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BeefTalk: Making Sense of the Bull Pen

When the bulls are penned is a good time for a close evaluation.

By Kris Ringwall, Beef Specialist

NDSU Extension Service

Last week, the report card on bull S48 was to keep him for the 2009 breeding season. This periodic review is used on all bulls at the time of purchase and periodically throughout a bull's life.

The first evaluation of older bulls is for soundness because putting resources into a bull that has limited breeding capacity is impractical. When the bulls are penned is a good

Images

Report Card for 10 Red Angus Bulls			
Dickinson Research Extension Center			
Bull	Body Weight	Body Condition	EPD Grade
P329	A	A	C
S13	A	A	B
S48	B	A	A
S49	B	B	C
S59	A	A	C
S6032	C	A	C
S6042	A	A	C
S6054	C	B	C
S6153	C	A	C
S6158	B	A	B

For EPD values, A = upper 25% of breed percentiles; B = upper 50% of breed percentiles; C = less than 50% of breed percentiles.
 For body weight, A = more than 2000 pounds; B = 1,800 to 1,999 pounds; C = less than 1,799 pounds.
 For body condition, A = score more than 6; B = score 5; C = score less than 5.

Report Card for 10 Red Angus Bulls

Report Card for 10 Red Angus Bulls			
Dickinson Research Extension Center			
Body Weight	EPD CW	EPD SC	EPD WW
A	A	A	A
B	B	B	B
C	C	C	C
D	D	D	D
E	E	E	E
F	F	F	F
G	G	G	G
H	H	H	H
I	I	I	I
J	J	J	J
K	K	K	K
L	L	L	L
M	M	M	M
N	N	N	N
O	O	O	O
P	P	P	P
Q	Q	Q	Q
R	R	R	R
S	S	S	S
T	T	T	T
U	U	U	U
V	V	V	V
W	W	W	W
X	X	X	X
Y	Y	Y	Y
Z	Z	Z	Z

For EPD values, A = upper 25% of breed percentiles; B = upper 50% of breed percentiles; C = less than 50% of breed percentiles.
 For body condition, A = score more than 6; B = score 5; C = score less than 5.

Report Card for 10 Red Angus Bulls - including EPD scores

nd state fair



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time for a close evaluation.

Small problems tend to become big problems. Minor structural problems often will develop into movement problems during the breeding season.

The breeding soundness exam should be scheduled prior to turn out. With all the cold weather lately, now is a good time to monitor for frozen scrotums, especially if the bulls were not bedded or protected from the severe cold.

For this discussion, I will concentrate on the 10 Red Angus bulls at the Dickinson Research Extension Center. The 10 are P329, S13, S48, S49, S59, S6032, S6042, S6054, S6153 and S6158. These bulls are registered with the American Red Angus Association and the registrations and data are current.

To begin the evaluation, I gathered the weights and body condition scores of all the sound bulls. The oldest bull was born in 2004 and weighed 2,445 pounds with a body condition score of 7.

The other nine bulls were born in 2006 and ranged from 1,735 to 2,020 pounds and had body condition scores of 5 to 8. None of these bulls are overly thin and only one bull is starting to carry some excess.

All the bulls were rated for some of the expected progeny differences (EPDs) available from the Red Angus Association. The challenge with data

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use of releases

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collection is information overload.

There are various reasons why a bull remains in the bull pen, but he is there for a reason. The information available on sale day was impressive enough to buy the bull or he was simply affordable.

In the end, a simple question remains. "Are they still good enough to stay or are there better bulls?" In an attempt to answer this question, I developed a scoring system.

The bulls that weighed more than 2,000 pounds received an A. Those that weighed between 1,800 and 1,999 pounds were given a B and those bulls that weighed less than 1,800 pounds were given a C grade.

For body condition, those scoring a 6 or higher received an A, those scoring a condition score of 5 received a B and those scoring a condition score of 4 or lower got a C. There were no bulls with a condition score of less than 5.

In addition, if a bull ranked in the upper 25 percentile within the breed for a specific EPD trait, the bull received an A. The bull received a B if the EPD value was in the upper 50 percentile but less than the 25 percentile. Bulls with an EPD value in the lower 50 percentile received a C.

The report card on the Red Angus bulls (or should we say their grade point average?) was P329 (B),

S13 (B), S48 (B), S49 (C), S59 (B), S6032 (C), S6042 (C), S6054 (C), S6153 (C) and S6158 (B).

In summation, the bull pen has five good Red Angus bulls and five that are average. With the buying season opening up, the center can better evaluate how many bulls are needed and develop a budget to work with.

The process may seem cumbersome, but the point is that we gather some data and rank the bulls. Does the data support keeping them or are better bulls on the market that might meet our production goals?

As a producer, you need to become comfortable working the numbers and incorporating data into your decisions to meet your goals. Happy bull buying!

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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Attachments



[PDF - Report Card for 10 Red Angus](#)

[Bulls](#) 

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[EPS - Report Card for 10 Red Angus](#)

[Bulls](#)

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[PDF - Report Card for 10 Red Angus](#)

[Bulls - including EPD scores](#) 

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