on the Simbrah breed, but also on their bottom line.

"Hopefully, I will give you an avenue to create an interest in feeding cattle so you can collect some of the data as a group or individually to help promote your breed," said Janda. "Even though, it may be some-

thing that you are not comfortable with or a little outside of your comfort zone."

Graham Land & Cattle Co. is a custom feedyard located in Gonzales, Texas. Janda explained they have a history of working with producers to feed and finish out cattle as an extension of their operation.

"We are truly a custom feedyard. That is something Dr. Graham (owner) has desired since he purchased this in 1986," Janda said. "Whatever somebody needs- we try to do it."

Over the years, Graham Land & Cattle Co. has participated in several feeding trials and breed programs to help producers and associations collect valuable data. Graham Land & Cattle Co., with the help of the packing plant, can specifically help producers collect data on rib eye area, back fat thickness, quality grade, yield grade and tenderness scores.

"It is an opportunity to understand a lot more about your cattle when you take them all the way to the

packing plant," Janda said. "Not just quality from a dining experience, but also average daily gains, feed conversion rates and overall health. If you have never owned a steer past the day you weaned him, there is probably a lot you can learn about their health if you own them through harvest."

During his presentation, Janda shared with producers the data Graham Land & Cattle Co. has collected over the years on Simbrah cattle. The data he shared was collected on 214 head from 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2013. He shared that the average in-weight was 735.6 lbs. and out-weight was 1,335 lbs., which correlates well with what packers desire to "fit the box."

Additionally, he said the Simbrah cattle's average daily gain was about 2.5 lbs. per day and they had a conversion rate just under 8 lbs. per day. Janda explained that those are pretty average numbers and overall positive for finishing out a 700 lb. animal.

Within those same 214

head of Simbrah cattle, 3% graded prime, roughly 70% graded choice and about 25-27% graded select. Janda said those were fantastic numbers compared to the rest of the cattle within their feedyard—with the exception of their Wagyu cattle.

"We are already seeing some great numbers in the Simbrah cattle going to the

packing plant," Janda said. "Simbrah cattle fit very well into what we do with the Brahman influence that they carry. The carcass quality they present allows us to sell those cattle just about anywhere in the country and they are probably going to be profitable for you."

What allows Simbrah cattle to do well at Graham Land & Cattle Co., Janda explained, is the area's cli-

mate and the products they feed. The mild temperatures of South Texas, along with feeding brewers grain bode well for the breed, which allows them to perform high.

"The climate we have and the products we have available allow us to take fantastic care of those cattle and get them to grade like their genetics will allow them too," Janda said.

(Continued on page 2)



Simbrah cattle on feed this summer at Graham Land and Cattle Co.



Maurice Janda was a presenter at the 2018 Simbrah Summit.



The American Simmental Association is currently conducting a steer feedout at Graham Land and Cattle Co., Gonzales, Texas (pictured). The feedout includes Simbrah sired cattle.

Value...

(Continued from page 1)

When considering retaining ownership, these factors are important for producers to take into account. Certain breeds need to be fed in certain

areas, Janda explained, in order to maximize their potential. In his presentation, he pointed out a particular picture of Simbrah cattle feeding at the bunk.

"This picture was taken earlier in August at about 11:30 a.m. when it was 95

degrees and 85% humidity," Janda said. "All of them are at the feed bunker eating – that is what you want to see."

Most producers take a traditional marketing approach because of logistics and the minimal risk it presents. When producers take their cattle to the sale barn it is simple, Janda explained, but producers lose not only potential data, but potential dollars.

"The shrink going from your ranch with an unweaned animal through the sale barn is about 9%," Janda said. "That unweaned animal goes straight to the sale barn and is going to lose a lot of weight and you aren't going to get paid for that. A pre-conditioned animal is going to do much better in that scenario or much better going through the feed-yard."

In order to retain ownership and see extra dollars, Janda said producers need to implement a true 45-day weaning program where the calves have been taken off of the cow, received two rounds of respiratory vaccines and black leg, dewormed and started on a grain diet. Imple-

menting these measures sets the calves up to succeed in the feed yard because their rumen is prepared.

"That is a very stressful moment in the animal's life," Janda said. "It has been weaned, hauled and vaccinated. Then at that point you have its changed feed – you are looking at a potential disaster. So that weaning process, or pre-conditioning process, is extremely important to ensure those animals will make it because they are going to be with us for a long time."

Janda broke down exactly how retaining ownership can beef up a producer's bottom line when compared to a traditional marketing approach. Based on current market and input prices in August, Janda figured producers could potentially see a \$73.51 per head increase in income when comparing retained ownership to traditional marketing at weaning.

As it relates to the Simbrah breed, producers can gain valuable information to help market their breed to other producers. However, no matter what

breed a producer is raising, retaining ownership can help all producers market their cattle better and manage their operation more effectively.

"I understand what we do is a very small portion of your business," Janda said

in closing. "But I also think what we do can add value to the rest of your business by feeding those cattle for you. I hope we can add value to your herd by gaining some information and generating data for all."

YOUNG HERD BULL FOR SALE

We have a two-year-old red, polled purebred Simbrah bull for sale.

He comes with a proven pedigree. His sire, Smith TMP Red Jewel is an international champion, and is siring calves with lots of performance.

If you are looking for a calving ease bull, then this one fits the bill. His EPDs rank him in the top 10% of the breed for calving ease and 20% for birth weight and add to that he ranks in the top 10% for weaning and 15% for yearling---that's the kind of spread you want, if easy calving and pounds at weaning and yearling are how you make your money.

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NEWS

You Can Use...

Tom Brothers Ranch schedules sale

Tom Brothers Ranch, Campbellton, Texas, will kick off their private treaty bull sales on Dec. 8th. The event will be held at the ranch and the offering will include 35 SimAngus and Simbrah bulls. They will sell with complete performance information and interested cowmen are invited to visit their website, www.tombrothersranch.com for photos, catalog and details. For additional information, contact Ellen Tom at 210/313-0020 or ellen@tombrothersranch.com or Philip Tom, 512/296-6845 at philip@tombrothersranch.com.

Buzzard Hollow Ranch to host bull sale

Buzzard Hollow Ranch will host their bull sale on Jan. 26th at the ranch in Granbury, Texas. The sale will be on www.DVAuction.com. The offering will include a selection of SimGenetic bulls. For more information visit www.bhr-simmentals.com or call Fred Schuetze at 817/573-0957.

Simbrahs compete in bull test

The Rio Grande Valley Beef Improvement Association (RGVBIA) held its annual all breed gain test.

There were over 90 bulls included in the test and the RGVBIA Index is the ratios of the following computed with each age group and breed: 30% for average daily gain; 20% rib-eye area/cwt, 20% weight per day of age, 20% marbling and 10% scrotal circumference.

Reavis Farms, Mission, Texas, had the high indexing Simbrah bull and the third highest indexing bull overall with a RGVBIA Index of 123.00. The bull sired by RFI Real Deal was the champion in the intermediate division. 7N Ranch, Donna, Texas, had the champion junior Simbrah bull with an index of

108.23, while La Muneca Cattle Co. had the reserve champion with an RGVBIA Index of 103.68. 7N and La Muneca also had the champion and reserve champion calves with bulls that indexed 112.45 and 108.20, respectively.

7N saw their Simmental bull have the highest index on the test with a 125.94 RGVBIA Index. The bull is a son of Mr. NLC Upgrade.

The top 32 bulls were offered for sale through an online auction. The RGVBIA is now conducting another test and the online sale will be March 15-18th.

SimGenetic steer feedout underway

Currently, the American Simmental Association (ASA) is conducting a SimGenetic Steer Feedout which includes Simbrah sired steers at Graham Land & Cattle Co., Gonzales, Texas. The test began Nov. 1 and a field day will be held at a later. For additional information contact Chip Kemp with the ASA at ckemp@simmgene.com or 406/587-4531.

Feed intake project underway

The American Simmental Association (ASA) is collecting feed intake data coupled with the carcass merit program and your help is needed. Your gift to the American Simmental-Simbrah Foundation, earmarked for the feed intake project, will help make collecting feed intake data a reality for ASA. For more information contact Fred Schuetze, research fundraising chairman at 817/894-0563 or bhr@speednet.com. You may also contact ASA staff members Jackie Atkins at jatkins@simmgene.com or Chip Kemp at ckemp@simmgene.com.

Genetic selection for calving ease

The most important factor affecting calving difficulty is birth weight of the calf in relation to size of the dam. Genetics influences birth weight. Birth weight was one of the four traits (along with weaning weight, yearling weight, and maternal ability which is often called "milk") originally evaluated with

Expected Progeny Difference (EPD), an estimate of genetic transmitting potential. Birth Weight EPD includes records not only from an individual, but also from relatives and progeny. So, if Birth Weight EPD is available for an individual it should be used in genetic selection instead of the individual's actual birth weight, which can be highly influenced by non-genetic factors.


Birth Weight EPD is just an indicator of calving ease. As breed genetic evaluation programs evolved, EPD was developed for actual calving ease. EPD for calving ease includes the effect of birth weight and so should be used instead of Birth Weight EPD. And when EPD for calving ease is available, it should be used alone without considering Birth Weight EPD.

Most breed associations report two estimates of calving ease. One is Direct Calving Ease EPD. It should be thought of as a factor of the calf, i. e., how easily the calf is born. This is the EPD that should be considered in predicting ease of birth of a sire's

(Continued on page 12)

RFI


Simmental and Simbrah genetics.




Smith Satisfies, a cornerstone polled purebred Simbrah sire of the breed. He has balanced EPDs, including a top 1% ranking in the breed for birth weight.



Smith CRC Lubbock, a young polled, purebred Simbrah sire that is getting the attention of the breed. He ranks in the top 20% of the breed for API and TI.



RFI Done Deal, a polled three-quarter son of RFI Real Deal. Ranks in the top 5% of the breed for API and 2% for TI.



WHF Devil's Cut, a polled Simmental sire that we are using to produce percentage and purebred Simbrah cattle, as well as Simmies.

We've been producing SimGenetics in the Rio Grande Valley for more than 30 years and our cattle stand on their genetic merit, performance and quality. We stand behind our cattle and strive to not only breed cattle that will work for our broad customer base, but we also strive for superior customer service.

We have pictured some of the bulls that are leading our program and producing outstanding individuals for us.

If you need a show heifer, herd sire, range bull or replacement female—come see the ones with the RFI prefix.

We currently have a number of bulls on test in the Rio Grande Valley Beef Improvement Association Test and will have select consignments to that online sale, March 15-18.

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Simbrah carcass merit

By Martha Holllida Garrett

Over the past several years, Bill and Jane Travis have fed their Pine Ridge Ranch Simbrah cattle at Graham Land & Cattle in Gonzales, Texas and had them sent to Kane Beef where Dr. Joe Paschal, longtime livestock specialist with Texas A&M Agri Life Extension, collects carcass data and tenderness results for them and other breeders feeding at several feedyards in South Texas.

In 2018, Pine Ridge sent two loads of cattle, 22 head in March and 63 head in July, that were typical of the performance of this carefully selected Simbrah cattle. The first group

weighed 1428 pounds and dressed at 63.2% for an average carcass weight of 866 pounds. These cattle had only .30 inches of rib fat, but had an average rib-eye area of 16.9 square inches or 1.95 square inches of ribeye muscle per 100 pounds of carcass weight. Typically, 1.80 is considered muscular. These cattle had an average marbling score of Small 84 (Low Choice). A total of 73% were Choice or Prime with an average yield grade of 1.6. Warner-Bratzler Shear Force (WB SF) averaged 5.07 pounds with no steak over 6.50 pounds (values over 8.0 pounds are not considered tender).

Their next load of 63 steers sent to Kane Beef in July averaged a little lighter, 1320 pounds and dressed 63.5% for an average carcass weight of 805 pounds. These cattle had .33 inches of rib fat and 15.6 square inch ribeyes and again 1.95 square inches of ribeye muscle per 100 pounds of carcass weight. The average marbling score of these cattle was Small 87 (again on the upper end Low Choice). A total of 68% were Prime (5%) or Choice and had an average yield grade of 1.9. WBSF averaged 5.59 pounds with only one animal being considered not tender.

Dr. Paschal says he has data on Pine Ridge's cattle going back several years and the performance of these cattle are typical of their cattle each year.

The Travis' have been pursuing carcass data for the Simbrah breed for years and are staunch advocates for tracking the data and using it to improve their herd and the breed.



Lineup of carcasses from the Pine Ridge cattle fed at Graham Feedyard and harvested at Sam Kane in 2018.

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The building blocks to commercial genetic awareness



By Lane Giess, American Simmental Association Director of Commercial and Non-traditional Data Programs

olds into a prediction model. Your seedstock provider undoubtedly uses EPD's and selection indexes to make mating deci-

sions, why shouldn't you have the same technology? <http://www.simmental.org/site/index.php/the-requirements>

Cowherd DNA Roundup

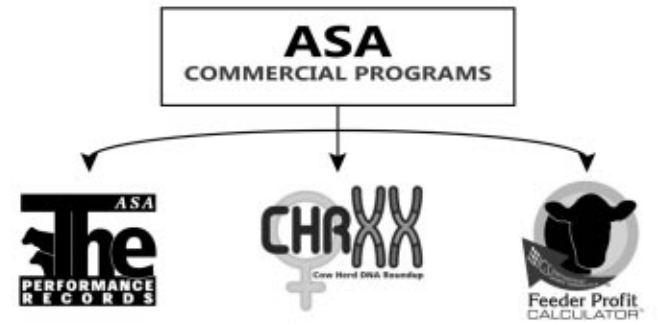
The CHR is your opportunity to push the accelerator on female genetic awareness. Every cattleman understands who their best producing cow is, but do they know right away which replacement heifer will fill that role? The field of genomics allows us to

gain a better understanding of a young heifer's genetic potential even before she start producing. This technology utilizes known regions on the bovine genome that impact specific economically relevant traits. For example, longevity in cattle is known once they've been in production for almost a generation, but you would hope to know that information before you invested time and money in replace-

ments. Through genomics, we can use known genetic markers to give us an indication of whether a female may last in the herd longer

(or shorter) than others. The CHR will provide you with years of information before you have to invest

(Continued on page 6)



The commercial programs offered by the American Simmental Association (ASA) are an effort to provide genetic tools to the largest sector of the beef industry; the commercial cattlemen. These efforts are supported through multiple ASA programs and the world's most comprehensive beef genetic database. The three pillars to ASA's Commercial Programs are the Total Herd Enrollment - Commercial option (THE-CM), Cowherd DNA Roundup (CHR), and the IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™ (FPC). These three programs allow you to maximize the genetic awareness surrounding your program and to make better management and selection decisions.

Each of these programs is designed to offer assistance at three key management moments in your production system; breeding, heifer selection and weaning. This article will briefly dive in to how each program functions.

Total Herd Enrollment - Commercial

The THE-CM is the foundation to these programs and allows you to fully capitalize on the true genetic awareness of your cowherd. This is a herd reporting program that helps isolate the known genetic potential of every female you own. The industry's best metric for understanding genetic merit on individual animals is through an expected progeny difference (EPD). Simply put, an EPD informs you of the difference in production value for a given trait compared to the average animal. These are all calculated through pedigree relationships and performance records - and genomics if desired. Selection indexes take that one step further by combining multiple economically relevant EPD's along with industry costs and thresh-

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We have several good sons competing in the RGV Bull Test with the top half selling in the RGV Performance Test 2nd Annual Online Bull Sale next spring. These bulls can be seen at Rio Beef Feedyard.

A BIG HEARTY THANKS goes out to all of our semen, heifer and bull buyers. We are excited and proud of how well our Gold Medal cattle are doing for you. We appreciate how so many of you refer to them as **THE COWMAN'S KIND!!** 3 units of semen sell in our LMC & Friends Giving THANKS Sale V.



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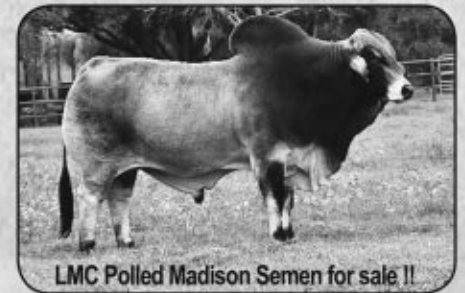
CONGRATS to all of our LMC Jr. Team who have won 3 of the last 4 \$10,000 San Antonio Jr. Simbrah Shows plus many more including Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, RGV, AJS Round Up, MAS & Dallas!!



MIL GRACIAS to Carlos Rascon from Mexico and all others for buying Gold Medal sired herd bulls. We appreciate all of our domestic and foreign buyers.



CONGRATS to our 2018 LMC Special Award Winners - Booster - Toby Cantu Family, Educator - Dr. Ida Acuña Garza and Volunteer - Brad Cowan.



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At the recent ABBA Performance Bull Test & Sale, LMC Polled Madison sons were the 1st, 3rd & 4th top scanning bulls, highest breeder sale avg. and top seller at \$10,700 selling to Stanley Stevens. **WHY?** They are **THE COWMAN'S KIND!!** **MIL GRACIAS** to all who bid and bought bulls!!



We have a fancy set of Polled Brahman, Simbrah and Simbravieh heifers for sale at this time. We also have an excellent set of bulls on the RGV Bull Test. You are welcome at any time to visit La Muñeca.

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SimGenetic sires recognized by Integrity Beef Alliance



BOZEMAN, MT--- SimGenetic sires are now recognized by Integrity Beef Alliance (IBA) as part of their value-added program. IBA is a comprehensive beef production system through which members can utilize standardized management practices, marketing outlets, data utilization, assistance procuring replacement cattle, and additional support. IBA's Terminal

Calf Program provides members with the option of participating in a value-added calf sale and offers

producers additional support such as data consultation. The Replacement Female Program offers producers the opportunity to market females to IBA Terminal Calf Program participants. IBA helps members produce a product that exceeds consumer expectations.

"Integrity Beef Alliance is pleased to announce the recent inclusion of the

Simmental breed as an approved bull for use in the value-added program," said Robert Wells, Alliance executive director. "Simmental cows were already approved. We believe this will allow commercial producers utilizing Simmental genetics an additional opportunity to be recognized and receive premiums for all the value-added traits they build into their cattle. Integrity Beef Alliance has an 18-year track record of producing high-quality value-added calves for the industry and which consumers are

demanding."

Chip Kemp, American Simmental Association director of commercial and industry operations, expressed ASA's enthusiasm about ASA's relationship with IBA. "The inclusion of SimGenetics into the Integrity Beef Alliance program is a win for all involved," said Kemp. "This allows those savvy, profit-focused commercial producers involved with IBA the freedom to incorporate today's Simmental influenced genetics to add serious value to their feeder calves and to add mean-

ingful maternal merit as well. The evolution of SimGenetics, and the fact that this evolution is backed with fact-based science, makes for an ideal complement to the predominant cow base in the south central portion of the U.S. The data is clear, the overwhelming majority of commercial operations can benefit from an infusion of Simmental genetics. We are pleased the IBA leadership team has welcomed SimGenetics into their progressive and highly regarded data-driven program."

Awareness...

(Continued from page 5)

years of time. This program is very time sensitive so if you are interested, call today.

Simmental.org/chr

Feeder Profit Calculator

While the other two programs are focused around your cowherd, the FPC is centered around where you make ends meet. You've invested a lot of time and money into not only your cowherd, but also your bull battery because you know role genetics plays in the end product. You've also invested in your management protocols to ensure the feeder calves you raise will stay healthy and perform in the feedlot. These investments help you stay profitable and build a more valuable feeder calf, but are your buyers aware of your commitment? The FPC is a third-party view of the profit potential on your calf crop through the understanding of genetics, health and management. Your buyers want low risk, high potential calves with earning potential. You want to highlight that your calves fit their need. As opposed to traditional marketing slogans and empty statements lets provide true awareness. Oh, and it is at no cost.

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TX

PINE RIDGE RANCH, LLC
 Bill and Jane Travis • 214/850-6308
billtravis@simbrah.com
 Athens, Texas

Shopping for a new bull? Here's your guide

By University of Georgia Staff



This group of Simbrah bulls was photographed at Shallow Water Ranch.

If you have been in the cattle business for very long, you are intimately familiar with the many purchasing decisions that your operation requires you to make. From feed and minerals to medications, equipment, and pasture management, it seems that the task of finding the best option for your operation is never-ending. While operational decisions are undoubtedly important, there is one purchase that is a tangible investment in the future of your program. If you choose natural service as your primary breeding sys-

tem and maintain a closed herd, the only source of new genetics you bring into your program will be from the bulls you select.

Research has shown that following three generations of retained replacement females, 87.5% of the genetic make-up of the heifers you retain is the result of your last three bull purchases. This makes your herd sire purchasing decisions critical to your operation's success. When you consider purchasing a herd sire, there are a set of minimum standards that each bull should meet for con-

sideration, and then there are "extras" that a seed-stock producer may choose to provide which will add value to a bull. It really is impossible to buy a bull that is "too good"; however, it is entirely possible to buy a bull that is "too expensive," so let's take a look at some factors to consider when you are standing in the sale pens deciding what to buy.

Information you should expect

Earlier in this piece, it was mentioned that certain minimums should be considered when purchasing a bull. By this, we mean if the following information is not available to you, consider it a deal-breaker, shake hands and walk away.

Fertility

If you read many of these articles you know that the sale of one calf per cow per year is the only real source of revenue for cow calf producers. While it is true that some income can be generated by the sale of cull cows and bulls, sale of these animals costs the operation in terms of capital, and will not translate into profit over time. It's unfair to say that every cow that doesn't get bred is the bull's fault. Cow fertility is a complex matter independent of the bull, but it is certain that bulls who are unable or unwilling to breed cows will result in a loss of revenue. Bull fertility is a function of several factors including but not limited to age, genetics, nutrition and health; however, the only objective method for evaluating bull fertility is a breeding soundness examination (BSE). For this reason, it is critical that any bull you purchase should have passed a BSE in the past 30-60 days. A BSE should be performed by a licensed veterinarian or trained professional and should comprise an assessment of scrotal circumference, sperm concentration, motility and morphology, the bull's physical ability to breed based on structure and general health, and physical examination of the reproductive organs (Table 1). A "satisfactory" bull is determined to be acceptable for all criteria. It is important to note that this is not a guarantee of fertility, but that nothing was found that would affect potential fertility. Bulls, particularly

(Continued on page 9)

Pine Ridge Simbrah.

- Black Angus cattle dissipate body heat through their lungs, by panting, such as dogs

- Angus seek cooling temperatures provided by shade and standing in water for long periods. Standing in water can be unhealthy.

- Black Angus is a one-breed genetic.

- Black Angus cattle have been consistently line bred resulting in defects and reduced heterosis

- Black Angus are environmentally suited to a smaller range than Pine Ridge Simbrah.

- Black hair is a very poor hair color due to sunray heat absorption and insect resistance.

- Black Angus tend to grow more internal fat when harvested over 1,200#.



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Make weaning and preconditioning a worthwhile investment

By Jason Smith, Assistant Professor and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Department of Animal Science, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

Time and time again, the data tells us that properly weaned and preconditioned calves are more valuable than calves that were "weaned on diesel fuel." And it is beyond the shadow of a doubt that weaning and preconditioning is the right thing for our industry. So why don't more of us employ weaning and preconditioning as a

routine management practice? In short, it doesn't always yield a positive return on investment. This doesn't mean that it can't, and it doesn't mean that it won't. It just means that if we aren't focusing on adding additional value to the cattle above and beyond just being able to call them weaned and preconditioned, it may not

seem like the juice is worth the squeeze.


We know that the fact that calves are no longer balling adds value. We know that castration and dehorning add value. We know that any of a number of defined vaccination and deworming programs add value. We know that bunk-breaking and familiarity with a waterer adds value. And we know that marketing calves in a way that puts them in front of customers that recognize the benefit of these things adds value. So, if this is the case, why are the returns often too small to entice more adoption?

Simply put, pounds still pay. And unfortunately, a 4-5% "value-added" premium for weaned and preconditioned calves may not offer enough "juice" for many to justify "the squeeze." Even if it is the right thing for the industry, my experience has been that a month and a half of time and effort that pays for itself without any additional return is a hard sell. So, considering that it is the right thing to do for the industry, how do we add enough additional value during that period to yield enough of a return to make it worth our while and then some? Nutritional management and time.

Expect 500 to 600 lb. calves to lose roughly 50 lbs. at weaning. Even when a portion of that is gut fill, if those calves are managed to gain only 1 to 1.5 lbs. per head per day during a 45-day preconditioning phase, we essentially get them back to where they started at weaning time – and that's about it. In that scenario, the additional value that was added to the cattle through being able to label them as weaned and preconditioned is often offset by the expenses that it took to get them there. If managing calves for a rate of growth that will add additional value through weight gain is not a primary focus of your program, don't expect weaning and preconditioning to be a game-changer on your sale ticket.

But, those same calves are managed to gain 2 to 2.5 lbs. per head per day during that same 45-day weaning

(Continued on page 11)




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Shopping...

(Continued from page 7)

yearlings, must be observed to ensure that acceptable libido or sexual desire persist through the breeding season after purchase.

“

If you have been in the cattle business for very long, you are intimately familiar with the many purchasing decisions that your operation requires you to make

”

Animal health

Do not buy bulls, or any breeding cattle for that matter, if health and vaccination status has not been verified. Bulls from reputable programs will be vaccinated and a simple look at the sale catalog or conversation with the seller should provide all the information you need for your records. In addition to confirming that vaccina-

tions have been given, inquire as whether any boosters have been given and the date of the last vaccination. Any animal that you bring onto your farm should go through a quarantine period, but it is important to know when vaccines were given because it takes time (30-45 days is best) for immunity to build after a vaccination is administered. Stress caused by sale day, hauling, commingling with other bulls, or turnout on cows can slow this process down. It is vital that your new bull have peak immunity in the first 30 days after turnout so that fertility issues associated with disease or vaccine stress are minimized. Apart from vaccines, bulls should be bright eyed and active with no signs of respiratory or digestive distress. They should have tested negative for PI-BVD and results available for your inspection. Feet and legs should be examined for soundness, and body condition score should be no lower than a 5 on a 1 to 9 scale. A desirable BCS of 6 is pictured in Figure 1. Note that the ribs of the animal are not visible and that there is noticeable fat covering in the forerib

and small ponies around the tail head. There should be noticeable flesh in the bull's flank and moderate width and substance to the brisket area. In the case of aged or non virgin bulls, negative test results for trichomoniasis, tuberculosis and PI-BVD are also recommended in addition to the records previously discussed.

Performance data and genetic information

The amount of genetic and performance information offered during the sale of bull varies by seller and scenario. Bulls sold private treaty, may have less data available than those sold through a sale. Sale catalogs are an excellent place to find this information. Performance data may or may not be presented, but is usually shown as adjusted weaning or yearling weights, average daily gains, or weight ratios. If you have done business with the breeder before and know the consistency and quality of his program, performance information is extremely valuable in sorting through a bull offering. The deal-breaker here is genetic information, potential herd sires need to have genetic infor-

mation at least in the form of EPDs. The exception here is obviously commercial bulls that are not registerable through a breed association, but in the case of registered bulls, genetic information should be provided.

In visits to operations, we are often directed toward a bull and told that he is a purebred, but wasn't registered. The value of a registered bull is in having access to pedigree information and genetic predictors, so if you are not going to see these benefits, don't pay registered prices for

unregistered cattle. The focus of this article is not how to use EPDs, that's a conversation for another day, but the point is that whether you make your living with cattle or work a full-time job and just have 20 head on the old home place, the ability to select bulls based on genetic merit will positively impact your bottom line as long as the cattle are managed properly.

Information that adds value

At a bare minimum, the information in the previous section should be available

on any bull you consider for purchase. Some progressive producers may choose to collect more information on their bulls, or manage the cattle in such a way that their value is increased and a higher sale price may be justified.

Guarantees

No one raises seedstock without selling a bull that is either infertile or sub fertile at some point, the measure of a good seedstock producer is in how he manages these issues. Guarantees are common in the bull market, but they

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$$\frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

$$x_1 = x + a$$

$$2 \times 2 = 4$$

$$y = \frac{a+c-b}{2}$$

$$x_1 = \frac{-b - \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$


$$y_1 = d$$

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$$x_1 = x$$

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 Dec. 8th-Tom Brothers Ranch Opening Day of Private Treaty Sale, Campbellton, Texas 2019
 Jan. 26-Buzzard Hollow Ranch's Annual Bull Sale, Granbury, Texas
 Jan. 28-Junior Simbrah Heifer Show, Fort Worth Livestock Show, Fort Worth, Texas
 Feb. 2-Cowtown Classic SimGenetic Sale, Fort Worth Livestock Show, Fort Worth, Texas
 Feb. 3-Open Simbrah Show, Fort Worth Livestock Show, Fort Worth, Texas
 Feb. 9-Fort Worth Livestock Show Commercial Female Sale, Fort Worth Livestock Show, Fort Worth, Texas
 Feb. 11-National Simbrah and National Percentage Simbrah Shows, San Antonio Livestock Show, San Antonio, Texas
 Feb. 13-Simbrah-Simmental Superbowl, San Antonio Livestock Show, San Antonio, Texas
 Feb. 13-San Antonio Livestock Show All Breed Bull and Commercial Female Sale, San Antonio Livestock Show, San Antonio, Texas
 Feb. 14-Junior Simbrah Heifer Show, San Antonio Livestock Show, San Antonio, Texas
 Feb. 16-19-LMC GenePLUS Online Sale XXVI
 Feb. 26-TSSA International Simmental/Simbrah Sale, Houston Livestock Show, Houston, Texas
 Feb. 27-International Simbrah Show, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Houston, Texas
 Feb. 27-Houston Livestock Show All Breed Bull and Commercial Female Sale, Houston Livestock Show, Houston, Texas
 Mar. 7-Junior Simbrah Heifer Show, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Houston, Texas
 Mar. 13-Junior Simbrah Heifer Show, Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show, Mercedes, Texas
 Mar. 14-Open Simmental Simbrah Show, Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show, Mercedes, Texas
 Mar. 23-26-LMC GenePLUS Online Sale XXVII
 Mar. 30-Junior Simbrah Show, Star of Texas, Austin, Texas

Worthwhile...

(Continued from page 8)

and preconditioning phase (and it isn't incredibly difficult or expensive to do so), that's an additional 40 to 60 lbs. of added weight. So now, we have not only the additional weight, but also the premium associated with the fact that we can call them weaned and preconditioned.

Most programs require a minimum weaning and preconditioning phase of somewhere in the realm of 45 days. Unfortunately, it seems like many groups of calves are managed as if they couldn't get to the end of that 45-day period and cattle shipped soon enough. But unless those calves were creep fed, expect their gain to be back-loaded. Extending that time frame – even by two weeks – can pay huge dividends.

Extending the phase from 45 to 60 days, and managing the cattle on that same plane of nutrition often adds somewhere in

the realm of an additional 120 lbs. of weight gain during that 60-day period of time. And we can expect that additional weight gain and value-added premium to add \$150.00 to \$200.00 in value per head. If we focus on utilizing high quality forages (pasture or harvested), an economical source of supplemental energy and protein, and a complementary mineral and vitamin supplement to do so, that will generally result in a \$30.00 to \$50.00 per head return over investment.

Do you know of any banks offering more than a 10 to 20% interest rate over a 60-day investment period? I don't either. But if done properly, weaning and preconditioning can. And if necessary, work with your nutritionist or Extension personnel to ensure that your investment in weaning and preconditioning adds value to your calves in a way that widens your profit margins, rather than just becoming an added expense.

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Shopping...

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vary in content from seller to seller. Some guarantees only last for 30 days while others may guarantee the bull through the first breeding season. Guarantees may pledge a full refund or simply adjust the terms of sale; however, guarantees usually come in one of four types:

1. Refunding the purchase price to the buyer and reclaiming ownership of the bull in question.

2. Replacing the problem bull with another of equal value.

3. Refunding the difference between purchase and salvage price after the buyer has sold the bull for beef.

4. Giving a credit toward the future purchase of another bull.

As expected, most of the time, a better guarantee comes at a higher cost because the seller is absorbing more risk if there is a problem with the bull.

Genomic testing

The gamble with using EPDs as a fail-safe selection tool is the accuracy of the prediction in young cattle that have few, if any, progeny. The lack of con-

fidence associated with EPDs on young bulls comes from not having progeny and sometimes performance data both of which increase the accuracy of the EPD. In young bulls, for example, most of their genetic value is based on their pedigree. As these animals age and have offspring, we know more and more about their genetic merit. This increased confidence is denoted by an increase in the accuracy value (0 – 1 scale) associated with each EPD. It does not necessarily mean the EPD increases if accuracy increases. It just

means the EPD becomes closer to the true value, whether it increases or decreases. Remember that EPD stands for EXPECTED progeny difference. Genotyping a young animal increases accuracy because having knowledge of the genetic makeup has a similar value to adding the performance of 5 to 50 progeny, depending on the trait in question. Samples of DNA can be collected very early in life, and unlike metabolites or hormones, the genetic code does not change over the course of an animal's life. Genomic testing allows producers to

take a virtual snapshot of a portion of the genes that are flowing in the population which regulate economically important traits. This increased knowledge about the actual DNA of an animal allows for increased confidence in the genetically enhanced EPD (GE-EPD), and has real value for the buyer of the bull.

Seller reputation

Arguably, the best way to for a seller to add-value to his bulls, is by doing business the right way. Cattlemen who have established a reputation for producing quality herd sires,

and have a good relationship with their customers set themselves a cut above the rest, and often have the ability to demand a premium for their cattle. There are buyers who will choose not to pay for a bull from a reputable program, but repeat customers of dependable breeders will usually tell you that the sale price was justified by the added peace of mind knowing the seller will stand behind the cattle, and that buying from a program with a history of producing quality cattle is worth the extra investment. It's the same concept we face when purchasing household items. Do I buy the name brand or take a chance on the cheap stuff?

News...

(Continued from page 3)

calves. The other is Maternal Calving Ease EPD, i.e., how easily a female gives birth. In sire selection, Maternal Calving Ease predicts calving ease of a sire's daughters.

Direct and Maternal Calving Ease are different traits. Just because a sire has a desirable Direct Calving Ease EPD does not mean his daughters will necessarily be easy calving. This is a common misconception. In fact, most research shows a negative genetic relationship, ranging in magnitude from low to medium depending on the particular study. So, if you are selecting terminal sires (with no replacement heifers to be saved) you should concentrate only on Direct Calving Ease EPD. But if you save heifers, you should consider both Direct and Maternal Calving Ease. You can find sires with desirable EPD for both Direct and Maternal, but it will not be as easy as when looking for Direct alone.

Source: Texas A&M Beef Browsing Newsletter

Simbrah promotional items available

The American Simmental Association (ASA) has marketing materials for the Simbrah breed. A brochure and signs are available which promote Simbrah as the crossbreeding choice. For details on how you can get copies of the brochure for distribution and have the sign at events in your area, contact the ASA at 406/587-4531.

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