



BeefTalk 702: In Search of Good Sires

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Making Sense of the Numbers NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center

Red Angus	Birth Weight (EPD lbs.)	Weaning Weight (EPD lbs.)	Yearling Weight (EPD lbs.)	Marbling Score EPD	Rib Eye Area (EPD sq. in.)
2014 national breed average*	-1.6	55	86	0.45	0.12
2008-09 DREC born bulls	-1.5	57	91	0.52	0.33
2010-11 DREC born bulls	-0.5	61	104	0.43	0.38
2014 DREC breeding bulls	-4.2	65	105	1.01	0.38

* Red Angus Proven and Opportunity Sires

Angus breed average EPD values.

As of Feb. 5, the Red Angus breed average within proven and opportunity sires for birth weight is minus 1.6 pounds, weaning weight is 55 pounds, yearling weight is 86 pounds, marbling score is 0.45 and the rib-eye area is 0.12 square inch.

The center's bulls that were born in 2008 and 2009 did meet the goals. The sire's average birth weight was minus 1.5 pounds, weaning weight was 57 pounds, yearling weight was 91 pounds, marbling score was 0.52 and rib-eye area was 0.33 square inch. As these bulls grew older, the replacements also are expected to meet or exceed the Red Angus breed average.

The center's bulls that were born in 2010 and 2011 averaged a minus 0.5 pound birth weight, weaning weight of 61 pounds, yearling weight of 104 pounds, marbling score of 0.43 and a rib-eye area of 0.38 square inches. These current sires are reflective of a desire to meet the center's goals and also think about the reality of buying bulls.

A review of the EPD values reveals that the center has decreased birth weight slightly but increased weaning and yearling weight. Along with the increased growth in the current sires, marbling decreased and rib-eye area increased. Three traits moved in the right direction but two did not.

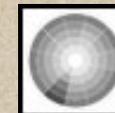
Although the center still is above the breed average for all the Red Angus growth and carcass traits of interest, the birth weight slipped below breed average. Although the center does not need to buy a Red Angus herd sire, the opportunity for artificial insemination (AI) certainly is a viable option to help adjust or further refine the center's Red Angus genetics.

The bottom line is to know the breed average EPDs for the traits of interest, know the herd historical and current averages for EPD traits of interest, set herd goals and then select the right bulls.

Focusing on five traits within the Red Angus breed - birth weight, weaning weight, yearling weight, marbling score and rib-eye area - the Dickinson Research Extension Center has set a goal that the average value for herd sire expected progeny differences (EPDs) should meet or exceed the Red



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A disclaimer is in order. Beef producers initially select a breed or type of bull they like and then develop working relationships with the various breeders, breeding companies and ultimately the breed organization that supports the chosen type of cattle. The Dickinson Research Extension Center utilizes several breeds and/or types of cattle and then develops relationships within each type or breed.

For today, I am going to highlight one of those relationships. It is not because one is better than another, but I simply want to show the center's process in selecting bulls. The point is to apply the process, not the actual bulls the center uses to develop one's own breeding program.

The center deals with the real world and, in this case, when opening the select sires website, some Red Angus bulls pop up that appear to meet the center's needs. To get there, I followed these steps. First, I searched the Web for Select Sires beef and found <http://www.selectsiresbeef.com/>. From there, I selected the "Select-a Sire" tab and then clicked on "EPD Spreadsheet." I searched by breed and selected Red Angus.

The Select Sires website provides a spreadsheet of all available Red Angus bulls. This data is exportable or can be utilized as presented. Either way, a quick ranking of the desired traits showed that four bulls met the center's criteria to rank at or greater than breed average for birth weight, weaning weight, yearling weight, marbling score and rib-eye area.

These four bulls averaged a birth weight of minus 4.2 pounds, weaning weight of 65 pounds, yearling weight of 105 pounds, marbling score of 1.01 and rib-eye area of 0.38 square inch. Any of these four bulls would meet and maintain the center's goals for growth and carcass traits.

Keep in mind the center's goal, which in this case is to breed 1,100-pound cows that will have the potential to produce 1,400-pound or more finished steers at harvest. The center could use all four bulls by AI because these bulls offer the center decreased birth weight, a trait for which the current herd sires are slightly under the center's goal, but improve carcass merit with no loss in weaning or yearling growth.

These bulls would provide the genetics to fit the cows that are in the herd, which are cows that are smaller-framed and have a target mature weight of 1,100 pounds. The center has moved to May calving and expects cows to fend for themselves at calving and bring home growth-orientated calves in the fall that fit industry expectations.

The bottom line is to know the breed average EPDs for the traits of interest, know the herd historical and current averages for EPD traits of interest, set herd goals and then select the right bulls. The mission is accomplished if you know your goals, find your bulls and enjoy the beef industry.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.BeefTalk.com>. For more information, contact the NDBCIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

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