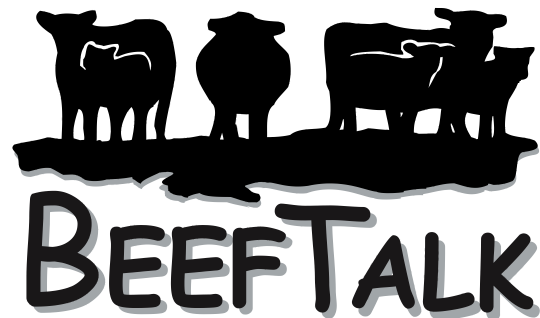


Bulls Are Valuable Assets, and Now Is the Time to Evaluate the

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Structural problems, poor performance and/or behavior were the reasons for culling three bulls at the Dickinson Research Extension Center the other day. The bulls were sold to two different buyers for a total of \$3,831.35. After the trip to town, the bulls weighed 2,095, 2,085 and 2,145 pounds. They had weighed 2,210, and 2,210 and 2,270 pounds walking out of the lot three days earlier.

The issue of shrink or fill is real. Given the volume and capacity of these bulls, the 5.5 percent shrink during the marketing process is somewhat typical (I will save the shrink discussion for another article).

The cash for reinvestment into the future herd sires is nice and now is the time to review the remaining animals in the bull pen. Are the performance expected progeny differences (EPDs) of the remaining bulls up to the challenges of this year's spring offering of bulls?

The center maintains a line of Hereford bulls for use following artificial insemination of the cowherd. After culling issues are resolved, all producers should go to their respective breed association Web sites and check out how their bull pen rates in the industry.

For the center, a quick review of the American Hereford Web site at www.hereford.org was in order. Following a quick review of the Hereford home page, as well as a quick look at the Hereford verified program, I clicked EPD Inquiry and proceeded to enter the center's list of 3-year-old bulls.

By simply typing the registration numbers, which in this case are 42287234, 42287389, 42287422, 42287429 and 42287459, the genetic value of the center's remaining 3-year-old bulls popped up on the screen. The neat thing about the Hereford Association's Web site is that the average for all similar age bulls can be printed at the bottom of the listing.

I was able to determine quickly that all these bulls should sire calves that are above the breed average for weaning weight and yearling weight, based on their above-average EPDs for weaning weight and yearling

weight. In fact, four of the bulls rank within the top 10 percent of the Hereford breed for weaning weight, and three of the five bulls rank within the top 10 percent for yearling weight.

Four of the bulls have heavier than average birth weight EPDs, although calving experience with these bulls on the center's mature cows has not been a problem. These bulls have sired cows that are average for milk production. Four of the bulls are predicted to sire calves with less than average 12th-rib fat at 365 days of age and three are expected to sire calves with greater than average rib eye at 365 days of age. Two of the bulls are expected to have greater intramuscular fat at a year of age.

The data led me to conclude the bulls are fit, sound and have good performance behind their pedigrees. None of the older bulls are the superstars that excel in every trait, but they are good, solid performance bulls that will produce a calf crop with value in today's market.

A similar procedure needs to be done for all the younger bulls as well. There is no use hauling feed to bulls that aren't predicted to produce calves with additional value.

Following a spring semen evaluation to assure fertility, these bulls are good to go. Now, all that is left to do is count the breeding groups, determine the number of groups that are short bulls and start looking at bull sale data.

Bull sales are always a good way to pass the winter months, but just make sure the homework is done and don't buy bulls you don't need.

May you find all your NAIS-approved ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at www.BeefTalk.com. For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1133 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to www.CHAPS2000.com on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0280.

Selected Performance Data for 3-Year-Old Hereford Bulls

Dickinson Research Extension Center

Name/ID	Calve Ease Direct (%)	Birth Weight	Weaning Weight	Yearling Weight	Milk	Fat	Ribeye Area	IMF Percent
SR Sandman 1492	-1.4	+5.5	+52	+81	+17	0.000	+0.21	-0.15
SR Magnet 1552	-6.2	+8.3	+54	+99	+14	-0.009	+0.01	+0.06
SR Sandman 1342	-1.8	+5.5	+53	+78	+15	-0.014	+0.09	-0.14
SR Sandman 612	+0.7	+3.6	+51	+85	+13	-0.019	+0.23	-0.09
DS Imprint 522	+0.2	+6.9	+49	+85	+13	-0.016	-0.10	+0.06
Average Active Sires	-0.3	3.8	37	63	14	0.001	0.07	0.00

Source: www.hereford.org