

Dalebanks Digest

Spring 2016

Spring 2016 Private Treaty Sale Bulls

Early-March will bring another balanced-trait set of Dalebanks yearling bulls to market.

We will offer a select group of 75 spring yearlings on a first-come, first-served basis beginning **Tuesday, March 8**.

Bull Availability and Information

Sires represented are Complement, Composure, Prophet, 5050-0345, Upward 228, Bismarck, 7229, Confidence, New Day 454, Thunder, GF Wisdom and other sires.

The yearling bulls will be weighed, measured and ultrasounded on February 24, so we plan to have them freeze branded, sorted and ready to select by March 8. The bulls will be evaluated for breeding soundness, vaccinated, poured and ready to breed approximately 15 head of cows or heifers later this spring or summer.

Low-Energy Development

As in past years, these bulls were pasture-weaned in September. They grazed dry grass and were supplemented with 20% range cubes until mid-October. They then grazed cover crop pastures until late November, and we have kept them on a moderate energy development ration since then. Their current feed ration consists largely of ground wheat straw and corn silage. By design, the bulls will be not be as heavy (*fat*) as some yearling bulls, but we are confident that the long-term payout of improved fertility and increased longevity will be beneficial for our customers. As always, please let us know about your experiences with these bulls.

This bull grow-out program imitates a pasture development scenario by limiting the number of days in a pen, utilizing larger pens (more exercise) and feeding extremely high roughage rations (mimicking a dormant native grass and protein scenario).

Significant genetic variation is still able to be seen, thus allowing for accurate EPD calculations and selection decisions. *And remember... an extra 1" of backfat on a bull might make him appear "bigger, stouter, deeper, higher performing" or any of the other terms that sound good over a microphone, but it does not actually make him—OR HIS CALVES-- any better than his genetics allow.*

Please contact Matt **anytime** to add your name to the list for information on these bulls as soon as it is available. We look forward to visiting with you soon!

Maternal Plus

by Matt Perrier

While we all sell commercial cattle by the pound, astute cattlemen are beginning to recognize that weaning and feedyard growth can be *optimized* while simultaneously moderating mature cow size. It is also becoming apparent that true measures of reproductive efficiency are better performance indicators than the highly variable, age-old merit of "average weaning weight."

These reasons are what compelled our family to be one of the first in the nation to enroll in the American Angus Association's cow inventory reporting program, Maternal Plus, in 2012. And it's why we continue to submit breeding information, udder scores and mature height and weight data on each cow at weaning time.

"Most pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed to a bull" might not garner any bragging rights in many coffee shops today, but we believe that these types of metrics are a more useful benchmarking tool for cowherd productivity. Sure, reproductive efficiency is a lowly-heritable trait, but with enough selection pressure, we believe that we have—and will continue to—move the needle toward more efficient maternal genetics. All the while, we continue to see our performance figures of weaning weight, yearling weight, ribeye area and marbling simultaneously improve.

Matt was pleased to sit on a panel discussion outlining the Maternal Plus program during the 2015 National Angus Conference. The Dalebanks focus on ALL traits of economic importance starts right where it should ...with sound, hard-working, functional females. Do we continue to strive for improvements in the "payout" traits like weaning weight, yearling weight and end-product measurements? Yes. But we believe that it's equally important to simultaneously work the cost side of the equation, as well.

So you won't likely see us choosing a side in the current debate of "carcass versus maternal cattle." We know that —with enough disciplined genetic selection and measurement—these two groups of traits can, and MUST, exist simultaneously in most of our customers' herds. And as our industry expands the herd over the next several years, producers who efficiently manage their bottom line while optimizing output will likely be rewarded most.



A Successful Mission

by Matt Perrier

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About a month ago, I returned from the Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show in San Diego. For me, this year's convention was more than just another gathering of beef industry folks. It increased my gratitude to the dedicated men and women of our armed forces, of which there are many in San Diego, plus it reinforced my faith in our beef community's leaders.

Two unrelated events during three days of meetings made me most proud. First was a speech by retired Navy SEAL Robert O'Neill and second was the NCBA Cattle Marketing & International Trade Committee meeting. A bit random, yes, but allow me to appropriately begin with the decorated military man's comments.

O'Neill is a 40-year-old retired SEAL with a tremendous story to tell about dedication, teamwork and leadership. Much of what he accomplished in more than 400 combat missions is classified, so I will let you and your Internet search engine determine individual operations in which he may or may not have been involved. Let us just say he was a key player in several assignments that have occurred over the past decade, some of which you likely saw on the evening news or big screen.

He told a few "war stories" during his address to thousands of cattlemen, but it was his life and leadership lessons that resounded most with me. O'Neill shared his ingredients to a successful mission: find the right people, prepare (but don't wait for the "perfect plan"), effectively communicate with each other, don't let emotions drive your decision-making process and never quit. It truly was an awesome address, as O'Neill translated his world-class military training into tips for success in our daily lives.

Later that day, I attended the Cattle Marketing and International Trade Committee meeting. This was likely the most anticipated policy meeting of the week, as representatives from the CME Group had been invited to discuss cattlemen's concerns relative to the volatility in the cattle futures contracts in recent months. Although a few were expecting a fight, we participated in a civil discussion between two parties who knew they needed each other to succeed.

Outcomes of the discussion are readily available in other publications, so I will not review these points. But as I witnessed this thorough, open, frank discussion, which involved cow-calf producers, stockers, feeders, commodity traders and CME management, I was pleased to see all parties' willingness to find workable solutions. Nearly everyone departed the meeting with a better understanding of the other groups' needs and an increased commitment to working together to create better risk management and pricing tools for

the beef industry. In fact, the first step toward addressing the beef industry's concerns was enacted the following trading day, when the CME Group implemented "messaging limits" for cattle contracts.

So what would have happened if cattlemen had stayed home, complained to our neighbors and pointed the finger of blame toward Chicago? Or what if either group had entered the room with heels dug in, refusing to compromise? Any of these scenarios likely would have ended with inaction, animosity or the eventual demise of what should have continued as a useful tool for all involved.

Instead, we secured the right people, we were prepared, we communicated effectively, we separated emotions from decision-making and we committed to never quit.

I think Rob O'Neill would have called it a successful mission.

Succession Planning

by Matt Perrier

The Greenwood County Farm Bureau Association hosted a seminar last January that focused on Farm and Ranch Succession Planning. Dr. Gregg Hadley and Forest Buhler, both with Kansas State University, outlined the steps necessary to successfully navigate the challenges associated with transitioning farm and ranch businesses to future generations.

While most folks enter this exercise focused on estate or asset transfer from one generation to the next, these experts pointed out that there are several steps that must be completed before the actual estate plan is written. Primarily, communication amongst all parties about their desired outcomes and involvement must occur from the start. Basic business plans, financial feasibility considerations and even potential roadblocks due to emotions or past relationships must be considered before any estate planning even takes place.

Each family's business and situation are different, so there is no such thing as a "cookie cutter" solution for farm and ranch succession planning. While it can be a lengthy process and cause some additional work and stress, it is a necessary duty that all of us have to preserve our legacies for future generations.

If you have not begun this planning process, we suggest you do so. There are many opportunities to attend a seminar through your state or local livestock or farming organization, or contact your extension service for suggestions. Our word of advice: do NOT contact an attorney and ask them to "write something up" for you. It will likely be a waste of your money and their time.

Attend an ag succession planning seminar or contact an expert to help you get started successfully.

We look forward to working with your family for generations!

Choose Wisely

Reprinted with permission of Drovers Cow-Calf

By Dr. Tom Field, University of Nebraska

For the commercial cow-calf producer the two most important professional relationships are with the seedstock supplier and the herd veterinarian.

Genetics provides a foundation upon which the future of the enterprise will stand. Given the tremendous influence of the bull battery, the sire-acquisition process takes on a special level of significance, and thus, the relationship with the genetic supplier becomes highly important.

One of my mentors in the cattle business believed that before a decision was made on which bulls to purchase; cattle producers should visit the potential seedstock supplier's business at least twice — initially to check out the supplier and the second time to evaluate the cattle. His concept was founded on a commitment to only buying seedstock from herds managed under a similar philosophy and with comparable weather, forage and climatic conditions to the purchaser's situation. His belief was that if the people were solid, then you could more confidently do business, safe in the knowledge that they were creating good cattle and that they would stand behind them.

However, even before contact is made with a seedstock producer, cow-calf managers must assess their own condition and their level of herd performance in critically important areas, and they must solidify their goals and objectives for the beef enterprise.

A mating system

Determining the mating system is another key decision cow-calf producers should make by using knowledge about their own enterprises as well as leveraging the experience of other producers and of the genetics supplier. The mating system, along with the sires selected to work within the mating system, requires that commercial producers carefully assess four critical areas:

- Feed resources and environmental limits

- Labor resources

- Marketing goals and objectives

- Gaps between present and desired levels of performance in traits critical to profitability.

Once these issues have been addressed in detail then a meaningful discussion can be undertaken with potential seedstock suppliers.

A long-term and valued relationship with any seedstock supplier begins with business integrity, a commitment to providing solutions to customers, conversations founded on meaningful information and service after the sale. As these discussions are undertaken, two concepts should always be kept in mind. First, the novice bull buyer deserves an attentive seedstock supplier who is willing to provide education, answer questions and,

most importantly, follow up after the sale. Second, there is a dramatic difference between the supplier whose sole goal is to sell a bull and the supplier focused on solving problems for a customer.

Sire selection should be founded on making the most objective decision possible that is aligned with the overall strategy and vision for the cow-calf enterprise. Thus, it is essential to acquire bulls only from those herds with active engagement in a performance program backed by a dynamic national database and supported with state-of-the-art genetic prediction tools. It is not important that a cow-calf producer understand the intricacies of how genetic estimates are calculated, but developing a solid functional understanding of how to use the estimates and information is critical. The role of the seedstock supplier is to provide educational and consulting support to assure the comfort level of the customer.

Making matches

The sire-selection process is one driven by winnowing down the available bulls for sale into a group of individuals that possess the appropriate combination of performance metrics. These should align with the limitations of the resources available on the ranch and ensure conformance to the demands of the target market for progeny.

This narrowing-down process can be driven by several key focal points:

- Avoid sires that create dystocia.

- Will replacement females be kept from the progeny? If yes, then what is the appropriate level of mature size and milk production for the particular farm or ranch?

- What is the optimal combination of growth, muscularity, marbling and carcass yield for the target market? Producing feeder calves that can be merchandised to generate high levels of revenue is fundamental to profitability.

- Finally, what are the gaps in performance for the herd that need to be closed to improve productivity, profitability and quality of life?

In each of these discussions, reputable seedstock breeders will provide information, insight and advice. Using their experience and knowledge is critical to building a genetic base designed for long-term satisfaction from the cow-calf enterprise.

We have always valued Dr. Field's opinions on the beef industry, and we think he is spot on in this column. There are always plenty of bulls available to cow-calf producers today, but surprisingly few programs that provide their customers assistance in interpreting the genetic information, market trends and profit-driving solutions for the commercial beef industry. We appreciate each conversation we have with customers and look forward to helping each of you remain profitable in the coming years.



75 Private-Treaty Bulls Available Starting March 8!

Sires include

Complement, Composure, Prophet, 5050-0345, Upward 228, Bismarck, 7229, Confidence, New Day 454, Thunder, GF Wisdom and other balanced-trait sires.

Plenty of calving-ease bulls for heifers, plus high-performance genetics for cows.

Bulls available for selection beginning March 8 on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Matt today to receive information on this high-quality set of bulls. They will be freeze branded, vaccinated, fertility tested and ready for use this spring.

Call or email today to receive more information when it is available and make your selections!

Dalebanks Females for Sale Private Treaty

Select groups of spring pairs and bred fall females will be available throughout the spring and early summer. Contact Matt for info.

Annual Bull Sale: Saturday, November 19, 2016

Selling approximately 130 yearling and coming 2-year-old bulls

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